

**The role of student negotiation in improving the speaking ability of
Turkish university EFL students: An action research study**

Submitted by

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Abstract

Teaching speaking is an area of language education which is frequently neglected in English classes in Turkey. This dissertation reports on an action research study designed to address this problem. The study involved data collection through interviews, questionnaires, and observations, as a way of eliciting students' views as a means to improve speaking classes and to outline the impact of student negotiation on students' classroom participation and performance. The research, conducted in the ELT Department at a university in Turkey, comprised three different stages. In the first reconnaissance phase, initial data were collected to understand the classroom context. This informed the second stage, comprising eight weekly-based interventions that involved planning, action, observation and reflection, in which students were given a voice and classroom activities were designed accordingly. In the third stage, the final data were collected to understand the effectiveness of student negotiation.

According to the findings, students wanted more opportunities to practise spoken language in class. Student negotiation allowed for the design of classes according to students' needs and wants, with students becoming more motivated to engage in classroom activities. This led to the development of more positive attitudes towards speaking classes, and more positive perceptions of their speaking ability were reported at the end of the term, together with increased classroom participation, greater willingness to communicate, higher self-esteem, and lower levels of anxiety. The findings also suggested that student negotiation is likely to impact on students' and teachers' professional development.

The study has a number of implications for both the teaching of speaking and for research: it demonstrates the significance of student engagement in classroom activities, made possible through designing activities which take into account students' views and perceptions. Student negotiation and attention to students' needs and wants would appear to promote a high level of student participation, increased motivation and more positive attitudes towards speaking classes. Further research studies, and specifically, more action research, should be conducted in Turkey to generate practical implications to improve classroom practice.

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Dedication

This dissertation
is dedicated to

Zeki Yeşil (21),

a participant of this research study,
who was killed by a bomb attack carried out by PKK terrorist organisation on police
on 19 January 2012 in Hakkari.

Bu tez,
19 Ocak 2012 tarihinde Hakkari'de PKK terör örgütü tarafından polis ekiplerine karşı
düzenlenen bombalı saldırıda öldürülen
ve bu çalışmanın bir katılımcısı olan

Zeki Yeşil'e (21)

ithaf edilmiştir.

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List of Abbreviations

CEF	Common European framework
CLT	Communicative language teaching
EdD	Doctorate of Education
EFL	English as a foreign language
ELT	English language teaching
GTM	Grammar translation method
IATEFL	International association of teachers of English as a foreign language
KPSS	Public personnel selection examination
L2	Second language
MEB	Turkish national ministry of education
ÖSS	Student selection examination
ÖSYM	Student selection and placement centre
SBS	Secondary school placement test
SPSS	Statistical package for the social sciences
TESOL	Teaching of English to speakers of other languages
YDS	Foreign language examination
YÖK	Turkish Council of Higher Education

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The philosophy of language teaching has undergone significant changes over time. In the 19th century, the grammar-translation method (GTM) dominated the language teaching field (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). GTM was an appropriate method for teaching the structure of the target language and this was the main requirement of language learners in that era. However, during the 1970s, increased opportunities to travel created the need for communicating through the target language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This led to the development of communicative language teaching (CLT) approaches, which shifted the focus of language learning from learning the usage to learning the use of the target language (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). In other words, the focus on forms and structure of the target language changed and language classes put more emphasis on using the language productively. This heightened the importance of communication skills and learners were perceived not as passive recipients of customised native speaker input but rather as having active roles that can influence the learning process (Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Littlewood, 1981). One of the main objectives of CLT is to improve learners' abilities to speak and write in the target language (Harmer, 2007), which should result in developing communicative skills. CLT classes mainly focus on "speaking and listening skills, on writing for specific communicative purposes, and on authentic reading texts" (Brown, 1994: 226). This indicates that the CLT approach emphasises both written and verbal communication. With regard to the scope of this dissertation, which focuses on teaching speaking, the present study concerns verbal communication. Another important aspect of CLT is that it draws attention to the characteristics of individuals and this is now the dominant approach for teaching languages and current trends in research on language learning and teaching involve issues focusing on individual learners such as learner-centred methods, learners as individuals, learner autonomy, and individual differences.

These changes influenced the development of English language teaching (ELT) in Turkey and policy makers declared that developing learners' communicative

skills should be the main objective of ELT in Turkey (Talim Terbiye Kurulu, 2006). However, this does not necessarily mean that students' communicative skills are addressed in classes. This is because classroom decision-making is a complicated process which is influenced by various factors (Johnson, 1999) and there is much evidence in the literature that classroom practice does not always address the objectives set by the policy makers because it is the teacher who plays an important role in the classroom decision-making process (Barrow, 1984; Lamie, 2005; McKernan, 2008; Nation & Macalister, 2010; Troudi & Alwan, 2010).

Considering the Turkish context, the communicative emphasis of policy makers is not addressed in classrooms and English language teaching remains highly structural (Alagözlü, 2012; Işık, 2011; Uztosun, 2013). As a result of this structure-based language teaching, despite devoting years to learning English, Turkish learners appear to have difficulty in improving their communication skills, and hence, teaching speaking is an issue that needs to be addressed. Alagözlü, who investigated the ELT policy in Turkey, agreed that GTM is the dominant method. She noted that 'the lack of consistent language policy', 'the disparity between curriculum and learner's needs', and 'lack of teacher training' are the main reasons for the persistence of structural language education (p.1759). Parallel to this, Işık evaluated the textbooks used for teaching English in primary schools and found that the activities were structure-based and mechanical, focused mainly on teaching about language and had little reference to communicative aspects of the target language.

The overdependence on structures in primary and secondary schools impedes learners' communicative skills in English and students enrolled in different departments at universities complete their English education with little attention to spoken or written production in the target language. Conversely, students enrolled at ELT Departments still have a chance to improve: they continue taking intensive English classes focusing on different skills in English, as they will be qualified as English language teachers when they graduate. The skill-based courses, which are provided in the first two years, are the only chance for improving communicative abilities in English, and therefore, it is of critical importance to provide effective classes at that level. The lack of congruency between approaches advocated by policy makers and classroom practices that

are mentioned above may cause a disconnection between learners' anticipated needs and real needs at university level. For that reason, in order to provide effective skill-based courses at ELT Department, learners' needs should be considered thoroughly.

These issues are the main impetus of the present study. Overall, it attempts to develop and promote effective speaking classes for students in a university ELT Department. The approach centres on understanding students' needs and wants and then making appropriate interventions to improve classroom practice. To achieve this, students were given a voice in classroom decision-making and action research methodology was followed as a way of implementing student-negotiated speaking classes. The findings of the study may be useful for understanding the impact of student negotiation on students' classroom participation and performance, and the implications of this for improving the speaking abilities of English language learners.

1.2 Rationale for the study

I learned English by experiencing one of the most intensive English classes in Turkey. I graduated from Muzaffer Atasay Anatolian High School, a school type which offers intensive English classes. I chose Language Division at the tenth grade and enrolled at ELT Department after taking university entrance exam. This exam involved English language test which comprised of 100 multiple-choice type questions that focused on learners' lexical, grammatical, and reading skills. I had 90 correct answers out of 100 questions. Although this may seem as quite a high achievement result, it was not considered very high according to the requirements of Turkish assessment procedure: this test requires recognition rather than the production of the target language, and hence, test takers develop very high level of structural knowledge of English with no attention to their communicative skills.

After enrolling in the ELT Department, I was invited to take preparatory exemption exam which consisted of four language skills tests. This was the first time when I had noticed the necessity of learning to speak. Before that, I had believed that learning the structures of English would be enough for a language learner. My first class focusing on speaking skill was in the first year of ELT

Department. After graduation, I have worked as a teacher of English at primary and secondary state schools. During my teaching career, I was very dissatisfied because I could not work on improving students' communicative skills but had to focus mainly on structural aspects of English. There were a number of reasons for this: I did not feel competent and knowledgeable enough to offer effective communicative classes, I had to follow a particular course book and complete it by the end of the term, I did not have opportunity to test students' different skills, and students were not motivated to learn and use English communicatively. The dissatisfaction with my teaching career forced me to resign and I started working as a research assistant at ELT department.

During my doctoral study at University of Exeter, I published two articles addressing the connection between teachers' and students' beliefs and practices (see Appendix 1). Although these studies were small-scale, they profiled the weight given to different language areas in English classes in Turkey and revealed that English classes only address grammar and vocabulary. Both teachers and students believed that communication should be the main focus of language learning but they confirmed that they focused on structural aspects of English in classes. Different reasons were mentioned hindering consistency between beliefs and practices, such as 'the content of university examination', 'course books', 'the status of English in the society', 'overloaded syllabus', and 'time constraints' (Uztosun, 2011; 2013).

In relation to the objective of Professional Doctorate in Education programme, my main preoccupation in selecting a thesis scope was to offer a practical response to the problem of teaching speaking in Turkey. This is only possible through a flexible and systematic methodology which can be applied in classroom context. Action research is therefore the appropriate methodology for this research as it allows for flexible research procedure which can be adapted according to the research context (Somekh, 1993). The main concern of action research studies also parallels the impetus of the current study in terms of targeting at improving practice (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Elliot, 1991; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; McKay, 2006). Classroom practice is the crux of action research which aims at bridging the gap between theory and practice, and overcoming problems originated in the teacher's own concerns and problems (Crookes, 1993; McNiff et al., 1996). Action research allows for understanding,

evaluating and improving the educational practice (Bassey, 1998; Frost, 2002; McKay, 2006) and this procedure is essential for the current study in identifying the classroom problems and improving the quality of speaking classes.

Another important aspect of the present study is involving learners in classroom decision-making. Speaking is regarded as a personal skill which requires the involvement of each individual (Harwood, 2010; Louma, 2004), which is one of the essential features of effective speaking classes (Ur, 1996). To do so, speaking classroom practice should be designed with the aim of involving each participant (Brown & Yule, 1983) and this is possible through offering appropriate speaking activities according to students' expectations. Student negotiation may be a good method of collecting data from students to design classroom activities accordingly (Doran & Cameron, 1995). For that reason, this study seeks for providing effective student-negotiated speaking classes.

The scope of this study conforms to the principles of action research in terms of concerning improvement in classroom practice. Listening to students' voice may be a possible way of fulfilling this aim. Therefore, the nature of action research studies and the role of student negotiation as a way of giving learners a voice are two main bases of the present study.

1.3 The central concepts of the study

The current study draws attention to the fact that speaking classes should aim at providing ample opportunities to practise spoken language communicatively (Hall & Austin, 2004). This indicates that each learner should be active in speaking classes. However, ensuring this is challenging because students' engagement in classroom activities is determined by various factors (Doran & Cameron, 1995). Before designing speaking classroom activities, the teachers should understand students' wants and needs because their perceptions influence their engagement in classroom activities. If they do not find an activity interesting and useful, their motivation to be involved will probably decrease. Listening to students' voices is therefore essential for speaking classes through which teachers can obtain valuable information about students' wants and needs (MacBeath et al., 2003). This is one of the main tenets of student negotiation in language classes which can be defined as "a means for a teacher

and students to share decision-making in relation to the unfolding language curriculum of the group” (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000:29). As pointed out by Breen and Littlejohn (2000), student negotiation could fulfil different purposes such as understanding an individual’s unobservable mental processing, correcting or improving an individual’s understanding, and reaching an agreement on a matter.

The way to listen to students’ voice is of critical importance. As underlined by Ruddock and McIntyre (2007), students should understand the purpose and focus of negotiation. The method of negotiation is also crucial, in that students should feel comfortable to share their opinions and they should not be judged when they have different opinions or expectations than those held by the teacher. For example, after an unsuccessful activity, asking questions to the whole class such as ‘why aren’t you speaking?’, ‘what’s wrong with that activity?’, ‘tell me what you want?’ will probably result in no response. This shows the importance of using appropriate methods for listening to students’ voice.

Student negotiation should not be utilised where there is something wrong in the class. This may result in developing negative attitudes towards negotiation. Conversely, negotiation should be provided as a part of speaking classes and students should notice that their comments are taken into consideration. It is worth noting that involving students in classroom decision-making by means of student negotiation does not necessarily mean that what students say will exactly determine the lesson content (Ruddock & McIntyre, 2007). Overdependence on students’ comments may be problematic. Instead, teachers should combine their own beliefs and their students’ comments and consider these views as a possible way of enriching the effectiveness of speaking activities. In the light of the issues influencing the impact of student negotiation, the present study aims at providing a positive and systematic student-negotiated speaking class.

1.4 Significance of the study

Although it is taken for granted in Turkey that neglecting communicative aspects of the target language in English classes is a perennial problem, no research

studies were conducted within a critical point of view to investigate this problem. The articles published within this scope are mostly descriptive in nature and provide a well-outlined history of foreign language education starting from the Ottoman Empire era in 19th century (e.g. Kinsız et al., 2013; Küçükoğlu, 2013; Nergis, 2011). These studies provide an understanding of the role of culture in foreign language learning with little concern about generating recommendations to improve the classroom practice. This indicates a chasm existing in Turkish context between the scope of research studies and actual practical classroom problems.

There are a few research studies on teaching speaking in Turkey and despite the potential value of action research studies in terms of bridging the gap between theory and practice, few educational action research studies have been carried out in Turkey. This shows that Turkish educational researchers in ELT field were unconcerned with the enthusiasm among TESOL specialists to conduct action research to improve the classroom practice of foreign language classes in the late 1980s and the early 1990s (Crookes, 1993; Rainey, 2000).

This lack of attention to action research studies in Turkey makes classroom problems formidable challenges as no practical recommendations are generated by research studies. Arguably, the scope of research studies in Turkish context should be shifted from theory-oriented to practice-oriented. Action research studies should be conducted to bridge the gap between theory and practice (McKay, 2006) by offering ways to improve quality of practice in classes (Elliott, 1991). This study is designed with the aim of masking this gap and offering other researchers an example of systematic action research.

The present study is carried out with participants who are pre-service English language teachers. This study may promote their personal and professional development through building an understanding of the significance of teaching speaking, making them aware of activities which stimulate spoken language production, and introducing them to action research as a means of professional development.

1.5 Research aims

This study aims at considering ways of providing effective speaking classes to first year ELT Department students at a university in Turkey. To do so, after observing the classes and identifying the problems, the present study will make activity-based classroom interventions which will be designed according to the data collected from students. In designing these interventions, students' needs and wants will be taken into consideration and appropriate activity types will be provided. The data emerging from this study is expected to profile the problems Turkish EFL learners experience while communicating through English, identify the effectiveness of different types of speaking activities, and reveal the impact of giving learners a voice in classroom decision-making on learners' language and personal-related issues of speaking as a language skill.

1.6 Organisation of the dissertation

This dissertation comprises seven chapters. The current chapter introduces the main concepts of the research with reference to its rationale, significance, and aims. Chapter Two will outline the background of the study and cover contextual issues such as the Turkish educational system, assessment within education, teacher training, and career choice. This chapter highlights the status of ELT in Turkey with particular attention to the role of speaking in English language teaching, student needs, and issue of voice.

Chapter Three provides a critical review of relevant literature, discussing the history, distinctive characteristics, and the role of speaking in language learning. This chapter introduces the role of individuals in speaking activities and draws attention to the rationale for negotiating the speaking activity types to promote effective speaking classes. The significance of action research as a way of improving practice is also addressed in this chapter.

Chapter Four outlines the ontological, epistemological and methodological stance of the study. A detailed description of the methods implemented to meet the objectives of this study is provided and the research procedure is discussed with reference to research issues such as setting, participants, data collection process, data analysis, ethical considerations and the quality of the research.

Chapter Five presents the findings and details the research processes and the data which emerged from three different stages of the action research. Both quantitative and qualitative data are presented in relation to the research questions, and other issues which have emerged from the study are highlighted.

Chapter Six discusses the data presented in the previous chapter with particular attention to the literature. The final chapter draws tentative conclusions and discusses the implications of the findings for policy makers, teacher educators, teachers, and researchers. This chapter includes a section where I reflect on my experience at University of Exeter as a doctoral candidate.

Chapter Two

Contextual Background

2.1 Introduction

Research and context are interconnected: context can provide the impetus for an enquiry in which a number of questions are raised relating to problems observed in that context. Understanding the contextual issues is important to make sense of the outcome of research studies. This section will detail the research context of the present study and provide information about the Turkish educational system with particular attention to related issues about teaching speaking and student voice.

2.2 The Turkish educational system

The Turkish educational system has undergone significant changes in 2012. This section will not address these changes specifically but focus on the educational background of the participants which they have experienced prior to entering university. The old system has four stages of schooling in Turkey: pre-school, primary, secondary, and higher education. Primary education is compulsory and involves two phases. While the first phase lasts five years, the latter encompasses three years of schooling. The starting year of the first phase is at the age of seven. After completing the primary education, students are placed in secondary schools according to their scores in Secondary School Placement test (SBS). This test is administered centrally by Turkish National Ministry of Education (MEB) at the end of the primary education and comprises 100 multiple-choice type questions on five different disciplines including Turkish, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Sciences and English. English is the least prominent discipline with seventeen questions solely addressing students' lexical and grammatical knowledge.

Secondary education involves four years of schooling and there are four main types of schools: Anatolian High Schools, Anatolian Teacher Training High Schools, Science High Schools, and General Schools. Similar to primary education, secondary education comprises two phases including general and choice-based subjects. During the first phase, which lasts one year, students

take general courses such as Turkish Literature, Mathematics, Physics, History, Geography, and English. After that, students select their fields of studies and take intensive choice-based courses for three years. There are four main divisions: Positive Sciences, Social Sciences, Turkish and Mathematics, and Foreign Language. This decision is a turning point for students because they cannot enrol in the departments which are not associated with their divisions, which means that they are supposed to choose their career paths at the age of fifteen.

The participants in this study are the graduates of foreign language division because this is a prerequisite for enrolling at ELT Departments. In these divisions, the significant weight is given to English with twelve hours of classes per week and learners study in order to pass the university entrance exam which will be detailed in the following section.

2.3 Assessment within education

Similar to other educational levels, access to universities is exam-driven. University examinations are centrally administered by Student Selection and Placement Centre (ÖSYM) and are based on multiple-choice tests. The structure of these examinations is a perennial area of debate in Turkey because one exam shapes the future of millions of students.

Students graduating from language divisions take two exams: Student Selection Examination (ÖSS) and Foreign Language Examination (YDS). While ÖSS deals with students' proficiencies in different disciplines such as Turkish, Social Science and Mathematics, YDS is concerned with the level of students' English proficiencies. YDS contains 100 multiple-choice types of questions covering only test taker's reading, vocabulary and grammar skills. After the announcement of scores, students fill in a preference form and are placed in universities according to their scores.

Hardly surprisingly, this overdependence on multiple-choice tests in testing individuals' English competencies forms an unbridgeable gap between the focus of test takers and communicative nature of language. Although this type of testing is practical in terms of testing millions of people at the same time, their validity seems questionable in terms of representing test takers' competencies

in English. This is because individuals can be successful by developing strategies through studying particular structures in English which will be enough to recognise the correct answers in exams. Importantly, the profiles of people who have succeeded in national English tests in Turkey show that they are very proficient in structural or lexical aspects of English but cannot interact in English even at a basic level.

2.4 Teacher training system and choice of career

In addition to the students' educational backgrounds, it is necessary to outline the type of training they receive and their possible future careers. ELT Departments are founded under faculties of education which are the heart of teacher training system in Turkey. Similar to other departments at universities, the curriculum of ELT departments is standardised by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) with the aim of training future teachers of English. ELT curriculum comprises three types of courses: 'pedagogical', 'general culture', and 'field knowledge'. The language of instruction of field knowledge courses is English while others are delivered in Turkish. Field knowledge courses receive more weight because they address issues concerning English language skills and teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL). These courses include 'Advanced Reading and Writing', 'Oral Communication Skills', 'Language Acquisition', 'Linguistics', 'Teaching Methodology', 'Language Teaching and Literacy', and so on. Students also take pedagogical courses such as 'Educational Psychology', 'Testing and Evaluation', and 'Guidance and Counselling'. General culture knowledge courses focus on different areas, such as 'Computer', 'Turkish', 'Second Foreign Language', and 'History of Turkish Revolution'.

Graduates of these departments qualify as teachers of English after four years of university education. They have work opportunities in a variety of institutions such as state schools, private colleges, private language teaching institutions, and universities. However, most people prefer to be employed in state schools because MEB provides permanent positions without demanding any proof or certification of competence at any subject of the profession.

Therefore, being employed in MEB is very competitive and the hiring process is centralised through a multiple choice test called Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS). This process receives heavy criticisms as well because it does not concern test takers' competencies in their specialisations but covers general knowledge such as Turkish, Mathematics, History, Geography, General Culture, Basic Law, Current issues and Educational Sciences. Consequently, people become English teachers at state schools not based on their competencies in English or in teaching of English but their knowledge in the above named disciplines, which seems rather problematic.

2.5 English language teaching in Turkey

The majority of people living in Turkey are monolingual. English is seen as a world language and the vast majority of students study English as the main foreign language both in state schools and private institutions. MEB states that "the teaching and learning of English is highly encouraged as it has become the lingua franca, in other words, the means of communication among people with different native languages" (Talim Terbiye Kurulu, 2006:16). Therefore, many people want to learn English because it is seen as a distinction in Turkish society.

Learning English begins at the fourth grade of primary education at state schools when the students are at the age of eleven. Children from high-income families have the privilege of learning English at the age of five or six in private colleges, which is a reflection of the social inequity. The frequency of English classes depends on the level of education. At primary level, students take three lessons per week in the fourth and fifth years. The number of lessons increases to four hours a week in the sixth, seventh and eighth years. At secondary level, English takes priority with twelve hour long classes per week in foreign language divisions. Considering that each term is comprised of seventeen or eighteen weeks, the rough calculation of these numbers illustrates that a student graduating from language division takes 2,240 English classes in nine years.

Despite this intensive learning of English, most secondary school graduates have difficulties in using English because English classes mainly deal with

structures of formalised English. However, once students reach university and study at ELT departments, they focus on different aspects of English. In these departments, the duration is four years and a year consists of two terms. Additionally, there is also a preparatory year where students take skill-based English courses. There are different practices about this because individual universities are responsible for the structure of preparatory classes. In my context, students who enrolled in the departments are invited to take exemption exams which test their four language skills and students who succeed in this test start the programme as the first year students. On the other hand, students who failed this exam are obliged to take preparatory classes involving five different courses such as Grammar (8 hours p/w), Reading (6 hours p/w), Speaking (6 hours p/w), Writing (4 hours p/w), and Vocabulary (4 hours p/w).

2.6 Teaching speaking in Turkey

In Turkey, there is a debate about the conceptualisation of 'what is language'. Oral proficiency has been enshrined in the general objectives of English language teaching where the main emphasis is on developing students' speaking skills which will enable them to use English communicatively. This is also written in the regulation of foreign language teaching which states that foreign language teaching should focus on improving learners' four skills involving reading, writing, speaking and listening (MEB, 2006). Parallel to this, in primary education curriculum of English, developing learners' communicative skills is declared as the main objective. Learner-centred approach has been introduced and the current trends are identified, such as Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Brain-based learning, Multiple Intelligence Theory, and Process-oriented approach (Talim Terbiye Kurulu, 2006).

Nevertheless, the structures of national English tests administered in Turkey conflict with this approach. The dichotomy of representing two distinct approaches in curriculum and testing is that the weight is given to the usage of English in classroom practices. This is because learners' main objective is to get through English tests. Demirtaş and Sert (2010:160) highlighted the structure-based teaching of English as follows:

Learners' proficiencies in English language are not at the desired level. Language teaching is teacher-centred and based on grammar teaching. Learners, as passive receivers, do not take part in any educational processes, such as decision-making or implementation.

Işık (2011) considers course books as the main reason behind this disconnection. He carried out a study and evaluated English course books of primary schools according to 26 criteria and concluded that although the language teaching philosophy in Turkey addresses the current view of the field, course book tasks do not represent the communicative nature of language and mainly reflect the principles of structuralism and behaviourism.

As in Işık's study (2011), it is possible to understand classroom practices by evaluating course books because these resources indicate classroom practices in Turkish state schools. In general, teachers only follow course books because they have to complete them by the end of the academic year so that students learn topics that will be covered in the national English exams. Teaching of English at university level is different because lecturers are free to design their classes as long as they consider course objectives specified by YÖK. These course contents only include general information about the aims and outcomes of the courses. Consequently, teachers are free to use any materials, activities, and testing tools as long as the outcomes meet the objectives of the courses. This makes it possible for teachers in speaking classes to design specific course contents themselves. This may result in either positive or negative teaching environment. Teachers can follow a particular textbook which involves mechanical speaking activities and this hinders the communicative language learning. Conversely, teachers can design the courses according to the needs of the students. The significance of this will be discussed in the following section.

2.7 Student needs and issue of voice

The course-book oriented and structure-based English teaching conflicts not only with the curriculum but also with students' beliefs because learning to use the target language seems to be the main concern of learners. This disconnection between beliefs and practices is detrimental to individual's satisfaction. Bada and Okan (2000, cited in Maiklad, 2001) assert that learners tend to be more motivated to methods or activities that are congruent with their

beliefs. To address this, it is crucial to form a bridge between classroom practices and students' needs and wants.

A handful of research studies have been carried out to identify Turkish EFL students' needs. Kaçar and Zengin (2009) implemented a quantitative study involving 227 students from different educational levels. They found that improving speaking is the main objective of learners. Students reported that they wanted to learn English to be able to communicate with people from other countries. Another study within this scope was conducted by Çelik (2000). The quantitative data collected from 301 ELT Department students in a university showed that speaking, vocabulary, and listening are the most needed skills, while grammar and reading were reported as the least needed ones.

These studies illustrate a certain conflict between classroom practices and students' needs and wants. This indicates the problem of student voice in the design of classroom content. To address this, teachers should endeavour to address students' needs and wants while designing the classroom procedures. In the light of these issues, the present action research commences with the recognition of these two problematic issues: the lack of student voice and the lack of attention currently paid to teaching speaking in Turkey. This study aims firstly, to understand the characteristics of positive speaking classroom from students' perspectives and make necessary changes in lesson contents which may improve the effectiveness of the learning process. Secondly, through collecting systematic feedback from students about the effectiveness of each course, this action research study may serve as a model of student-negotiated speaking classroom. Finally, identifying the means of involving students in classroom decision-making process may lead to teacher development as well because this requires teacher's critical thinking about the ways they design lessons and improving weak points of their teaching. With these aims in mind, this dissertation may be useful for teachers to understand the activities to consolidate the oral proficiency of Turkish EFL learners, and hence, they may build an awareness of the role of student voice in designing effective speaking classroom that scaffolds students' oral communication.

2.8 Summary

This chapter provided contextual details relevant to the study with a particular focus on the amount of speaking in English that occurs in language teaching in Turkey. Disconnection between educational objectives and classroom practices were addressed and possible reasons for these were discussed. The significance of addressing students' needs and wants was also highlighted. Building on the issues covered in the first two chapters, the next chapter will provide a critical review of relevant literature and lead to the specific research questions that the study attempts to answer.

Chapter Three

Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter critically reviews the relevant literature in relation to the theoretical stance of the current study, focusing on the research objectives which are discussed in the previous chapter. Brief information about the nature of speaking will be introduced with regard to the different conceptualisations of language. The nature of speaking will be discussed by highlighting its individualistic nature. Subsequently, issues related to improving learners' speaking skills will be discussed in three different sections: student negotiation, learner autonomy, and action research as a way of improving practice.

3.2 The role of speaking in language learning

There is little doubt that learning a foreign language is a difficult process as it involves a number of challenges that learners need to overcome. Foreign language learners are expected to develop various skills each of which has distinct nature. Among those, some researchers consider speaking as the most challenging skill considering the fact that it is closely intertwined with other areas (Grainger, 2000; Hall & Austin, 2004; Littlewood, 1992; Nunan, 1991). This close connection is emphasised by Shumin (2002:204) as follows:

Learning to speak a foreign language requires more than knowing its grammatical and semantic rules. Learners must also acquire the knowledge of how native speakers use the language in the context of structured interpersonal exchange, in which many factors interact.

Echoing Shumin's words, speaking is integrated with other areas, in that it involves a wide range of sub-skills which constitute spoken language competence (McDonough & Shaw, 2003). However, considering that English is nowadays more widespread as a 'lingua franca', the distinction between a native and non-native speaker seems problematic because English is no longer 'owned' by native speakers (Mesthrie & Bhatt, 2008). As pointed out by Seidlhofer (2011), lingua francas have no native speakers, and therefore, targeting the development of English competencies that native speakers have may be both unachievable and undesirable for foreign language learners. In

contexts where English is used as a foreign language, the teaching of English should put less emphasis on native speaker competency and more on developing learners' abilities to use English as an international language.

The existing literature provides ample insight into the salience of speaking skill as the nub of language learning. For instance, according to Nunan (1991:39), "the art of speaking is the single most important aspect of learning a language". Hall and Austin (2004) also maintain that speaking is the most rewarding aspect of language learning. The mainstay of this assumption resides in the fact that speaking and listening skills are vital communication skills (Grainger, 2000) and the most important function of language is "facilitating communication with others" (Littlewood, 1992:9).

However, this emphasis was not supported in the past where there was hegemony of reading and writing over speaking and listening (Fleming & Stevens, 1998). Grammar received more weight to develop proficiency in traditional foreign language classes (Hall & Austin, 2004). This can be seen as the reflection of the conceptualisation of language in this era because, throughout history, the kind of proficiency learners need led to changes in language teaching methods (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

3.3 The history of speaking in language teaching

GTM, which centred on reading and writing skills through putting great emphasis on grammar rules, was the dominant method in language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This method draws attention to grammar and translation with little focus on speaking and writing (Griffiths & Parr, 2001). After that, the increased opportunities for communication toward the mid-nineteenth century resulted in the demands for oral proficiency in foreign languages (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This need led to the emergence of Audio-lingual method. This method is based on the behaviouristic view of learning which suggests that learning is a habit formation and relies on drills (Harmer, 1991) and repetition of dialogues through which learners can memorise chunks of language. This overdependence on memorisation is detrimental to using language communicatively because

communication is spontaneous in nature and this cannot be processed by solely relying on particular utterances.

In the late 1950s, Chomsky, the father of cognitive psychology, reacted against behaviourism and rejected the idea of language as a habit formation. He claimed that human beings have innate ability to learn languages which enable children to analyse and develop the complex structural system of their mother tongue and he proposed the concept of 'universal grammar' which is the common grammars of the human languages (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). According to this theory, rather than acquiring the language through imitation, children's inborn ability to acquire language is activated through parental talk and this results in first language acquisition. This Chomskyan perspective of language acquisition shifted the understanding of language from observed behaviour to a process happening inside of the brain.

The early 1980s was the time when Krashen proposed five influential theories: 'acquisition-learning hypothesis', 'monitor hypothesis', 'natural order hypothesis', 'input hypothesis', and 'affective filter hypothesis'. In acquisition-learning hypothesis, Krashen (1985) made a distinction between acquisition and learning: acquisition is something subconscious while learning is a conscious process and results in knowing about the language (Mitchell & Myles, 1998). Furthermore, Krashen also emphasised the function of monitoring which refers to learners' control and modification of the output after learning takes place (Krashen, 1982). This hypothesis might be related to self-correction, in that learners can perceive their mistakes in their utterances and use this knowledge for correction. Krashen's natural order hypothesis concerns the learning sequences of language rules with the assertion that there is a predictable order that learners undergo while learning a language (Krashen, 1985). Additionally, in his input hypothesis, Krashen proposed a term 'comprehensible input' claiming that learning can occur if the level of input is just beyond the students' competence (Krashen, 1985). In other words, understanding learners' levels plays an important role for designing appropriate classroom environment through which teachers can provide neither too difficult nor too easy activities. And lastly, Krashen's affective filter hypothesis draws attention to learners' affective states: the level of acquisition is affected by learners' affective states, in that when their affective filter is low, they let the input in (Kumaravadivelu,

2006). Considering this, instead of solely focusing on learners' cognitive level, their emotional state should also be addressed because it is not possible for an individual to be open to learning unless they feel secure and comfortable.

Although these hypotheses made important contributions to the field of language learning, they have been criticised since they fail to address different variables influencing the language learning process. McLaughlin (1987) discusses the limitations of these theories because of their deductive natures, in which hypotheses were derived from a number of assumptions. He acknowledges the limitation of the 'acquisition-learning' hypothesis in terms of relying solely on language rules and neglecting the role of the language learning environment. According to him, the difference between learning and acquisition is ambiguous because learners can 'acquire' the language in classes that focus on communication. Prabhu (1987) also argues that the 'acquisition-learning' hypothesis ignores individual differences and points out that a particular systematic instruction may be perceived differently by individuals. With regard to the 'monitor hypothesis', McLaughlin argued that it ignores the role of comprehension in using the language and only focuses on language production. He claims that language comprehension and production cannot be isolated. He also criticises the 'natural order' hypothesis with reference to the findings of research studies that revealed conflicting findings regarding the sequence of language acquisition. Kumaravadivelu (2006) supports the argument that there is not a predictable order in learning a language, since learners in immersion programs can develop fluency in speaking but make numerous grammatical errors while speaking. This indicates that different language programs may lead to the development of different language areas. McLaughlin also criticised the 'input hypothesis' in that it fails to define comprehensible input, which makes it untestable and limits its contribution as it does not suggest ways of providing effective instruction. Parallel to this, Young (1988) argues that the definitions of 'input' and 'the stages of comprehensible input' are vague and need to be clarified. Regarding the 'affective filter' hypothesis, McLaughlin underlines the role of individual differences which are disregarded in Krashen's hypothesis. These various criticisms of Krashen's hypotheses indicate that they address language learning issues from a limited perspective and fail to address different variables that may influence the language learning process.

Krashen's hypotheses have evolved into new theories. One of the most influential theories is Swain's output theory. In response to the Krashen's input hypothesis (1985), Swain (1985) introduced the notion of comprehensible output. According to Swain, output concerns how the corpus of written or oral utterances is produced by learners (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). She suggested that "rather than focusing on the input, the successive attempts to output were viewed as a way for learners to test hypotheses about the target language and progressively produce more accurate, coherent and conventionalized language" (Hall & Austin, 2004:200). In other words, within the lens focused on classroom context, output hypothesis places emphasis on learners' production rather than solely focusing on the information provided by the teacher. By seeing output as the indicator of learning, this theory capitalises individual's performance.

Krashen's input hypothesis was also extended by Long's interactional hypothesis. As the name suggests, this theory claims that the development of language proficiency is promoted by face-to-face interaction and communication (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). According to this theory, "learners begin to develop complex language at syntax level when they are stretched through the interactions to modify their language use beyond the word level" (Hall & Austin, 2004:200). This theory sees interaction as the precondition of language learning regarding that learners will develop other competencies as they communicate through the target language.

3.4 The origins of communicative language teaching

In the light of the theories discussed above and in response to predominantly structural approaches in early 1970s, in the 1980s, there was a need to develop alternative methods because of the increasing interdependence of European countries which resulted in efforts to teach adults major European languages (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Contrary to the dominant structural views, Wilkins (1972) proposed communicative definition of language which had a significant impact on the birth of CLT (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Another influential theory for the emergence of CLT was Hymes' 'communicative competence' (1972). Brown (1994:227) defines communicative competence as an "aspect of our competence that enables us to convey and interpret messages and to negotiate meanings interpersonally within specific contexts". Considering this,

the term communicative competence widens the perspective of language learning through introducing the communicative function of language.

A number of studies to define and expand communicative competence was carried out. Canale and Swain (1980) describe it as being comprised of four sub-categories, namely, 'linguistic competence', 'pragmatic competence', 'discourse competence', and 'strategic competence'. Linguistic competence concerns knowing the rules governing the language and applying them without paying attention to them (Stern, 1983). Pragmatic competence, on the other hand, is about knowing how to use the language appropriate to the social conventions (Hedge, 2000). Discourse competence is "the ability we have to connect sentences in stretches of discourse and to form a meaningful whole out of a series of utterances" (Brown, 1994:228). Lastly, strategic competence concerns "dealing with authentic communicative situation and keeping the communicative channel open" (Canale & Swain, 1980:25).

As seen from the definitions above, communicative competence provides a convenient understanding of what language is through shifting it from a concept focused on the form and structure of the language to a concept of language focusing on the role of communication. However, as pointed out by Alptekin (2002), it fails to address the lingua franca status of English and solely addresses the context of native speakers. He questions the validity of communicative competence for non-native speakers and identifies the need for a new pedagogic model, taking into account English as an International Language, which "will help learners become successful bilingual and intercultural individuals who are able to function well in both local and international settings" (p.63). Alptekin's criticism of the term 'communicative competence' suggests that there is a gap in knowledge regarding the competencies required to learn English as a foreign language and this indicates the need for more research on what these competencies are.

The emergence of communicative competence made an important contribution to language teaching field and it became the desired goal of CLT (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Cook (2003:36) also notes that, "the focus of CLT was primarily and necessarily social, concerned as it was with the goal of successful communication". According to CLT approach, language learning is learning to

communicate. Therefore, in CLT classes, true-communication is purposeful, teachers are less-dominant, and students are encouraged to be responsible for their own learning (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). Hughes (2010:26) summarises the bedrock principles of communicative classroom as follows:

- Place high value on language in use;
- Assert that effective language acquisition takes place through language use;
- Aim to foster and develop the learners' communicative competence;
- Regard errors as a natural part of the progression towards a greater understanding of the target language;
- Link teaching methodologies to appropriate communicative tasks;
- Tend to favour inductive, student-centred routes to understanding;
- Place the learner at the centre of the learning process and assess progress in relation to factors affecting the individual (for example, levels of motivation).

Importantly, these principles hold that while putting an emphasis on speaking skills in CLT classes, the focus should be on authentic language (Brown, 1994), which in turn may enable learners to use the language communicatively in their daily lives. As a consequence, rather than focusing on the forms, this approach attempts to create a classroom environment where learners can practise using the language by engaging in communication through it. CLT also supports the view that language error is a natural part of communication and therefore, while speaking, discouraging learners by interrupting their speech to correct errors is avoided. Although classroom language cannot be entirely 'authentic' because classroom environment is not a natural part of everyday life, in CLT classes, the teachers and curriculum developers can try to approximate it as closely to it as possible. Ensuring learner's involvement in classroom activities is a desired goal and this is only possible through seeing learners as individuals whose needs should be addressed while designing classroom teaching. This emphasis on the need for developing learners' speaking skills gave rise to the studies on the nature of speaking, and studies were devoted to understanding the features of speaking as a language skill which will be discussed in the next section.

3.5 The nature of speaking

The studies on speaking skill introduced a number of distinct features of the nature of speaking. Bygate (1987) distinguishes between spoken language and writing through two sets of conditions as 'processing' and 'reciprocity'. Processing condition is related to time, in that writers and readers can take their

time to check the written material as much as they want. However, this is not possible in speaking and listening. As highlighted by Hughes (2010:208), "whereas a text can be edited and retracted, reread, analysed and objectified from outside, spontaneous spoken discourse unites speaker and content at the time of production". Conversely, reciprocity, which Bygate sees as a solution to processing problems, refers to speakers cooperation to overcome processing problems through reacting to each other by taking turns to produce the text of their speech together (Louma, 2004). This cooperative nature reflects the social dimension of speaking as a language skill.

These two natures of speaking are confirmed by Thornbury (2005) who asserts that speaking takes place in real time where there is no time for detailed planning and it has interactive nature which necessitates the cooperation of speakers to deal with speaking problems. He goes further by arguing that there are subtle differences in the grammar of spoken language and written language, therein spoken language involves more flexibility in grammar accuracy and word order compared to written language. In essence, the fact that the grammar, word order and vocabulary choice of written form of language differ from the spoken language is experienced by everybody in daily life where the message is the crux of everyday communication.

In addition to the aforementioned nature of speaking in terms of being spontaneous, unplanned and dynamic, Hughes (2002) emphasises the discourse dependent nature of speaking. She claims that speaking takes place not only between speakers but also between the discourse and what is happening around it. In other words, regardless of the speakers, the concept of communication might differ in different contexts and situations. Since speaking depends on various factors, it is difficult to foresee the flow of communication while speaking. Therefore, to be able to establish effective communication, speakers should be competent enough to respond to their interlocutor spontaneously.

Furthermore, speaking is a desire- and purpose-driven because we communicate to achieve a particular end which can be expressing ideas, expressing a wish, negotiating and/or solving problems or establishing and maintaining social relationship and friendship (McDonough & Shaw, 2003:134).

The content of speech depends on the purpose. It is significant therefore, to establish a good connection between words and our opinions so as to transfer the message accurately (Hughes, 2002). This also requires the effective use of body language, eye gaze and paralinguistic elements such as volume, intonation and prosody (Hall & Austin, 2004).

The number of the characteristics of spoken language discussed above confirms the complex nature of speaking skill. This reflects the variety of factors influencing the success of speech. However, it is also possible to distinguish spoken language with regard to the content of speech. To address this, Brown and Yule (1983) categorise spoken language into two groups as 'transactional' and 'interactional'. In transactional language, the language is mainly message based, in that it contains factual or propositional language such as a policeman giving directions to a driver (McDonough & Shaw, 2003). Conversely, in interactional language, rather than the content, the importance is given to establishing and maintaining social relationship. According to McDonough and Shaw (2003), non-native speakers need to develop both of these language skills considering the fact that language is not only used for information sharing but also establishing and maintaining social relationship.

In addition to these attempts to categorise spoken language, McCarthy (1998) synthesised the studies on discourse and conversational analysis and proposed four different features of spoken language, such as 'structural features', 'interactional features', 'generic features', and 'contextual constraints'. Firstly, the structural features comprised of three components: 'transaction', 'exchange', and 'adjacency pair'. According to McCarthy (1998), the transaction in the classroom is the use of short sort of conventional markers to section the lesson by uttering phrases such as 'right', 'ok', 'now', etc. Exchange is "the minimal structural unit of interaction consisting of an initiation and response such as a question and its answer" (p.52). Additionally, he offers examples of adjacency pairs such as reactions of condolence, congratulation-sequences, seasonal greetings, and telephone opening conversations.

Secondly, interactional features go beyond the structural features and refer to establishing and maintaining effective conversation. The subcategories of interaction features are turn-taking, discourse marking and information staging.

While turn taking refers to taking part in a conversation, discourse marking addresses using fillers such as 'well', 'you know', to gain time during the conversation. Information staging, on the other hand, is the organization of word clause in informal speech.

Apart from structural and interactional structures, McCarthy (1998) proposes generic features and contextual constraints as the other two features of spoken language. Generic features refer to particular predictable language events such as wedding speeches, jokes, and lectures. Contextual constraints, as confirmed by Thornbury (2005), concern the difference between spoken and written language in terms of grammar such as initial subject dropping, auxiliary verb or subject omitting (McCarthy, 1998). This relates closely to the great flexibility of grammar of speech and, by implication, the necessary awareness of such fluidity in spoken language on the part of the interlocutors.

The nature of speaking discussed above illustrates how complicated it is to deal with speaking as a means of communication. It requires being knowledgeable and competent in various areas which are significant for effective communication and it is crucial for language learners to be aware of this complex nature of speaking, and perceive the functions of these variables in order to be prepared and overcome communication problems stemming from the distinct nature of speaking. To do this, learners should take active parts in speaking classes because the awareness of the distinct features of speaking skills can be developed by means of practice. In doing so, speaking classrooms should take into account the characteristics of each student and this individualistic feature of speaking skill will be covered in the following section.

3.6 Speaking and the individual

The highlighted aspects of the nature and content of spoken language identify various factors influencing the success of spoken interaction. These factors involve a wide range of issues such as discourse, topic, context, process, and so on. Consequently, teaching speaking becomes a challenging task for language teachers because of its intertwined nature with a number of areas. Hughes (2010:6) discusses the complex nature of speaking classes as follows:

When the spoken language is the focus of classroom activity there are often other aims which the teacher might have. For instance, a task may be carried out to help the student gain awareness of, or to practise, some aspect of linguistic knowledge (whether a grammatical rule, or application of a phonemic regularity to which they have been introduced), or to develop productive skills (for example rhythm, intonation, or vowel-to-vowel linking), or to raise awareness of some socio-linguistic or pragmatic point (for instance how to interrupt politely, respond to a compliment appropriately, or show that one has understood).

However, although these factors play crucial role in successful communication, the individuals' characteristics are also worth addressing since they are the ones who cope with communication problems. This is because, besides being a part of the social aspect of talking, especially in educational setting, speaking is seen as something individual considering that the main body of language use is personal (Louma, 2004). Hence, if we want students to be engaged in classroom activities, it is essential to see them as individuals and consider their needs and expectations.

This reflects the concept of individual learning which centres on the unique characteristics of each learner. In this respect, the term 'individual differences' "concerns anything that marks a person as a unique human being" (Dörnyei, 2005:3). In psychological perspective, Colman (2006:361) defines it as "all of the ways in which people differ from one another". Dörnyei (2005) discusses individual differences by addressing personality, language aptitude, self-motivation, learning and cognitive styles, language learning strategies and other learner characteristics such as anxiety, creativity, willingness to communicate, and self-esteem. Williams and Burden (1997) propose constructivist approach to investigate individuals through centring on issues influencing individual's sense of their worlds. They regard self-concept, locus of control and attribution theory as the main indicators of individual differences.

Considering the nature of speaking skill in terms of requiring individual performance, motivation, anxiety, willingness to communicate and self-esteem seem to be relevant issues. This dissertation is concerned with students' participation in the speaking class, and hence, these four affective variables might play determining role in students' performance. The outcome of this particular action research study may illustrate how these affective states differ either positively or negatively in student-negotiated speaking classroom.

Among affective variables mentioned above, motivation can be seen as a broad concept which addresses any human behaviour and a very influential factor that affects students' performances. The impact of motivation in educational perspective is put forward by Dörnyei (2005:65) as follows:

Without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement.

Motivation can be regarded as a precondition of learning because as research shows, it affects a wide range of issues related to learning such as students' use of L2 strategies, interaction with native speakers, level of input, proficiency, and maintaining conversation in L2 learning (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). To address this, it is important for teachers to perceive learners' motivational states in order to use this important factor as a facilitator to learning and prevent its obstructive effects.

Anxiety is defined as "the subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the autonomic nervous system" (Spielberger, 1983, cited in Horwitz, 1986:125). According to Arnold and Brown (1999), anxiety is one of the major factors hindering learning process. This is because, in parallel to Krashen's affective filter hypothesis (1985), learners' classroom performances are influenced by their affective states, in that the main concern of learners with high anxiety is to overcome or avoid that unpleasant situation rather than learning something from it.

Willingness to communicate is another influential factor. Although this might be interrelated with factors such as motivation and anxiety, considering learners' performances in speaking classes, particular attention should be paid to this term. Willingness to communicate is learner's "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" (McIntyre et al., 1998:547). It is learners' drive to be engaged in communication, and therefore, it is a requisite for learners in speaking classes to practise speaking. As Nunan (1991:51) referred to Swain's words, we learn to read by reading, so also we learn to speak by speaking. If students are not willing to communicate, they will reject using the target language communicatively and this will obstruct the improvement in speaking skills. McIntyre et al. offer six groups of variables that influence willingness to communicate: (i) communication behaviour, (ii)

behavioural intention, (iii) situated antecedents, (iv) motivational propensities, (v) affective cognitive context, (vi) social and individual context (p.547). All of these layers are related to the scope of this study as they address willingness to exploit communication opportunities (Layer I), eagerness to communicate (Layer II), the desire to communicate with a specific person and self-confidence (Layer III), interpersonal and intergroup motivation (Layer IV), intergroup attitudes (Layer V), and intergroup climate and personality (Layer VI). These issues indicate the complex nature of the phenomenon, which is influenced by various factors ranging from contextual to personality issues, and these determine if the individual will engage in communication or not. It is therefore worth considering the role of willingness to communicate in teaching speaking and this study will focus on how student negotiation influences the individual's willingness to communicate.

Lastly, self-esteem is related to the notion of self-confidence (Dörnyei, 2005). Coopersmith (1967:4-5) defines self-esteem as follows:

By self-esteem, we refer to the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy.

Self-esteem refers to individual's self-questioning; it affects students' performances considering that learners with high self-confidence will probably take risks and engage in classroom activities. In other words, high self-esteem will stimulate learners since they believe that they will succeed in the particular task or activity. Brown (1994:136) regards self-esteem probably the most pervasive aspect of any human behaviour, in that "no successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without some degree of self-esteem, self-confidence, knowledge of yourself, and belief in your own capabilities".

This close interrelated nature of learners' classroom performances and their unique affective states illustrates the significance of addressing individual differences in classroom teaching. With the focus on speaking skills, the abovementioned factors are important for the effectiveness of speaking classroom. For that reason, it is vital to provide learning environment where learners can develop positive affective reactions.

In time, it is possible to reduce the negative effects of learners' affective states on their classroom performances. Hughes (2010) maintains that working on speaking in a foreign language can have an impact on the speaker's identity and affective factors. With regard to identity, improving speaking skills will lead to engagement in communication in the target language and hence, learners can feel more confident while speaking and this could result in gaining a new perspective, which is a reflection of learners' personal development. Hughes (2010:9) highlights that "a speaker must change and expand identity as he or she learns the cultural, social, and even political factors, which go into language choices needed to speak appropriately with a new 'voice'".

Furthermore, compared to other language skills, speaking relies more on speakers' personality and their affective states. This also happens in daily life where the communication is affected by the psychological moods of speakers at that particular time. Considering this close relationship between speaking and the individual, seeing that communication is the root of all human relationships, it might be apt to see speaking as a means of development of individual identity (Harwood, 2010). Hence, in speaking classes, rather than seeing speaking solely as a language skill, it is critical to consider its function to develop individual identity. However, this desired goal of the speaking class is not easy to fulfil as it requires the active involvement of each student. This is possible through understanding individuals' expectations from the speaking class and this important issue will be covered in the next section.

3.7 Student negotiation

Student negotiation involves listening to students' voices. From a broad perspective, "voice is the meaning that resides in the individual and enables that individual to participate in a community" (Hadfield & Haw, 2001), which suggests that each individual's views and perceptions need to be valued. Considering that spoken language is something individual and oral practice is a requisite for developing speaking skills, speaking classes are more effective if they take into account each student. As emphasised by Brown and Yule (1983), this poses a practical problem for teachers in designing speaking classes because spoken production requires each speaker to speak individually and enhancing students' engagement is one the main problems that teachers face

in foreign language classes (Tsou, 2005). This requires mutual collaborative work as speakers need someone to establish communication.

To do this, it is important to design speaking activities appropriate to students' needs and wants. This is because there is a clear indication between teaching style and activities and student motivation (Dörnyei, 2001) and students' engagement in activities is partly determined by the environment provided by the teacher and the extent to which it fosters communication (Xie, 2010). To avoid this, students' voice should be considered and tasks should be selected with reference not only to conceptual and cognitive demands but also learners' interests (Dörnyei, 2001; Nunan, 1991). This relates to the suggestion by Hall and Austin (2004) that engagement in oral language practice is the necessary part of successful speaking classroom. Similarly, Ur (1996:120) claims that in good speaking classes, learners talk a lot, participation is even, motivation is high and the language is at an acceptable level. This is possible through providing less controlled lesson content and ensuring students' participation in the learning process, which will provide the students with more appropriate learning environments (Johnson, 1995).

In speaking classes, this can only be fulfilled by the involvement of each student and this must be emphasised in the literature in identifying the characteristics of effective speaking class. In this respect, Littlewood (1992:97) describes four main indicators of an effective speaking class:

1. The classroom atmosphere must be conducive to communication and learning.
2. Learning must be relevant to learners' interests and needs.
3. Processes as well as products are important in the language classroom.
4. Learners must perform active roles in the classroom.

In essence, Littlewood's four qualifications of effective speaking class have interrelated nature. The first condition is creating a positive learning and communicative environment. The second step makes it possible to design the process according to learners' interests and needs. This means focusing on the process rather than the outcome and fulfilling these conditions will lead to the final item - active learner engagement.

Considering the above, designing a positive classroom environment which provides learners with the opportunity to actively engage in activities should be

the main objective of a speaking class. In Hall and Austin's words "the engagement in relevant and sustained oral language practice is necessary to bring second or foreign language users to high level of accomplishment" (Hall & Austin, 2004:194). However, for teachers, it is difficult to foresee what type of activities will lead to high student participation. For that reason, student negotiation is an attempt to redress this gap by presenting ways of listening to student voice. The underpinning philosophy of negotiation is described by Doran and Cameron (1995:19) as follows:

Learners may not always be motivated to engage in tasks presented. Perhaps they do not perceive these as meeting their needs and interests. They may also feel that some tasks are too difficult for them so that there is little likelihood of success. As a starting point, it is therefore important for teachers (and educational psychologists) to engage in a dialogue with pupils which is designed not only to identify pupil interests, but also to access their view of the learning situation.

Echoing this, rather than trying to predict how students will react to a particular type of classroom procedure, the easiest way to understand this is negotiating with students. For teachers, it is not convenient to try out different activities, like in trial-and-error method, to find the most effective one instead of asking the students. Therefore, listening to student voice can be seen as a starting point of designing effective classrooms.

Rodgers (2006) proposes two stages of negotiation: student's learning experience and implementing a research. He calls the process which takes place in-between these two stages as descriptive feedback. He describes descriptive feedback as follows:

A reflective conversation between teacher and students wherein students describe their experiences as learners, with the goals of improving learning, deepening trust between teacher and student, and establishing a vibrant, creative community on a daily basis. (p.209)

Student negotiation is related to the concept of the negotiated syllabus. This syllabus builds on a framework for teachers and learners "to create their own on-going syllabus" (Breen, 1987:166), rather than imposing a pre-determined syllabus. Therefore, it "allows full learner participation in selection of content, mode of working, route of working, assessment and so on" (Clarke, 1991:13). In its strong form, any stage of education is negotiated with students, including materials, methodology, and types of assessment (Ma & Gao, 2010). However, it is worth noting that, instead of authorising learners as the decision-makers of

critical issues in classrooms, negotiation can be incorporated into different types of syllabus through giving students a voice in evaluating classroom materials and tasks and suggesting ways to improve them (Clarke, 1991).

According to Breen and Littlejohn (2000), there are three types of negotiation: personal, interactive and procedural. Personal negotiation attempts to understand individuals' unobservable and complex mental processing. Conversely, interactive negotiation has a social nature where more than one person uses language to correct or improve what they understand. This negotiation corroborates Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis (1985), in that the appropriate level of input can be provided by means of interactive negotiation between teacher and students (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000). Lastly, procedural negotiation involves discussion between people with different interests or different perspectives with the aim of reaching an agreement on a matter, solving a shared problem or establishing acceptable ways of working (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000). In this respect, considering that a classroom is a social context and each individual has unique characteristics, negotiating on classroom procedure is an example for procedural negotiation.

Although negotiation involves any type of purpose-driven communication between individuals, student negotiation has a narrow nature, in that it refers to involving learners in classroom decision-making process. Ruddock and McIntyre (2007:8) propose two different cases where negotiation is possible at classroom level, namely 'opportunities for decision-making' and 'understanding your own learning styles, your weaknesses and strengths in learning and managing priorities for focusing your efforts towards improvement'. In this respect, student negotiation can address both giving learners a voice in decision-making and improving students' consciousness level about their own characteristics.

Since the main aim of this dissertation is to give voice to learners about their classroom procedures, both of these notions are related to the scope of the current study. In fact, this study sees these two issues as having a causal relationship, in that when learners have opportunities for decision-making, it is highly possible that they will develop self-critical awareness. This is because involving learners in decision-making procedure triggers their critical thinking

ability which results in being aware of their weak and strong points as language learners.

Ruddock and McIntyre (2007:35) suggest six issues that teachers should address in planning strategies for student negotiation:

- Having genuine desire to hear what pupils say
- Planning pupil consultation realistically from the beginning
- Explaining the purpose and focus of consultation to pupils clearly
- Creating conditions of dialogue
- Choosing the methods of consultation
- Giving pupils feedback after consultation

As seen above, the first condition for teachers to create a positive student-negotiated environment is to be open to criticism and ready for possible unexpected student feedback. For student negotiation to be useful, it is important to plan the process carefully. Since negotiation requires cooperation among different stakeholders, the willingness to contribute is essential. This can be fulfilled by providing information about the function of student negotiation. The effectiveness of student involvement is also influenced by teachers' attitudes and appropriateness of the methods used. It is crucial for students to see the effects of their involvement in the process. Otherwise, their motivation to contribute will decrease seeing that their involvement makes no difference. To avoid this, teachers should plan the process carefully and be prepared for the possible outcomes of student negotiation.

Ruddock and McIntyre (2007:39) offer three different methods of negotiation: 'direct', 'prompted', and 'mediated'. In direct negotiation, students are asked directly about their experiences or views. In prompted negotiation, students are expected to express their opinions about particular stimulus, for example, the recent lesson. And lastly, in mediated negotiation, different materials such as drawings, posters or photographs are used to assist learners who are not accustomed to being negotiated. Considering these, the current study adopts prompted negotiation in which the main objective is to understand students' views about different scenarios such as a recent lesson, the next lesson or the last term's work.

Students can also be negotiated by a third party instead of the teacher but this requires the cooperation between the teacher and the researcher (Ruddock & McIntyre, 2007). The use of an intermediary could be useful in terms of

providing learners with the opportunity to share their opinions more explicitly because some students may not feel comfortable to make comments to their teachers. This study underlines the advantage of using intermediaries in establishing communication between the teacher and students. Therefore, instead of the teacher asking for students' feedback, I act as an intermediary through collecting feedback from students and sharing the results with the teacher. This makes it possible for learners to share their opinions explicitly in data collection procedure because I ensure that their anonymity is preserved during and after data collection.

There are several positive outcomes of student negotiation. Student-negotiated classes may allow for shifting the role of students from being the object of research to active participants, which makes the process meaningful to them (Flutter & Ruddock, 2004). Consequently, establishing cooperative dialogue with students serves the purpose of increasing students' sense of competency and self-worth which will possibly result in personal and professional development (Doran & Cameron, 1995). MacBeath et al. (2003:5) discuss the benefits of student negotiation from different perspectives: 'pupil attainment', 'changes in attitudes', 'pupil critical thinking', and 'teacher awareness'. These four main issues suggest that student negotiation has a number of advantages for students' personal and professional development. As a result of negotiating about their individual characteristics, students can develop awareness about their interests, strengths and weaknesses which will possibly enable them to become more critical. Doran and Cameron discuss the value of student negotiation in teacher's and student's perspectives. According to them, by means of student negotiation, teachers obtain valuable information to provide appropriate classroom environment to learners. This critical process leads to teacher development, in that teachers attempt to provide appropriate classroom environment by making necessary changes in the classroom design (Ruddock & McIntyre, 2007). Furthermore, engaging in a self-critical negotiation leads students to begin to think about and take control of their own learning.

MacBeath et al. (2003:5) discuss both positive and negative outcomes that pupils report resulting from being negotiated. With regard to positive issues, pupils who are negotiated feel that they are respected and taken seriously. This is because they know that their views have an impact on how things are done in

schools and classrooms. This, in turn, results in being able to talk about one's own learning and feeling more confident about how to improve it. As a result, this affects pupils' feelings towards learning and school as they feel that they are parts of it. Conversely, student negotiation may have negative effects especially when there is no feedback, or when teachers are not really interested in what pupils say and make important decisions themselves.

3.8 Learner Autonomy

In the light of the possible impacts of negotiation on students' sense of being treated as individuals, establishing such a critical negotiation with students has a direct impact on their metacognitive development and on their understanding of how they learn (Prämling, 1990; Quicke, 1994). Quicke (1994:110) defines metacognition as "a form of knowledge about learning processes and in particular cognitive and intellectual strategies". Similarly, Nisbet and Schucksmith (1986) see metacognition as a 'super' skill that involves both cognitive strategies such as asking questions, planning, monitoring, checking, revising and self-checking, and metacognitive knowledge which addresses knowing how and when to apply those cognitive strategies. In other words, while cognitive strategies concern taking the control of your own learning, metacognitive knowledge refers to how and when to use these strategies appropriately. To do this, it is important to consider various issues such as valuing learners' opinions, seeing them as individuals, and accounting for their positive affective states.

In the literature, these features are associated with autonomous learner. According to Quicke (1994), metacognitive knowledge is habitual for autonomous learner. This is because, in general, autonomy refers to the knowledge of taking the control of your own learning and being responsible for your own development. In parallel to this, Breen and Littlejohn (2000) see classroom-based negotiation as a way of fostering learner autonomy.

In the history of language teaching field, the idea of autonomy entered in the 1970s through a project which was established in a language research centre at the University of Nancy and Holec, who was the leader of that centre, is seen as the father of autonomy (Benson, 2001). His definition of learner autonomy as

"the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec, 1981:3) introduces clear understanding of the concept. Dickinson (1987:11), however, defines autonomy in narrower perspective as "the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for the decisions concerned with his/her learning and the implementation of these decisions". These two definitions show that autonomy refers to concepts such as decision-making and independent action. Little (1991) picks up on these concepts of decision-making and independent action referred to in the above definitions but also mentions ideas of detachment and critical reflection.

Considering the idea of learner autonomy, it is clear that it refers to individual learning which sees learners as having unique characteristics. Therefore, learner autonomy is not a method or skill or behaviour (Benson, 2001) but it is a philosophy of sharing the big piece of the learning cake with its owners - learners. This is an important notion in the context of the present study which is designed to involve learners in classroom decision-making process.

However, this does not mean that promoting autonomy is leaving learners alone but it entails encouraging and assisting them to take control of their own learning (Benson, 2001). In doing so, it is important for teachers "to develop a sense of responsibility and encourage learners to take an active part in making decisions about their learning" (Scharle & Szabó, 2000:4). This mirrors the shift from 'directed teaching' to 'self-directed learning' (Little, 2007) and this is declared as one of the Council of Europe's ideals: "making the process of language learning more democratic by providing the conceptual tools for the planning, construction and conduct of courses closely geared to the needs, motivations and characteristics of learner and enabling him so far as possible to steer and control his own progress" (Trim, 1978, cited in Little, 2007:16).

To foster learner autonomy, rather than imposing predetermined classroom procedures to learners, it is essential to provide a cooperative learning environment where learners have a say about their own learning. The negotiated syllabus highlights the significance of collaborative learning, learner-centeredness, learner autonomy, and shared decision-making (Ma & Gao, 2010). In this respect, negotiation and promoting learner autonomy have interactive nature, in that when students are negotiated and feel that their

opinions are valued, this will enable learners to become autonomous. This is also emphasised by Breen and Littlejohn (2000:22) as follows:

A classroom based upon negotiated knowledge and procedures allows the learner autonomy on an equal footing with others in the group and as a contribution to the good of the learning community.

This study supports this philosophy of aiming for designing appropriate classroom environment to foster learner autonomy. The central premise of the current study is a belief in the importance of the concept of 'self-directed learning' and that this should be the main objective of speaking classes. This is because practice, active engagement and learner autonomy are interrelated, with one leading to another: learners need to practise to improve their speaking skills; to do this, they need to engage in classroom activities and this fosters autonomy, because learners with self-critical ability can perceive their weak and strong points, leading in turn, to knowing which ability to focus on to develop their speaking skills.

Benson (2007) offers three different ways of addressing the learner autonomy in language education: 'technical perspective', 'psychological perspective', and 'political perspective'. In technical perspective, particular types of skills or strategies which are useful to become autonomous are emphasised. Psychological perspective deals with learners' attitudes and cognitive abilities to take control of their own learning. Finally, political perspective has a broad viewpoint facilitating learners' improvement by giving them control over the content and processes of their learning. With regard to the scope of this study, both psychological and political perspectives of learner autonomy are involved because the study aims at giving the learners' opportunity to take control of their learning process through improving their attitudes and cognitive skills by designing the lesson procedures according to their expressed needs and interests.

The studies on learner autonomy confirm that it has both collaborative and critical aspects which target the building of learners' self-awareness. This cannot be accomplished in a short period of time but rather requires adopting this as a philosophy and addressing it in each step of teaching. Considering this stance of learner autonomy, a good way of creating an autonomous learning

environment could be through action research and this will be discussed in detail in the following section.

3.9 Action research as a way of improving practice

In general, the main issue discussed above is involving learners in the classroom decision-making process through giving them a voice about issues related to their learning and the benefits of this in terms of enhancing student active participation in activities, fostering learner autonomy, improving students' critical understanding of themselves, and enhancing teacher professional development. With regard to the philosophy underpinning these issues, it may be appropriate to say that they are in line with the general objective of action research, which is to improve practice (Bassey, 1998; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Elliot, 1991; Frost, 2002; Kemmis, 2009; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; McKay, 2006).

As the name suggests, action research is a combination of action and research and this reflects the philosophy behind it. In action research studies, a problem is identified and systematic study, which combines action and reflection, is carried out with the intention of improving practice (Burns, 2010a; Ebbutt, 1985). In essence, the concept of action research was developed as a reaction against other types of research that neglect the function of research as a tool for improving practice (McKay, 2006). McKernan (1991) mentions five important movements in the history of research that gave rise to the emergence of action research. In nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the positivist view was the dominant view in research. Thus, research design often involved controlled research environments in order to explore cause and effect relationships by means of quantitative research methods (Cohen et al., 2007). This was followed by John Dewey's reaction against the scientific methods: Dewey supported the idea of collaborative research involving researchers, practitioners, and others in addressing educational problems (McKay, 2006). Dewey's views about reflective teaching gave birth to the concept of reflective activity, which requires testing out ideas originating from reflective teaching (Norton, 2009). Later, Lewin (1946) combined action and research in his study aiming to improve living standards of disadvantaged groups in respect to housing, employment, prejudice, socialisation and training, and this was well received by both

researchers and teachers (Cohen et al., 2007). In 1950s, the post second world war period, action research was commonly used to overcome post war problems. To do this, researchers were close to the data and they acted as 'insiders' rather than the 'outside researchers' typical of positivist research studies. However, this caused the decline of action research because it was believed that researchers' being close to the data deepened the gap between theory and practice (Norton, 2009). Later, Stenhouse (1971, 1975) made contributions to the concept of teacher as a researcher by acknowledging the significance of teacher's engagement in classroom research studies so as to identify and deal with practical problems (McNiff et al., 1996). These chronological milestones in the history of education portray the evolution in the understanding of research and point out the gap that led to the emergence of action research.

3.10 Definitions of action research

In the literature, there are various conceptions of the term 'action research' that highlight similar and different points in defining it (Chesler, 1990, cited in Crookes, 1993; Kelly, 1985). According to Crookes (1993), these definitions can be categorised into two as conservative and progressive lines. The former draws attention to the teacher-researcher aspect of action research while the latter emphasises action research as emancipatory activity. Although I do not think that using a term 'conservative' is suitable for categorising such an improvement-based construct, this is a useful way to portray two different conceptualisations of it.

The first line concerns the practice-based nature of action research attempting to improve classroom practice. These definitions emphasise the focal point of action research as a way of improving practice. In general, this perspective defines action research as a systematic inquiry which is carried out by individuals with the aim of understanding, evaluating and improving their educational practices (Bassey, 1998; Frost, 2002; McKay, 2006).

With regard to the progressive perspective, Carr and Kemmis (1986:220) offer a broader perspective in defining action research:

Self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out.

Somekh (1993:29, cited in Burns, 1999) defines action research as "a flexible methodology, not merely in terms of being eclectic in research methods, but more fundamentally in needing to adapt to the social and political situation in which it is employed". This suggests that the philosophy of action research is not limited to the classroom but aims for improvement in society because "action research should aim not just at achieving knowledge of the world, but at achieving a better world" (Kemmis, 2010:419). Burns (1999:12) has a similar stance in discussing the original goals of action research: "bringing about changes in social situations as the result of group problem-solving and collaboration".

With these ideas of action research in mind, this dissertation is centred on the classroom-based approach of action research. Parallel to this, the present study aims at improving classroom speaking practice through negotiating the content with students and designing classroom procedures according to students' wants and needs. In this way, action research provides the opportunity to think about the effectiveness of a stimulus critically and modify the next intervention accordingly.

3.11 Characteristics of action research

Considering the aforementioned characteristics of action research, Nunan (1992:17) proposed that it has three major characteristics: it is 'carried out by practitioners', 'collaborative' and 'aimed at changing things'. The first concerns the teacher as researcher and this aspect of action research is emphasised by a number of authors (e.g. Burns, 2010b; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988; McNiff, et al., 1996; Wallace, 1998). This highlights the fact that action research is conducted by teachers not by external agents (Hammersley, 2004) because it is teachers who are knowledgeable about the current situation of the class. Therefore, in action research, research questions should originate in the teacher's own concerns and problems (Crookes, 1993). However, as asserted by Wallace (1998:18), here, the aim is not to turn teachers into researchers but to help them use action research as a tool for improving their teaching practice.

Action research plays an important role in encouraging teachers by providing them with the opportunity to reach their own solutions and conclusions rather than imposing ideals presented by others (Burns, 1999). By changing practice through action research, "teachers become producers as well as consumers of knowledge" (Rönnerman, 2003:11).

Secondly, for action research to be effective, it is necessary to build a collaborative environment (Burns, 1999; Kemmis & MacTaggart, 1988; Mcniff et al., 1996). According to Kemmis and MacTaggart (1988:5), "the approach is only action research when it is collaborative, though it is important to realise that action research of the group is achieved through the critically examined action of individual group members". This important aspect of action research reflects the view that teacher reflection on its own is not sufficient but systematic and collaborative ways of understanding group reflections are important (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). According to Somekh (2006:7), this collaborative nature of action research plays an important role in building awareness of self as "intermeshed with others through webs of interpersonal and professional relationships that co-construct the researcher's identity". Echoing this, action research not solely aims at practical findings but also serves the purpose of engaging practitioners in research procedure which will result in professional development. This indicates the connection between student negotiation and action research as they both seek to involve students in a critical thinking of their learning. Therefore, action research is a good way of encouraging student-negotiated class (Tsafos, 2009).

The third characteristic centres on the philosophy of improving practice. In this respect, Elliot (1991:69) defines action research as "the study of a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it". This refers to the role of action research in filling the gap between theory and practice. As underlined by Hammersley (2004), the core feature of action research is that it comprises research and practice whose results feed back into the activity concerned. According to Mcniff et al. (1996), classroom practice is the basis of action research, and hence, action research studies are useful for bridging the gap between the theory and practice of education.

Costello (2003:5) proposes a list in which he synthesises the characteristics of action research studies as follows:

1. Action research is referred to variously as a term, process, enquiry, approach, flexible spiral process and as cyclic.
2. It has a practical, problem-solving emphasis.
3. It is carried out by individuals, professionals and educators.
4. It involves research, systematic, critical reflection and action.
5. It aims to improve educational practice.
6. Action is undertaken to understand, evaluate and change.
7. Research involves gathering and interpreting data, often on an aspect of teaching and learning.
8. Critical reflection involves reviewing actions undertaken and planning future actions.

These eight principles mirror the characteristics of action research with regard to its philosophy, procedure, aims and possible outcomes. This detailed scrutiny sheds light on the aims of action research which are grouped as changing practitioners' 'practices' and 'understandings of their practices' together with improving 'the conditions in which they practise' (Kemmis, 2009:463). Kemmis claims that these terms have an interrelated nature, in that practice stands for what we 'do', our understanding for what we 'think' and 'say', and the conditions for 'relatings'. He asserts that:

The practice of action research becomes entwined with other practices whenever it aims to understand those other practices, to change the way they are done or to change the ways people relate to each other in them. That is to say: in action research into other practices, the sayings, doings and relatings that compose the practice of action research become intertwined with the sayings, doings and relatings that compose those other practices.

(Kemmis, 2010:420)

Echoing Kemmis' words, action research is not solely systematic classroom research conducted by practitioners with the aim of improving practice but it is a world vision of approaching knowledge and reality critically and making deliberate interventions with the aim of improving specific situation which in turn could have an impact on other situations as well. This is because action research is not a change of practice but it is a "practice-changing practice" (Kemmis, 2009:464).

With regard to the role of using action research in classrooms, Sax and Fisher (2001) identified four areas where teachers may apply it:

1. teaching and making changes in teaching
2. learners and how they learn
3. interactions with the current curriculum
4. teaching beliefs and philosophies and their connections with daily practice

As seen above, action research has a broad perspective which can be implemented in any aspect of classroom teaching practice. For this particular study, the focus is on learners, in that action research is used as a methodology to understand how the learners want to improve their speaking skills. This enquiry, thus, is related to Sax and Fisher's areas in terms of making changes in our teaching in order to find the most suitable approach for our students.

In addition to defining and identifying the role of action research, there are attempts to categorise the types of action research. Kinsler (2010) proposed two criteria to categorise action research with reference to 'the role of researchers involved' and 'the scope of its findings'. Each category comprises three types of action research: first, second, and third-person practice; technical, practical, and emancipatory action research. In the first-person mode, the research is carried out by the practitioner and the researcher has a consultant role who is not involved in the research process. Elliot (1991) cautions against this type of action research because of the isolated role of the researcher. Second-person action research is co-operative in nature in that different researchers are involved. This type is related to Stenhouse's 'teacher-as-researcher' movement (Cohen et al., 2007) and it aims at narrowing the traditional gap between research and practice for both teachers and researchers (Bruce et al., 2011). Along these lines, Stenhouse (1975:159) argues that:

For the moment the best way forward is probably through a mutually supportive collaborative research in which teachers and full-time research teams work together. The situations in which this becomes possible are most likely to be created within research and development projects in curriculum and teaching.

Third-person action research involves the wider community where different stakeholders in the society are also involved (Kinsler, 2010:23). Considering these, the current research can be categorised as a second-person: I, as a researcher, identify the problem by means of classroom observation, student and teacher interviews, and I collect feedback during the term. However, at the

same time, I work collaboratively with the teacher: I inform her about the results and we negotiate about our interventions.

With regard to the other type of categorisation, technical action research attempts to “render an existing situation more efficient and effective” (Grundy, 1988:154). It aims at bringing about functional improvement in changing particular outcomes of practice (Kemmis, 2001). Practical mode, on the other hand, goes beyond this and endeavours to empower and emancipate stakeholders working with the practitioners (Berg, 2004). It therefore aims to enhance self-education for the practitioner (Grundy, 1988).

Lastly, the emancipating mode aims at "promoting a critical consciousness which exhibits itself in political as well as practical action to promote change" (Grundy, 1988:157). Here, the emphasis is not so much on the individual practitioners but on understanding the social and political context in which their practice occurs (Norton, 2009:54). This type of action research strives for "a better world in which each person can be happy in the sense that they have lived their life wisely and well, in a community with others who also aim, despite our diversity and differences, to live wisely and well" (Kemmis, 2010:419).

Categorising action research according to the weight given to emancipatory results may be questionable. This is because, as underlined by Kinsler (2010:185), “technical and practical educational action research that results in significant advances in students’ academic achievement and passing rates on critical ‘gate keeping’ tests is emancipatory research”. Any action research involves emancipatory results considering the fact that producing practical knowledge contributes to “increased well-being of human persons and communities to a more equitable and sustainable relationship with the wider ecology, leading not just to new knowledge, but to new abilities to create knowledge” (Reason & Bradbury, 2006, cited in Kinsler, 2010:186). Considering this, the broader function of action research in terms of improving rationality and justice of the society should not be ignored. Action research is a broad school of thought which cannot be limited to classroom practice. It aims for a better society which is only possible through individuals having a critical point of view. For that reason, although the current study focuses on improving classroom

practice through action research, I acknowledge the broader perspective of action research as a means of emancipating students and, hence, society.

3.12 Action research studies in TESOL

Action research as a means of improving practice attracted TESOL researchers in the late 1980s (Rainey, 2000) and different action research studies were conducted in a variety of contexts. Hames' EdD dissertation (2008) conducted an action research project where she investigated how second language (L2) motivation plays out over time in a class of thirteen EFL teenagers from different countries. She attempted to understand students' beliefs and values at the beginning of the year and investigated positive and negative factors influencing students' L2 motivation in the classroom over time through using different data collection methods such as questionnaires, essays, journals, and field notes. Action research enabled her to understand the situation in depth over time and to use this knowledge to refine and improve her professional practice. She concluded that being a teacher researcher has positive influences on her professional development which reflects the philosophy behind action research as regarding research as a way of improving practice, as well as serving a wider aim of promoting teacher's professional development.

Another action research project was conducted by Lo (2009) in Taiwanese context where the Triarchic Intelligence Theory (analytical, creative and practical intelligence) was applied in teaching English reading and writing at university level. The participants were two homogenous freshmen classes at advanced level of English and the data were collected through teacher-researcher diary, interviews and students' written reflections. Implementing an action research methodology allowed the researcher to have a dual role as a teacher-researcher and improve teaching quality by being self-critical with regard to the classroom procedures. The author concluded that following action research methodology was useful in terms of understanding the difficulties of adopting curricular examples, the constraints of interventions, improving the quality of teaching and making necessary changes in the research procedure.

Diab's action research (2008) comprised three cycles, each of which led to the modification of the next cycle and she conducted an experimental study in the

third cycle. The general objective of the study was to elucidate the effects of peer and self-editing on learner autonomy in L2 writing. The study was carried out in three groups of students at freshmen-level course at an English medium university in Lebanon. Both quantitative and qualitative instruments were used, such as graded essays, peer-editing forms, questionnaire, observation, pre-test and post-test. Considering the significance of action research as her methodology, Diab concluded that, as a teacher, conducting action research was useful in terms of addressing students' concerns, empowering teacher reflection and finding solutions for specific problems, strengthening the teacher-student relationship, and bridging the gap between teaching experience and educational theory.

Kebir (1994) carried out an action research study with the aim of understanding the role of teaching communication strategies in developing learners' strategic competence. The study was conducted in South Australia with newly arrived adult immigrants. She justifies her choice of action research as a methodology which is user friendly, accessible and practical in nature. Furthermore, she contends that action research has an "underlying common sense approach to research that legitimated the type of evaluation process most teachers engage in routinely and could be easily incorporated into my own daily teaching practice" (p.28).

These research studies in the TESOL field provide good examples of the value of action research as a methodology. With regard to the objectives of these studies, it is obvious that, regardless of the research scope, the main preoccupations of researchers are to find ways to improve classroom practice. In all of the studies, the researchers were involved actively in the process and they gave their students a 'voice' through applying different methods with the aim of identifying the problem thoroughly. In addition, their reflections on the research processes support the view that action research is useful in terms of utilising theory to improve practice and this also improves both students' and teachers' self-critical thinking which in turn leads to teacher professional development and learner autonomy.

The objectives of the current study clearly lie in the realm of action research, in that it is an attempt to understand Turkish EFL students' expectations of their

speaking class, and to use this information to create an appropriate classroom environment and design follow-up interventions according to the received feedback. Therefore, action research is seen to be the most appropriate methodology as it provides a flexible research process which makes it possible for the researcher to identify the problem, design suitable interventions and reflect on the intervention which will lead to modification of the next cycle.

3.13 Research Questions

In the light of the literature reviewed in this chapter, the research questions of the study were formed as follows:

1. What are Turkish EFL learners' perceptions of their English speaking ability?
2. What problems do Turkish EFL learners experience while speaking in English?
3. In what ways does negotiation of activity types impact on students';
 - a. Perceptions of speaking ability
 - b. Classroom participation and performance
 - c. Anxiety level
 - d. Willingness to speak
 - e. Self-esteem
4. In what ways is this action research procedure useful for providing students with opportunities to improve their speaking ability?

3.14 Summary

In this review of the literature, I have drawn attention to the significance of teaching speaking in language classes and the need to focus on developing learners' communicative skills. Improving speaking skills is challenging because it requires developing competencies in various areas, involving accuracy, word order, vocabulary choice, pronunciation, fluency, turn-taking, and interactional skills. This chapter has also highlighted the complexity of teaching speaking in terms of involving the participation of each student individually. To improve speaking skills, each student should practise spoken language in classes. To address this, teachers should seek ways to encourage each student's participation in speaking activities.

This is possible through understanding the characteristics of each student. Student negotiation is a way of fulfilling this as it promotes critical communication between students and the teacher. Through student negotiation, teachers can understand students' perceptions and views and this is useful for building an awareness of students' needs and wants and may lead to the design of appropriate classroom activities. Student negotiation may foster learner autonomy as a result of involving students in the critical process.

Student negotiation also requires that teachers should reflect on their classroom practice and attempt to improve it. This is one of the main principles of action research which encourages teachers to develop a reflective point of view through conducting systematic research to overcome the practical problems in their classes.

Action research and teaching speaking through student negotiation are the two main premises of the current study. The following chapter will cover the methodological issues of this study and detail the research procedure designed with the aim of implementing effective student-negotiated speaking classes through action research.

Chapter Four

Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The relevant literature discussed in the previous chapter underpins the main premises of the current study in developing EFL learners' speaking abilities. With reference to the complex nature of speaking as a language skill, this thesis supports the significance of regarding speaking as a distinctive area of work where critical importance is attached to the involvement of each student. In doing so, the role of negotiation and giving students a voice in classroom decision-making were discussed in detail and action research was introduced as an appropriate way to investigate the effects on students' feelings, levels of participation and performance as a result of giving them a voice in decision-making in speaking classes. In this dissertation, I use the term 'speaking classes' as the class sessions designed to improve the English speaking abilities of students.

Before discussing the other methodological issues, it is useful to present the structure of my action research, which is displayed in Figure 4.1:

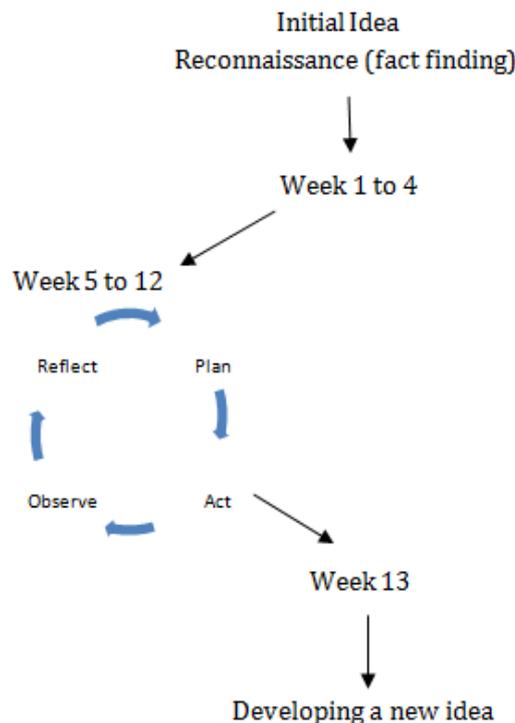


Figure 4.1: The structure of the action research

As shown in the figure above, my action research comprised of three stages. The first four weeks were the Stage One where I collected data to understand the situation in-depth and accompanied the findings with my initial views about the situation. This stage led to the second stage which was the longest period of my study. In this stage, I provided student-negotiated speaking classes where the classroom activities were designed according to students' needs and wants. This stage was requisite for the next stage which aimed at developing a new idea about the role of student-negotiated speaking class in the variables addressed in the research questions. This was the main concern of the Stage Three where data were collected about the effectiveness of the whole term.

This chapter will present the research methodology of the current study. First, I shall briefly discuss the research paradigms in educational research, followed by the conceptual framework of the present study. Second, the research designs and contexts of the pilot and main studies will be covered. Third, the data collection methods and procedures will be detailed along with the data analysis procedures. Finally, the ethical considerations, credibility and limitations of the current study will be discussed.

4.2 Research paradigms in educational research

The paradigmatic stance of a research study plays a critical role in its design because issues related to research paradigms reflect researcher's philosophical stance and this determines the ways to deal with research inquiries. In the words of Grix (2004:26), paradigm mirrors "the broad approach to research", and hence, its conceptualisation affects the research design. In this sense, Guba and Lincoln (1994:105) define paradigm as "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways".

This worldview can be characterised through three basic issues: 'ontology', 'epistemology', and 'methodology' (Guba, 1990). According to Grix (2004), there is a directional relationship between these three issues, in that ontological beliefs determine an epistemological stance and this affects the selection of the research methodology. Considering this directional relationship, ontology concerns the concept of reality with reference to the nature of existence (Crotty,

1998). According to Blaikie (2000:8), ontological stances are "claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other". Ontological point of view affects the epistemological stance which is concerned with "how we know what we know" (Crotty, 1998:8). In other words, epistemology deals with defining knowledge and describing ways to receive that knowledge. Grix (2004:32) claims that "epistemology should be looked upon as an overarching philosophical term concerned with the origin, nature and limits of human knowledge, and the knowledge-gathering process itself". Methodology, on the other hand, is more practical in nature, in that it involves "the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes" (Crotty, 1998:3).

There are three major paradigms used in educational research with different approaches to these issues. Firstly, the positivist paradigm supports the idea that reality exists "independently of our knowledge of it" (Grix, 2004:61). From this perspective, positivism rejects the idea of dependency of reality on the knower and positivists see the objectives of research studies as the ways of testing a theory or describing a hypothesis with highly controlled data collection procedures which will lead to time- and context-free generalisations (Nagel, 1986). This dependence on controlling variables and seeking for generalisable statistical results is not appropriate for studies in many educational settings because "there is usually no objectively 'correct answer' to a particular educational research question" (Melrose, 1996:50).

Conversely, the interpretive paradigm, suggests that "reality is socially and discursively constructed by human actors" (Grix, 2004:61). This paradigm supports the idea that the reality of a particular context depends on the individuals who have distinctive characteristics that cannot be generalised to other contexts. In this sense, interpretive researchers regard the social world as idiographic and seek for "culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of social life-world" (Pring, 2000:67). Therefore, they attempt to explain how individuals interpret the world with reference to their views, beliefs, values, cultural aspects and attitudes, and so on. Interpretive research studies do not seek for testing predetermined hypothesis but involves studying real life

situations where researchers are close to the data and aim at gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomena.

In seeking to understand a phenomenon, neither the positivist nor interpretive paradigms serve the purpose of improving individual learning, educational systems or social norms (Melrose, 1996). However, it is also worth noting that educational research has limited influence unless it contributes to the field through offering practical ways to improve learning and teaching processes. In this sense, Bassey (1998) contends that educational research is always directed at the improvement of policy and practice.

This concern is the main preoccupation of the critical paradigm. In this sense, critical theory aims not only “to understand situations and phenomena but to change them” (Cohen et al., 2007:26). In doing so, the critical paradigm holds that research studies should discuss how to transform particular aspects rather than just to understanding or describing them. In this respect, studies should aim to “restore to consciousness those suppressed, repressed, and submerged determinants of unfree behaviour with a view to their dissolution” (Habermas, 1984, cited in Cohen et al., 2007:28). Put another way, the critical paradigm seeks knowledge by studying the social world in which it is constructed and attempts to reveal problems that hinder individual's freedom in a democratic society.

4.3 Conceptual Framework: The Critical Paradigm

Considering the core philosophical characteristics of the three major paradigms discussed above, the current thesis is conceived within the critical paradigm. First of all, within the critical perspective, this thesis sees problems as the perceived reality of people in that particular context (Melrose, 1996). Echoing this, the ontological tenet in this study is that reality consists of problems faced by Turkish EFL learners in speaking classes which are an impediment to improving their speaking skills. With regard to epistemology, the critical paradigm is related to ‘subjectivism’ (Crotty, 1998), in that collaborative work with researcher(s) and participants is of critical importance to reach an understanding which can be used to transform historically mediated structures of groups (Guba, 1990). Based on these theoretical assumptions, this study

takes place in a collaborative research environment where students are involved in classroom decision-making processes.

It is important to reiterate that critical researchers are open to new ways of understanding which could lead to take effective actions (Crotty, 1998). This view is in accord with the philosophical foundation of this thesis where the main aim is seeking for practical solutions to a problematic situation - improving Turkish EFL learners' speaking abilities.

Crotty (1998) believes that critical research is a cyclical process which involves reflection and action. In doing so, any associated methodology should have a dialogic and transformative nature with the aim of "eliminating false consciousness and energise and facilitate transformation" (Guba, 1990:25). In the push to understand this complexity, ideology critique and action research are introduced as appropriate research methodologies for critical studies (Cohen et al., 2007). Fundamental to this work is the notion that action research is the appropriate methodology in terms of collecting systematic feedback from learners on a weekly basis which informs the content of subsequent interventions. Therefore, the knowledge gained in this study was emancipatory and aimed for collaboratively changing and improving the environment (Melrose, 1996).

Moreover, this study comprises a research environment where learners have a say about any aspects of their speaking classes. The study attempts to involve learners in classroom decision-making by valuing their critical thinking which is defined by Pennycook (2001) "as a way of bringing more rigorous analysis to problem solving or textual understanding, a way of developing more critical distance as it is sometimes called". Melrose (1996:52) emphasises this function of the critical paradigm as follows:

Educational researchers working within critical paradigm do not merely describe individual perceptions but encourage individuals and groups to examine and question their perceptions of the structures and control mechanisms of society or organisations, with the aim of empowering them to reconstruct their interpretations.

The study aims at creating a positive classroom environment to enhance learners' critical thinking through placing importance on their opinions as individuals. In doing so, I, as a researcher, encouraged them to be critical

through collecting systematic feedback and designed interventions based on their opinions.

4.4 Data collection methods

Research methods are usually categorised into either quantitative or qualitative, each of which has a distinctive approach to data collection and analysis. Although the distinction between the two is ambiguous (Bryman, 2008), it is possible to identify different natures of quantitative and qualitative research. In its purest form, quantitative research highlights quantification in data collection and analysis (Bryman, 2008). Conversely, qualitative research focuses on understanding the meaning of phenomena in individuals' lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Blaxter et al. (1996) describe the nature of quantitative research as it seeks for large-scale and representative data which is explored through numerical data analysis. However, qualitative research collects and analyses data chiefly in non-numeric form (Blaxter et al., 1996). While qualitative research permits study of an issue in depth and detail (Patton, 1980), quantitative research "seeks facts or causes of social phenomena without regard to the subjective states of the individuals" (Nunan, 1992:4).

In the light of these assumptions, it is possible to state that quantitative methods usually reflect a positivist point of view as they aim to collect reliable and valid data which may warrant generalisation. On the other hand, qualitative research seeks for understanding participants' knowledge and practices with the assumption that each individual has subjective perspectives which cannot be generalised to other contexts (Flick, 2006). However, instead of relying on a particular type of method only, researchers can combine the two in accordance with the objectives of the study. This combination is called mixed methods research which is "the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:17).

Some authors approach mixed methods of research in broad perspective and they argue that the theory of mixed methods research is a solution to the so called 'paradigm wars' with the assumption that mixed methods research is a

means of combining different paradigms (e.g. Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). However, I believe that it is not viable to combine different world views and so, in this study, mixed methods research is accepted as a combination of data collection methods.

Mixed methods studies are becoming common as researchers recognise the strengths of each type of method (Hinchey, 2008). Mixed methods research enables researchers to use different approaches in answering research questions rather than relying on limited types of choices (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). In other words, mixed methods research provides researchers with the flexibility of utilising the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods and this in turn improves the quality of data, and hence, research findings could be more useful through portraying both quantitative and qualitative aspects of the phenomena.

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected for the present study. For quantitative data, numerical data were collected to compare how students' reactions to classroom activities differed during the study. However, the majority of the research instruments were qualitative in nature because the priority was given to gaining insight into the problem and it was facilitated by the open-ended items.

4.4.1 The methods implemented in the study

Three main data collection tools were used in this study: observations, interviews and questionnaires.

Observation

Observation was used as the initial method because observational data are useful to describe the setting from the observer's perspective (Patton, 1980). For that reason, as the reconnaissance phase of my action research, before making any intervention, it was important to portray the context so that I could understand the situation in depth. Furthermore, observation is a distinctive method as it provides "live" data (Cohen et al., 2007:396) and it also "records non-verbal behaviour in natural settings" (Bailey, 1994:224). This was also

essential for the current study because students' non-verbal behaviours are good indicators of their feelings.

Flick (2006:216) proposes five different contrasting approaches to observation strategies:

1. Covert vs. overt observation
2. Nonparticipant vs. participant observation
3. Systematic vs. unsystematic observation
4. Observation in natural setting vs. artificial situations
5. Self-observation vs. observing others

The first dimension involves disclosing the observation to observees. If people know that they are observed, this will be overt observation. In this study, my observation was overt because students were informed that I would be observing the classes during the term. Secondly, the participation level of observer determines whether the observation is nonparticipant or not. In participant observation, observer does more than simply observe through using different data collections during the process (Bryman, 2008). My observation was nonparticipant because I did not want to ruin the natural classroom procedure and I just observed the classes without intervening. Thirdly, the nature of observation in terms of being systematic depends on the level of standardisation of the observation. In unsystematic observation, the observation scheme is less standardised and the observation is flexible. My observation was systematic in the sense that I had prepared a checklist beforehand and focused on particular issues of particular students. Fourthly, observation can be made either in natural setting or in artificial situations, such as laboratory. Since I observed the real procedures of a classroom, my observation was made in a natural setting. Lastly, it is also possible to address observer's reflexive self-observation for grounding the interpretation of the observed. However, this was beyond the scope of my observation where I focused on students' reactions to classroom activities.

Through observation, it was possible to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. While quantitative data allows for rating or categorising, qualitative data attempts to "probe beneath the surface of events, to elicit the meanings sometimes deeply buried, the interpretations and explanations, significance and impact of classroom life" (Wragg, 1994:50). My observation checklist comprised of field notes (see Appendix 2). These field notes were flexible in nature and

consisted of comments about everything that was believed to be important (McKay, 2006). The structure of the checklist differed according to the classroom procedure: if students were to work in groups on that day, I included the item where I would write my comments about the group work. Field notes were very useful in terms of understanding and commenting on students' reactions towards particular activities.

Questionnaire

Different types of questionnaires were used to collect feedback from the whole class. According to Hopkins (2008:118), "questionnaires that ask specific questions about aspects of the classroom, curriculum or teaching method are a quick and simple way of obtaining broad and rich information from pupils". Hence, a questionnaire is a good method to use when collecting large amounts of information from a group of participants (Dörnyei, 2002).

McNiff et al. (1996:98) caution against using questionnaire as a tool for action research studies. However, they do not reject the usefulness of questionnaires and they introduce two acceptable reasons for using a questionnaire within an action research study:

- to find out basic information that cannot be ascertained otherwise
- to evaluate the effect of an intervention when it is inappropriate to get feedback in another way

Since interviewing 32 students on a weekly basis was not possible, questionnaires played an important role in understanding all students' thoughts and feelings during the study. It would also have been very time consuming to interview the teacher after each lesson. Therefore, in the main study, I collected weekly data from the teacher through a questionnaire.

Both quantitative and qualitative items were included in the questionnaires. Closed questions were used where participants need to tick one or more options that applied to them (see Appendix 3). When completing questionnaires after interventions, I asked them to rate the success of the intervention and their classroom participation (see Appendix 4). In doing so, I attempted to collect objective data about the differences between the interventions. Mostly open questions were included in the questionnaires since they "allow the respondent to express a broader range of ideas" (McNiff et al., 1996:99). Therefore,

students were free to share anything about the course and this enabled me to collect rich data about my interventions and the evaluation of the term.

Interviews

Interview was the main data collection method of this study because interviews enabled me to gain insight into the situation. Kvale (1996:6) describes interviews as follows:

An interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose. It goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views as in everyday conversation, and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge.

Interview is a useful research tool when exploring how people interpret the world and make sense of their experiences (Brown & Dowling, 1998). Interviews were employed to try and gain an in-depth understanding of students' feelings and behaviours during the study.

Regarding the research interviewer's role, Kvale (1996:3) discusses two different approaches: research as 'miner' or as 'traveller'. With regard to the former, the interviewer intends to deepen their understanding of the phenomena through uncovering the subjects' inner thoughts. With the latter, the interviewer establishes communication with the subjects to learn their context and understand their values which may lead to new knowledge. Considering that this study builds on students' perceptions, my role during the interviews was as a miner, as I attempted to understand the situation in depth through revealing the reasons behind particular student behaviours.

The interview was semi-structured because this type of interviews provided me with flexibility in encouraging the interviewees to elaborate their responses (Borg, 2006). Questions were modified according to interviewee's responses and this allowed the conversation to become more natural which is essential for creating collaborative conversations. The collaborative nature of interviews in action research studies is emphasised by McNiff et al. (1996:101) in the way that "interviews are more likely to be informal discussions in which the researcher is aiming to influence the interviewee to become a collaborator".

Importantly, the three methods implemented in the current study had an interconnected nature. In the data collection process, the observational and

questionnaire data informed some of the questions used in the interviews. I asked the interviewees to elaborate on my field notes or their questionnaire responses so that I could understand the reasons for particular answers or actions. Wragg (1994:54) highlights the interactive nature of classroom observation and interviews as follows:

Classroom observation often involves making notes about classroom events and interviewing teachers and pupils to see what constructs and interpretations emerge when they talk about the classroom. Often extensive analysis of lesson and interview transcripts is involved.

Parallel to this, Hopkins (2008) maintains that interviews are sources for a participant observer in terms of verifying observational data. Wallace (1998:47) notes that "interviews and questionnaires are usually bracketed together since they both involve eliciting something from informants: usually factual information about themselves and their teaching situation, or attitudes/opinions on some issues".

4.4.2 The research questions and tools

After discussing the nature of each tool, it is worth noting their functions in this study in finding answers to my research questions. The connection between the tools and research questions is tabulated in Table 4.1.

Research Questions	Related tool
1. What are Turkish EFL learners' perceptions of their English speaking ability?	Student initial questionnaires Student initial interviews Teacher initial interview
2. What problems do Turkish EFL learners experience while speaking in English?	Observation in Stage One Student initial questionnaires Student initial interviews Teacher initial interview
3. In what ways does negotiation of activity types impact on students'; a) Perceptions of speaking ability b) Classroom participation and performance c) Anxiety level d) Willingness to speak e) Self-esteem	Observation in Stage Two Student post-session questionnaires Student post-session interviews Student final questionnaire Student final interviews
4. In what ways is this action research procedure useful for providing students with opportunities to improve their speaking ability?	Student final questionnaires Student final interviews Teacher final interview

Table 4.1: Research questions and tools

As can be seen in Table 4.1, the initial research tools sought answers to first and second research questions, where it was attempted to gain a general overview about learners' views of their perceived English speaking ability and

problems they experience while speaking. In an attempt to understand these issues, the initial questionnaire and interviews covered such areas as participants' educational backgrounds, views of different aspects of English, perceptions of English competencies and speaking abilities, opinions about the characteristics of an ideal speaking class. Additionally, to understand how participants feel during speaking classes, closed-ended items were included which were adapted from Horwitz et al.'s anxiety scale (1986) and relevant questions were asked in interviews (see Appendix 3 & 5). With regard to competencies in different language areas (e.g. accuracy, fluency, interaction, vocabulary), the items were adapted from Council of Europe (2001). In the teacher initial interview, in addition to collecting the teacher's demographic information, the objective was to understand the phenomena from the teacher's perspective (see Appendix 6).

The data collection process for the third research question was longer because it was essential to provide a student-negotiated speaking classroom to understand whether this process had an impact on different variables. In doing this, post-session tools were implemented after each intervention. These tools were more focused in nature as participants were expected to comment on the intervention and make suggestions about the content of the next intervention. Open ended items, which were adapted from Sampson (2010), were included in which participants were expected to comment on the effectiveness of the session (see Appendix 4).

Lastly, the methods of fourth research question centred on collecting feedback about the effectiveness of the whole term. Some similar questions to the initial tools were asked to see the differences in participants' self-evaluation (see Appendix 7). In addition to these, different items were included in student final instruments that referred to students' evaluation of the whole term, such as:

- What do you think about the lessons of this term?
- How were the topics and activities?
- How was your performance?
- How did you feel about sharing your opinions about classes?

Student final interview addressed similar issues to student final questionnaire (see Appendix 8). In the teacher final interview, I attempted to understand the picture from the teacher's perspective through focusing on her opinions about

the success of the term, students' participation, and the effects of this study on her professional development (see Appendix 9).

4.5 Research designs

This section will detail the process of the pilot and main studies. Furthermore, the findings of the pilot study will be noted with reference to the revisions made in the design of the main study.

4.5.1 The pilot study

Pilot study is regarded as a mini version of the main study (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). In pilot studies, researchers experience similar research procedure before the main study in order to check the feasibility of the research design. Mackey and Gass (2005:36) define pilot study as "an important means of assessing the feasibility and usefulness of the data collection methods and making any necessary revisions before they are used with the research participants". Conducting pilot study is a crucial part of research studies because researchers cannot predict the possible outcomes of data collection and the results of pilot studies allow researchers to revise the weak points of the data collection process.

Considering the above, my pilot study aimed at checking the feasibility of the research process designed for the main study and seeing the appropriateness of data collection tools. The piloting process centred on four following questions:

1. Does the research procedure cause any negative student reaction?
2. Does the research procedure allow for collecting systematic data from students and the teacher?
3. What kind of changes should be made to improve data collection tools?
4. What kind of observation checklist should be used to observe student participation and performance in speaking classes?

Setting and participants

The pilot study was conducted in 'Oral Communication Skills 1' course at English Language Teaching Department, Faculty of Education at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey. The participants of the pilot and main studies were of similar age and had similar educational experiences.

Data collection process

The piloting process lasted four-weeks. The same procedure was followed in the pilot and main studies. I processed a mini-version of the main study where I observed classes, collected initial data from the students and the teacher in the first two weeks; made interventions and collected feedback about my interventions in the last two weeks (see Appendix 10).

Findings and implications for the main study

Students' reactions

During the pilot study, I observed that the research process did not cause harm, detriment and unreasonable stress. On the contrary, students reacted positively to an opportunity to carry out activities that they wanted. Students' comments on intervention 1 showed that they found the activity *"very good and enjoyable"* (R1), and wanted to *"continue carrying out these kinds of activities"* (R10).

Furthermore, the pilot study also revealed that students were critical of some of my interventions as they made some negative comments for the second intervention: *"I don't think that we can gain something by guessing"* (R13), *"The game was not fair. It took very long"* (R2). This critical point of view was essential for this study because the study comprised of interventions designed with reference to the students' feedback. Furthermore, these negative comments showed that the research environment did not pressurise students to make positive comments and they could share their opinions freely.

Collecting systematic data

The analyses of initial questionnaires and interviews showed that they are useful for collecting data about relevant issues. The lengths of these tools were also appropriate, with the average completion time for the initial questionnaire taking 21 minutes, and around twenty minutes for student initial interviews.

The designs of post-session questionnaires and interviews were appropriate to understand students' views about the success of the intervention and in considering the suggestions for the next intervention. In particular, the open-ended items of the post-session questionnaire and interviews yielded an in-

depth understanding of the situation. The completions of these were acceptable; student post-session questionnaire lasted for four minutes on average and student post-session interviews took around ten minutes.

Considering students' responses to the sections about the evaluation of the specific research tools, nothing negative was reported. Students found the tools appropriate and they agreed that they were "*very clear and sufficient*" (R24) and "*very well designed*" (R21).

Changes to be made

Besides some positive issues, the findings of the pilot study revealed some points where adjustments were needed for the main study. The changes to be made in each tool are discussed below:

Student Initial Questionnaire

- a. Adding General School as the other type of schools because some students wrote this as the other type of school they had graduated from.
- b. Disregarding the item asking students' scores in university entrance exam because most of the participants reported that they did not remember their scores.
- c. Designing a structured student self-evaluation section where students are asked to select which one applied to them will be more useful.
- d. Adding two open-ended items about students' perceptions of their strengths and weaknesses in speaking ability.
- e. Adding a new checklist about students' favoured speaking activities might be useful for designing the lesson accordingly.
- f. The descriptions of each activity should be included so that students can understand the activity types.

Student post-session questionnaire

Although this tool provided rich data about students' evaluation of the session and their suggestions for the following week, there were a number of issues worth considering for amendment. First of all, asking students to rate the session would be helpful to see their views about the success of interventions. Additionally, instead of asking students to rate their performance out of 5, including a 10 point scale would be more useful. Finally, adding different

checklists about group work, pair work and whole class discussion would provide data which could reflect how they process these activities.

Teacher interviews

The initial interview for the teacher was well designed. However, a conclusion was reached that it would be difficult to conduct interviews with the teacher after each lesson every week, and therefore administering teacher post-session questionnaire might be more convenient. For that reason, I designed a teacher post-session questionnaire for the main study which includes nine open-ended questions (see Appendix 11).

Observations

In the pilot study, the checklist I designed mostly included open-ended items and I was unsure how to fill out these sections. Therefore, after completing the pilot study, I went through the literature about the methods of collecting qualitative observational data and read about field notes. It is also noteworthy that, considering that the main study would last much longer than the pilot study, I would have more opportunity to observe students and re-design the observation checklist accordingly.

In the light of the findings of the pilot study discussed above, I was content that the study design was appropriate to serve the purpose of the current research in terms of exploring students' educational backgrounds, understanding their views about an effective speaking class, designing classroom procedure according to students' needs and wants, and collecting systematic feedback from students about their views of the success of my interventions.

4.5.2 The main study

Participants

The teacher participating in the study was a native speaker of English, was born and educated in England, and has been living in Turkey since 1982. The analysis of interview protocols illustrated that the teacher has been working as an English teacher since 1984 with the work experience in a variety of private

institutions and state schools. She has been working at that university since 1999 and teaching speaking for almost ten years.

The research class had 32 students. However, as expected, they did not attend all classes throughout the term. Therefore, the number of participants differed for each data collection tool. In designing items about the demographic information about the participants, the age item was not included because almost all of them were of similar age, between nineteen and early twenties. This is because, in Turkey, interdepartmental or inter-university student transfers are not common (Erten, 2009) and career switching or doing another major is not a widespread practice (Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). Therefore, the age range of participants of this study did not vary.

Six participants were selected as interviewees and they became the significant participants of the research study because I focused on these students during my observations and I conducted student interviews with them on a weekly basis, at the beginning and at the end of the term. I used purposive sampling in selecting the interviewees. According to Silverman (2005:129), "purposive sampling allows us to choose a case because it illustrates some feature or process in which we are interested". In doing so, I used my observation checklist where I noted my comments about volunteer students' classroom behaviours such as their attendance, willingness to participate and contribution to the activities. I also took into account their responses to the student initial questionnaire. Considering these, I selected students with different characteristics, i.e. students with high/low self-confidence, students with high/low participation, and students with negative/positive views about their speaking abilities. I also considered the gender of interviewees and invited three female and three male students.

Data collection process

The data collection phase was conducted in winter term of 2011-2012 academic year. The term started on 19th September and ended on 30th December. Although this was a period of fifteen weeks, the current study lasted thirteen weeks because of two weeks off due to the Eid Holiday and mid-term examinations (see Appendix 12).

The data collection process comprised of three stages. In the first stage, I observed classes with the aim of understanding the context with the focus on the classroom procedure and students' reactions to activities. This provided me with an understanding of students' levels of classroom participation and the potential reasons for the lack of effectiveness of classroom activities.

In Stage Two, weekly cyclical interventions were introduced, involving eight interventions in total. This stage was cyclical in nature because planning, acting, observing and reflecting stages of action research processes introduced by Kemmis and McTaggart's model (1988) was followed in designing interventions. In this process, I collaborated with the teacher during the week and made necessary amendments according to her suggestions. This was very helpful in designing implementable classroom activities because she was much more experienced than me and very knowledgeable about possible outcomes and problems of any activity.

Stage Three was concerned with collecting data about the whole term. In doing so, I administered student final questionnaire and conducted interviews with six students and the teacher in order to understand students' opinions about their action research experience.

4.6 Data collection procedures and ethical considerations

4.6.1 Gaining access

To seek official approval to collect data, I went through two official procedures. First, I submitted a certificate of ethical research approval form to my institution and received approval to conduct the study (see Appendix 13). Second, before starting data collection in Turkey, I submitted an official letter of application to the head of department with a brief explanation of the focus of my study and the necessary attachments of data collection tools that I would implement during the study. Once I had received official approval, I started data collection (see Appendix 14).

4.6.2 Approaching participants

During the study, I talked with students in Turkish because I wanted to establish rapport with them and I did not want to seem like a teacher or an outsider. I always highlighted their role as participants in this study and made sure that their feedback would determine the outcome of the study. I entered classes ten minutes before the lesson started like a student and I spent time with them during the breaks to make them regard me like a member of the class. Participants seemed interested because this would be the first time they had an experience of having a say about their classroom decision-making and they thought that this could be useful for their future careers as English language teachers.

4.6.3 Ethical Issues

Ethical issues play a key role in creating a positive research environment through which mutual trust is established between researchers and participants. Neglecting ethical concerns in a research study can obstruct participants' willingness to contribute. To avoid this, research studies should consider ethical issues because, as highlighted by many authors (e.g. Cohen et al., 2007; Flick, 2006; Mackey & Gass, 2005; McKay, 2006; Silverman, 2005), the quality of research studies depends on the trust created between the researcher and participants. For that reason, all researchers should address ethical issues in their research studies (Suter, 2006).

Obtaining the consent of the participants can be seen as the initial step of ethical considerations. Diener and Crandall (1978, as cited in Cohen et al., 2007:52) define informed consent as "the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation after being informed of facts that would likely to influence their decisions". Therefore, in addition to asking about the participants' willingness to participate in the research study, in order to obtain informed consent of participants, it is essential to inform prospective participants about the study.

According to Mackey and Gass (2005), informed consent documents should explain issues such as the general procedure of the study, its purpose, how anonymity of the participants' identities will be preserved, researcher's contact

information, risks to which participants might be exposed and whether the participation is on voluntarily basis. Considering this, I included an introductory paragraph in the student initial questionnaire where I explained the general objectives of the current study. I informed that their responses were not intended to evaluate or judge them and confirmed that this study was not a part of their course assessment. Additionally, students were assured that they could withdraw from the study at any time they wanted. There was an alternative class that they could attend which followed the usual teaching procedure of that course. I assured that the participation was voluntary and asked them to tick the 'yes' box which would show their willingness to participate (see Appendix 3). I made sure that each student was willing to contribute because this was critical for my study.

Similar to the data collection tools, the language of informed consent document was Turkish. Writing the informed consent form in the participants' mother tongue is preferable as it avoids any misunderstandings due to the lesser proficiency in the target language (Mackey & Gass, 2005; McKay, 2006).

Addressing ethical concerns are not limited to receiving consents of participants and there are other issues that should be taken into account. Confidentiality is seen as the main ethical issue (Burns, 1999; Perry, 2008; Suter, 2006) as it concerns protection of the rights and privacy of participants (Perry, 2008). It ensures that the identities of participants are not made public in order to avoid being judged negatively by colleagues or supervisors (Burns, 1999). This was a critical issue for the current research because I expected the participants to comment on the research procedure critically, which required sharing opinions about the classes including topics, activities and the teacher. In order to make sure that the students felt safe and comfortable enough to share their opinions freely, the questionnaire data was collected anonymously and I ensured interviewees that pseudonyms would be used to report findings.

I asked for permissions to audio record the interviews and no questions were directed which could cause harm, detriment and unreasonable stress during the interviews. The data were stored in my computer only and, after transcribing the audio files, I deleted them for the sake of ensuring confidentiality for the participants.

In addition to these considerations, according to Wallace (1998), it is not ethical to take students' time and energy for studies that do not introduce any useful outcomes for their learning and success. To address this, during the study, students were informed that I was doing something for the sake of their personal and professional development. They noticed that I collected data to improve the success of speaking classes and they seemed happy to be involved in this kind of a research study where their opinions affected the design of the next lesson.

During the data collection, I attempted to clarify the research process thoroughly. However, the only information I disclosed was the scope of my observations. As discussed earlier, I focused on six interviewees during my observations but I did not explain that I would observe them. This was because, as human beings, our feelings or behaviours may change when we know that we are being observed. Mackey and Gass (2005) contend that this kind of withholding information may be acceptable when the information collected could lead to unrepresentative sample of data.

4.7 Data analysis

Data analysis is the phase of research which reveals the main findings of the research study through conducting different analyses in accordance with the design of research study. With the lens focused on action research methodology, Burns (1999) sees data analysis as a research component of action research where "statements or assertions about what the research shows are produced" (p.153). In general, data analysis takes place after the completion of data collection but, it is also possible to analyse the data while still conducting the enquiry (Robson, 2002). This simultaneous nature of data collection and analysis is especially pertinent to action research studies where the research process has a cyclical nature. For that reason, data collection and analysis in action research "inevitably overlap, interrelate and recur" (Burns, 1999:154). Therefore, I analysed each data set immediately after the data collection.

In analysing the quantitative items of the questionnaires, I used descriptive statistics and Wilcoxon signed rank test through using Statistical Package for

the Social Sciences (SPSS) v. 16, because my objective for including quantitative items was "to gain a better overall understanding of the data set" (Mackey & Gass, 2005:251). In doing so, I attempted to explore the general tendencies through frequency analysis and the direction of significant differences in different variables.

For the analysis of the observations, as proposed by Patton (1980), I focused on 'chronology' to describe the classroom procedure, 'key events' to note down critical events in the classroom and, 'people' to centre on the interviewees (see Appendix 2). The analysis of qualitative data was much more complex. I used a variety of tools with specific objectives and employed different qualitative data analysis methods for each data set. For open-ended items in the student initial questionnaires where the objective was to portray the big picture of the context, using content analysis was appropriate because, "the formalisation of the procedure produces a uniform schema of categories, which facilitates the comparison of different cases to which it is applied throughout" (Flick, 2006:315). Content analysis comprised of coding, categorising, comparing and concluding (Cohen et al., 2007:476). Content analysis enabled me to understand the common features of students through understanding the recurring issues. I used inductive coding in which the categories emerged from the data without predetermining any categories based on the literature or theory (Burns, 2010a). In doing this, I read open-ended responses carefully several times to obtain an intuitive picture of the situation. I then categorised the responses and listed these categories in descending order to enable me to see the most commonly recurring themes (see Appendix 15).

In the analyses of teacher and student initial and post-session interviews, instead of carrying out cross-case analysis, which is the analysis of different responses according to common questions or central issues (Patton, 1980), I conducted case analysis which focused on the responses of each person (Patton, 1980). The objective was not to reach a common truth among interviewees but to understand how their individual opinions differed during the term. In these analyses I consider each interviewee as a single case because they all had different characteristics. In the analyses process, I went through each interviewee's responses to see how their responses differed according to the interventions during the study. To do this I coded and categorised the

responses and compared these categories with responses to other interventions. In addition to providing information related to interviewees' characteristics, the interviews yielded an insight into the data collected from the whole class. I asked interviewees to elaborate on the strong and weak points of the interventions. The data were analysed using a content analysis approach. I read the interview transcripts and categorised the recurrent themes (see Appendix 16). For example, 'the lack of practice' was one of the major themes that emerged from the initial data and related comments were categorised under this theme throughout the study in order to reveal how students' opinions about this theme changed during the study.

In the student post-session questionnaire, where I aimed at collecting feedback from all students, I also used content analysis because it was essential to understand the predominant opinions of all of the participants which would determine the design of my next intervention. The objective was different in tools used in Stage Three because it was essential to develop a new understanding of the situation. In doing so, the current study employed grounded theory which is "the systematic generation of a theory from data" (Glaser, 1996, cited in Cohen et al., 2007:491). There are five elements of grounded theory: theoretical sampling, coding, constant comparison, the core variables and saturation, and developing grounded theory (Cohen et al., 2007:491). For theoretical sampling, with regard to cyclical nature of action research, the data were collected during the whole term and I made sure that the sample was adequate to understand the context. After that, I used selective coding where I "identified the relationship between a core code and other codes" (Ezzy, 2002:93). At this stage, the intention was to identify the recurrent themes in the data. This was followed by constant comparison to check if the categories fit with the data. I then identified core variables and sub-categories of the data. Finally, I developed the theory through interpreting the most recurrent categories.

4.8 Research Issues

It is a truism that conducting research studies with high quality is one of the main concerns of any researcher. This is because the quality of research reflects how well the research procedure is designed to find answers to

research questions. In the literature, different criteria are proposed to evaluate the quality of a research study. For quantitative studies, in general, validity and reliability are important issues because they concern the generalisability of the findings. However, since qualitative studies do not rely on a large sample but focus on a particular case (Hopkins, 2008), reliability and validity of qualitative research studies are approached from a different perspective.

As asserted by Burns (2010a), action research is local research often done in classrooms and it does not introduce findings that can be easily generalised to other classrooms. However, this does not necessarily mean that qualitative research cannot be evaluated through particular criteria. To do this, there are different criteria that qualitative researchers address to ensure the quality of their research studies.

Qualitative researchers tend to use the term 'trustworthiness' instead of validity (Burns, 2010b; Zeichner & Noffke, 2001). Burns (2010b:85) defines trustworthiness as a phenomena referring to:

...whether the data analyses, reports and interpretations constitute honest and authentic reconstruction of the research and of the knowledge that emerged in the social environment, while the value accruing to participants in undertaking research contributes to its worthwhileness.

In qualitative research, the term 'dependability' is used for reliability, 'credibility' for internal validity and 'transferability' for external validity (McKay, 2006). Among these concepts, dependability concerns how trusted and reliable the reported data are in the study (McKay, 2006). According to Patton (1980:461), "the credibility of qualitative study depends on the credibility of the researcher because the researcher is one of the instruments of data collection and is subjectively involved in the analysis process". Therefore, to achieve credibility, researchers are expected to report the context and procedure of the study in a detailed, fair and an unbiased way (Burns, 1999; McKay, 2006; Patton, 1980). This study attempts to provide sufficient details about research issues by providing detailed information about the context, research problem and objectives, data collection and analysis procedures, action research cycles, interventions and findings. Transferability or external validity, on the other hand, has to do with "the degree to which the findings of a qualitative study might be applicable to other contexts" (McKay, 2006:13).

There are other issues that qualitative researchers should consider to enhance the quality of their research. Among these, triangulation is a common way of checking the quality of research as it ensures multiple perspectives on the phenomena (Burns, 1999). As highlighted by Denzin (1970, cited in Patton, 1980), triangulation, which combines several observers, theories, methods and data sources allows researcher to overcome "the intrinsic bias that comes from single-methods, single-observer, and single-theory-studies" (Denzin, 1970, cited in Patton, 1980:464). In a similar vein, by means of triangulation,

...you can compare and cross-check to see whether what you are finding through one source is backed up by other evidence. In this way you can be more confident that your reflection and conclusions are supported by the data and not just by your own presuppositions or biases (Burns, 2010a:96).

There are four types of triangulation: 'methods triangulation', 'triangulation of sources', 'analyst triangulation', and 'theory/perspective triangulation' (Patton, 1980). Methods triangulation focuses on using both quantitative and qualitative tools with the aim of checking if all tools collect similar findings. Conversely, triangulation of qualitative sources compares different qualitative data tools, such as observational data and interview data (Patton, 1980). Analyst triangulation is "the involvement of two or more persons independently to analyse the same qualitative data set and compare their findings" (Patton, 1980:468). Theory triangulation, as the name suggests, is using different theoretical perspective to analyse the same data set (Patton, 1980).

The current study employed both 'methods triangulation' and 'triangulation of sources', as the data were collected through four types of tools that involved both quantitative and qualitative items. This is in line with the definition of triangulation proposed by Elliott and Adelman (1976, cited in Burns, 1999:163): "triangulation involves gathering accounts of a teaching situation from three quite different points of view, namely those of the teacher, his [*sic*] pupils, and a participant observer".

Burns (1999) synthesised different quality criteria for action research proposed by different authors and suggested five different categories of validity:

	Validity type	The description
1.	Democratic validity	This criterion relates to the extent to which the research is truly collaborative and allows for the inclusion of multiple voices.
2.	Outcome validity	This criterion relates to the notion of actions leading to outcomes that are 'successful' within the research context.
3.	Process validity	This criterion raises questions about the 'dependability' and 'competency of the research'. Key questions here are: Is it possible to determine how adequate the process of conducting the research is?
4.	Catalytic validity	This criterion relates to the extent to which the research allows participants to deepen their understanding of the social realities of the context and how they can make changes within it.
5.	Dialogic validity	This criterion parallel to the process of peer review which are commonly used in academic research. Typically, the value or 'goodness' of the research is monitored by peer review for publication in academic journals.

Table 4.2: Validity criteria for action research (Burns, 1999:161-162)

Before discussing these criteria, it is worth noting that the best indication of quality in action research is its transformative nature, in that it should inform changes in educational practices (Burns, 1999). In this respect, the present study can be seen as transformative in nature since it followed a systematic research process where different cycles were conducted to improve the quality of an educational setting. The study has democratic validity because it creates a positive research environment where the researcher worked collaboratively with the teacher and students. Since the study was carried out over a whole term, it also has process validity. The study also has catalytic validity as one of the objectives of the study was to foster students' critical thinking by giving them a voice about their classroom decision-making. Finally, the current study has dialogic validity because the research is designed under the supervision of two specialists of the field.

4.9 Summary

Having explained in detail the research approach and design, in the following chapter I shall present the findings of each stage of the study, and discuss the main findings.

Chapter Five

Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the present action research study that comprised of three different stages. These stages were different in nature and aimed at understanding the situation before, during and after my interventions. Although questionnaires and interviews were implemented as data collection tools in all stages, their designs differed in relation to the objectives of the stage. Stage One involved gathering initial data in the first four weeks of the research. This led to Stage Two, in which the student-negotiated speaking classroom was implemented for eight weeks. And finally, in Stage Three, final data were collected in the last week of the term to understand the participants' views about the effectiveness of the term.

Each stage involved three data sets: (a) quantitative data from the whole class through closed items in the questionnaires, (b) qualitative data from the whole class through open items in the questionnaires, (c) qualitative data from six participants through interviews. While the quantitative data aimed at collecting numerical data which would allow for making comparisons between different variables, qualitative data were collected in order to gain an insight into the situation with particular attention to the subjective comments of the participants.

Concerning the quantitative data analysis, the descriptive statistical analysis was applied by using SPSS v. 16.0 to see the mean scores of items. Additionally, non-parametric descriptive statistics were used because no assumption was made about the type of the data before the analysis, in accordance with the underpinning philosophical approach to the study. Wilcoxon signed-rank test was implemented to see the differences before and after the study. Conversely, content analysis was implemented to understand the recurrent themes in the qualitative data. A sample of qualitative data analysis is attached in Appendix fifteen.

In order to protect their identities, all of the participants were anonymised. Interviewees were given M and F letters according to their genders and 1, 2, 3 numbers according to their anxiety level. For example, M1 was a male student

with the highest level of anxiety (see 5.2.1). Other participants were categorised in R letters and numbers. These numbers were given randomly because the data were collected anonymously from the whole class, and therefore, Rs were not the same students throughout the study.

5.2 Stage One: Exploring the context before interventions

This stage served the purpose of establishing as far as possible a positive research environment to make interventions in an otherwise unchanging class group. To do this, it was essential to establish rapport with the students and to give them time to become familiar with my presence. This stage lasted four weeks and I collected data from the students and the teacher about issues such as students' personal characteristics, English learning background, opinions about the different areas of language, perceptions of their ability in speaking and views about the ideal speaking class.

5.2.1 Participants in the study

The teacher participant

The teacher participant, who was a native speaker of English, had a significant role in the study and contributed differently at each stage. She lectured classes throughout the study. During the first stage, I interviewed her to collect information about her teaching experience, beliefs about the language, and views about students' classroom participation and performance. Additionally, she gave valuable information about the course content and the objectives of the course. In the second stage, we designed the interventions together: I informed her about the students' responses each week and we negotiated the design or adaptation of activities which would meet their expectations. During the week, we exchanged ideas through e-mails and finalised the course content. In the last stage, I interviewed her and asked for her views about the degree of usefulness of the student-negotiated speaking classes.

In the teacher initial interview, she informed me that she had been working as an English teacher since 1984 in a variety of private institutions and state schools in Turkey. She had been working at this university since 1999 and had

been teaching speaking courses for almost ten years. When asked about her views about the different skills of language, she highlighted the role of speaking, arguing that, in order to speak the language well, learners need to have grammatical and lexical knowledge.

She said that the course aimed at improving students' fluency and accuracy in both everyday language and academic discussions. The number of students in classes is very high and this is a major factor influencing the quality of speaking classes. To overcome this, she prefers presenting different activities that require the participation of all students such as pair work and group work. According to the teacher, students perform better in these types of activities because they are reluctant to speak in front of the whole class.

According to the teacher participant, student participation varies as each group has its own unique dynamic: while students are very active and willing to participate in some classes, this is the opposite for others where she has to try very hard to make some students even utter a sentence. She feels that, this is because, in some classes, when students make a mistake, others laugh at them. However, in other classes, students encourage their friends and this leads to a comfortable classroom environment. She emphasised the significance of a positive classroom atmosphere and suggested that this directly affected confidence and learning.

When asked about students' speaking abilities, she responded that it was 'not advanced':

Although they are supposed to be, they do not even become advanced at the end of the year. Students' speaking levels differ very much. Some students are very good, some are not bad. But some students cannot even utter a sentence. It differs very much.

Regarding the main problem of students with low levels of performance, she highlighted the lack of practice:

They did not practise language before. The education they have received expected them to find a particular correct answer. The answer should be correct, there is no alternative. It is difficult to overcome this conception. They believe that if they do not utter exactly what is expected, the interlocutor will not understand what they say.

She confirmed that students were good at reading and grammar. They could recognise the language but had difficulties in producing both the written and

spoken language. She did not see vocabulary as the main problem *“because a person can express himself by using basic words”*. Therefore, she expected students to express themselves by uttering simple sentences.

The major problem with the activities was students' dependence on solving the problem. Instead of using the opportunity to speak provided by that activity, students focus on doing the activity and they even speak in Turkish to achieve the objectives of the task. With regard to student negotiation in speaking classes, she supported the idea that students should be a part of classroom decision-making. She also underlined that *“It may be problematic if it is only the students who decide what to talk about but it is useful to present some options and consider their preferences”*.

The student participants

The research class had 32 students. However, as expected, some students did not attend all classes throughout the term. Therefore, the number of participants in the second stage differed in each week. In the second week, when I conducted the student initial questionnaire, the number of participants was 29 in total: 23 female and six male students.

Six students were selected as interviewees and they became the significant participants of the present study because I focused on these students during my observations and interviewed them on a weekly basis, at the beginning and at the end of the term. To select these interviewees, in the student initial questionnaire, I asked for volunteers and 15 students (10 females and 5 males) responded positively. I invited 3 male and 3 female students: in selecting these interviewees, I took into account their responses to the student initial questionnaire and invited students with different characteristics in terms of anxiety level, classroom participation and perception of speaking ability.

It is possible to classify the six interviewees into three groups: (a) highly anxious, (b) negative speaking abilities, and (c) positive speaking abilities. The first group comprised of Male 1 (M1) and Female 1 (F1). These two students strongly agreed with items about anxiety in the student initial questionnaire and, in the student initial interviews, they both confirmed that they were not happy with their speaking ability and the main problem was anxiety. Secondly, M2 and

F2 were the second type of interviewees and they were somewhat more positive about their speaking ability. Unlike M1 and F1, they were more eager to participate in activities and they underlined factors other than anxiety as the issues affecting their speaking performances. Thirdly, M3 and F3 were the most positive students. Compared to the other interviewees, they seemed happy with their speaking performances and were willing to be active in classes.

5.2.2 English learning background

In order to gain an idea of the weight given to areas of English language in classes at different educational levels, a section was included in the student initial questionnaire where participants were expected to tick as many areas as they wanted to show the main focus of English classes in primary, secondary and high school education (see Appendix 3). The results are interesting, in that there was a strong consensus about the ranking of seven different areas in different educational levels (see Table 5.1).

	Areas	Primary School		Secondary School		High School	
		N	Sum	N	Sum	N	Sum
1.	Grammar	28	20	29	26	29	28
2.	Vocabulary	28	16	29	18	29	26
3.	Reading	28	7	29	12	29	20
4.	Writing	28	1	29	4	29	18
5.	Speaking	28	1	29	3	29	14
6.	Pronunciation	28	1	29	3	29	14
7.	Listening	28	0	29	2	29	13

Table 5.1: The focus of teaching in primary, secondary and high school

Table 5.1 displays the results in rank order, from the most ticked skill to the least ticked ones. It is clear that, regardless of the educational level, the rankings of seven areas were exactly the same: grammar, vocabulary and reading were reported to be the most addressed areas while listening, pronunciation and speaking were the least covered areas in each level of schooling. On the other hand, compared to primary and secondary schools, English classes in high schools were reported to have wider range of language areas covered.

To confirm and further understand the reasons behind this emphasis on grammar, vocabulary and reading in their English classes, I asked interviewees to elaborate on this matter. The consensus was that *“There was no attention to speaking or writing. The focus was solely on grammar”* (F3), and, *“Usually, the*

teacher lectured the lesson. After that, we did activities such as fill in the blanks, writing a word ten times, etc. It was grammar and structure based” (F1).

The scenario was different for university classes. To reveal the focus of English teaching in their current university education, students were asked to fill out 5 point Likert-type items; 1 was assigned for ‘strongly disagree’, and 5 for ‘strongly agree’. The results contrasted with the focus of other educational levels (see Table 5.2).

Areas	N	Mean	SD
Speaking	28	4,53	.74
Listening	29	4,24	.78
Writing	29	4,10	.93
Pronunciation	26	4,03	1.03
Grammar	27	3,89	.86
Reading	26	3,76	.90
Vocabulary	29	3,68	.84
Valid N (listwise)	23		

Table 5.2: The focus of teaching in university education

As displayed in Table 5.2, the majority of participants agreed that the main focus of their current university education was on ‘speaking’. ‘Listening’ and ‘writing’ were reported to be other most addressed areas. Fewer participants confirmed ‘vocabulary’, ‘reading’ and ‘grammar’ as the focus of their current university education.

The interview protocols illuminated the main focus of the participants’ English language learning experiences. Typical comments indicated that students mainly dealt with *“grammar and vocabulary for almost ten years with no focus on speaking”* (M1). This lack of addressing speaking as a language skill resulted in feeling incompetent in speaking and conceptualising language as something limited to grammar and vocabulary:

University classes are the first time that we have been dealing with speaking. Therefore, we do not feel competent in speaking. (M3)

Before I came to university, I did not know that speaking and listening were so important. I was very happy in high school because I felt very competent in English. I did not know that I was lacking in speaking skills. I thought English was something limited to structures. But when I came to university, I noticed that there are other skills. (M1)

5.2.3 Importance of language areas

Considering the particular focus of this dissertation on the speaking skill, revealing the importance attached by participants to each language skill may provide useful data in understanding their standpoints about the ideal weight given to speaking in English language classes. To address this, open-ended questions were included with the aim of revealing the participants' views about the most important language areas. The comments showed that some of the participants emphasised the importance of more than one language area.

The most recurrent theme, mentioned by 8/25 participants, was 'speaking and listening'. Some participants (4/25) emphasised 'speaking' only and the idea that 'all areas are important' was mentioned by another four participants. It is worth pointing out in this regard that there was agreement among the participants in including 'speaking' at least as one of the important parts of language areas. The open-ended item provided insights about the rationale for putting more emphasis on particular areas.

First, the communicative nature of language was the recurrent theme for attaching more importance to speaking and listening. As one participant said:

Speaking and listening are important in terms of communicating with native speakers. (R20)

Another agreed:

To communicate with others in daily life, we should listen and understand, speak fluently to express ourselves. (R22)

Second, the respondents who regarded only 'speaking' as the most important language area agreed with the above and put emphasis on communication: *"The thing we do in daily life is to communicate. To communicate effectively with tourists, we should speak well"* (R8). On the other hand, some participants regarded speaking as an indicator of knowing the language suggesting that *"It is not meaningful when we are not competent in speaking no matter how competent we are in grammar, vocabulary and listening"* (R1). Students' emphasis on speaking was confirmed by previous studies conducted in Turkey. Kaçar and Zengin (2009), who investigated Turkish EFL learners' beliefs about language, found that students at different educational levels believed that improving speaking skills should be the main objective of language learning. In

Çelik's study (2000), the quantitative analysis of the data from 301 students studying at a particular ELT department revealed speaking as the most needed skill.

Third, the participants who supported the view that all skills are important highlighted the interrelated nature of language areas:

Each area is important. All is related. Language is something living and changing. Language is for understanding people. Therefore, each area plays an important role in fulfilling this objective. (R15)

5.2.4 Perceived ability in speaking

With regard to the scope of this dissertation in terms of addressing individual's affective states, it was essential to understand their perceived ability in speaking. To do so, participants were asked to rate 5 point Likert-type items, 5 being strongly agree and 1 strongly disagree. The descriptive statistics are given in Table 5.3.

Areas	N	Mean	SD
Grammar	29	3,72	.64
Reading	29	3,58	.77
Writing	29	3,48	.78
Vocabulary	29	3,27	.75
Pronunciation	29	3,13	.78
Speaking	29	2,96	.73
Listening	29	2,82	.88
Valid N (listwise)	29		

Table 5.3: Perceived areas of proficiency

As displayed in Table 5.3, most participants agreed that, compared to other areas, 'grammar' was the area that they felt more competent. The majority of them were also happy with their ability in 'reading' and 'writing'. On the other hand, few participants felt they were competent in 'listening' and 'speaking'.

In an attempt to further understand participants' satisfaction with their speaking abilities, they were asked to focus on speaking and rank their speaking satisfaction level out of 5. Overall, the mean score was 2.89: the majority of students (19/29) ticked 3, 6/29 students ticked 2, only 3/29 students ticked 4, and none of them ticked 5 as their English speaking satisfaction level. Participants gave different reasons for their satisfaction levels. The majority of them considered 'lack of practice' as the main reason for being dissatisfied with their speaking ability. As one participant stated, they *"had been dealing with*

speaking activities for only one year” (R16), while another one believed this was *“rather late*” (R19) and one suggested they were not happy with this because *“there was no adequate opportunity for speaking*” (R17). Lack of student participation in language classes was also named as one of the major demotivating aspects of speaking classes in Sampson’s study (2010).

Additionally, some respondents pointed out that ‘inability to express what I think’ was the reason reducing their satisfaction with their speaking abilities:

No matter how much we want, we cannot speak particularly fluently. In fact, we can speak but we get stuck I guess. We know, we can make sentences sometimes but we cannot speak. (R3)

The reason for this, as stated by R6, was because *“Whenever I see an English word, I think of its Turkish equivalent. But when I speak, I cannot recall the English version of my intended message”*. This problem was also raised by participants who reported that ‘lack of lexical knowledge’ was the main problem they face while speaking:

I have difficulty in expressing myself when I do not have the necessary lexical knowledge. I cannot recall the English words immediately because I formed Turkish sentences in my mind. (R4)

In addition to these considerations, some participants mentioned that ‘inability to speak fluently’ was a factor hindering their satisfactions. In this respect, one participant commented that *“Although I can somewhat express myself, I don’t think I can speak fluently enough”* (R1). ‘Feeling anxious’ was another recurring theme. This was highlighted by some of participants, who agreed that *“When I start speaking in English, I get anxious; I cannot focus on my speech and cannot express myself”* (R22).

Strong and weak points

Participants were also asked to comment on their strong and weak points in speaking. Regarding weak points, ‘lexical knowledge’ was the most recurring theme (10/29). Furthermore, ‘making long pauses’ and ‘anxiety’ were other common responses mentioned by five respondents. With regard to lack of lexical knowledge, participants claimed to have difficulty *“in finding the suitable word while speaking”* (R25) and this was caused by having *“limited vocabulary knowledge about different topics”* (R17). The second point, ‘making long pauses’, was mentioned by some participants as obstructing fluency in

speaking and was related to *“first thinking in Turkish, and then trying to translate it into English”* (R15). This was because the students did not gain the competency of speaking spontaneously and they found it difficult to *“think, form and speak in sentences at the same time”* (R11). Anxiety was the other recurring theme. In this respect, participants detailed their feelings while speaking:

I don't feel comfortable while speaking. I have self-confidence but I feel shy. (R10)

Different reasons were mentioned regarding the strong points in speaking. The majority of participants agreed that they could speak well on familiar topics at basic level; some confirmed that they were competent enough in grammar to monitor the accuracy of their speaking and others maintained that they could somehow establish communication with the help of gesture, using mime and body language.

The interviewees were in line with the whole class in terms of considering vocabulary as their weakest point in speaking and made similar comments to F2, who stated: *“I cannot find the exact word when I speak”*. M2 was also in agreement with the whole class about pausing while trying to find the right word to use:

While speaking, I think of a word but I cannot find the exact word. When I think this, I make long pauses and this hinders speaking fluently. (M2)

In addition to ‘lack of vocabulary’ and ‘making long pauses’, ‘anxiety’ was the other factor which was raised both by the whole class and the interviewees:

We are very shy about speaking. We are afraid of making mistakes; we worry that our classmates will laugh at us. (M2)

We always think if my friends will make fun of me or they will laugh at me. Will this be correct if I speak like this, etc. When you think like that, you cannot speak. (M3)

Interviewees agreed with the whole class about their strengths in speaking: *“I can even express what I think at basic level”* (M1). However, compared to other interviewees, F3 was more positive about her strengths in speaking:

If I feel comfortable, I can speak fluently, I can use my voice effectively, and I can monitor grammar as well.

Competency in sub-skills of speaking

Different items were included in the student initial questionnaire concerning the sub-skills of speaking: accuracy, fluency, interaction, and lexical range. Students were given three levels of proficiency (1=low, 2=medium, 3=high), and were asked to tick the one which applied to them (see Appendix 3). The sum scores of each area show that the majority of students confirmed their level as medium: students seemed more positive in 'interaction', where four students ticked level 3, and more negative in 'lexical range', where none of the students ticked 3, and in fluency, where thirteen students ticked level 1 (see Appendix 17).

5.2.5 Views on classroom process

In addition to asking participants about their educational experiences and their perceptions of their language abilities, the questionnaire investigated their feelings about speaking classes: a number of items concerning the affective states of the participants were included employing 5 point Likert-type items, 1 being 'strongly disagree' and 5 'strongly agree'.

The quantitative analysis of this section highlighted some contradictory results (see Appendix 18). It was revealed that most participants agreed with the statement, 'I feel confident when I speak English in English class'. However, they also agreed with the item 'I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English speaking classes'. This may indicate that advanced preparation was beneficial for students in terms of fostering confidence while speaking.

Furthermore, in this section, the mean scores of items related to anxiety were relatively low. For example, few students agreed with the statements, 'I am very anxious when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class', 'It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English class', and 'I feel unconfident when I don't understand the topics that other students understand'. These results suggest that anxiety was not the main problem for the participants.

In contrast, the interview protocols revealed some anxiety problems. M1 maintained that 'lack of confidence' was the main issue that he needed to overcome. Similar to M1, being called on in class made F1 very nervous:

When I know that I am going to be called on, I want to leave the class.
My voice gets hoarse. My hands tremble.

Both M2 and F2 based their anxiety problem on their class, as this was the beginning of the term, they had not yet become used to their classmates and, therefore, they felt shy when speaking in front of the class "*because we do not know our classmates well*" (M2). M3 and F3 were more positive about their contributions and both agreed that they felt confident while speaking. However, for F3, her performance depended on the classroom environment which was expected to be lively and positive, and for M3, his background knowledge of the topic was the precondition for performing well in speaking classes.

5.2.6 Ideal speaking class

The final section of the student initial questionnaire aimed at understanding participants' views about the characteristics of a positive speaking class. The findings not only provided an understanding of participants' general expectations from speaking classes but also informed the design of my first intervention. The descriptive analysis of the data showed that the majority of participants wanted to 'deal with vocabulary items' in speaking class. Most participants agreed that they should be 'active' in the class. This was also the case in Zhang and Head's study (2010). They conducted a study at a university in China with the aim of seeking ways to make reticent learners be involved in speaking activities. Before allowing participants to design classroom activities themselves, the researchers identified their needs and found that 'taking an active part' in classroom activities and 'seeking opportunities to use the [target] language' were the major expectations of learners. Parallel to this, in Sampson's study (2010), carried out in Japan, students showed a strong preference for a communicative lesson style which involved the students actively.

The participants also reported that they favoured 'working in pairs and groups'. Regarding the topics to cover in speaking class, the majority of participants wanted to deal with 'hobbies' and 'current affairs'. 'Common phrases' and

'vocabulary' were the top two activities that students wanted to carry out in speaking classes (see Appendix 19).

The interviewees emphasised the importance of topic selection, suggesting that *"The topic should be interesting for students"* (M1) because, *"If it is boring, than students will not speak"* (F2). Furthermore, M1 emphasised that students' background knowledge should be taken into consideration in topic selection so that *"Everyone has something to say about the topic"*. They were also in agreement about the significance of a positive classroom environment. They supported the view that *"The classroom atmosphere should be comfortable. Everybody should feel relaxed while speaking"* (F3) and *"This is a must for an effective speaking class"* (M2).

Taken together, this initial stage made a significant contribution to my knowledge of the research context by providing in-depth data about various issues. To synthesise, I understood that, although participants believed in the importance of speaking as a language skill, in their previous language learning experience, they had mainly dealt with the structural aspects of English and this resulted in feeling competent in grammar and reading but less so in speaking. I also noticed that most participants were not happy with their speaking performance and had problems stemming from lack of practice and inability to use vocabulary items effectively while speaking. Although it was not the case for the whole class, a high level of anxiety was reported to be the major issue for some interviewees. Furthermore, this stage also informed me about the general expectations of the speaking classes held by the participants. I realised that participants favoured activities related to vocabulary and wanted to be active in class by means of group and pair work activities.

Before making any interventions, uncovering the issues discussed above was significant to the thorough understanding of the research context. The data collected at this stage therefore informed the design of my interventions by means of illustrating the issues relevant to students' speaking abilities. The next stage, Stage two, comprised classroom interventions designed with the aim of providing speaking classroom procedures appropriate to the students and findings from this stage will be discussed in the following section.

5.3 Stage Two: Implementing and the analysis of the student-negotiated speaking lessons

This stage was the implementation stage of the student-negotiated speaking classroom. It comprised eight weekly classroom interventions that were designed according to the findings of the post-session tools (see Appendix 20). This process was cyclical in nature, in that the findings of an intervention informed the next one. Although this stage does not directly address particular research questions, processing this stage was a requisite for understanding the experience of the student-negotiated speaking classroom.

Questionnaires were given to the whole class at the end of each lesson. After analysing the questionnaire data, I interviewed six students the following day. The objectives of these tools were twofold: to reveal students' views about the effectiveness of each lesson and understand their suggestions for the next lesson.

The designs of my interventions were informed by different data sets collected during the study. As discussed earlier, the data collected in Stage One profiled participants' general expectations from speaking classes and this provided an understanding of their perceptions of the characteristics of ideal speaking classes. I took into account these aspects during the study and attempted to provide relevant activities. The data collected in Stage Two revealed the weak and strong points of my interventions and this enabled me to reflect on my interventions, which was essential for improving the effectiveness of my next intervention. The teachers' comments and my observations also affected the design of my interventions as I designed some of the interventions considering our views about students' actual needs rather than their reported wants.

5.3.1 The designs of the interventions

The first intervention was designed according to the data collected in the first stage which revealed that the majority of students wanted to study common phrases in speaking. For the second stage, I relied on students' comments on the open-ended item which was designed to elicit rich data as participants were free to write anything about the next lesson. However, this item was not successful in providing informative data as participants made general

comments such as “*continue this*” (R4), “*an interesting topic*” (R5), “*general activities*” (R8). To overcome this, after intervention 2, this item was converted to a closed one and presented as a list of twelve speaking activities (adapted from Klippel, 1984), and participants were asked to tick as many activities as they wanted for the following week (see Appendix 4).

The results showing the two preferred activity types for the weeks following the second intervention are presented in Table 5.4.

Intervention	Activity 1	Sum	Activity 2	Sum
3	Guessing	19	Jigsaw	16
4	Guessing	22	Vocabulary	21
5	Guessing	19	Jigsaw	16
6	Vocabulary	20	Guessing	18
7	Guessing	18	Role-play	14
8	Guessing	11	Role-play	10

Table 5.4: The two preferred activity types for the weeks following the second intervention

Although students were given twelve alternatives, they asked for particular activities during the term, namely, guessing, vocabulary, jigsaw and role-play. Among those, there was a high preference for guessing activities: it was the most popular activity for five interventions. In guessing activities, students try to find out something that the other student knows. As highlighted by Klippel (1984), guessing activities are popular among language learners because they allow for language practice and provide an entertaining and engaging classroom environment. In the interventions, guessing and vocabulary activities were combined because vocabulary was the other popular activity. In these activities, students were asked to define and guess words in various situations (see 5.3.2).

When asked why they favoured guessing activities, interviewees addressed different aspects of this type of activities. For example, some put emphasis on being appropriate to involving all students because:

Everybody tries to say something, it arouses interest because you are curious about the result. (M3)

Guessing games are better and they are more enjoyable. Everybody tries to participate and do something. (F1)

Others liked their on-going nature:

Guessing games are better than other activities because it [the activity] does not end at once, you can continue speaking as much as you can. (M1)

F3 also favoured guessing activities and indicated that she would use this type of activities when she became a teacher of English in future. Jigsaw and role-play were the other popular activities. In jigsaw activities, as in jigsaw puzzles, cooperation is required to find the solution by means of fitting together the pieces of information students have (Klippel, 1984). Students did a jigsaw activity in intervention 5. In this activity, each student was given a different version of a picture and was asked to discover the differences through speech alone (see 5.3.2). This was difficult for them since the students found it demanding to describe all aspects in their pictures. This session was reported to be the most difficult one (see 5.3.3).

In role-plays, students were given a situation and expected to act according to the information provided about their roles (Klippel, 1984). Short role-play activities were implemented as combinations of other activities presented in Intervention 1 and 2. In Intervention 7, the sole activity was a role play (see 5.3.2). As with the jigsaw activity, this session was also reported to be the most difficult session (see 5.3.3).

5.3.2 The intervention procedure and participants' comments

To understand how this research provided a student-negotiated speaking classroom, it is worth detailing the procedure for each intervention. This section will outline this, with reference to lesson content, the teacher's and students' comments on post-session questionnaires and the interviewee's responses in post-session interviews. Information about the lesson contents of each intervention is displayed in Appendix nineteen.

Intervention 1

The results of the final section of the student initial questionnaire illustrated that participants wanted to deal with conversation gambits in my first intervention. I therefore prepared a number of controlled activities which enabled them to practise phrases such as 'By the way'; 'To my mind'; 'To tell you the truth'; 'Well, let me think' (adapted from Keller & Warner, 1988). The teacher identified the objectives of this lesson as *“to teach gambits and give the students the opportunity to practise them”*.

The analysis of the open-ended items in the student post-session questionnaire revealed some negative comments. Most participants seemed dissatisfied with the activities and found them “*not useful*” (R5) because “*There were activities and questions all the time*” (R26). Some of them did not find the lesson interesting and they were not happy with practising familiar topics. Among the interviewees, M3 was in line with the whole class in terms of being unhappy with dealing with familiar issues. He commented as follows:

I could have participated much more but since they were known things, I did not want to. (M3)

Although the teacher reported that she met her objectives and was happy with the students’ participation, she agreed that “*Some activities may have been more useful if they were more appropriate to students’ levels*”. M1, one of the most anxious interviewees, maintained that he was still having troubles because of being anxious: “*As usual, I could not speak this week, I felt very anxious while speaking. Therefore, the lesson was not very good for me*” (M1). Other interviewees, on the other hand, highlighted some positive aspects of the lesson and seemed very satisfied with the content of the lesson:

The activity was very comprehensible and provided much opportunity to speak. Everybody could speak with ease. Even I, I am very anxious, but I could speak in this week’s lessons. (F1)

This was the best speaking class, the most active and enjoyable one. Before that, the topics were very boring. We could not speak anything until this week; there was nothing to talk about. Now we have that different environment. (F2)

M2 also found it useful to carry out pair work because “*When my partner did not want to participate, I encouraged him because I wanted to do the activity*” and he affirmed that pair work activities are useful for providing speaking opportunities to each student.

Intervention 2

As discussed earlier, I could not collect useful data for the design of this intervention. Therefore, I tried to select a familiar topic so that each student could have something to say. In this lesson, students were divided into two groups as smokers and non-smokers. Each group put forward arguments about particular issues written on the board. After that, the groups were mixed and they were expected to defend their arguments and reach a consensus (adapted

from Sampedro & Hillyard, 2004). According to the teacher, this lesson aimed at *“allowing students to express personal opinions on the subject of smoking, from the standpoint of a smoker or a non-smoker and to enable them to listen to the ideas of others and reach a consensus on the topic”*.

The majority of students made positive comments on the lesson such as *“the topic was good”* (R6), *“the lesson was good and enjoyable”* (R13), and *“it was very enjoyable”* (R26). Participants underlined the usefulness of the topic and the group work activity:

Since smoking is a common topic, we have opinions about it. Therefore, I could speak English easily. (R26)

Thanks to the group work activity, I found the opportunity to speak. (R28)

The teacher was positive about meeting her objectives and agreed with the students about the appropriateness of the topic because *“Most students had an opinion on the subject, but many of the smokers seemed to be inclined to be in favour of giving up smoking and thus were not very defensive of smokers’ rights”*. Although all interviewees agreed that the topic was useful in terms of having something to say, they made different comments about other issues. M1 and F1 were content with the group work activity which allowed them to communicate with their friends rather than the teacher. They both confirmed that they did not feel anxious in group work activities:

I don't feel anxious in group work activities. When I speak in group work comfortably, I believe that I can overcome my anxiety problem while speaking with the teacher. (M1)

The lesson was very good because I feel anxious when I speak in front of the class but this does not happen in group work activities. (F1)

F2 and F3 were also satisfied with the lesson procedure. They confirmed that the topic was interesting and this allowed for high student participation. However, F2 reported that she was not in a good mood that day for personal reasons, and therefore, she did not participate much. Interestingly, F3 viewed the classroom participation as limited to whole class work and somewhat negative about her participation in the lesson even though she confirmed that she was very active in the group work activity.

M2 and M3 did not seem as satisfied as the other interviewees. Although they both agreed that the topic was good, they criticised some aspects of the lesson.

M2 mentioned that he did not like to speak on general topics because they *“had been speaking on this kind of general topic since high school”*. For that reason, he felt restricted by using particular arguments. Additionally, he was not happy because he did not learn new things that can be used while speaking:

We did not learn new words. Therefore, we could only use the words that we had already known. So, we did not progress. (M2)

The only issue that M3 was not content with was group work activity. He maintained that the lesson would be much better if it was not group work because he preferred working individually. He put forward an epitomising rationale for this, as follows:

In group work, we only try to find a general opinion and determine what to say when the teacher asked for our group's conclusion. We do not speak more than that. Since we share the responsibility, it does not matter if you contribute or not individually. Therefore, I don't want to take initiative in groups. Additionally, we don't pay attention to our speech when we speak with our friends as much as we do while talking with the teacher. Anyway, our friends even do not pay attention to what we are saying. (M3)

To overcome this, he suggested that these types of activities should be carried out in front of the class through the involvement of the teacher.

Intervention 3

This intervention involved a guessing activity because the data which had emerged from the previous student post-session questionnaire revealed it as the most popular activity that students wanted to study this week. I combined this with a vocabulary activity because 'lack of vocabulary' was one of the recurrent themes revealed in initial data regarding participants' weak points of speaking ability. This was the first time students did a guessing activity. The teacher stated the objectives of this week as *“getting students to explain words, interact with a partner to clarify the vocabulary being asked for and to compete against other students to gain the highest score in the class”*. In this lesson, students were paired up, one couple versus another, and tried to describe and guess a word (adapted from Klippel, 1984). These words were easy to describe, such as 'table', 'overhead projector', 'water', 'motorcycle', and so on. At the end of the activity, the pair with the highest number of words won the game and so a prize. The classroom atmosphere was very positive during this activity because each pair did their best to describe and guess the word.

In the post-session questionnaire, the majority of participants made very positive comments, such as *“simply superb”* (R5), *“wonderful”* (R30), *“it was unbelievably enjoyable and useful”* (R29), *“it was the most useful activity so far”* (R19). The main reasons for this high level of satisfaction were the positive classroom environment and the fact that participants found this motivating:

I laughed a lot. And when I noticed that the class was having fun, I was much more motivated. (R30)

The teacher was content that the activity was motivating and all students were engaged in the activity willingly and successfully. She mentioned a number of reasons for this: the activity was in small groups, not in front of the whole class; the element of competition added to their enjoyment; they enjoyed playing games and the vocabulary was generally known to them, so they could concentrate on giving oral explanations. Additionally, she highlighted that Turkish did not seem to be used very much and observed that when it was employed, the fellow students warned each other.

All interviewees made positive comments about this intervention. Taken together, as with the whole class, the main issue was the positive classroom environment. Even F1 and M1, who were the most anxious students, pointed out that they felt comfortable while speaking in the lesson:

I find it difficult to speak in front of the class, I could not overcome this. But like we did this week, when I speak in pair or group work activities, I speak much more. (F1)

This week was good. We were not directly related to the teacher. We communicated with our friends all the time. (M1)

F2, who had negative views about her speaking ability, was very happy with the positive classroom environment as well. She maintained that this affected her own performance because when *“the class was energetic, I felt the same. It was superb. I felt excited while defining the word because I did my best to win the game”*.

M2 had a different perspective and made comments similar to those he had made for intervention 1 where he emphasised the usefulness of pair work:

In pair work, the things I learned from my partner were very useful for me. I learned new things when my partner described the words.

F3, who was the most positive interviewee about her speaking ability, highlighted her own performance during the activity and seemed satisfied: *“I*

described the words well and when I noticed that my partner guessed them correctly, I got motivated” (F3).

The reason why M3 was happy with this intervention was that he could find an opportunity to speak a lot and the activity involved dealing with vocabulary:

I noticed that I like vocabulary activities that we describe words. This is because you perform and receive an immediate feedback from your partner.

Intervention 4

Students commented positively on the effectiveness of the last intervention. They wanted to carry on studying guessing activities so a similar activity was designed for this week. The teacher identified the objectives as *“giving the students oral practice in an enjoyable way, in order to help them speak more fluently, be able to express themselves more exactly and practise asking questions”*. In this lesson, each student had a name tag of a famous person fixed to their back. They then circulated around the room and tried to find out who they were by asking yes/no questions. When they found out which famous person they were, the teacher attached another name tag to their back. The student who had the most name tags on his/her back was declared the winner and earned a prize (adapted from Ur, 1981). This was a mingling activity and I observed that the class was very lively, students had great fun, and all students communicated with each other. Although they did not learn new things that could be used while speaking, they had an enjoyable communicative classroom environment.

Most participants made positive comments about this session, such as *“very successful”* (R12), *“very enjoyable”* (R13) and *“very good”* (R1). Considering the reasons why this session was favoured so much, there was a strong consensus that it provided opportunity to speak. The majority of students were in agreement with R26, who stated that:

Since the activities were interesting, they were also useful in terms of providing us with the opportunity to speak.

The teacher was positive about meeting the objectives of the lesson:

Very good atmosphere, with activities enjoyed by students and a high level of participation, due to the fact that all activities were game-like. The games also engendered a competitive atmosphere, which can sometimes become rather too prominent.

The most anxious interviewees, F1 and M1 were very satisfied with this type of lesson procedure because they preferred to communicate with their friends rather than the teacher. M1 claimed that, because of being activity-based, the lesson was so enjoyable that the time had flown by. F1 was happy as well because of finding opportunity to speak with her friends:

I could not speak that much before you [the researcher]. Nobody was talking this much. You observed this as well. But when it is like that, we all speak much more. We talked with our pairs, with group members, in any case, each person has chance to speak.

F3 agreed with these comments and underlined the usefulness of competitive classroom activities: *“When there is a competitive environment, you want to talk a lot and feel comfortable. This is very important. Additionally, these activities improved my contact with the class. This is also important”*.

Other interviewees were more cautious about the usefulness of this activity: *“We did not have much to say and could only use particular phrases. It was not something to make us talk freely”* (F2). M2 agreed that he did not like to feel limited to using particular questions. Additionally, unlike F1 and M1, M2 and M3 did not like to be working separately from the teacher that much and they claimed that the teacher should somehow have been involved in the class:

When you permit the students too much freedom, this creates problems in the lesson process. Therefore, teacher should direct the class and s/he should be the main factor in the lesson. (M2)

In this kind of activities, the classroom environment becomes chaotic. Instead, in pairs, we will sit, one or two people will come to the board, they will perform and then another group will take their turn. (M3)

Intervention 5

Since the interventions I had made so far involved guessing activities only, I designed a different type of activity for this week and presented a jigsaw activity, another popular activity reported in the student post-session questionnaire. I also wanted to provide a freer communicative activity in which students could discuss anything they wanted without relying on controlled task instructions. I designed two activities: a jigsaw and a discussion activity. First, students worked in pairs: each pair received a different version of a picture and was asked to find out the differences through speech alone. Second, students were divided into groups of five or six and discussed spending £500 to decorate their shared house. They were expected to reach a consensus. The teacher

specified the objectives of this week as *“giving the students practice in pair and group interaction, and using negotiation to reach an outcome for the task”*. During the first activity, I observed that students found it difficult to describe some parts of the picture and they mostly spoke in Turkish in the second activity.

The responses of the participants to open-ended items showed that they found the lesson interesting because it was the first time they had done a jigsaw activity. Some participants made positive comments such as *“The activity was good, it was like a game”* (R15), *“I could speak with ease”* (R17). On the other hand, the majority of them emphasised that *“The first activity was a little difficult”* (R12) and they did not have an effective discussion in the second activity: *“I did not like that my group mates preferred speaking in Turkish rather than English”* (R27).

Concerning the issue of meeting objectives, the teacher stated that, *“The tasks used were designed to ensure objectives were met, if they were actually carried out”*. Although she was positive about students’ motivation and participation in the first activity, she was not happy with the use of Turkish in the second activity: *“Some tended to use the mother tongue rather than English, indicating that they thought the objective was to reach an outcome rather than use just the English to do so”*. According to her, the reason for this was because of *“students’ different attitudes to pair or group work”*.

M1, F1 and F3 were missing that week. All other interviewees mentioned that they mostly spoke in Turkish in group work activities. This was because, *“In group work activities, in any case, one starts speaking in Turkish and after that everybody does the same”* (F2). For that reason, the interviewees agreed that pair work activities are more useful in this respect because *“When you work with a partner, you have to speak, there is nobody else who can do that activity”* (M3).

F2 was satisfied with her participation because she felt that she talked a lot in the first activity. However, M2 voiced similar concerns as in the intervention two about learning new things:

We could only use particular words. I could not form different sentences. I always said things like ‘there is a bird’, ‘there is a tree’.

To overcome the problem of use of Turkish, M3 suggested that groups should be controlled by the teacher all the time:

In group work, we can divide the class into 3 so that each group can listen to another. Our teacher can listen to it as well. In this case, we will do it more seriously.

Intervention 6

In the post-session questionnaires, some students commented that they wanted the teacher to provide more guidance and feedback on their speaking performance. This intervention was designed with the aim of providing a classroom environment relevant to these students. In this activity, students were given a list of twenty occupations and asked to rank five of them according to two criteria: the ones that are regarded and paid for in society and the ones that they think are the most important (adapted from Klippel, 1984). Occupations that students may not know were selected so that they could learn new words. After working in groups and making a list, each member of the group was asked to justify their list in front of the whole class. According to the teacher, the objective of this activity was *“to give students the opportunity to learn some vocabulary, practise discussing and negotiating with classmates, and present results to the class”*. During the activity, I observed that students did not talk much and most of them did not seem comfortable while talking in front of the class, and it was difficult for the class to pay attention to each student’s opinions.

The majority of students were happy to learn new vocabulary items but they did not find the topic interesting and they did not like to speak in front of the whole class:

I am happy that our vocabulary knowledge is becoming more extended. (R16)

I could not find ample opportunity to speak because the topic was not interesting. (R11)

I did not want to come to the board. (R4)

Interestingly, one student stated that s/he had to participate because everybody was supposed to. The teacher made positive comments about the usefulness of the lesson in terms of providing opportunity to speak and negotiate. But she mentioned that the activity would be better with fewer students.

All interviewees, excluding F2, stated that they felt restricted by the topic because it did not allow for generating different opinions. Therefore, they agreed that they could not find opportunity to speak:

We could not contribute much this week. We selected the important occupation and then gave reasons. Since everybody talked about the same issues, we could not find much to say. (F1)

For that reason, some interviewees found the lesson boring. M1 maintained that he liked the mingling activities as it provides a comfortable classroom environment. F3 highlighted this with reference to the competitive natures of activities:

In previous weeks, the classroom was lively because there was a competition, everybody was trying to win. But this week, this was not so, there was not a competition. I believe that the competitive environment is important in speaking classes.

Regarding speaking in front of the class, when asked about his feelings, M1 responded:

It was not difficult. But I made advanced preparation: I noted down what I would say in front of the class so that I would not get stuck. Therefore, I was comfortable. (M1)

Among the interviewees, only F2 and M3 made positive comments. F2 affirmed that she liked the topic because it was subjective and everybody had different opinions. Therefore, she confirmed that she could find opportunity to speak. M3, however, liked the structure of the lesson because he wanted to be under the control of the teacher:

Everything was like we talked last week. We did everything in front of the teacher. I believe this was more serious. We did not use Turkish. This was exactly what I wanted.

Intervention 7

Considering the students' previous performance in the speaking activities, the teacher and I agreed that they were having difficulties in maintaining conversation when they are unable recall particular vocabulary items. This requires the ability to use circumlocution as a communication strategy which is a means of compensating for lack of knowledge of vocabulary by means of conveying the message using different words and phrases. We decided to present an activity in which students could practise this skill. In designing the activities of this intervention, I considered students' positive and negative

comments about my previous interventions and attempted to provide a classroom environment where students would be willing to participate.

The first activity of this intervention had a procedure similar to that of Intervention 3. Students worked in pairs, one couple versus another and defined words to their partners. This week, the words were in Turkish and students were expected to explain them by means of circumlocution (adapted from Klippel, 1984). Before the activity, teacher gave information about the function of circumlocution, illustrated some examples and wrote some phrases on the board. The second activity was a role-play and students were given different situations and asked to make dialogues with their partners (adapted from Klippel, 1984). The teacher identified the objective as *“raising awareness of and giving practice in circumlocution as a communication strategy; secondly, getting students to practise communicating in particular situations, through using role-play”*.

Similar to intervention 3, the classroom environment was very lively and students enjoyed the first activity very much. The majority of students agreed with my observation and made positive comments: *“It was very enjoyable and useful”* (R17), *“The activity was very interesting and enabled us to speak”* (R7), *“It was enjoyable, we talked a lot”* (R14). One participant found this week useful because *“The guessing game was a bit difficult”* (R5). Most students confirmed that they realised the importance of using circumlocution as a communication strategy especially when they got stuck in the conversation. All interviewees confirmed that the circumlocution activity was appropriate to their needs:

We really cannot express ourselves; we get stuck in conversations when we cannot find the word. This happens to me as well. When I start explaining something, if I cannot recall the word, I break the conversation like I did not utter that sentence and I form another sentence. Therefore, this activity was very useful. (F1)

With regard to the second activity, students reported mixed feelings. While some students mentioned that they enjoyed the role-play activity, others stated that they did not find it interesting. According to the teacher, overall, the session was successful, the classroom atmosphere was very good and students were enthusiastic. However, she observed that some students did not like the role-play activity:

In the second activity, maybe one or two students did not like the topic of the first role play (split up with boy/girlfriend) ... All students participated, due to the nature of the activities and the way in which students were grouped, although in the second activity, one or two finished rather quickly.

M1 mentioned that the role-play activity was not particularly successful:

The role-playing activity was moderate. It was not very good. It restricted us because we could only speak on a particular situation. We could say three or four sentences.

However, other interviewees were positive about the role-play activity.

According to M2, this was the best aspect of the class:

The second activity was exactly what I wanted. It allowed students to think and respond immediately ... I was very active therefore this was very useful to me. I believe this was the most useful activity we have done so far.

Interestingly, this classroom procedure changed M3's opinions about the ideal speaking classroom. So far, he had always underlined that the students should be under the control of the teacher because this affects students' concentration on the activity. However, this week, he reported that this lesson was more useful in terms of providing opportunity to speak:

This activity was continuous in nature. In other activities, we expressed ourselves in one or two sentences but this was not like that.

When reminded about his opinions about the ideal speaking class, he responded:

Compared to last week, this lesson provided more opportunity to speak. That's why I preferred this. But if we did it in groups, we would start speaking in Turkish.

Intervention 8

The final intervention involved a guessing activity because this was the most favoured speaking activity. Considering students' comments on post-session questionnaires and interviews, I attempted to provide a competitive classroom environment, which was also reported as one of the essentials of speaking classes.

This was a guessing activity in which students were divided into four groups of seven. A member of a team came to the front and picked up a name card of a famous person. Each member of the group asked questions to find out who the famous person was. After each member asked questions, the group negotiated

and guessed the famous person (adapted from Klippel, 1984). The group with the most points won the game. According to the teacher, this activity was designed to *“practise asking questions in order to discover the identity of a famous person, at the same time focussing on the correct form of the question”*. The student enjoyed the activity but some students did not find a question and could not negotiate with the group as much as expected.

The majority of students mentioned that they liked the activity:

These kinds of activities are very useful and enjoyable. Time flies by and it ends quickly. I wish we had more time. (R14)

The teacher reported that the lesson was useful because students needed to practise asking questions. She also stated that the classroom environment was positive as the activity was in the form of a game and students found it enjoyable because of the competitive environment.

M1 and M3 were missing that week. Among the other interviewees, F1, F2 and F3 were satisfied with the lesson. F2 maintained that she did not feel restricted: *“We could ask any question we wanted”*. F1 highlighted the appropriateness of the lesson to their needs: *“I always believe that we have difficulties in asking questions. This is because we haven’t practised this in lessons, we always answer questions”*. F3 liked the competitive nature of the activity:

These activities stop you feeling shy during the lesson. The majority of our classmates do not want to speak in the class. They absolutely have opinions but they do not want to talk. But since these activities make everybody involved in the class, they notice that there is no reason to be shy. And they improve. These activities are very useful in terms of overcoming these negative views. (F3)

M2, however, did not find the lesson useful because he did not like group work activities:

I could not benefit from this lesson. In any case, I felt negative while doing group work because of the number of students involved. We also could not direct useful questions that could lead us to find the solution. We always asked the same questions such as ‘is it female or male’. Since we always repeated ourselves, this activity was not interesting to me.

M2 also mentioned that he felt a bit tired because it was almost the end of term and there were many other assignments they had to prepare.

5.3.3 The effectiveness of the interventions

Two sections with closed-ended items were included in the post-session student questionnaire with the aim of collecting numerical data to make comparisons between the interventions. In the first set, students were given two scales from 1 to 10 and asked to rate these according to two criteria: (a) the evaluation of the session, (b) the evaluation of their individual classroom participation. These items aimed to reveal participants' overall views about the effectiveness of the interventions. Results are illustrated in Figure 5.1:

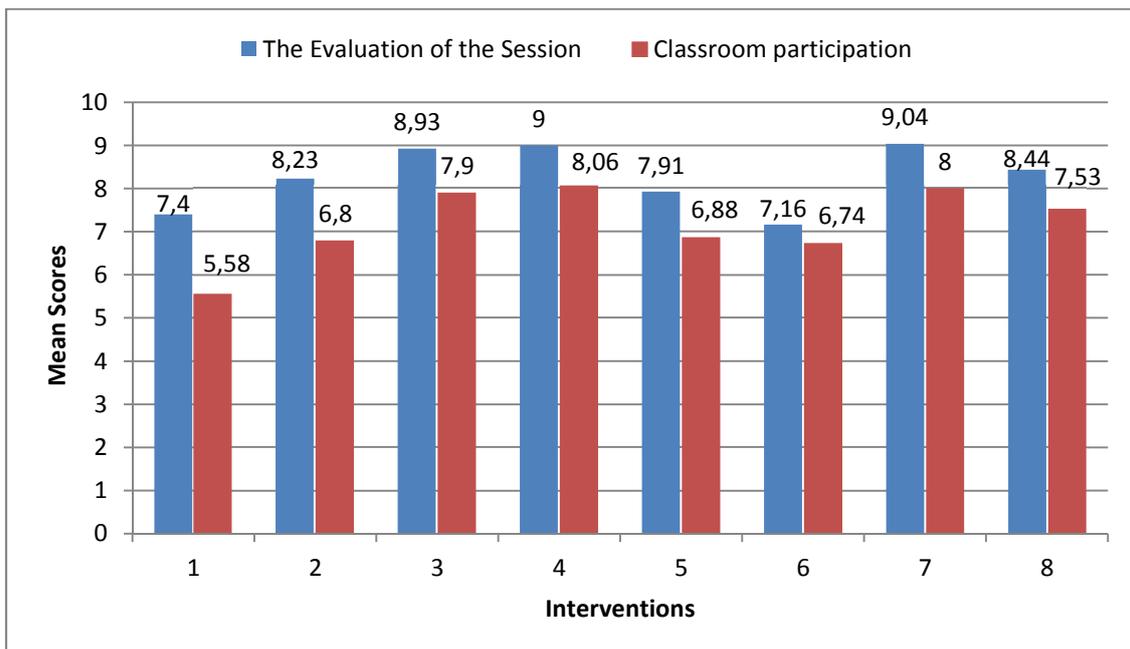


Figure 5.1: The evaluation of the session and classroom participation

Figure 5.1 shows that, overall, students were positive about the effectiveness of the interventions as the lowest score was 7.16. It is also seen that there is a positive correlation between these two items. When the mean scores of the 'evaluation of the session' increased, so did the scores of the 'classroom participation' item. When the mean scores of each intervention are compared, it is seen that intervention 7, 4 and 3 were reported to be the most successful classes. Intervention 6, 1 and 5 were the only three lessons where overall scores were below 8.

The second set of questions, which comprises 5 point Likert-type items, concern two issues: 'the characteristics of the session' and 'the effectiveness of the session'. The former addressed issues such as usefulness, appropriateness, enjoyableness and difficulty of the session; the latter had a

more specific perspective involving items about the instructions, the classroom atmosphere, activities, topics and participants' levels of feeling comfortable, finding opportunity to speak, and receiving feedback. The results are displayed in Table 5.5.

Questionnaire Item		Intervention							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The characterisation of the session	Useful	4	5	3	2	7	8	1	6
	Appropriate to my needs	7	4	3	2	5	8	1	6
	Enjoyable	7	5	1	2	6	8	3	4
	Difficult	3	5	8	7	1	4	2	6
The effectiveness of the session	The instructions were clear	6	2	7	1	8	5	3	4
	The classroom atmosphere was positive	7	4	1	3	6	8	2	5
	The speaking activities were good	7	4	3	2	6	8	1	5
	The topic was interesting	6	4	3	2	7	8	1	5
	I felt relaxed	7	5	1	2	6	8	3	4
	The activities provided lots of opportunities to speak in English	8	4	2	3	5	7	1	6
	I had enough opportunities to speak	8	4	1	3	6	7	2	5
	I received useful feedback about my speaking performance	8	5	2	4	6	7	1	3
TOTAL (excluding the 'difficult' item)		75	46	27	26	68	82	19	53

Table 5.5: Rankings of interventions for each item relating to perceived characteristics and effectiveness (1=highest mean score, 8=the lowest mean score)

Table 5.5 displays the results that were ranked according to the mean scores (see Appendix 21 for mean scores) and shows that each item, except for 'difficult', is positive. For that reason, the summation of rankings of items excluding the 'difficult' item shows the overall success of each intervention. In this respect, Intervention 7, 4 and 3 were the most successful classes with the lowest scores in total ranking. These interventions were in the top three in relation to usefulness, appropriateness and enjoyment, and Intervention 7 was also ranked in the top three for effectiveness. Conversely, intervention 6, 1 and 5 were found to be the least successful classes. Interestingly, although the first intervention was reported to be the least appropriate and enjoyable, it was the fourth highest ranked useful session.

The mean scores of difficulty were low. While the mean score of the most difficult intervention was 2.04, the mean score of the least difficult item was 1.53 (see Appendix 21). This shows that students did not find the interventions difficult and there was not much difference between interventions regarding their difficulty levels. The analysis of the item of 'difficulty' revealed interesting results which are worth discussing: interventions 5 and 7 were reported to be the most difficult classes. While intervention 7 was considered one of the most successful sessions, intervention 5 was among the least successful classes. These results may indicate that, in contrast to being 'enjoyable', 'appropriate to needs' and 'useful', difficulty is not a factor related to the success of a lesson. In intervention 7, students explained Turkish words to their partners by means of circumlocution and in intervention 5, they did two activities: they tried to find the differences in a picture without showing their pictures to their partners and did a group activity in which they negotiated on decorating their shared house and came to an agreement on what to buy with a limited amount of money.

There was a consensus about the ratings of interventions in the following items: 'the classroom atmosphere was positive', 'the speaking activities were good', 'the topic was interesting', and 'I felt comfortable'. Despite the slight differences in rankings, the most highly rated classes were intervention 3, 4 and 7 and the least highly rated classes were interventions 6, 1 and 5. The scenario was the same for classes rated highly in terms of providing opportunity to speak. However, there were slight differences in the rankings of the low rated classes: intervention 8 was one of the lowest three rated interventions and intervention 5 was reported to be more successful in this matter. Concerning receiving useful feedback, intervention 3, the other intervention ranked overall, was ranked in second position. Interestingly, although intervention 4 was one of the top rated interventions, it was not rated particularly high in providing useful feedback.

With regard to the lesson contents of top rated classes, they had a number of characteristics in common. Each one of them was a guessing activity which included a game-like competitive environment where students defined and guessed a word and worked in fours - one couple versus another. In intervention 7, students defined a Turkish word by using circumlocution; in intervention 4, they asked questions about a famous person and tried to find out who s/he was, and lastly in intervention 3, they defined basic English words.

The lesson procedures of the least successful lesson were varied. In intervention 6, students were expected to rank five occupations according to their prestige level in the society. They discussed their lists in groups and each member of the group came to the board and explained their reasoning to the whole class. In intervention 1, students did a number of controlled activities to practise conversation gambits. In both of these classes, students were not satisfied with the opportunity provided to speak English. In intervention 6, they also did not like to speak in front of the class. In intervention 1, students were not happy with the controlled nature of the activities and maintained that they would prefer doing less controlled activities that allowed for freedom of directing the conversation.

To sum up, this stage allowed for processing the student-negotiated speaking classroom through designing lessons according to students' views collected systematically on a weekly basis. Participants wanted to do particular type of activities and in general, they seemed content with the lesson procedures, especially with regard to finding opportunities to speak English and feeling comfortable while doing the activities in the class. Although the whole class was in agreement about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of most interventions, interviewees reported different views. For example, M1 and F1 were very happy when they were not under the control of the teacher and favoured activities that enabled them to communicate with their friends rather than the teacher. F2 and F3 were more positive when the classroom environment was lively and the activity was not so controlled. Conversely, M2 and M3 were satisfied when they were controlled by the teacher, learned new things and received feedback from the teacher.

This chapter now continues with the results of the final stage of my action research which concerned participants' views about the effectiveness of the whole term. This will in turn give ideas about the usefulness of student-negotiated speaking classroom in relation to different variables which will be discussed below in detail.

5.4 Stage Three: The evaluation of the term

This stage was the final stage of my action research and sought for participants' critical evaluation of the student-negotiated speaking classes they experienced during the term. The teacher was interviewed with the aim of understanding her opinions about the effectiveness of the term. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from students. In general, the objectives of the quantitative data were twofold: (a) exploring similarities and differences in participants' opinions about their English proficiency, speaking ability and affective states before and after the study, (b) revealing the extent to which participants felt involved in classroom decision-making. On the other hand, the qualitative data aimed for in-depth understanding of the issues mentioned above together with individuals' opinions about experiencing student-negotiated speaking classes.

5.4.1 The teacher's evaluation of the term

The final interview with the teacher was designed to understand her opinions about the effectiveness of the term with particular attention to the objectives of the course, students' participation and performance, and the usefulness of student negotiation in speaking classes.

Overall, the teacher maintained that she met the objectives of the course by means of providing students with ample opportunity to speak English, which, in turn, would help them improve their speaking abilities. She believed that the activities were useful as *"Every student participated, I do not consider how well they spoke but the participation was good"*. According to her, this was because students *"enjoyed the activities. If they had not, they would not have participated"*. When asked about the reasons for this enjoyment, she emphasised the game-like nature of activities and their appropriateness to students' levels. She also underlined the positive classroom environment of the class, in that students seemed to get along well with each other.

The teacher confirmed that student negotiation affects student participation:

When you negotiate, students feel that they have possession of the lesson and activities. I tried to involve students in other classes and asked them to explain the activities they wanted to study. However, we provided this more systematically in this class. Therefore, the research class students were more involved compared to other classes.

She emphasised the classroom dynamics as well and stated that each class has unique characteristics. Therefore, their reactions towards the same activity may differ: *“One activity or topic may be effective in one class but this may be just the opposite in another”*. Although she agreed that student negotiation is useful, she was not sure if it works well in all classes. She gave an example of a class that she taught before:

That class was very quiet and passive. I could not receive feedback. They did not participate. I asked what and how to do but I could not receive much information.

Additionally, for student negotiation to be effective, she thought that students should be aware of their wants and needs. She was cautious about the implementability of this type of systematic procedure and pointed out that she had been teaching in five different classes, with more than twenty-five students in each:

You need to involve students systematically and collect feedback regularly. But it is difficult for me to put this into practice in all my classes. If I had just one class with smaller number of students I could easily provide this.

With regard to the impact of this research on her professional development, she confirmed that she started to be more critical regarding the activity choice:

I think about classroom issues more critically. These involve students' needs and ways to refer these needs. To do so, I started to critically evaluate the usefulness of activities.

She also agreed that, in her future classes, she would try to involve students more: *“I will try to ask students for detailed information about the things they need, the activities they want and the activities which are more useful to them”*.

5.4.2 Impacts of the interventions: Students' evaluation

This section will present the findings of quantitative and qualitative items included in both student initial questionnaire and final questionnaire. The number of participants providing final data is higher than the initial one because three students were missing when I administered the student initial questionnaire.

Perceptions of proficiency levels before and after the study

In order to reveal the differences in participants' views about their proficiency levels in seven different language areas, the same items were included in student initial and final questionnaires.

The results of descriptive statistics and Wilcoxon signed rank showed that, among seven language skills, the only significant difference was found in speaking (see Appendix 22) the result of which is displayed in Table 5.6.

		Descriptive		Wilcoxon signed rank						
		Mean	Std. Dev.		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	Sig.	
Speaking	Before	2.96	.73	after-before	Negative ranks	5	9	45	-2.61	.009
					Positive ranks	16	11.6	186		
	Ties	8	-		-					
	Total	29								
	After	3.46	.67							

Table 5.6: The differences in the perceptions of proficiency level

As seen in the table above, 16/29 students ranked speaking more positively after the study. The rankings of eight students did not differ and only 5/29 students were more negative about their speaking ability at the end of the term. Considering that separate courses for each language skill are offered in that term, speaking classes were found to be the most successful one. This indicates the impact of student negotiation on students' perceived abilities in speaking. This parallels the findings of Sampson's study (2010): that designing speaking classes by taking into account students' negative past experiences and expectations from speaking classes was found to have an impact on students' confidence in their ability to communicate.

Satisfaction of speaking skills and perceptions of weak and strong points

Another item seeking differences before and after the study addressed participants' levels of satisfactions with their speaking abilities. Students were asked to rate their speaking ability out of 5. At the beginning of the term, 19/29 participants rated it with 3, 6/29 with 2 and only 3/29 students rated their speaking satisfaction as level 4. However, at the end of the term, participants were more positive about their speaking ability: 15/32 participants rated their speaking satisfaction as level 4, 14/32 as 3 and only 2/32 participants rated it

with 2. To further understand the differences in student satisfaction, Wilcoxon signed test was implemented the results of which is displayed in Table 5.7.

		Descriptive		Wilcoxon signed rank						
		Mean	Std. Dev.		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	Sig.	
Satisfaction with speaking ability	Before	2.89	.56	after - before	Negative ranks	1	7	7	-3.26	.001
					Positive ranks	14	8	113		
	Ties	12	-		-					
	Total	27								
	After	3.41	.62							

Table 5.7: Students' satisfactions with their speaking ability

As shown above, significant differences were found in students' satisfactions with their speaking abilities before and after the study ($p < .05$), with fourteen participants showing greater satisfaction at the end of the term.

The qualitative analysis of the relevant data revealed both similar and different themes before and after the study. At the beginning of the term, the majority of participants highlighted 'lack of practice' as the main reason for their satisfaction levels. However, this was only mentioned by two participants at the end of the term. The usefulness of the term in providing opportunity to speak was confirmed by one participant: *"Thanks to the activities, we found ample opportunity to speak. Now, I am more comfortable while speaking. But still, for some reason, I cannot see myself competent enough"* (R10).

Another important difference was in 'fluency'. At the beginning of the term, 'inability to speak fluently' was mentioned as a recurrent factor that reduced participants' speaking satisfaction levels. Parallel to this, before the study, the majority of participants considered 'making long pauses' as their main weakness in speaking. However, this was not mentioned at the end of the term and five participants reported fluency as their strong points:

I feel strong in fluency and vocabulary choice. (R28)

I don't make long pauses anymore, I can use different words. (R5)

The differences in participants' perceptions of their strong points are also worth mentioning. Unlike the beginning of the term, most participants reported 'lexical knowledge' and 'pronunciation' as one of their strong points at the end of term. This was highlighted by one participant: *"I believe I am good at pronunciation, vocabulary choice and using phrases effectively"* (R21).

There were also common themes mentioned both before and after the study: some participants still consider 'vocabulary' as a factor reducing their satisfaction with their speaking abilities.

Sometimes, when I speak, I face a problem caused by my lack of vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, I cannot express myself all the time. (R16)

Since I cannot remember which word to use when I speak, I get stuck and I want to change the subject. This is definitely because of [the lack of] my vocabulary knowledge. (R22)

This lack of 'lexical knowledge' was also mentioned by the majority of participants as one of their main weaknesses in speaking:

I think my weak point in speaking is lack of vocabulary. I forget words because I do not review. Therefore, sometimes, I have troubles in finding suitable words. (R2)

The teacher, however, disagreed with students: she did not consider 'lexical knowledge' as the main weakness of students. She believed that students know the meanings of words but they cannot use them while speaking:

The only thing is that they do not use words they know because these are passive words. The number of words you use is not important in speaking. The important thing is to use the words you already know. I think they will overcome this in time by means of practice.

Anxiety was the other recurrent theme which was highlighted both before and after the study, not only as a weak point but also as a factor reducing satisfaction with speaking ability:

I feel stressed because of the fear of getting stuck while speaking. (R10)

Sometimes I face problems stemming from feeling anxious. Therefore, I cannot express myself at all times. (R16)

Taken together, the comparison of qualitative data collected before and after the study revealed both similarities and differences. Although 'anxiety' and 'lexical knowledge' were considered as reasons for being dissatisfied with speaking ability both in initial and final data, 'lack of practice' and 'making long pauses' were not common themes at the end of the term. Some of the participants also added 'pronunciation' as one of their strong points at the end of the term. Furthermore, the results of 'lexical knowledge' were interesting in the final data: it was the most recurrent theme as a weak point in speaking and it was also one of the most recurring themes as a strong point. In other words,

while twelve participants reported lexical knowledge as their weak point, six students regarded it as their strong point.

Competency in sub-skills of speaking before and after the study

Additionally, participants' views about their proficiency levels in accuracy, fluency, interaction, and vocabulary were compared before and after the study. Participants were given three options (1=low, 2=medium, 3=high level) and asked to tick the one which applied to them. The descriptive analysis of the data revealed that participants were more positive about their proficiency level in all four language areas at the end of the term (see Appendix 23). The Wilcoxon signed rank results showed significant differences in interaction and the results are displayed in Table 5.8.

		Descriptive		Wilcoxon signed rank						
		Mean	Std. Dev.		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	Sig.	
Interaction	Before	1.89	.61	after-before	Negative ranks	5	7	35	-2.07	.038
					Positive ranks	12	9.8	118		
	Ties	12								
	Total	29								
	After	2.25	.56							

Table 5.8: Participants perceptions of their proficiency levels in sub-areas before and after the study

As seen in Table 5.8, significant difference was found in interaction ($p < .05$), with 12/29 students being more positive about their interaction at the end of the term.

Affective states before and after the study

The final section focusing on differences in initial and final data relates to participants' affective states in speaking. The majority of these items were negative in that they addressed negative student behaviours and attitudes (e.g. 'I worry about'; 'I feel embarrassed'; 'I get nervous'). There were also some positive items (e.g. 'I am happy'; 'I feel confident'; 'I can take turn').

The mean scores of the most items addressing negative behaviours and attitudes decreased after the study (see Appendix 24). Four items, whose mean scores decreased, referred to positive student behaviours and attitudes: 'I am

happy to be corrected because it is a good way to learn'; 'I feel confident when I speak English in English class'; 'I can take turn in conversations if the topic is familiar to me'; and 'I can take a turn in conversations about any topic by asking relevant questions'. These results show that participants are more positive about their affective states at the end of the term.

To further understand the differences before and after the study, The Wilcoxon signed rank test was implemented and significant differences were found in four items which are displayed in Table 5.9.

		Descriptive		Wilcoxon signed rank						
		Mean	Std. Dev.		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	Sig.	
I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English speaking class.	Before	3.75	1.15	after-before	Negative ranks	20	13.6	272	-3.56	.000
					Positive ranks	4	7	28		
					Ties	5				
	Total	29								
After	2.65	1.4								
I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	Before	3.2	1.23	after-before	Negative ranks	17	14.1	241	-2.14	.032
					Positive ranks	8	10.5	84		
					Ties	4				
	Total	29								
After	2.46	1.34								
I can answer questions directed by the interlocutor but have difficulty in directing the conversation by asking questions.	Before	3.51	1.15	after-before	Negative ranks	15	10.5	158.5	-2.61	.009
					Positive ranks	4	7.8	31.5		
					Ties	10				
	Total	29								
After	2.78	.94								
I can take a good turn in conversations about any topic by asking relevant questions.	Before	2.62	.86	after-before	Negative ranks	5	9.5	47.5	-2.42	.015
					Positive ranks	16	11.4	183.5		
					Ties	8				
	Total	29								
After	3.5	1.84								

Table 5.9: Differences in participants' affective states before and after the study

As can be seen in Table 5.9, the greatest significance was found in the item, 'I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English speaking

class' ($p < .00$). The differences were also significant in items, 'I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance'; 'I can answer questions directed by the interlocutor but have difficulty in directing the conversation by asking questions'; and, 'I can take a turn in conversations about any topic by asking relevant questions' ($p < .05$). The significant differences in these items indicate that advanced preparation is not required for students to feel comfortable. Furthermore, students felt more confident and less nervous while speaking, even on the topics that they had not prepared in advance. They felt more positive about responding to questions from the interlocutor and turn-taking in conversations at the end of the study.

5.4.3 Involvement in classroom decision-making

The last quantitative section of the student final questionnaire was designed to explore participants' views about their involvement in the process. Six questions were asked about their involvement and they were asked to tick 'yes', 'no' or 'sometimes'. The results are displayed in Table 5.10:

	Yes		Sometimes		No	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Did you feel that you have responsibility for making decisions about the topics?	20	62,5	6	18,8	6	18,8
Did you feel that you have responsibility for making decisions about the activities?	24	75,0	6	18,8	2	6,2
Do you think that the activities were selected according to your wants?	26	81,2	6	18,8	0	0
Do you think that the topics were selected according to your wants?	25	78,1	4	12,5	3	9,4
Do you think that the activities were selected according to your needs?	27	84,4	4	12,5	1	3,1
Do you think that the topics were selected according to your wants?	28	87,5	3	9,4	1	3,1

Table 5.10: Opinions about the involvement in the process

As seen in the Table 5.10, a significant majority of the participants were positive about their involvement in the process. They agreed that the topics and activities were selected according to their wants and needs. The most agreed item was about selecting the topic according to their wants and the least agreed item was 'feeling responsible for making decisions about the topics'.

Qualitative data were also collected to further understand participants' opinions about their involvement in the process. The majority of the participants agreed that the classroom procedures were appropriate to their wants and needs. They

mentioned that this allowed for more enjoyable and useful classes in terms of providing opportunity to speak:

Speaking activities were ideal for all of us as they provided us with opportunity to speak each week. If activities were not like that, I wouldn't find the chance to speak. (R9)

Next week's topics and activities were selected according to the results of the questionnaires we filled in. Therefore, the lessons were very enjoyable. (R10)

Only one student reported negative feelings:

I don't think that the classroom activities were useful to me. No matter how good my speaking is, I don't have self-confidence and therefore, I believe I could not express myself in speaking classes effectively. (R13)

5.4.4 Views about the effectiveness of the term

This section presents the qualitative findings of the student final questionnaire and interviews. The findings will include participants' comments on the following four themes: (a) their classroom participation and performance in the term, (b) the role of student negotiation on their participation and performance, (c) the usefulness of activities, and (d) their affective states during the study and the areas where these have improved.

Classroom participation and performance in the term

Only three participants made negative comments about their classroom participation and performance: "*it was not very good*" (R13), "*I don't think I participated enough*" (R30). Other participants commented that they were happy with their classroom participation and performance in the term. To support this, most participants made comparisons with their last year's performance in the preparatory class. They agreed that their classroom participation and performance were better than last year: "*I can speak more fluently and a bit more comfortably compared to last year*" (R14).

Another participant gave more information about their progress during the term in comparison to last year:

I believe, compared to last year, I've progressed a lot. Because last year, I could only utter short sentences and made basic grammatical mistakes. But now, I can form complicated sentences and do not make those basic mistakes. (R2)

The majority of participants agreed that the reason why they progressed was because of the topics and activities through which they engaged in activities during the term: *“I feel I can express myself better. Thanks to the topics and activities”* (R15) because they *“allowed for finding opportunity to speak in each lesson willingly and without feeling shy”* (R1). Another participant explained how their feelings differed after the interventions of the current research:

At the beginning of the term, the topics were not of interest. No matter how much I prepared, I did not want to speak. But in time, thanks to the activities, I found more opportunity to speak. Now, I can express myself with ease. (R2)

Interviewees made similar comments. With regard to her progress during the term, F2 highlighted the usefulness of circumlocution as a communication strategy. She confirmed that now she was *“trying to express the message in different ways rather than trying to send it in a particular way”*. She also reported that she could speak spontaneously without making long pauses and underlined the significance of practice in speaking classes. She gave an example of this:

We can learn how to pronounce words in class but we can only pronounce words accurately if we can practise. Since your activities aimed at making us speak, they directly improved our speaking level.

M2 agreed with F2 about his improvement in using circumlocution:

At the beginning of the term, when I did not know a word, I stopped speaking ... But now I am trying to find an alternative way. Now, we get used to uttering complex sentences, using conjunctions. This was not the case earlier.

M3 was somewhat more negative about his speaking performance: he still needed time to think what to say and reported having difficulties in spontaneous speech. However, he was positive that he would gain this ability in time because he believed that *“gaining fluency is not something to achieve just in a term. We need more time to do that”*.

The quotes above illustrate that participants found speaking classes useful. Considering the focal point of the current study in terms of providing a student-negotiated speaking classroom, it was significant to find out whether student negotiation played a role in the usefulness of speaking classes. These issues will be discussed in the following section.

The influence of student negotiation on participation and performance

Only two students made negative comments about the role of student negotiation on their classroom participation and performance: *“I don't think so”* (R13), *“not very useful”* (R29). Other students are in agreement with the positive aspects of student negotiation.

The majority of students agreed that, through student negotiation, activities provided ample opportunity to speak:

Thanks to the variety of activities in speaking classes and selecting activities according to students' needs, I found opportunity to speak and most of the time, I realised that I speak spontaneously without thinking what to say too much. (R3)

I believe the lessons were very useful. When the activity is good and accepted by the class, I realised that me and my friends do not feel unwilling to speak. (R11)

In the student initial interviews, when the intervention had not yet been started, M3 stated that he did not like to follow the curriculum all the time. When I asked this in the final interview, he commented:

You intervened and solved this problem. Thanks to you, we did not stick to the curriculum ... Everybody was happy with that. Everybody selected the topic that s/he wanted. Everybody tried to speak. I think this was very good. ... If we just followed the curriculum and if we hadn't done such kinds of activities, everybody would have got bored.

Other interviewees agreed that student negotiation leads to presenting a classroom environment appropriate to students' needs and wants. F1 stated that student negotiation is necessary *“because nobody can know our needs and weaknesses better than us”*. M3 discussed this from the perspective of the teacher and stressed the usefulness of student negotiation for teachers because through student negotiation *“you had an idea of what you can do next week. For example, when students did not perform well, you can learn the reasons by negotiating with them”*.

With regard to factors that lead to a high level of student participation, most students mentioned that they *“wanted to participate more because the topics and activities were interesting”* (R6), and hence, *“the lessons allowed for participation of each student”* (R30). For that reason, they enjoyed the lessons and this was also mentioned as a factor affecting their classroom performance:

Most of the time, the lessons were very enjoyable, I received useful feedback. Making a difficult lesson enjoyable encouraged me to speak and I believe that my performance got better and better. (R5)

As a result of these factors that led to high student participation, even reticent students participated more because *“When everybody is active, I question myself why I am not speaking, and then I start speaking as well”* (R17).

The role of student negotiation in fostering students’ classroom participation is confirmed by Xie’s study (2010). She investigated teacher-student interaction in English classes at a Chinese university and concluded that “the teachers should relax their control and allow the students more freedom to choose their own topics so as to generate more opportunities for them to participate in classroom interaction” (p.19). Parallel to this, Tsafos (2009) conducted an action research study with students aged fourteen and fifteen in Greece with the aim of enabling students to be active in the analysis of Ancient Greek literature texts. The data collected from different tools revealed that, as students take active roles in action research, they become involved in negotiation and this helps to enhance the teaching and learning process.

Some participants stated that participating in classroom activities improved their self-confidence in speaking:

I improved my self-confidence in speaking English in class. I had ample opportunity to speak. The topics were always useful. I believe we had a very useful term. (R2)

For these reasons, some participants made very positive comments about the classes: *“the most enjoyable and useful speaking classes I’ve experienced so far”* (R27); *“This was the first lesson that I hadn’t looked forward to a break”* (R3).

The usefulness of activities

Participants further detailed the reasons for high level of student participation and the majority of them underlined the usefulness of group/pair work activities:

Instead of making whole class discussions on a particular topic, doing group work affected my classroom participation. (R1)

In group and pair work activities, we struggle to communicate and this also affects the participation of other students. (R24)

After group work activities, I realised that I developed my skills to speak in front of the class. (R3)

Some students also highlighted that in group/pair work activities, they felt more comfortable and this affected their performance: *“Group work is really useful for improving speaking skills. It stops you feeling shy”* (R11). In this respect, one participant emphasised that, you are supposed to speak in these kinds of activities, and therefore you establish rapport with your classmates, and hence, you *“did not feel shy with them anymore”* (R3).

These positive comments about group work activities may seem conflicting with the results discussed in Stage Two where students were not happy with the high number of students in groups. However, as confirmed by one interviewee, the students did not distinguish between group work and pair work and they used ‘group work’ as an umbrella term to refer to pair work activities as well.

M2 agreed with the usefulness of group/pair work activities and maintained that these activities enabled him to gain self-confidence by means of providing opportunity to speak in English:

Now, when I deal with an unfamiliar topic, if I don't know what to say, I can say something to indicate that I don't have any idea or I can use different phrases to gain time. ... This is the basis of speaking. I am very happy to gain this confidence.

He also claimed that, by means of evaluating the lessons, he paid greater attention to his classmates' performance and this allowed for *“getting to know them better and therefore, the classroom environment got better”*. F3 also highlighted this and she believed that the classroom environment was positive during the term. According to her, student negotiation played an important role in this *“because activities were designed according to our wants and so everybody enjoyed this and they were all very active”*.

Participants' affective states during the study and the areas where these improved

With regard to individuals' affective states during the study, only one participant commented that it was negative because they *“felt nervous”* (R13). On the other hand, most participants mentioned positive changes in their affective states:

I thought I would be unsuccessful this term. Thanks to topics and activities, I overcame my social phobia. I overcame my anxiety a bit and gained speaking confidence. These are very important progressions for me. (R3)

They agreed that the decrease in anxiety affected their speaking performance:

Getting used to speaking brings self-confidence and this brings effective speaking. (R27)

I feel now more comfortable while speaking and this affects my performance. (R4)

The teacher agreed that students felt less anxious at the end of the term. She emphasised the usefulness of activities which do not ask students to speak in front of the class:

I believe these activities lower students anxiety. When I ask students, they comment that they feel more comfortable while speaking. Whether correct or false, they are now ready to say something without feeling anxious. This is a rather important improvement that I aim for.

F1 and M1, whose main problem was feeling anxious while speaking, reported that they were more positive at the end of the term. F1 admitted to still feeling anxious when she *“speaks in front of the class but this is not as much as earlier”*. She maintained that doing a variety of activities which provided ample opportunity to speak played an important role in her progress:

We did so many speaking activities. We spoke lot. If we did this last year, I believe we would be at much higher level now.

M1 also agreed that speaking classes were useful for him in terms of understanding the fact that he should feel comfortable and should not be afraid of making mistakes while speaking. He reported that his anxiety problem is not over yet, but he had progressed since the beginning of the term:

Sometimes, I did not get anxious, I don't know, it depends on my mood at that time. I wish the term did not end. I think I am getting better. ... I cannot say that I have self- confidence but at least, I have progressed.

M2 went further and claimed that this study had a psychological aspect. He agreed that the study aimed at leading to *“students’ personal development through presenting an environment where students gain self-confidence through becoming aware of their ability to contribute to the designs of lessons”*.

With regard to those language areas where students perceived improvement, the majority of participants confirmed that the classes were useful in improving their ‘fluency’.

The classes helped me speak more fluently by providing opportunity to speak in English. (R30)

We learned the importance of fluency and tone of voice. Thanks to the activities, we practised these. Everything was positive to improve our speaking skills. (R1)

Some students mentioned that these classes were useful in terms of learning 'phrases' that can be used while speaking:

Learning phrases to use while speaking contributed to my speaking ability so much. (R5)

I am now more knowledgeable about how to direct a conversation by using different phrases. (R21)

Additionally, some participants maintained that the lesson procedures they had experienced would be useful for their future career: *"I learned what kind of activities I can provide when I become a teacher in the future"* (R6). This consideration of their future role as teachers was also mentioned by F2 and F3:

I started to think about the activities that I can provide to my students as a teacher in future. (F2)

When I become a teacher, I will certainly use such activities to make speaking classes more effective. (F3)

5.4.5 Students' feelings about negotiation

In addition to understanding the influence of student negotiation on students' speaking abilities and classroom behaviours, it is important to consider their feelings. To understand this, students were asked to comment on how they felt when they had a voice in classroom decision-making.

Significantly, all relevant comments were positive. Participants agreed that they were pleased to experience such a learning process. The majority of participants confirmed that they felt 'valued' and 'important'. They made a connection between student negotiation and providing effective classroom procedures:

I was pleased to see that our opinions are considered to be important. In this way, we could do activities appropriate to our needs. Knowing that our opinions are valuable for you and processing the lesson according to our needs made these classes effective. (R2)

All interviewees were in agreement about the positive feeling of being involved in classroom decision-making. M1 stated that student negotiation made him *"feel more responsible"*. Similarly, M2 commented that *"Negotiating with*

students shows that you respect your students, you trust them. Giving this responsibility to your students is very useful". F3 also supported this view: *"We felt that we are individuals: Each student felt that s/he was considered important"*.

Student negotiation was also mentioned as a factor that improved students' motivation: *"At least someone is valuing our opinions; this is rather pleasing and motivating"* (R23). This process also related to change in students' roles in the classroom as some participants mentioned that they *"did not feel like a student, but like a real prospective teacher"* (R3). Some participants also mentioned that their opinions about the characteristics of an effective teacher changed. One participant defined an effective teacher as someone *"who considers his/her students important"* (R11).

M3 agreed that student negotiation was motivating for him and felt that he needed to do something in return:

During the term, I noticed that our teachers cared about us, they really wanted to contribute to us and therefore they were doing this study. This made us more motivated. ... I tried to pay more attention. You cared about us, you were trying to do something for us, and in return, I thought I should care about my teacher and be aware of our responsibilities.

Parallel to this, when asked about their opinions about the characteristics of effective speaking classes, a significant majority of participants confirmed that 'this is the ideal class': *"Instead of imposing boring topics, such enjoyable lessons made me get more involved in class"* (R5).

Some participants emphasised that, before this experience, they *"didn't have any opinion about speaking classes: how they are carried out and what they address"* (R8). But now, they understood the *"difference between a speaking class in which everybody tried to speak and the one where just specific students speak"* (R31).

M3 also talked about how his views about effective speaking classes changed during the study. At the beginning of the term and after some interventions he said that he liked to speak in front of the class when the teacher observed him. After doing different activities, his view changed:

At the beginning, I believed that everybody should speak in front of the teacher, this would be more disciplined. But sometimes we did different activities. Therefore, my opinions changed. I now believe that other kinds of activities provide more opportunities to speak.

To support their arguments about changes in their opinions of effective speaking classes, some students made comparisons with the classes of the previous year:

Last year, it was very boring. The teacher put pressure on us to speak. It made me feel more nervous. The only thing he did was asking questions. I noticed how awful this lesson was; I found what I expect this term. (R3)

Furthermore, most students reported that they gained a new perspective about evaluating lesson and confirmed that they became more 'critical':

I began to evaluate the topics more: which one would be better, which one would offer more speaking opportunities. And you expected us to evaluate the sessions. Therefore, if I didn't think about it, I wouldn't be able to answer. (R8)

After a while, I started checking students' interests and motivation towards the lesson. Now, in every lesson, I also observe others' reactions. (R23)

Some interviewees also confirmed that they gained a new perspective in evaluating the lesson. In this respect, F2 maintained that she "*can criticise the lessons and can see the negative aspects*". Moreover, some students felt that they "*can now think in multi-perspective*" (R25), and they became more aware of their strong and weak points: "*By evaluating, I achieved an awareness of what we can and cannot do*" (R15). This finding is similar to that of Tsafos' study (2009), where participants confirmed that student negotiation allowed for reflecting on classes and taking relevant discussions.

The interviewees also maintained that attending interviews each week was useful for them. F1 pointed out that she evaluated the lessons more critically because she thought about what to say in interviews. This also affected her classroom performance:

If I didn't attend interviews, maybe I would not pay attention to the lessons that much or I would speak in Turkish. Normally, I do not attend every lesson in a term, but this term I had almost perfect attendance in speaking lessons, I just missed one class.

F2 also confirmed this and she reported that she felt more responsible:

During the term, we started thinking about the activities that can be more useful for us. This was because this research is something carried out for me individually. Therefore, I asked my classmates' opinions about classes. I asked them if they got bored or whatever. These interviews give me more responsibility but, if I did not attend the interviews, I would feel responsible as well because of filling out questionnaires at the end of each lesson. ... But since I was attending the interviews, you observed me more carefully. You asked questions about my performance. Therefore, I paid more attention to speaking. ... Sometimes, I took notes during the lesson about what to say in the interviews.

In the light of these comments, M2 offered a useful summary of the objectives of the current study:

This was an experiment and we were subjects. I now consider speaking lesson as a challenge rather than a fear. I will not feel sad even if I cannot speak. I believe I got the logic of what you wanted to give us. ...You wanted us to speak more but before that, you intended to overcome obstacles which affect our speaking performance. I believe that it is difficult to speak without overcoming this psychological aspect. These obstacles may be feeling anxious, feeling shy, thinking in Turkish.

5.5 Summary

This chapter presented the findings of each stage of this study. In the first stage, the reconnaissance phase, it became clear that students were dissatisfied with and lacked confidence in their speaking ability. The main reason was reported to be lack of practice. Students' perceived gaps in vocabulary knowledge and lack of fluency were the other factors leading to students' dissatisfaction. Students main expectations from speaking classes was to be actively involved. To ensure this, they wanted to work with interesting topics and not to feel anxious about contributing to the class.

Stage Two was the implementation of student-negotiated speaking classes. The data collected at this stage revealed both positive and negative aspects of classroom activities. In general, students favoured guessing activities that provided a game-like competitive classroom environment which led to a high level of classroom participation. Conversely, controlled activities, speaking in front of the class, and large group activities were reported to decrease the effectiveness of classes.

The findings revealed in Stage Three illustrated the effectiveness of student negotiation, since students were significantly more satisfied with their speaking ability after the interventions. Statistically significant differences were also found in their perceptions of their interactional skills before and after the study. Most students made positive comments about the effectiveness of the speaking classes. The majority of participants agreed that student negotiation resulted in the teacher's use of appropriate classroom activities and this fostered their classroom participation. Since their views were valued and considered, students reported feeling valued and important during the study. Student negotiation seemed to influence students' and the teacher's professional development, in that they reported an increase in criticality in evaluating the classroom activities. The following chapter will build on these findings and link them with the literature outlined in Chapter Three as well as other theoretical issues emerging from the study.

Chapter Six

Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter offers a critical synthesis of the existing literature and the findings presented in the previous chapter. The reasons behind particular perceptions will be discussed with reference to the related theories. The findings seem to have two distinct bases as issues related to speaking and negotiation. The speaking part focuses on teaching speaking with reference to individual's perceptions and the characteristics of classes that promote student participation. Issues related to negotiation concern the changes in students' perceptions after experiencing student-negotiated speaking class. This chapter is structured according to these two different notions emerging from implementing student-negotiated speaking class.

6.2 Participants' initial perceptions of speaking ability and reported problems experienced while speaking

Before going into detail about issues revealed by this study, it is worth introducing students' views about their speaking ability and discussing reasons behind negative perceptions. This section covers the data collected at Stage One before implementing student negotiation. The data emerging at this stage is important in terms of understanding the situation before my interventions and identifying changes in perceptions during the study which will be discussed in the following sections.

The issues that are discussed below are not students' competencies but rather their perceived abilities: instead of testing students' performances in language tests, I relied on their perceptions. This is because students' views can provide more information than test results: there is a tendency to focus on "how things are rather than how people think – or perceive – things are" (Flutter & Ruddock, 2004:6). Therefore, this study centres on how individuals perceive issues related to their speaking ability.

Students felt more competent in 'grammar', 'reading', and 'writing', and less so in 'listening', 'speaking', and 'pronunciation'. This seems to be related to the weight given the different language areas in English classes that students had taken in primary, secondary, and high school in which little attention had been drawn to areas that students felt less competent. This is not surprising because students cannot develop competencies in the areas that are neglected in English classes. Nunan (1991:51) refers to Swain's words to support this: "We learn to read by reading, so also do we learn to speak by speaking". Hammerly (1991:1) offers a useful summary of the inevitable outcome of neglecting spoken language and providing structure-based language teaching:

Students taught by the grammar-translation method – a tradition that is still alive today, in many places – developed an intellectual understanding of language structure and maybe the ability to read, but instead of gaining oral fluency they suffered from what could be described as a second language mutism.

Five main factors were mentioned as the reasons why students felt incompetent in speaking: 'lack of practice', 'inability to express what I think', 'lack of lexical knowledge', 'inability to speak fluently', and 'feeling anxious'. 'Lack of practice' may be seen as an umbrella term that may lead to other factors. The need for practice will be detailed in the following section which will cover students' views about the ideal objectives of language learning.

With regard to the natures of the other four factors, 'inability to express what I think' is an expression which closely relates to learners' performances in the speaking activities. A particular attention should be given to the phrase 'what I think'. This became obvious in intervention five when students were given two versions of a picture and expected to describe pictures to their partners and find the differences. In one of the pictures, there was a band round the boy's hat. None of students were able to describe this because they did not know that this item is called 'band'. Instead of describing it by using different words such as 'there is something black', 'something like this', they ignored this difference. I observed this as their main problem while speaking. The teacher also confirmed this and related it to the structure of educational system in Turkey: students always take multiple-choice tests in which they are asked to indicate the correct answer, or what is absolutely true. While speaking, they form a word or sentence in Turkish in their minds and try to translate this into English, and then they start speaking. When this is the case, it is not possible for them to speak

'fluently' and dealing with these challenges in a short while inevitably fosters 'anxiety'.

Interestingly, students considered inability to recall the word 'band' as a 'lack of lexical knowledge'. However, this is not a lexical problem. Nation (2008) contends that it is not required to have a big vocabulary for spoken production and claims that 1,200 head-words are sufficient for a reasonable level of speaking. This refers to the question of 'knowing a word' and addresses the difference between active (receptive) and passive (productive) vocabulary (Nation, 2001). Passive vocabulary is seen as the recognition of a word and its meaning while active vocabulary refers to words that students are able to use in oral production.

Nation (2008) sees 'inability to recall a word' as one of the common problems learners experience while speaking and he offers 'paraphrasing strategy' as a possible solution (p. 44). This is a communication strategy as it is "used to overcome communication problems related to interlanguage deficiencies" (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997:182). This strategy is termed as 'circumlocution' in Dörnyei and Scott's taxonomy of communication strategies (1997). They defined it as "exemplifying, illustrating or describing the properties of the target object or action" (p.188). Dörnyei (1995) conducted an experimental study to check the teachability of communication strategies. Despite positive changes found in participants' frequency of using strategies, he concluded that, instead of providing strategy courses, teachers should raise learners' awareness about the potential of communication strategies. In this study, it is seen that students are not aware of the function of circumlocution which serves the purpose of sending the message across using different words or phrases. To overcome the communication problems, students should understand the need for using communication strategies which should be seen as a natural part of conversation.

It may be assumed that factors mentioned above are interrelated in nature. The main problem seems to be inability to activate known vocabulary items to be able use them in oral production. Overcoming this communication obstacle could improve students' fluency, and hence, they may feel less anxious while speaking as they will notice that they can express themselves. All of these

issues are related to the necessity of finding opportunity to practise spoken language in language classes. The next section will build on this and cover students' views about the ideal focus of language classes.

6.3 Students' espoused theories of language learning and views about the ideal objectives of language learning

Students drew attention to the communicative functions of language. They supported the view that English should be learned to communicate. They underlined the importance of speaking and maintained that language learners should aim at becoming good speakers of the target language. A number of reasons may have led to this emphasis. This study was carried out in speaking class, and therefore, students may feel more positive about speaking as they were part of a study conducted in a speaking class. This is called Hawthorne effect in educational research and it indicates the differences in people's reactions between the research environment and real life (Cook, 1962). The role of students' future career may be another reason. The participants will become English teachers in future and they are aware that they need to improve their communicative skills in English to become effective teachers in future.

Students' views are in line with the objectives of CLT which focuses on social aspects of language and aims for successful communication (Cook, 2003). CLT draws attention to the significance of engagement in oral language practice in language classes by providing a classroom atmosphere conducive to communication and learning (Hughes, 2010). Active participation, which makes it possible to find opportunity to speak in language classes, is the major theme of the current study. Students expected to find opportunities to practise spoken language through classroom activities. The monolingual context of Turkey and the fact that most students cannot find people with whom they can speak English outside the class seem to be reasons why students underline the significance of active participation in speaking classes.

Ensuring students' active participation is one of the essential features of good speaking classes (Ur, 1996) and is also pertinent to the general objectives of CLT which centres on promoting ample output from students (Hughes, 2010).

Active participation improves students' exposure to the target language and creates a positive classroom environment where students can practise using it. This underpins the social-interactionist view of learning which resides in the fact that "children are born into a social world, and learning occurs through interaction with other people" (Williams & Burden, 1997:39). In their social constructivist model of language learning, Williams and Burden propose 'context' as another reason interplaying with other issues addressed in self-interactionism. Context, which also involves 'emotional environment' (e.g. trust and belonging), is one of the factors influencing students' classroom motivation (Williams & Burden, 1997:44). Considering this significance of classroom context, it is essential to understand students' expectations from language classes. The following section will discuss participants' views about the characteristics of effective classes which may shed light on the issues that teachers should take into consideration while designing speaking classes.

6.4 Students' views about the issues to consider in designing effective speaking classes

This section introduces the issues that are reported as factors influencing the effectiveness of speaking classes. The data discussed in this section were collected at the first and second stages of the study. In other words, the issues covered in this section are combinations of students' views before and during my interventions. The results can be grouped into two categories: structural and affective issues. While the former refers to lesson design, the latter addresses issues having impact on students' affective states. Although the majority of students were in agreement about affective issues, there were some conflicting views about the lesson design, which makes it necessary to address individual differences in language learning.

6.4.1 Structural issues

There were four major themes determining the success of speaking classes: 'the involvement of the teacher in activities', 'the structure of group work', 'the structure of speaking activities', and 'providing new input in speaking activities'.

With regard to the role of the teacher in speaking activities, there were conflicting opinions: while some students, especially the anxious ones, preferred carrying out activities with their friends rather than the teacher, others expected the teacher to be involved. The former group of students reported to feel more anxious when the teacher controlled their performance. This relates to the view that people who have trouble in speaking experience greater difficulties in foreign language classes where their performance is monitored by the teacher (Horwitz et al., 1986). According to Dickinson (1987), this is related to 'self-instruction' which is defined as "situations in which learners are working without the direct control of the teacher" (p.8). She sees self-instruction as a possible way of overcoming some affective factors that delay language learning and increasing empathy in class through reducing the centrality of the teacher (p.26). For that reason, self-instruction seems to be needed more by anxious students.

On the other hand, some students found the activity more useful when they communicated with the teacher. They reported to pay more attention to their performance when the teacher observed and this also makes it possible to receive feedback from the teacher. Williams and Burden (1997) raise this issue when questioning the involvement of significant others in language learning process: teachers not only influence learners' personal feelings but also their engagement in an activity through providing positive or negative feedback. This shows the inverse connection between anxiety and teacher involvement: when students can control their anxiety, they may feel more comfortable with carrying out the activity with the teacher.

These different standpoints show the role of 'individual differences' in language learning, which is defined as "characteristics or traits in respect of which individuals may be shown to differ from each other" (Dörnyei, 2005:1). Individual differences are worth considering in language classes because they can directly influence learners' involvement in activities. In my context, for example, it was essential to present activities which take into consideration the conflicting expectations of students with different characteristics. Otherwise, the classes would be useful only to a limited number of students.

Group work activities were favoured by most students because they were useful in meeting students' wishes to practise spoken language. Additionally, group work fosters responsibility and independence, improves motivation, and contributes to a feeling of cooperation and warmth in the class (Ur, 1996:232). The number of students in a group was a crucial factor. In intervention five, for example, students worked in groups of six or seven and this was one of the least successful activities. The stated reason was because students mostly spoke in Turkish, one of the drawbacks of group work (Ur, 1996). When asked about the reasons why they communicated in Turkish, they stated that the high number of students in group work hindered self-control.

Ensuring positive group dynamics is critical in group work activities because "individuals behave differently in groups than they would do outside the group" (Dörnyei & Malderez, 1999:157). Dörnyei (1994) offers four aspects of group dynamics relevant to L2 motivation: (a) group-orientedness, (b) norm and reward system, (3) group cohesion, and (d) classroom goal structures. Group-orientedness concerns the engagement of learners in pursuing the group goal; norm and reward system is about identifying a norm for reward and punishment of an activity; group cohesiveness refers to the strength of the relationship between group members; classroom goal structures address the nature of classroom environment in terms of being competitive, cooperative or individual. This study revealed that, when the number of students in a group is high, students do not want to engage in the activity because they feel their individual contribution is not worthy, as there are other students who are responsible as well. This obstructs group cohesion and students do not find it necessary to establish rapport with the group. This also confirms the 'individual' nature of speaking, in that each learner's contribution should be significant in classroom activities.

To overcome this problem, most of my interventions involved pair work activities which enabled students to work cooperatively with their partner. This fostered self-control and avoided the use of Turkish in activities. This underpins 'cooperative learning', which resides in the fact that all learners, regardless of their competency, "can benefit from being placed in the role of both tutor and tutees, of learning from and providing scaffolding for peers" (Crandall,

1999:226). Pair work activities were therefore found motivating in this study: even reticent students could be involved with the support of their partners.

The structure of speaking activities was the other issue that influenced students' perceptions of the effectiveness of activities. In less successful interventions, students commented that they felt restricted by the topic and maintained that the session would have been more useful if they had not relied on particular structures. In the literature, different classifications are proposed to distinguish the structure of speaking activities (e.g. Harmer, 1991; Littlewood, 1981). Harmer and Littlewood make a distinction between two types of activities: while communicative activities allow for authentic use of the target language by engaging in communicative practice, pre-communicative or non-communicative activities put emphasis on forms and materials and involve practising specific elements of knowledge or skill that can be used in communicative activities. Students did not like pre-communicative activities as they found them restricting. This happened when, for example, they were allowed to ask only yes/no question or expected to select particular responses from a variety of options. Interestingly, some activities which provide considerable freedom to students were also unsuccessful. For example, when they were free to discuss anything in the 'decorating a house' activity, they stopped speaking English and communicated in Turkish. These instances confirm the necessity of providing a balance between communicative and pre-communicative activities, which may influence the effectiveness of classes. To address this, it is essential to know the characteristics of the learners and attempt to structure activities appropriate for their needs and expectations.

Another issue that is worth considering in lesson designs was the perception of 'learning something new'. In some interventions, students were not provided with new information that they could use while speaking and some participants mentioned this as a missing point of the class: they felt that they did not progress when they only practised English by using the existing knowledge. This suggests that some participants have an input-oriented view of learning, which sees providing some input as the essential part of speaking classes. However, relying on the new information in speaking class may be problematic because speaking is a complicated skill which requires a wide range and type of sub-skills (Tarone, 2005). This refers to the distinction between 'product-

oriented' and 'process-oriented' learning. Although students asked for a 'product', relying on 'process', as highlighted in CLT approach, is more meaningful because speaking requires engaging in a communication process (Richards, 2006). This also underpins Swain's comprehensible output hypothesis (1985), which emphasises the importance of learner's output in language learning. This is confirmed by Harmer (1991) who states that "exposing students to language input is not enough: we also need to provide opportunities for them to activate this knowledge, for it is only when students are producing language that they can select from the input they have received" (p. 40). The participants of this study may not be aware of the function of output in language learning. This may reflect the structure of their educational background: they always focused on developing their receptive skills, which requires receiving input. They may expect the same in speaking class as well. To address this, students need to be aware of the significance of process in improving speaking skills and stop considering practising the known information as a waste of time.

6.4.2 Affective issues

This section details the issues to consider in designing classes that foster students' affective states. 'Finding interesting', 'feeling comfortable', 'being competitive', and 'useful and appropriate' were the common students' comments on successful interventions. Noteworthy here is the fact that how these issues affect students' participation in classroom activities makes a significant difference, especially taking into consideration individual differences between the participants.

The extent of which students find the activities interesting directly influences students' engagement in activities: "if students do not want to be involved in communication then that communication will probably not be effective" (Harmer, 1991:49). After successful interventions, students mostly commented that they 'had fun' and found the lesson 'interesting' and 'motivating'. Conversely, less successful classes were considered 'not interesting' and 'boring'. This shows the significance of considering students in designing classroom activities. An interesting experience related by a teaching colleague provides a good example of the need to take into account students' interests: his attempts to raise a

significant and very topical political issue as a theme for discussion were greeted with indifference. This shows that teachers should avoid designing activities according to their own interests which could possibly contrast with that of their students.

Making students 'feel comfortable' is another essential feature of effective speaking classes. All students expected that the activities should provide an appropriate environment where they felt comfortable while speaking. This is mainly achieved by game-like and competitive activities. In this type of activities, students concentrate on fulfilling the task objective and reported that they did not perceive it like a class hour. This shows the significance of social context in classrooms "which influence not only academic motivation and achievement, but also the individual development and well-being of students" (Urduan & Schoenfelder, 2006:340). In competitive activities, students felt comfortable and motivated as they were very eager to win the game. This tendency centres around the premise of 'arousal' and confirms that 'curiosity' is a significant factor that impacts on "learner's effort to complete an activity satisfactorily" (Williams & Burden, 1997:126).

The 'usefulness' and 'appropriateness' of the activity also determined the reported success of my interventions. In the intervention where students were asked to use circumlocution as a communication strategy, for example, students were very positive because they noticed that this was one of their weak points. This is what Williams and Burden (1997:125) regard as 'perceived value of the activity'. They stated that learners' engagement in activities depends on how much value they attach to the accomplishment of or involvement in an activity. Of critical importance here is the extent to which teachers will rely on students' perceptions of the value of the activity. Overreliance on this without considering students' actual needs could be problematic. They may attach value to game-like activities which in fact do not address their needs. For that reason, students need to be made aware of what they need and teachers should justify their activity designs, then students will perceive the value of the activity even if those activities are not so popular.

6.5 The changes reported after interventions

The issues covered above detailed students' perceived abilities in speaking and discussed the reasons behind negative perceptions. Students' comments about the effectiveness of activities were also mentioned with reference to factors to consider while designing speaking activities. This section will now discuss how these perceptions evolved after my interventions. It will cover the findings gathered at the final stage and discuss the reported changes in issues addressed in the third research question: 'perceptions of speaking ability', 'classroom participation', 'anxiety level', 'willingness to communicate', and 'self-esteem'.

6.5.1 Changes in perceived speaking ability

Before delving into the issues mentioned above, it is worth discussing students' reported perceptions at the end of the present study. Significant differences were found between the data collected before and after my interventions regarding students' perceptions of and satisfaction with their speaking ability. After my interventions, students were significantly more positive about these issues. This refers to students' beliefs about their own capacities and underpins Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1977) which concerns "judgements of what one can do with whatever skills they possess" (Bandura, 1986:391). Self-efficacy beliefs are related to how individuals perceive the possibility of achieving a goal (Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). It is therefore associated with self-confidence and past performance: when the learners have positive beliefs about their capability and have positive past experience about fulfilling this objective, their pursuing a goal is more likely to result in achievement (Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Urdan & Schoenfelder, 2006). In the light of these factors, it is not surprising to reveal low self-efficacy beliefs about speaking in the first stage of this study because participants had not experienced classes focusing on their speaking skills. Therefore, they developed negative attitudes towards their ability to carry out speaking activities. However, after my interventions, they noticed that they can perform well in these activities and this changed their perceptions. This shows that providing appropriate speaking classes to students' needs and wants leads students to develop positive sense of self-capacity and this fosters self-efficacy.

The majority of students confirmed that they 'can express themselves better' and 'speak more fluently' at the end of the term. These are related to 'inability to speak fluently', and 'inability to express what I think', which were mentioned at Stage One as problems hindering positive perceptions of speaking ability (see 6.2). This supports the suggestion that speaking classes offered during the term addressed students' perceived weaknesses in speaking and were useful in terms of fostering positive perceptions of these issues. A positive perception of speaking ability is seen as an important factor influencing students' motivation: "increased perceived competence will lead to increased motivation which in turn affects frequency of L2 use in the classroom" (Hashimoto, 2002:57, cited in Sampson, 2010). This is also related to the relationship between classroom participation and academic achievement (Tsou, 2005) and there is an agreement in the literature that students with high level of classroom participation can develop higher academic achievement, since "interaction involves participation, personal engagement, and taking of initiative in some way, activities that in turn are hypothesised to trigger cognitive processes conducive to language learning" (Krupa-Kwiatkowski, 1998, cited in Tsou, 2005:133).

In this regard the findings of a study with a similar research procedure to this study are of interest. Zhang and Head (2010) aimed at enhancing the involvement of reticent students in speaking classes at a university in China. After asking students to identify their needs, they authorised students to adopt the role of decision-makers and to design classroom activities themselves. The analysis of the qualitative data showed that students had made significant progress in their speaking abilities and classroom participation. The researchers also implemented a speaking test at the end of the study and compared students' performances with a control class. The results showed significant differences, with the experimental class outperforming the control group. The authors concluded that giving learners a voice in lesson design is a useful approach for overcoming learner reticence through "allowing learners to create their own opportunities and activities to practise speaking" (p.8).

It is noteworthy to distinguish accuracy and fluency to understand the nature of fluency in speaking. While accuracy emphasises the usage of the language, the fluency concerns its use (Brumfit, 1984). With regard to accuracy in speaking,

speakers are expected to produce grammatically accurate utterances. Conversely, less attention is given to form of language in fluency activities in which learners focus on the message that is being communicated (Hammerly, 1991; Nation, 1989). Fillmore (1979, cited in Nation, 1989:377) defines a fluent speaker as someone who “does not have to stop many times to think of what to say next or how to phrase it”. The focus on fluency rather than accuracy conforms to the objectives of CLT classes, and hence, communicative approach stimulates student fluency (Brown, 1994; Hammerly, 1991). Positive perceptions about ability to speak fluently at the end of the study indicate that my interventions served to create communicative environment in which students engage in activities that can foster their fluency.

The comparison of students’ perceived competency in sub-areas of speaking revealed significant differences in ‘interaction’. According to Council of Europe (2001), which published CEF to provide a common basis of what language learners should learn, spoken interaction is one of the two components of speaking proficiency. Students who have good interaction skills can “construct conjointly, through the negotiation of meaning following the co-operative principle, conversational discourse” (Council of Europe, 2001:73). To do so, learners need to use reception, production, cognitive and collaborative strategies so as to manage co-operation and interaction, such as “turn-taking and turn-giving, framing the issue and establishing a line of approach, proposing and evaluating solutions, recapping and summarising the point reached and mediating in a conflict” (Council of Europe, 2001:73). The interactional nature of speaking refers to the theory of interactional competence, which is underpinned by the fact that people are engaged in face-to-face activities in their everyday lives and participating in oral practices requires the knowledge of interactive resources (Hall, 1993). Interactional competence is developed through interactive practices (Hall, 1995) in which individuals “acquire a general, practice-specific interactional competence by participating with more experienced others in specific interactive practices” (Young, 1999:119). This present study seems to contribute to students’ perceptions of their interactional competences. The structure of activities may play an important role in fulfilling this: my main concern in designing activities was to address students’ major needs of finding opportunity to speak which is possible

through the involvement of each learner in classroom activities by interacting with their friends and the teacher.

The comments were positive about the classroom participation as well. The great majority of participants agreed that their classroom participation improved during the term. They reported to be more willing to be involved and communicate in classroom activities. High level of involvement was mentioned as a factor not only fostering willingness to communicate and raising self-esteem but also decreasing anxiety. These positive changes will be discussed in the following section with particular reference to the impact of student negotiation.

6.5.2 The student negotiation and changes in students' perceptions

The issues discussed above illustrate the positive changes students reported at the end of the study. However, the role of student negotiation in these changes is not entirely obvious. Students' comments on qualitative items serve the purpose of understanding this because students made connections between positive changes and the impact of negotiation. This section will build on this and discuss how student negotiation affected students' perceptions of their 'classroom participation', 'willingness to speak', 'anxiety level', and 'self-esteem'.

Before analysing these issues, it is important to underline the broader perspective by relying on the major needs of students: 'finding opportunity to speak'. As underlined earlier, students related their negative views about speaking ability to 'lack of practice'. This was also the main issue they expected from speaking classes. At the end of the study, students agreed that student negotiation was useful in terms of addressing their needs to practise spoken language in classes. This was because the activities were designed according to students' needs and wants which helped foster their engagement. This had an impact on students' 'perception of ability', 'classroom participation', 'willingness to speak' and 'self-esteem'. Since changes in students' perceptions of ability were covered in the previous section, this section will focus on other issues.

Enhancing students' involvement in classroom activities is one of the main principles of CLT, which aims at "encouraging students to engage in copious amounts of spoken language in the classroom" (Hughes, 2010:148). Ur (1981) considers this as an issue of 'encouraging participation' with the assumption that well designed activities may not mean that they will provide high level of student engagement. Therefore, students' needs and wants should be taken into consideration and this study shows that student negotiation is a good way of encouraging student participation in classroom activities.

This problem underpins the term 'willingness to communicate' which is defined as "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using L2" (MacIntyre et al., 1998:547). Willingness to communicate is the basis of students' engagement in communication (Fushino, 2010). Therefore, classroom participation and willingness to communicate is interrelated: the more willing to communicate the students are, the more eager they are to engage in activities. According to MacIntyre's model (1994), positive perception of communication competence and low level of classroom anxiety lead to willingness to communicate, which results in high frequency of communication. This study confirms that considering students' needs and wants foster their willingness to communicate. The importance of considering students' perceptions parallels findings from a study conducted by Léger and Storch (2009), who investigated learners' perceptions of their speaking ability, of their contributions to classroom activities, and their attitudes towards these activities. They investigated the significance of these issues on students' willingness to communicate in the second language. The participants were French learners at an Australian university and were asked to reflect on their learning environment and assess their speaking ability throughout the term. The study concluded that students' perceptions of classroom activities and their speaking ability affected their willingness to communicate.

Conversely, the issue of anxiety was not entirely straightforward and different comments were made in final instruments. While some students mentioned to feel less anxious at the end of the term, others still highlighted it as a problem they experienced while speaking. This confirms the complex nature of anxiety (Dörnyei, 2005): it is seen that developing positive anxiety requires longer course of time. Anxiety is defined as "worry and negative emotional reaction

aroused when learning or using a second language” (MacIntyre, 1999:27) and it is a significant affective factor that may impede the learning process (Arnold & Brown, 1999). This is one of the main premises of Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis (1982), which claims that a learner’s affective filter should be low so that they can learn the new information. Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) point out that anxious learners are less eager to engage in spoken language because it requires a language production performance, and hence, speaking is considered as the most anxiety-producing experience (Young, 1990).

Horwitz et al. (1986) propose three factors that influence foreign language anxiety: (a) communication apprehension, (b) test anxiety, and (c) fear of negative evaluation. Among these factors, communication apprehension seems particularly relevant as it is “a type of shyness characterised by fear of or anxiety about communicating with people” (p.127). This may be a personality factor, in that some people do not enjoy interacting with others. However, in this study, even talkative students felt anxious when they communicated in English. This is termed as ‘the special communication apprehension’, and it refers to the situation where one has troubles in comprehending others and making oneself comprehended (Horwitz et al., 1986). This shows the connection between perceived ability and anxiety: if learners have positive self-efficacy, then, they may feel less anxious while communicating (Williams & Burden, 1997). In addition to these factors, Horwitz et al. underline other factors influencing foreign language anxiety, such as ‘self-perceptions’, ‘beliefs’, ‘feelings’, and ‘behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process’ (p.128). These issues show that anxiety is complex in nature and influenced by various factors. This complex and determining nature of anxiety should be considered in speaking classes and teachers should attempt to provide classroom environment in which students feel comfortable.

Among the factors related to students’ speaking performance, particular attention should be devoted to self-esteem. This is because self-esteem is not only related to language production but also personal development. According to Oxford (1999), self-esteem is related to the context and self-efficacy because it is “a self-judgement of worth or value, based on feelings of efficacy, a sense of interacting effectively with one’s own environment” (p.62). With regard to

classroom context, students who are valued are more likely to develop positive sense of self-esteem. Additionally, there is a relationship between success and self-worth (Covington & Beery, 1976), in that students with positive perceived abilities may have more positive sense of self-esteem. Dörnyei (2003) agrees that self-worth is one of the components of final stage of L2 motivation which he termed as 'postactional stage', in which learners make judgements about how things went and this determines their motivation for future activities. Although the relationship between success and self-worth cannot be neglected, this study centres on Oxford's emphasis on the role of valuing learners in speaking classes and illustrates that, regardless of attainment, learners can develop positive sense of self-worth through being given a voice and considered as significant members of classroom.

6.6 The affective impact on the participants of being involved in negotiation and the research process

The previous sections covered issues referring to students' perceptions and discussed the role of student negotiation on factors related to language production and personal development. This section will introduce another aspect of the current study which draws attention to participants' feelings during the study. These issues will be covered in two different sections: students' feelings about being involved in negotiation and the research process.

6.6.1 Being involved in negotiation

The present study centres on individuals and gives them two significant roles: giving opinions about the lesson designs, and evaluating the usefulness of classes. Their comments determined the lesson content as activities were designed according to data collected from the students. The roles given in this study resulted in 'feeling respected'. Students reported to feel important as they build awareness that they can have a say in lesson designs. Involving learners in decision-making through sharing responsibility and giving them a voice in establishing priorities enhance student self-determination and intrinsic motivation (Dörnyei, 1994). This is because, when learners feel that their individual views are taken into account, they become more motivated. This

underpins the two issues that MacBeath et al. (2003:5) mentioned as the benefits of consulting pupils: “feeling that you are respected and that you are listened to and taken seriously”, and “knowing that your views are having an impact on how things are done in school and classroom”.

Student negotiation also has an impact on students’ self-perceptions as individuals having unique characteristics. This is one of the principles of CLT which considers the diversity among learners and regards these differences “not as impediments to learning but as resources to be recognised, catered to, and appreciated” (Richards, 2006:24). Consequently, student negotiation fosters a sense of ownership and students can take control of their learning (Graves, 2005; Ma & Gao, 2010). This study enhanced individual’s self-recognition through considering the opinions of each participant rather than listening to the voice of the majority. This led to gaining self-awareness: students build awareness of their abilities and also of their needs and wants. This is one of the advantages of student negotiation in terms of increasing students’ sense of competency and enhancing independent learning through which students can start to evaluate their own learning (Black et al., 2002; Doran & Cameron, 1995; MacBeath et al., 2003).

Thanks to negotiation, students gained criticality: they paid more attention to the appropriateness of speaking activities because they were going to evaluate the session. This changed their perceptions of their role in classroom and they did not feel like students but like prospective teachers. This is something that MacBeath et al. (2003:5) discuss as a benefit of student negotiation in terms of allowing students for “thinking more critically and [being] reflective about their learning”. This illustrates the connection between learner autonomy and student negotiation. Involving students in classroom decision-making results in gaining the characteristics of autonomous learners such as being able to control and take the responsibility of their own learning (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000; Little, 1991; Scharle & Szabó, 2000).

Student negotiation enhances positive classroom dynamics because it expects students to pay attention to others by means of which students get to know their classmates better. This develops positive classroom motivation which is one of the crucial elements of effective language classes. Crookes and Schmidt (1991)

propose four major motives that influence L2 classroom motivation: (a) interest, (b) relevance, (c) expectancy, and (d) satisfaction. Interest is related to intrinsic motivation and refers to individual's internal drive to accomplish a task (Dörnyei, 1994). Relevance concerns the connection between personal needs, values, goals, and the content of learning materials or activities. Expectancy addresses the perceived possibility of success and satisfaction, i.e. is about the outcome of the activity. This study addressed all issues related to classroom motivation. The activities were designed according to students' views and this makes it possible to provide relevant and interesting classroom activities. The activities allowed for the participation of each student without worrying about being successful. The satisfaction was achieved through collecting feedback at the end of each lesson and considering these comments in designing future interventions.

6.6.2 Being involved in the research process

In addition to discussing the role of negotiation in students' feelings, it is worth considering their opinions about being involved in such kind of a research process. The comments discussed below illustrate the significance of conducting classroom-based research. Although this study centred on students, being a part of this research also influenced the teacher participant's professional development and this will be discussed in the second section.

Student participants

The students realised that an important aim of the research was to enhance their ability to speak English. As a consequence of being involved in the research, many reported that they felt 'valued' and 'important', and that they wanted to do something in return. This had a positive effect on their motivation to participate in the classroom activities. Involvement in the research also made students feel 'more responsible', and this resulted in them reporting that they thought carefully about their responses to questionnaire items and interview questions. This indicates the impact of action research on the involvement of participants. By providing a flexible classroom environment, action research "constitutes the means for the students' gradual active involvement in the research process" (James & Worrall, 2000:103). The value of active

involvement in action research on participants' attitudes towards the research has also been reported by Kemmis (2009).

Involving learners in the learning process underpins Feuerstein's theory of mediation (Williams & Burden, 1997). Feuerstein offers three features of mediation: 'significance', 'purpose beyond the here and now', and 'shared intention'. Williams and Burden (1997) suggest other factors that can be used to mediate, including 'a sense of competence', 'awareness of change', 'a belief in positive outcomes', 'sharing', 'individuality', and 'a sense of belonging'. The students may have found this study motivating because it addressed the aspects related to mediation. They realised the significance of the study in terms of improving their speaking skills which was essential for their future career. Fulfilling this became the common objective of each individual and this resulted in building a sense of belonging and sharing. During the term, students became aware of their competency and developed positive perceptions of their speaking abilities.

The teacher participant

The teacher participant had a significant role in the research process. She collaborated with me in designing the activities and provided essential feedback on the effectiveness of interventions and activities. We discussed students' comments and reactions, and together we devised possible solutions to classroom problems.

The final teacher interview suggests that the use of student negotiation to plan learning activities and approaches had a positive impact on her professional development through enhancing her criticality. This is related to reflective language teaching which is "deliberating on experience, and that of mirroring experience" (Pennington, 1992:51). Reflective action requires "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads" (Dewey, 1933:9). Schön (1987) offers two concepts of reflection: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. While the former refers to the reflection taking place during practice, the latter concerns reflecting on a class after a period of time (Hatton & Smith, 1995). According to Rodgers

(2006:219), student negotiation is reflection-on-action *with* students. During data collection, I and the teacher participant designed classroom activities through reflecting on what happened in classes and attempted to design next intervention by critically thinking how to promote effectiveness of activities. This involvement in critical thinking enhanced the teacher's professional development and fostered her critical thinking ability.

This is one of the main tenets of action research which aims at enhancing teacher critical reflection through classroom-based research studies designed to provide insight into complex dynamics of a classroom (Hodkinson & Harvard, 1994). Action research is a good way of improving practice where teachers are "encouraged to reflect critically on the assumptions, values and beliefs informing their teaching practice" (Fisher, 2003:313). The changes reported in the teacher's critical thinking ability support an argument that implementing action research not only serves the purpose of improving classroom practice but also fosters teacher's reflection which is an important prerequisite for enhancing teachers' professional development. The teachers therefore need to be aware of the significance and positive benefits of implementing action research in their classes.

6.7 Summary

This chapter addressed two aspects of student-negotiated speaking class through making a distinction between issues related to speaking as a language skill and student negotiation as a way of involving students in classroom decision-making. The ideas and concepts which emerged from the study and which have been discussed in this chapter will lead to implications and recommendations for both policy and classroom practice designed to promote the development of student speaking ability; these will be covered in the following chapter.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions and Implications

7.1 Introduction

This chapter details the concluding remarks of this dissertation. The findings presented and discussed in the previous chapters are addressed in relation to their contributions to the field and implications are generated for the teaching of speaking. The limitations of this study are discussed and this leads to outlining implications for future research. The last section covers the concluding reflections on my doctoral experience.

7.2 Contribution to knowledge and implications

The main aim of this study was to improve speaking classroom practices. Students were involved in negotiation and activities were designed taking into account their needs and wants. Data which emerged from this study revealed issues related to teaching speaking which are noteworthy to generate implications for stakeholders of education, including policy makers, teacher educators, and teachers.

7.2.1 The status of teaching English in Turkey

In Turkey, there is a disconnection between curriculum and classroom practice. Although developing learners' communicative skills is declared as one of the objectives of English language teaching, classroom practices were reported to rely solely on the structural aspects of language. This indicates the lack of attention given to speaking skills in language classes. The gap between policy and practice should be the major concern for policy makers and they need to become aware of classroom problems that obstruct provision of communicative language classes.

7.2.2 Improving students' participation in speaking classes

Students need to practise spoken language to improve their speaking skills. For speaking classes to be effective, all students should be engaged in classroom

activities. Both teachers and teacher educators should perceive this distinct nature of speaking and speaking classes should aim at involving each student in classroom activities. This is possible through understanding each individual's perceptions and designing appropriate activities to their needs and wants. Student negotiation is an effective way of ensuring this: those factors which influence students' classroom participation can be identified and classes can be designed accordingly. Therefore, student negotiation should be a part of speaking classes.

7.2.3 Listening to student voice to promote student participation

Student negotiation does not necessarily require the procedure followed in this study: it is not a method but a philosophy underpinning the significance of taking into account students' views and perceptions in classes. Initially, teachers should realise the significance of listening to students' voices. Selecting appropriate methods is important for implementing effective student-negotiated classes. For example, in order to give learners a voice, asking students to elaborate on their expectations in front of the class may not work. A more appropriate approach may be to administer short questionnaires or interview students. These decisions can vary according to the characteristics of classes. Importantly, student negotiation should serve the purpose of listening to each student's voice which provides teachers with an in-sight into students' views and perceptions and these should be considered when designing activities.

7.2.4 Teachers' and students' roles in student negotiation

Implementing student negotiation does not mean giving the students the role of decision makers of classes. Conversely, it is a way of synthesising teacher's and students' beliefs considering that students may not be aware of their needs and may ask for classroom procedures irrelevant to their needs. Classes designed by solely depending on students' views may not be useful for improving students' particular skills. To avoid this, teachers should take part in decision-making as well and create a balance between students' beliefs and their own beliefs.

7.2.5 Issues to consider in designing effective speaking classroom activities

In this study, students favoured group work activities as they provided more opportunity to practise spoken language. The strength of group work should be considered by both teachers and teacher educators. In large group activities, however, students tended to switch to Turkish. To avoid this, small group activities seem to be more useful in terms of engaging each student in oral communication in English.

The structure of activities also influences the effectiveness of speaking activities. Students may want to carry out either non-communicative or communicative activities, or they may ask for activities in between. Teachers should understand the characteristics of individuals and activities should be structured by taking into account as many different views and expectations as possible. The teacher's role in activities is also important. While anxious students are likely to favour peer communication, less anxious students may want to carry out activities with more direct communication with the teacher. The onus is on teachers to provide a balanced classroom environment through taking into account students with different characteristics.

Student negotiation also reveals affective factors which influence individual participation. To be involved in classroom activities, students need to find activities interesting, relevant to their needs, and should feel comfortable in classes. Teachers should perceive the influence of students' feelings on their classroom participation and activities should create a positive climate in the classroom. Taking individual learning differences into account can also help in fostering a climate of purposeful positivity.

In this study, student negotiation revealed that students have misconceptions about their lack of lexical knowledge and the role of communication strategies. This shows that student negotiation is not limited to understanding what to cover in classes but also yields an insight into students' perceptions. Through student negotiation, teachers can uncover these issues and students can be made aware of their misconceptions which will possibly affect their classroom performances.

7.2.6 The outcomes of student-negotiated speaking class

This study revealed that student negotiation serves the purpose of identifying students' needs and wants and designing activities accordingly. This led to increased student motivation, and a higher level of student participation which resulted in more positive attitudes towards speaking classes, involving positive perceived ability, greater willingness to communicate, higher self-esteem, and lower levels of anxiety.

Designing effective speaking activities, fostering student participation and developing positive perceptions are cyclical in nature: designing effective activities is a requisite for fostering student participation; when student participation is high, students develop positive perceptions of speaking, which influence their engagement in activities. Teachers should perceive the significance of considering students' perceptions: if these are neglected in classes, it is difficult to expect high level of classroom participation.

7.2.7 The impacts of student negotiation on students' and teacher's personal and professional development

The effects of student negotiation are not limited to improving the quality of speaking classes. It also contributes to students' sense of self-worth, with students becoming aware of their own characteristics as individuals, as well as their strong and weak points in speaking. To evaluate interventions, the participants paid more attention to activities and this resulted in developing criticality. Being involved in action research also influenced students' perceptions: they perceived the value of this research, and therefore, felt more responsible and took part in data collection process more conscientiously.

The present action research also promoted the teacher's professional development. The teacher developed a critical point of view through reflecting-on-action to understand students' views and perceptions thoroughly and address these in classroom interventions. This indicates the benefit of implementing action research in classrooms: it not only improves classroom practice but also promotes teacher development.

7.3 Implications for pre-service teacher training in Turkey

The issues discussed above illustrate the positive impact of student negotiation on different variables influencing the quality of speaking classes, and identify factors to consider in implementing effective student-negotiated speaking classes. The quality of the training received by teachers will have an impact on the quality of education provided by teachers. Pre-service teachers will seek to use student-negotiated speaking classes only if they perceive that it has positive aspects. For that reason, teacher training programmes should be designed accordingly and the impacts of student negotiation on speaking classes should be emphasised. Implementing student-negotiated speaking classes in ELT Departments in Turkey may serve as an example for prospective teachers of English of how to build an awareness of the value of student negotiation.

7.4 Implications for in-service teacher training and ELT at state schools

Emphasising the role of student negotiation in pre-service teacher training programmes is likely to increase the possibility of the implementation of student-negotiated speaking classes in future. To improve the quality of current ELT in Turkey, in-service teachers should also develop an awareness of student negotiation through the provision of appropriate training. Implementing student negotiation at state schools may seem more difficult because there are different issues influencing teachers' classroom decisions, such as the curriculum and the course book. To avoid this, a more flexible curriculum should be designed so that teachers have the time and the opportunity to listen to student voice and incorporate new tasks and/or materials accordingly. The speaking activities included in course books should be less controlled and more adaptable to the needs of students with different characteristics. Sample materials should also be provided to teachers to be used when implementing student-negotiated speaking classes.

Student negotiation is not limited to classes. There is a growing body of literature that highlights the possibility of the implementation of student negotiation at schools. This underpins the assumption that, in addition to improving classroom practice, student negotiation can also lead to school

improvement as it “allows teachers and schools to develop a clearer understanding of pupils’ responses to schooling” (Flutter & Ruddock, 2004:133). This broader perspective of student negotiation can involve negotiating with students about different issues such as teachers’ relationships with students, curricular issues, and government of the school (Flutter & Ruddock, 2004). Involving students in decision-making procedures at schools requires considering students’ opinions in making decisions about issues related to their education. In some countries, especially in the UK, schools are encouraged to involve students in decision-making (Ruddock & McIntyre, 2007). This may lead students to become democratically competent and responsible members of society (Flutter & Ruddock, 2004). Considering that education seeks to improve students’ abilities, increase their knowledge in different disciplines and enhance their personal growth, students should actively take part in decision-making at schools. This should be considered by the MEB in Turkey and the implementation of student negotiation in schools should be piloted in some schools. The outcomes of such pilots could provide an understanding of the impact of student negotiation at schools on improving the quality of education provided.

7.5 Implications for other contexts

Encouraging students’ participation in classes is an issue which is relevant to other contexts, not only the Turkish ELT context. A number of studies conducted in different contexts have focused on ways to enhance student participation. These studies mostly centre on understanding the reasons behind learners’ reticence to speak English during lessons and finding ways to reduce it through introducing new practices.

The majority of studies of this sort have been carried out in Asia where learner reticence is seen as a particular problem. Xie (2010) conducted a study in China with the aim of investigating the role of teacher-student interaction on learners’ reticence. The data were collected through observations, audio and videotaping, and stimulated reflection. Students and teachers were asked to reflect on their interactive behaviours in classes. Xie concluded that involving students in critical thinking allowed teachers to relax their control over lesson

designs and also allowed students to choose their own topics which increased opportunities to participate in classroom interaction.

Zhang and Head (2010) carried out a study in the same context in which they actively involved students in designing their speaking courses and planning activities. Self-evaluation forms, classroom observations, and tests were used to investigate the effectiveness of the process. The results showed that involving students in decision-making resulted in positive attitude change and increased motivation. Students reported that they built an awareness of the learning process and became more self-confident in developing competencies related to speaking ability.

The studies within this scope are not limited to the Asian context. Tsafos (2009) conducted an action research study which offered opportunities for student negotiation in a literature course in a high school in Greece. Teacher-student negotiation was reported to promote the effectiveness of classes and transform students' roles from passive receivers to active participants.

The main findings of the studies discussed above parallel the findings of the present study. Student negotiation seems to improve classroom practice through making it possible to provide classes relevant to students' needs and wants. This illustrates the context-free nature of student negotiation. The present study goes beyond this and reveals the impacts of student negotiation on students' sense of self-worth, criticality and teachers' professional development. These issues are worth investigating in different contexts and the research design of this study may serve as an example for future studies within this area.

7.6 Limitations of the study

Before suggesting implications for further research, it is worth addressing the limitations of this study. This study was carried out in a particular class. Therefore, findings revealed in this study cannot be generalised to other contexts because each class has unique characteristics. Nevertheless, the present study offers 'transferability', in that readers or researchers can

recognise similarities with their own contexts and see the relevance of the findings and implications.

Researcher subjectivity may be seen as another limitation. Subjectivity is one of the main problems of qualitative research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) because critical decisions are made by researchers and their interpretations may affect the data collection and analysis. In this study, I avoided involving my own views because this would contradict with the research objectives: I needed to build an objective point of view of classroom problems to understand the situation in depth and to improve the effectiveness of classes.

An interesting aspect of the study relates to the Hawthorne effect. This can be seen as constituting a possible limitation of this study. Hawthorne effect is the influence of being researched on participants' behaviours (Cook, 1962): participants may react differently in a research environment. This may be the case in this study as well, in that students may have reacted differently in classroom activities as they were aware of the research being conducted. However, bearing in mind the involvement of the students in the study and in the classroom processes, and the nature of their comments on this research, it is clear that the research procedure also had positive impacts on their classroom participation and performance. Hence, in this particular case, the Hawthorne effect can be considered from both a negative and positive perspective.

To overcome the limitations of data collection tools, researchers use triangulation to collect more trustworthy data as it enables to go "beyond the limitations of a single method by combining several methods" (Flick, 2006:24). This study implemented different data collection tools such as questionnaires, interviews and observation which enabled to understand different aspects of the situation.

Dörnyei (2002:7-8) points out different issues which can be seen as limitations of questionnaires. Among these, 'social desirability', 'self-deception', 'acquiescence bias', and the 'halo effect' may affect the quality of data collected through questionnaires in this study. The first two factors are related to the extent to which participants provide true answers. Participants may tend to respond with what is desired or expected in the society and not give accurate

self-descriptions. The acquiescence bias refers to respondents' tendency to agree with sentences that they do not have a strong opinion about. The halo effect concerns the positive impression of a person or a topic which may lead participants to respond positively to related items. In this study, some of students' responses may have been influenced by social desirability or self-deception. Since the data were collected in speaking classes, they may tend to overvalue speaking as a language skill. In items concerning their affective states, they may have agreed with items that they are not sure about. They may give positive responses when they evaluate my interventions because of their positive attitudes towards me, the teacher and/or the lesson. These problems may have been partially overcome in the present study through using both questionnaire and interview data and by repeating the questionnaires at different times during the study, which enabled students to become more involved in and more accustomed to the research process.

The interview also has certain limitations. Kvale (1996) discusses the quality of interviews with reference to 'the interview subject' and 'interviewer qualifications'. He points out the characteristics of good interviewee and interviewer. Since I interviewed the same students ten times during the term, these issues are less likely to have arisen during the study. I established a rapport with the interviewees during the term and interviews became more like conversations. A further issue relates to the type of questions which may influence the quality of the data collected, such as long, double-barrelled, or leading questions (Robson, 2002). To avoid this, a pilot study was conducted to check the appropriateness of interview questions. In addition, the flexible nature of action research made it possible to make appropriate amendments to the interview questions during data collection.

The issues discussed above introduce the possible limitations of this study. These limitations do not necessarily reduce its contribution to developing practice in the teaching of spoken English in Turkey. However, they do indicate issues to consider in future research.

7.7 Further research: The value of researching speaking and action research to reflect on and improve practice

In Turkey, there is a gap between research and classroom practice. Much educational research in Turkey fails to generate practical implications for improving classroom practice (Grossman et al., 2007). Classroom-based research studies are required to reveal ways to improve classroom practice. Action research is a research approach that addresses this directly. Therefore, teachers should perceive the significance of conducting action research in their classes and action research should be a part of pre-service and in-service teacher education in Turkey. Furthermore, although teaching speaking seems to be the main problem of ELT in Turkey, there is little research in this area. Research studies should be conducted in this field to portray the current situation so that implications are generated to address the practical problems of teaching speaking in Turkey.

This study was conducted with a particular class. To further understand the role of student negotiation, more research should be conducted in different contexts. This study involved experienced foreign language learners who had been learning English for more than ten years. The role of student negotiation on learners at different proficiency levels should also be investigated and students of different age groups should be involved in negotiation. This requires conducting studies at state schools in Turkey. MEB should encourage researchers carrying out research studies at state schools.

7.8 Concluding reflections

My doctoral study at University of Exeter was a turning point in my career. The structure of the TESOL programme was similar to my Master's programme at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University. This enabled me to build on issues that I had already studied in Turkey. One of the most useful aspects of the EdD programme was taking different modules that focused on different aspects of the field. This enabled me to study various disciplines such as language acquisition, teacher education, and curriculum issues. Since I will become a teacher educator, taking these modules at doctoral level was very useful and I feel that I can teach classes relating to these issues at Bachelor level.

The EdD programme at University of Exeter has made a significant contribution to my professional development as a novice academic. Writing assignments that involved empirical studies was also very useful and I learned how to conduct studies and write articles. I am very pleased that I have published some of these assignments and presented some others at international conferences. I presented my assignment for the Second Language Theories Module at the 6th ELT Research conference in Turkey and this paper was published in the conference proceedings. I also wrote an article based on this assignment that is being reviewed by the RELC Journal. I have also published two articles from the study that I conducted for the Teacher Education Module (see Appendix 1). Although both of these were published in local journals in Turkey, I believe that these were good starting points for my future publications. I have also published a joint paper in the Journal of Language Teaching Research. This was a study I conducted with my colleague in Turkey. We also presented a similar study in IATEFL conference which was held in Glasgow in 2012. I worked with the course leader of Curriculum Issues Module on my assignment and we wrote a joint paper which is currently being reviewed by the Teacher Development Journal. I am hoping to publish my dissertation as our joint study with my supervisors in one of the top journals in the field.

During the thesis stage, I have been very satisfied with the topic of my dissertation because it addresses one of the most problematic issues in ELT in Turkey. Using an action research methodology allowed me to generate practical implications to improve the problem of teaching speaking. Working with supervisors with expertise both in the area of teaching speaking and in action research provided a facilitative environment and the opportunity to develop a reflective and critical approach. I want to conduct further classroom-based research studies to investigate different issues in classrooms. As a prospective teacher educator, I intend to introduce action research to pre-service teachers and will endeavour to make both pre-service and in-service teachers aware of the value of conducting action research to improve classroom practice.

Appendices

Appendix 1: My articles addressing the status of ELT in Turkey

Uztosun, M. S. (2013). An interpretive study into elementary school English teachers' beliefs and practices in Turkey. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 4(1), 20-33.

An Interpretive Study into Elementary School English Teachers' Beliefs and Practices in Turkey

Abstract

This exploratory study seeks for understanding the relationship between Turkish elementary school English teachers' espoused beliefs about the effective ways of teaching English and their self-reported practices. 6 teachers, who were working at different state schools in a town located in the Northwestern part of Turkey, were interviewed. Interpretation of the data revealed inconsistency between teachers' espoused beliefs and self-reported practices. Although there was a strong consensus that English should be taught communicatively, all participants reported that their teaching practices mainly focus on vocabulary and grammar. Different factors were discussed hindering this consistency such as exam-based educational policy, time constraints and overloaded syllabus. In the light of these, this study recommends changing the focus of current English testing system to using the language communicatively and implementing an adaptable curriculum where language learning objectives will be shifted from preparing students for the examinations to improving their competences in productive skills.

Keywords: Teachers' beliefs and practices, English as a foreign language, English language teaching in Turkey

Introduction and Background

The status of English in Turkish educational system seems contradictory. In curriculum, developing learners' communicative skills are declared to be the main objective of English language teaching (Talim Terbiye Kurulu, 2006). However, learners' English proficiencies are tested through examinations including multiple-choice questions which neglect productive skills and this leads to focusing on getting through examinations rather than developing communicative skills.

This dichotomy is the main preoccupation of this research study aiming at demystifying the backdrop of English language learning and teaching in Turkey. In the push to understand this complexity, the current study deals with teachers' beliefs because beliefs are considered to be the indicators of individuals' decisions, choices and behaviours (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Pajaras, 1992; Borg, 2001) and understanding teachers' beliefs potentially provide profound insight into several aspects of teacher's professional world (Gahin, 2001).

The aforementioned function of teachers' beliefs is also emphasised in various definitions. Rokeach (1968) defines beliefs as the best indicators of the decision made by individual in the course of their lifetime. Additionally, Richardson (2003) approaches beliefs in a broader perspective and he underlines their role as addressing individual's understandings, premises or propositions about the world around us.

In the light of the findings of previous studies on teachers' beliefs, Calderhead (1996) suggested five main areas that teachers hold particular beliefs: *beliefs about learners and learning*, *beliefs about teaching*, *beliefs about subject*, *beliefs about learning to teach*, and *beliefs about self and the teaching role*. According to Calderhead, these issues could be interrelated where teachers' beliefs about subject, for instance, may be closely related to their beliefs about teaching.

In this study, three of these areas were addressed - *beliefs about subject*, *beliefs about learning* and *beliefs about teaching*. Firstly, considering teachers' beliefs about subject, there are three theoretical views of language in literature as *structural view*, *functional view* and *interactional view*. The first refers to four aspects of language including phonological units (e.g., phonemes), grammatical units (e.g., clauses, phrases, sentences), grammatical operations (e.g., adding, shifting, joining, transforming elements), and lexical items (e.g., function words and structure

words) (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Secondly, functional view (communicative view) emphasises the role of language as a tool for expression of functional meaning. Interactional view, on the other hand, sees language “as a vehicle for realization of interpersonal relations and for the performance of social transactions between individual” (Richards & Rodgers, 1986:17).

Secondly, knowing the representation of learning is imperative for teachers so as to provide appropriate learning environment where learners can achieve expected learning outcomes determined by teachers’ understanding of what is learning (Williams and Burden, 1997). In identifying the conceptions of learning, Gow and Kember (1993) present six main categories that can be related to different approaches:

- A quantitative increase in knowledge
- Memorisation
- The acquisition of facts, procedure, etc. which can be retained and/or used in practice
- The abstraction of meaning
- An interpretative process aimed at the understanding of reality
- Some form of personal change

(Gow and Kember, 1993, cited in Williams and Burden, 1997:61)

Thirdly, different teaching methods are proposed for these six categories of learning. These categories refer different aspects of language. For example, while the first two categories rely on grammatical and lexical items, the third one is more practical in nature. This type of learning refers to Presentation, Production and Produce (PPP) model which rely on skill-based teaching. On the other hand, ‘the abstraction of meaning’ and ‘an interpretative process aimed at the understanding of reality’ concern with communicative use of language and the last category refers to personal development through learning to think, learning some social skills and learning about the world (Williams and Burden, 1997).

Considering these different approaches about language, language learning and teaching, this study attempts to elucidate Turkish EFL teachers’ beliefs regarding epistemological issues about English: whether it is seen as a subject to concern the acquisition of grammatical structures or a tool for communication. Additionally, the current study aims at profiling the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and practices with reference to the factors leading consistency or inconsistency between beliefs and practices

Teachers’ beliefs and classroom behaviours

The process of teaching is comprised of two major domains: (a) teachers’ thought process, (b) teachers’ actions and their observable effects (Clark & Peterson, 1986). Considering the nature of beliefs as the indicators of beliefs, there is an agreement that teachers’ practices are determined by their beliefs (Richards, 1998; Bandura, 1986; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992). Some previous studies also concluded parallel findings where significant relationship was found between teachers’ espoused beliefs and practices (e.g. Bai & Ertmer, 2004; Woods, 1991; Hatipoğlu, 2006; Mori, 2002).

For instance, in their case study focusing on the learner-centeredness in Turkish context, Hatipoğlu (2006) found a strong relationship between beliefs and practice. She observed that teachers present an appropriate classroom environment to their beliefs about learner-centred learning. Additionally, Bai and Ertmer (2004) focused on in-service teachers’ beliefs about using technology in the classroom and observed a positive relationship between their beliefs and uses of technology. Mori (2002) also found that teachers give corrective feedback in relation to their beliefs. Woods (1991) carried out a longitudinal study where he focused on teachers’ curriculum-based and student-based views of teaching and elucidated a consistency between teachers’ decisions and their underlying assumptions and beliefs about language.

Aforementioned findings illustrate the positive relationship between teachers’ beliefs and practices ranging from the selecting of activities, corrective feedback and using technology. However, there are also studies which found no consistency between teacher’ beliefs and practices (e.g. Duffy & Ball, 1986; Hoffman & Kugle, 1982; Yim, 1993; Karavas, 1993; Gahin, 2001; Maiklad, 2001; Seban, 2008).

Duffy and Anderson (1984) found that only four of eight reading teachers employed practices that reflected their beliefs. Additionally, Hoffman and Kugle (1982) investigated whether teachers’ types of verbal feedback are related to their beliefs about reading and no significant

relationship was found. Similarly, Yim (1993, cited in Gahin, 2001) focused on grammar teaching from a communicative orientation and found no consistency between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices. Another study was carried out by Karavas (1993, cited in Gahin, 2001) who investigated the consistency between teachers' beliefs and practices in Greece. He found that teachers' classroom practices are not congruent with their beliefs, which was highly communicative.

Gahin (2001) conducted a research study within the same scope in Egyptian context. The findings of the data, which was collected through questionnaire, interviews and classroom observations, illustrated that majority of teachers' espoused beliefs mismatched with their classroom behaviours and different reasons were discussed as factors that may hinder this consistency such as larger classes, lack of resources, workload, time constraints and low pay. Another study, which was carried out in Thailand, also supports Gahin's findings where the majority of the teachers were observed to be more passive than their expressed beliefs (Maiklad, 2001). Similar to Gahin, external factors are discussed such as lack of resources, overload contents to teach, students' and teachers' conditions, societal expectations, exam-based assessment and the unofficial role of English in Thailand. Additionally, Seban (2008) carried out a qualitative research study in Turkey and investigated the relationship between primary class teachers' beliefs about teaching writing and their instructional practices and she found inconsistency between teachers' practices and self-reported beliefs.

These contrary findings show that the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their practices is still debatable. In response to this intriguing complexity, this study attempts to profile English language teachers' beliefs about the ideal foreign language teaching environment in Turkey and elucidate whether teachers present an appropriate teaching environment to their beliefs.

The status of English in Turkey

Considering learners' reasons for learning English as a foreign language, two motivation types seem predominant for Turkish learners in learning English: integrative and instrumental motivation. The former concerns the interest to a foreign language shown in a society (Lambert, 1974, cited in Gardner and MacIntyre, 1991). Parallel to this, in Turkey, English is seen as a world language and many people struggle to learn it effectively because knowing English means to be distinct from other people. Secondly, "the practical value and advantages of learning a new language" (Lambert, 1974: 98) is another drive for Turkish learners of English. This role of English is also emphasized by Ministry of National Education (MEB) stating that "the teaching and learning of English are highly encouraged as English has become the lingua franca, namely, the means of communication among people with different native languages" (Talim Terbiye Kurulu, 2006: 16).

The curriculum of English teaching in Turkey shows that there are attempts to follow the current trends in English language learning and teaching fields. However, the status of a foreign language in a country cannot solely be determined according to the theoretical views but it is also important to know what types of testing procedures are offered to test learners' proficiencies. Considering these two issues, in essence, there is a big dilemma concerning English language teaching in Turkey where teachers are expected to develop students' productive skills and the proficiencies of learners are tested through structure-based examinations.

This approach of neglecting productive skills makes it a perennial problem to learn how to use language effectively because learners do not need to develop their productive skills to prove their proficiencies in English. In this respect, considering the structures of English examinations administered in Turkey such as Secondary School Placement test (SBS), Foreign language test (YDS), Foreign language proficiency examination for state employees (KPDS) and Foreign language proficiency examination of Interuniversity committee (ÜDS), it is clear that they do not test learners' proficiencies in using the language but only include multiple-choice items that taken into account learners' knowledge in reading, vocabulary and grammar. As a result, students are placed in secondary schools (SBS), universities (YDS) and academicians become associated professors (ÜDS) without speaking or writing in English. Therefore, the objectives of Turkish learners of English are to get through these examinations rather than developing their productive skills. Therefore, many Turkish learners of English know the structures of English thoroughly but cannot speak or write in English even at basic level.

The sample of the current study includes teachers whose students take SBS to be enrolled in secondary education. These examinations are administered centrally by MEB and students

were invited to take three examinations at the end of each year as 6th, 7th and 8th grades. The average scores of these three examinations were calculated and students were enrolled in secondary schools according to their average scores in SBS. In 2009, MEB removed examinations hold after 6th and 7th grades and declared that SBS will be administered once at the end of the 8th grade.

SBS includes 80 multiple-choice types of questions in five different disciplines: Turkish, Mathematics, Science, Social Science and Foreign Language. Foreign language is offered in four different foreign languages: English, German, French, and Italian. The foreign language of the schools of this study is English. English test includes 13 multiple choice questions which concern students' lexical and grammatical knowledge.

The above discussed disconnection between communicative theoretical standings of policy makers and accuracy-based conceptualisation of good language learner is the main concern of the current study. In doing so, in the light of teachers' beliefs, this study aims at elucidating whether teaching procedures are designed according to the theoretical approaches proposed by National Ministry of Education (MEB) or is it the content of examinations which determine English language teaching procedures offered in Turkey.

Methodology

Research framework

This study is informed by the interpretive paradigm. Concerning the ontological perspective of this paradigm, "reality is socially and discursively constructed by human actors" (Grix, 2004: 61) and therefore, social world cannot be explored but understood because it is dependent on the social actors which cannot be generalised to any other context. In doing so, understanding individuals' beliefs, values, attitudes are the main concerns of interpretive studies.

In the light of this ontological position, interpretivists believe that knowledge is something personal, subjective and unique (Cohen et al., 2007). This epistemological position of interpretivists leads to studies aiming at understanding individuals' world view which in turn provide information about the social world.

In this respect, the current study seeks for understanding teachers' beliefs and practices with particular attention to reasons. In this respect, this study follows the idea that reality is subjective and obtained by discovering the cultural meaning revealed by the behaviour of the subjects (Nunan, 1986). This exploratory case study intends to elucidate the standpoints of individuals so as to understand the social context, which enables researcher to obtain deep data through understanding the rationale for particular thoughts and behaviours.

Purpose of the study

The current study attempts to profile whether in-service teachers' beliefs are congruent with theories proposed by curriculum designers or with the skills required to develop for becoming successful in English language examinations administered in Turkey. In this respect, it is attempted to understand the impact of these two dichotomies on teachers' beliefs and practices. In doing so, this study seeks for elucidating the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices.

To address these issues, this paper reports findings to the following research questions:

1. What are Turkish elementary English teachers' beliefs about the effective ways of teaching English?
2. What are Turkish elementary English teachers' beliefs about their current practices?
3. What are the reasons for connection or disconnection between teachers' espoused beliefs and self-reported practices?

Participants

In Turkey, elementary education is compulsory and divided into two phases. The first phase is comprised of five years of schooling and the other three years encompasses the second phase. Teachers working in state schools have to follow the syllabus and use materials which are designed by National Ministry of Education (MEB). Students take 3 hours English classes per week in the first phase and 4 hours in the second phase.

The participants of this study include 6 Turkish teachers of English working at elementary state schools in a town located in the Northwest part of Turkey. The current study was carried out in

that town because of its accessibility for the researcher. The population of the town is 39.000 and it has seven secondary and twelve elementary state schools.

Four elementary schools were selected for this study. School A and C are located in the centre of the town where families have higher socio-economic backgrounds compared to other two schools (see Table 1).

Random sampling was used in selecting the participants. Although 8 teachers were invited, two teachers were due to administrative commitments. As displayed in Table 1, the demographic information of participants shows that they all hold bachelor degrees in English language teaching. While four of these teachers were novice teachers with 1 or 2 years of teaching experience, two teachers were experienced teachers having more than 10 years experience. The demographic information of participants is tabulated below:

Table 1. The demographic information of the participants

Code	Gender	Degree	Years of Experience	School
T1	Female	B.A	2	A
T2	Female	B.A	1	A
T3	Female	B.A.	1	B
T4	Male	B.A	15	C
T5	Male	B.A	10	C
T6	Female	B.A.	2	D

Data collection and analysis

Research studies show that beliefs can be investigated quantitatively or qualitatively. As for quantitative designs, in general, survey is employed as a research methodology where researchers use particular scales to check correlations between different variables. One of the most commonly used scales is Horwitz's (1987) Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI).

Using quantitative methods to investigate beliefs receive criticism because "they are not suitable for examination of issues that require reflective thinking owing to the pre-categorized nature of the questions" (Maiklad, 2001: 74). Kalaja also supports this and claims that quantitative methods "only measure beliefs in theory and not actual occasions of talk and writing" (Kalaja, 1995: 197). Using quantitative methods is useful for researchers to reach larger data set and conduct statistical analyses to check correlations among different variables but limitative in terms of providing in-depth data which is essential for understanding the situation thoroughly. Considering the subjective nature of beliefs, it is vital to understand the reasons behind individual's beliefs. Therefore, using qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, narrative writing, and journal keeping gives researchers the opportunity of observing and negotiating with participants, which provides them to understand the situation in depth.

Interview is used as a data collection tool in this study. Interviews are useful for understanding complex and deep issues (Cohen et al., 2007), and they are regarded as major research tools to explore how interviewees interpret their views of the world and make sense of their experiences (Brown & Dowling, 1998). Due to time constraints, it was not possible to collect data through observing teachers' classroom behaviours. For that reason, rather than teachers' observed practices, their self-reported practices were addressed in this study.

The interview was semi-structured. This type of interview is directed by a set of general themes rather than specific questions, which provide researchers with the flexibility in encouraging the interviewee to talk about these themes (Borg, 2006) and allows for exploring the tacit and unobservable aspects of participants' lives (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, cited in Borg, 2006).

After selecting the prospective participants, I contacted with school administrators and explained the scope my research study to get permission to interview with teachers. Afterwards, I met teachers and gave details about my study and asked them to sign an informed consent form. This form includes information about the objectives of the study and notifies that the participation in the study is on voluntary basis. Participants were also informed that any information they gave would be solely used for the purposes of this research project and their anonymity will be preserved by the researcher. Before data collection, the researcher asked interviewees' permission for audio recording. During the data collection, no questions were directed which are not committed to personal privacy and which might cause harm, detriment

and unreasonable stress during the interviews. The data were only stored in researcher's computer and audio files were deleted after transcription for the sake of participants' personal privacies.

No direct questions but themes were prepared beforehand and questions were directed according to the flow of the conversation so as to provide a natural conversational environment. Themes were predetermined considering the aforementioned three main areas of teachers' beliefs as *beliefs about teaching*, *beliefs about subject* and *beliefs about self and the teaching role* (Calderhead, 1996). In doing so, interviewees were asked to talk about their beliefs about the effective ways of language learning, teaching and their current teaching practices. As an interviewer, I just intervene when the talk became irrelevant for the scope of the study and I always ask 'why' questions so as to understand the reason behind the particular situation.

Considering the mother tongues of the interviewees, the language of the interviews was Turkish and the interviewing process lasted around 17 minutes and different issues were also negotiated such as teachers' reasons for becoming a language teacher, their beliefs about pre-service and in-service training and their beliefs about testing students. Nevertheless, due to limitations of space here, this paper focuses on teachers' beliefs about language teaching and their practices.

As for data analysis, the data were transcribed verbatim and the themes and interpretations were coded and categories were constructed considering recurring themes in interview protocols.

Pilot Study

The pilot study was carried out with an English teacher working at an elementary state school in order to avoid difficulties in organizing the interviewing process in the main study. In the analysis of the interview, it is observed that it lasts around 17 minutes and predetermined themes were useful for elucidating teachers' beliefs about language learning and teaching.

Findings and Discussion

Analysis of the data revealed that teachers were in agreement about the function of language where all participants supported that using the target language communicatively should be the main objective of foreign language learning. This showed that teachers agreed with curriculum designers.

On the other hand, it was revealed that teachers' practices were not congruent with their beliefs because all participants remarked that their opinions about ideal teaching did not match with their teaching practices. They confirmed that they only focused on structural forms of the target language. This finding supports the findings of some previous studies where no consistency was observed between teachers' beliefs and practices (e.g. Duffy & Anderson, 1984; Hoffman & Kugle, 1982; Yim, 1993; Karavas, 1993; Seban, 2008; Gahin, 2001; Maiklad, 2001).

As a result of this disconnection, participants reported that they were not satisfied with their current English language teaching procedure: *'If I were a student here, I would consider myself as I did not know English'* (T1). Table 2 illustrates the categories of answers. The number of items the categories were mentioned by each interviewee is shown in parentheses.

Table 2. Teachers' beliefs about ideal ways of teaching English and current practices

Ideal		Practice	
Speaking (6)	Exam-driven (4)	Reading (3)	
All skills (2)	Disregarding other skills (4)	Translation (2)	
Using different resources (1)	Following the course book (4)	Writing (1)	
Separate skill hours (1)	Vocabulary (3)	Pronunciation (1)	
Counselling (1)		Speaking (1)	

Effective ways of teaching English

The data revealed that all participants agreed that English should be learned communicatively and the main objectives of teaching process should be improving students' speaking skills

because *'you cannot consider yourself that you know a foreign language unless you can speak in that language'* (T1). According to another participant, *'it is not very important if you do not know how to write in English. The important thing is communication. Therefore, students should develop their speaking skills'* (T4). As highlighted in these two quotes, all participants considered language as a tool for communication. For that reason, they remarked that improving students' speaking skills should be the main concerns of foreign language teachers. In addition to speaking, two participants stated that teachers should aim at developing students' four skills as reading, writing, speaking and listening: *'language is integrated. So, all skills should be included in teaching process. It is meaningless for students to focus on one or two skills'* (T3). In doing so, one participant suggested using different resources such as videos, songs and games: *'separate speaking, writing and listening classes should be provided'* (T2). Another issue highlighted by one interviewee was counselling. She asserted that, *'I have to spend 10 or 15 minutes of each lesson for counselling because students have adaptation problems because of entering puberty'* (T1).

These quotes showed that participants were aware of the functions of language as a communication tool because learning a foreign language requires using it effectively. This confirmed that they followed the current trends in the field where the focus is on the needs of using the target language communicatively. They highlighted the significance of presenting integrated language classes and using different activities to motivate students. On the other hand, the role of elementary teachers in helping students overcome particular social and personality problems occurred because of puberty was also underlined.

Current teaching practices

Despite their communicative perspectives, all participants remarked that they could not refer to their beliefs about language in their teaching practices. They only focused on reading, grammar and vocabulary because students main objective in teaching English was to get through SBS because English success was based on their performances in this examination. In this respect, one participant stated that *'We are teaching English according to the SBS exam. Therefore, students are currently studying on multiple-choice tests and we attempt to teach how to answer these questions correctly. They are trying to memorise everything. For that reason, I believe that English is not taught thoroughly'* (T1).

As a result of this exam-based educational policy, participants declared that they disregarded other language skills: *'We generally focus on vocabularies because vocabularies are very important for the exam'* (T2). Another point about current practice was the overreliance on the course books: *'You have to follow the course book because the exam questions are designed according to the topics and vocabularies covered in textbooks'* (T3). In this vein, there was a consensus that their practices mainly relied on reading and vocabulary. Additionally, two participants stated that they used translation as a method: *'In pre-service education, our lecturers suggested us not to use mother tongue while teaching English. But it is not possible in practice. Students do not understand anything when you do not translate. All students try to translate and if they do not understand, they expect you to translate the phrases'* (T2). Only one interviewee reported that he was trying to refer to all four skills: *'I pay attention to students' pronunciations, I present listening and speaking activities where necessary and I give importance to their writing skills'* (T4).

These observations about current teaching practices shows that teachers' practices mismatch with theoretical approaches proposed by MEB. While policy makers are expected to follow a communicative teaching environment, various reasons seemed to obstruct this. This impracticality of educational reforms in Turkey was also addressed in a research study carried out by Grossman et al. (2007) with the aim of understanding teacher educators' attitudes towards curriculum reform implemented in National Educational Development Project (NEDP). The analysis of the survey revealed that 49.5% of 78 teacher educators agreed that educational leaders are not sincere about wanting to reform education and 72.9 % of 124 respondents thought that education in Turkey is too political. With regard to the overall satisfaction about NEDP project, 82.8% of 157 participants reported that it does not meet its overall goals. The findings of this study confirm the disconnection between curriculum designers' theories and teachers' classroom behaviours. Considering this, the practicality of theoretical frameworks proposed by policy makers seems problematic. To unpack this complexity, policy makers should not disregard the characteristics of classroom environment, which is vital to propose an implementable curriculum.

Reasons for the disconnection between beliefs and practice

Considering the reasons underpinning this disconnection, as tabulated in Table 3, different factors were reported to be influencing teachers' decision-making in teaching English such as time constraints, overload syllabus, exam-based policy, lack of resources, large classes, course book, the status of English. Considering the interpretive studies on teachers' practices and beliefs, it is seen that there are some common findings in terms of factors influencing teachers' decision-making process as time constraints (Gahin, 2001), overload contents to teach, large classes, the status of English, and exam-based assessment (Maiklad, 2001).

Table 3. Reasons for the disconnection between teachers' beliefs and practices

Reasons
Time constraints (5)
Overload Syllabus (4)
Preparing for the exam (4)
Lack of resources (4)
Large classes (3)
Course book (3)
The status of English (2)

In this study, time constraints and over loaded syllabus were reported to be the main reasons for focusing on particular aspects of language. All participants agreed that, it was not possible to cover the syllabus if they spent time for all activities of the course book: *'When you include extra activities, it is not possible to cover the topics in the syllabus'* (T6). In the same vein, another participant stated that *'you need to decide, whether you will include all of the activities in the course book and will not cover the syllabus or skip some activities in the course book but cover the syllabus'* (T4). These quotes supported that the curriculum was not implementable because it included topics which were difficult to cover in one term. To overcome this, all participants agreed that 3 and 4 hours of English classes were very limited and they suggested increasing class hours: *'If I had 9 or 10 hours English classes, I believe I could teach English very effectively'* (T2).

Exam-driven policy was seen as the other reason which affected their teaching procedure, students' expectations and attitudes towards English learning: *'When you ask students to speak, they ask you to hand out tests so that they can study for the examination'* (T1). Another participant stated that *'when I correct students' pronunciation mistakes, they said that they do not need to pronounce correctly for the exam'* (T3). This also affected students' attitudes towards learning English: *'Their main concern is getting high marks in the exam'* (T6). For that reason, teachers tended to skip activities which referred to students' productive skills SBS in order to cover vocabularies and grammatical topics which were required to be successful in this examination. This was because the content of SBS included all topics covered in the course books. This obscured teachers from presenting different activities and they only followed the course books so that students would be prepared for the examination by the end of the year.

Lack of resources was another problematic issue which affected teachers' current practices. 4 participants stated that they did not receive the CDs of course books, and therefore, they either skipped listening activities or read aloud the typescripts and asked students to answer to the questions in listening activities. This affected the effectiveness of listening activities negatively because students could not hear the pronunciations of native speakers. For that reason, it is important to provide audios which will enable students to get familiar with native speakers of the target language. In addition to this, concerns were voiced about the large classes: *'It is not possible to present speaking activities because some classes have 30 students'* (T4).

The structure of course books was mentioned as an another factor. The majority of participants agreed that course books are effective in terms of including different activities for developing different skills. However, as discussed above, due to students' expectations and time constraints, they stated that it was not possible to carry out all activities. On the other hand, two

participants believed that the level of course books were not suitable for students because they had to cope with very difficult grammatical rules and vocabularies especially in the 8th grade. One participant complained about course book designs: *'Course books can be effective in theory but authors do not consider students' and teachers' psychologies. Topics and activities are too difficult for students and therefore, they get bored while dealing with English'* (T5). The same teacher also remarked that teachers did not have right to take initiative: *'In the past, I was doing my daily and annual plans. I was writing the objectives of each topic by myself. But now, top-down plans are designed by MEB. All the things we carry out in classrooms are pre-determined'* (T5).

The status of English in Turkey was considered as another influential factor for teachers' practices. Two participants stated that using language was not important in Turkey. Therefore, developing speaking skills was not emphasized in any educational level.

Implications

This study aims at understanding teachers' espoused beliefs about the effective ways of English language teaching and elucidating the relationship between their beliefs and practices. In doing so, it is intended to elucidate factors determining teachers' practices in teaching English. Although this was an exploratory case study, the findings allow generating some pedagogical recommendations.

First of all, the current study elucidated that teachers believe in the essentiality of teaching English with the objective of developing learners' communicative skills. This shows that teachers support the theoretical approaches proposed by curriculum designers. However, despite their communicative perspective, teachers remarked that their current practices solely rely on teaching the usage of English. This illustrates the disconnection between teachers' beliefs and practices. It is seen that this disconnection is detrimental to teacher satisfaction because teachers reported that they are dissatisfied with their current practices. To overcome this, it is important to understand the reasons for the disconnection between teachers' beliefs and practices in order to avoid factors obstructing teachers to present classroom environment appropriate to their beliefs.

Secondly, the theoretical approaches proposed by curriculum designers are not implemented in classroom. While the objectives of English language teaching are declared to be developing students' all four skills, teachers reported that the only focus of their current practices is to develop students' grammatical and lexical competencies. This disconnection illustrates that there is a problem about the implementability of the English language teaching curriculum in Turkey.

In doing so, it is important for curriculum designers to consider the characteristics of English language classrooms so as to design an implementable curriculum because it is not viable to expect teachers to teach English communicatively while students do not need to communicate in English to prove their competencies. In this respect, the focus of exam system should be changed to using the language communicatively because this study shows that testing tools play important role on the design of teaching process. Therefore, learners' grammatical knowledge together with their different competences should be considered in testing their proficiency levels so that they can study on developing their productive skills.

Additionally, concerns have been voiced regarding the overloaded syllabus. Teachers remarked that their first duty is to cover all topics included in course books rather than designing appropriate teaching procedure to the needs of the students. For that reason, it is more useful to design adaptable syllabi where teachers can select appropriate activities according to the needs of their students. In doing so, there was a strong consensus that English language class hours should be increased so that teachers can present more effective teaching procedures which aim at developing students' productive skills.

Another concern was about the lack of teaching resources. Considering the nature of foreign language in terms of representing real life situations, it is important for students to deal with foreign languages by using different materials. To address this, English classrooms should include audio-visual materials which will provide students with the opportunity of studying English authentically. In doing so, the number of students in a class may be an important factor influencing the quality of English language teaching.

Conclusion

Considering that the current study is the first of its type focusing on the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices in Turkish context, the study made contributions to English language learning and teaching field in Turkey. However, it is important to reiterate that there are some limitations of this study.

This study did not deal with teachers' observed practices but their reported practices. Therefore, it is not certain whether participants provide relevant information in interviews about their real teaching practices. For that reason, further research studies are required within the scope of investigating the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their observed practices.

No study was carried out in Turkish context investigating the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices. To unlock this unvoiced issue, further research studies in different fields of education should be devoted to understand Turkish teachers' beliefs and practices and elucidate whether theoretical approaches proposed by policy makers are represented in classrooms. To do so, quantitative research studies are also needed which may explore different aspects through involving large number of participants from different contexts.

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY INTO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES IN TURKEY

Abstract

This study aims to understand the relationship between teachers' and students' beliefs about effective ways of learning English and elucidate whether teachers' and students' beliefs are congruent with their self-reported practices in Turkey. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to 5 teachers of English and 6 of their students and qualitative analysis of the interview protocols revealed consistency between their beliefs about effective ways of learning English. On the other hand, teachers and students were in agreement about the disconnection between their beliefs and practices. Although they believe that English should be learned communicatively, they claimed that their current practices solely focus on structural and lexical units of English. Different factors were discussed leading to this mismatch such as the content of university examination, course books, the status of English, overloaded syllabus, etc. and the disconnection between beliefs and practices is reported to be a factor hindering the satisfaction gained from current teaching and learning procedures.

Keywords: Teachers' beliefs, Learners' beliefs, English language teaching in Turkey, Beliefs and practices

Introduction and Background

Beliefs are foci points of research studies aiming to understand individual's intentions for particular points because beliefs are propositions which are held consciously or unconsciously and accepted as true by individuals (Borg, 2001). In this vein, investigating beliefs provide a

deep insight into individual's inner world. This is also emphasized by Hancock and Gallard (2004) highlighting the role of beliefs as guiding individual's intentions for action.

This function of beliefs determined the scope of studies in the field of education where teachers' and students' beliefs are investigated with the aim of understanding individuals' thoughts and behaviours. In this respect, Shavelson and Stern (1981) asserted that what teachers do is governed by their thoughts and teachers' decision-making are determined by their theories and beliefs. In this context, regarding the characteristics of any teaching procedure being comprised of various decision-making processes, investigating teachers' beliefs are significant to understand the reasons behind providing a particular teaching environment.

In this vein, Calderhead (1996) proposed five main areas that teachers hold particular belief as *beliefs about learners and learning, beliefs about teaching, beliefs about subject, beliefs about learning to teach, and beliefs about self and the teaching role*. Concerning these five main areas, teachers' belief system is comprised of their conceptualisations about different issues such as the characteristics of learners, effective learning and teaching processes, field of study, teaching experience, self-efficacy and characteristics of good language teacher.

Apart from teacher's beliefs, understanding learner's beliefs is also important for profiling the effectiveness of a classroom environment since "learners have their own agendas in the language lessons they attend" (Nunan, 1989: 176). In other words, learners bring particular beliefs into classroom and they contribute to the effectiveness of teaching and learning environment. Richards and Lockhart (1994, cited in Maiklad, 2001:86) identify nine different areas in the belief systems of English language learners:

- Beliefs about the nature of English: the significance and difficult aspects of the language
- Beliefs about speakers of English: their attitudes towards native speakers of the language
- Beliefs about the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Beliefs about teaching: effective and ineffective teaching methods
- Beliefs about language learning: ways to learn a language, and useful activities and approaches
- Beliefs about appropriate classroom behaviour: appropriate forms of classroom interactions and behaviours
- Beliefs about self: their own abilities to learn a language
- Beliefs about goals: their goals of language learning

These areas show that learners hold beliefs about different issues related to classroom environment. These beliefs play important roles in determining the effectiveness of classroom environment where the congruency between learners' and their teachers' beliefs affects the quality of teaching procedure because it might not be probable to expect learners to be motivated in a learning process which mismatches their beliefs. In this respect, Richards (1998) highlights that learners' and teachers' beliefs might be different and this causes misconceptions about teaching in various areas. In similar vein, Bada and Okan (2000, cited in Maiklad, 2001) revealed that learners tend to be more motivated to methods or activities that are congruent with their beliefs.

Considering this function of the relationship between teachers' and students' beliefs, different studies were carried out with the aim of understanding the congruency between beliefs hold by students and their teachers. For example, Nunan (1989) found mismatches between learners' and teachers' views about important issues of learning process. While teachers value communicative activities, learners place greater value on traditional activities. In the same vein, Spratt (1999) revealed that only 54% of activities carried out in their teaching procedures are favoured by learners in a Hong Kong university. On the other hand, Kern (1995) elucidated positive and negative relationships between learners' and instructor's beliefs in his study including students enrolled in French lessons at a university in the USA. The quantitative analysis of the data revealed that both students and instructors are optimistic about the language learning process. On the other hand, mismatches were found about issues concerning pronunciation, error correction and the importance of rule learning.

The results of previous studies illustrate the possibility of connection and disconnection between teachers and students' beliefs. However, Richard and Lockhart (1996) emphasized the role of social and institutional contexts on teachers' beliefs. This is also important for students' beliefs because there is a strong consensus about the context-specific nature of beliefs (Brown &

Cooney, 1982; Bandura, 1986; Pajares, 1992). Therefore, it is not useful to generalise the findings of beliefs studies to other social and cultural contexts.

Although different studies were devoted to understanding the relationship between teachers' and students' beliefs in different contexts, no study has been carried out in Turkey within this scope. In this respect, this study is the first type of its form focusing on the relationship between beliefs hold by students and their teachers of a secondary state school in Turkey. In doing so, this study attempts to understand students' and teachers' beliefs about effective ways of learning English and their current classroom practices and aims at elucidating whether there is a congruency between their beliefs and practices. Considering Calderhead's (1996) and Richards and Lockhart's (1994) proposals about areas that teachers and students hold beliefs, this study addresses teachers' beliefs about subject, learning/teaching and students' beliefs about four language skills, language learning and goals. The nature of these beliefs seems comparable and interrelated. For instance, teachers' beliefs about subject might address students' beliefs about four language skills and students' beliefs about language learning and goals might be related to teachers' beliefs about teaching. In this vein, the current study seeks for elucidating teachers' and students' beliefs about ways of learning English efficiently, the effectiveness of their current English teaching/learning practices and factors determining their teaching/learning procedures.

The context

In Turkish educational system, there are four types of schoolings as pre-school, primary, secondary and higher education. Primary education is compulsory and it encompasses two levels as first (5 years) and second phases (3 years). After completing primary education, students are enrolled in secondary education considering their scores in Secondary School Placement (SBS) test.

Secondary education is provided at different types of schools such as Anatolian High Schools, Anatolian Teacher Training High Schools, Science High School etc. This level of education is also comprised of two phases as: common (1 year) and division-based education (3 years). In common phase, students take common courses such as Turkish Literature, Mathematics, Physics, History, English etc. After completing this grade, students select their fields of studies and they take intensive division-based courses. There are four main types of divisions as Science, Social Science, Turkish-Mathematics and Foreign language. This selection is of critical importance because students can only select departments of universities according to their divisions of graduation. In this context, it is not possible for students to be enrolled in foreign language departments unless they are graduated from language divisions at secondary education.

In Turkey, English teaching starts at 4th grade of primary education when students are at the age of 10. During primary education, students take 3 hours of English classes at 4th and 5th grades and 4 hours at 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. The intensiveness of English classes differs according to the type of school in secondary education. Considering the population of the study, students studying at Anatolian High Schools take English classes 10 hours per week in 9th grade and in language divisions, 12 hours of English classes are provided in the division-based phase of secondary education.

After completing the secondary education, students graduated from language divisions take two university examinations as Student Selection Examination (ÖSS) and Foreign Language Test (YDS). These examinations are administered centrally by Student Selection and Placement Centre (ÖSYM). ÖSS encompasses various tests concerning students' knowledge in different disciplines such as Turkish, Mathematics, History, Geography, Philosophy. On the other hand, YDS deals with students' competencies in English by 80 multiple-choice type of questions.

The content of YDS seems ineffective in terms of representing the communicative perspective of curriculum designers in Turkey because according to the regulation of foreign language teaching, foreign language teaching should focus on developing learners' four skills as reading, writing, speaking and listening (MEB, 2006). However, YDS only refers to students' competencies in reading, vocabulary and grammar. For that reason, students do not need to develop their productive skills but they just need to improve their lexical and structural competencies to be enrolled in universities.

This conflict between the perspectives of curriculum designers and accuracy-based exam policy is one of the preoccupations of the current study aiming to understand the role of these factors in determining the teaching procedures followed in a secondary state school in Turkey. In doing

so, this study aims to profile the roles of these two perspectives in determining the teaching procedures followed in Turkey through investigating teachers' and students' beliefs about ideal ways of learning English and the effectiveness of their current practices referring to the factors determining their learning/teaching procedures.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the study

This study aims to understand the relationship between teachers' and students' beliefs about effective ways of teaching English. In doing so, the relationship between teachers' and students' espoused beliefs and self-reported practices will be investigated with the intention of revealing factors influencing teachers' and students' preferences in following particular type of English language learning and teaching procedure. In this vein, this study attempts to identify whether English language teaching procedures are designed according to the communicative perspectives of curriculum designers or to the content of university examination.

To address this, the current study seeks for answers to following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between teachers' and students' beliefs about effective ways of learning English?
2. What is the relationship between teachers' and students' beliefs about their current English language learning and teaching practices?
3. What are the reasons for connection or disconnection between students' and teachers' espoused beliefs and self-reported practices?

Participants

The participants in this study were 6 Turkish students and 5 English language teachers of those students. The type of the school was Anatolian High School which is located in Northwest part of Turkey. This town is selected because of its accessibility to the researcher. The school was selected on purposive accounts because it is the most prestigious school in the town. The statistical documents show that 81% graduates were enrolled in universities in 2009. This ratio is also high for students graduated from language division 90% of whom enrolled in foreign language departments at universities.

5 teachers out of 7 were selected randomly and they all accepted to participate. On the other hand, 3 volunteer students from 12th grade and 3 from 11th grade participated in this study. Students were selected from language divisions because English is their field of study and they take intensive English language courses to be enrolled in foreign language departments of universities. The demographic information of participants is tabulated below:

Table 1: The demographic information of teacher participants

	Gender	Degree	Year of Experience
T1	Female	M.A	11
T2	Female	B.A	11
T3	Male	B.A	19
T4	Male	B. A.	9
T5	Female	B.A	10

Table 2: The demographic information of student participants

	Gender	Age	Grade
S1	Female	18	12 th grade
S2	Female	18	12 th grade
S3	Male	18	12 th grade
S4	Female	17	11 th grade
S5	Male	17	11 th grade
S6	Female	17	11 th grade

Data collection and analysis

Although it is seen that beliefs can be investigated quantitatively and qualitatively, using quantitative methods in investigating beliefs receive criticism. According to Maiklad (2001), using quantitative methods is not suitable for issues that require reflective thinking. Considering the nature of beliefs, it is clear that they have complex nature which might not be investigated through pre-determined questions. A fortiori, it is essential to interact with individuals so as to

ask questions according to their responses which will enable researchers to understand individual's beliefs thoroughly.

To address this, a semi-structured interview was used in this study. This type of interview is useful for creating natural conversational environment because researchers do not ask pre-determined questions but talk about themes related to the scope of the research study. For that reason, it allows the researcher to explore tacit and unobservable aspects of participants' lives (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, cited in Borg, 2006). In this respect, I did not ask direct questions during interviews but I wanted participants to talk about general themes within the scope of the study. I only intervene when the talk become irrelevant for the scope of this study and I always ask 'why' questions to understand the reasons behind a situation.

Before the data collection, I met school administrators to take permission to interview with teachers and students. After that, I met prospective participants to explain the scope of my study and asked them to sign a consent form which shows that the interviewees participated in the study voluntarily. This form also assures that the data collected will be used for this study and their personal privacy and anonymity will be preserved by the researcher.

The interviews were conducted in Turkish which was essential for participants to express themselves thoroughly. Interviews with teachers lasted about 17 minutes because different issues were also negotiated such as their reasons of becoming an English teacher, beliefs about pre-service and in-service training. On the other hand, interviews with students lasted around 5 minutes because they are only asked to talk about their beliefs about ideal ways of learning English and their current learning processes.

To analyse the data, the audio-taped data were transcribed verbatim and coding was used to categorise the recurring themes issued by the participants.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of interview protocols revealed consistency between students' and teachers' beliefs about effective foreign language learning where all participants agreed the essentiality of presenting communicative language learning and teaching environment. On the other hand, this study revealed that both students' and teachers' self-reported practices are not congruent with their espoused beliefs. This inconsistency between beliefs and practices is also supported by some previous studies (e.g. Duffy & Anderson, 1984; Hoffman & Kugle, 1982; Yim, 1993; Karavas, 1993; Seban, 2008; Gahin, 2001; Maiklad, 2001). In the current study, all informants claim that despite their beliefs about ideal ways of foreign language learning, they learn and teach English traditionally as a result of different reasons such as exam-based policy, course books, the status of English etc.

As a result of the disconnection between beliefs and practices, all participants reported dissatisfaction from their current English language teaching procedure. For example, considering the effectiveness of their current English language teaching practices, the most experienced teacher participant declared that 'I believe that our current way of teaching English is very bad' (T3). Likewise, student participants remarked that they are not satisfied with current English learning procedure emphasizing that the objectives are limited to getting preparing for university examination which neglects students' productive skills. In this vein, a student participant asserted that "I cannot improve my different English skills because I am studying for university examination. I want to read English books, listen to English music. But when I spent time for these kinds of activities, I cannot study for university examination' (S2).

These assertions show that, in general, both teachers' and students' are not satisfied with their current practices of English learning and teaching which are designed according to the content of university examination. On the other hand, different factors were also addressed by the participants, which will be discussed below in detail as students' and teachers' beliefs about ideal ways of teaching English, current practices and reasons for disconnection between espoused beliefs and self-reported practices.

Teachers' and students' beliefs about effective ways of teaching English

Table 3: Beliefs about effective ways of teaching English

Teachers	Students
Communicative (5)	Communicative (5)
All skills integrated (2)	Four skills (1)
Pronunciation (2)	Grammar (1)

Table 3 displays the categories of answers. The numbers in parentheses show the times each categories were mentioned by each interviewee. As tabulated above, both teachers and students consider language as a tool for communication. All informants reported that using the target language is more important than knowing its structures. In this respect, one teacher participant stated that, 'the objective of learning a foreign language is communication' (T4). In the same vein, another participant claimed that 'developing speaking skills of students should be our main concern' (T5). Additionally, one participant emphasized that, 'I want students who do not know what the present simple and past simple are. They are not very important. But I want my students to be able to speak with people from other countries. I want them to express their feelings thoroughly and introduce our culture and country effectively' (T3). Students are also in agreement with their teachers about this issue and they claim that language should be learned communicatively: 'No matter how proficient we are in grammar, we cannot be proficient unless we develop our speaking and pronunciation skills' (S5). In the same vein, another student remarked that 'native speakers do not pay attention if we are speaking accurately while speaking in English' (S6).

In doing so, two teachers consider pronunciation as the main tool for developing students' speaking skills: 'I believe that the basis of any language is pronunciation. If you cannot pronounce vocabularies correctly, then, it is not possible to express yourself accurately' (T3). On the other hand, another participant remarked that English should be taught by referring to four skills: 'Grammar should be presented in developing students' four skills. These four skills should be integrated and students should study structures gradually and meaningfully' (T1). One student also remarked this point and she asserted that 'all four skills should be emphasized while learning and teaching English' (S2) and only one student stated that grammar should be the main focus (S1). But she supported this on condition that the learner will not go abroad but work and study in Turkey.

These extracts show that students hold similar beliefs with their teachers about the ideal ways of learning English. They both believe that English should be learned with the objective of developing learners' communicative skills. In doing so, they highlight the significance of developing students' pronunciation skills and integrating four language skills and teaching grammatical structures meaningfully.

Teachers' and Students' beliefs about current teaching and learning practices

Although both students and teachers believe that language should be studied communicatively, they also remarked that the only focus of current teaching and learning practices is reported to be reading, grammar and vocabulary (see Table 4).

Table 4: Teachers' and Students' beliefs about current teaching and learning practices

Teachers	Students
Grammar (5)	Grammar (4)
Reading (4)	Vocabulary (3)
Lack of writing activities (3)	Reading (2)
Use of mother tongue (2)	Multiple-choice tests (2)
Following the course book (2)	Course book oriented (2)

Considering the focus of current practice, the recurring theme which was emphasized by both teachers and students was the overreliance on grammar. In this respect, one participant said that 'our teaching solely relies on grammar' (T1). In the same vein, another participant remarked that 'half of our teaching procedures refer to grammar; the other part is concerned by reading, listening and speaking' (T5). Student participants also supported their teachers' assertion: 'Classroom activities solely rely on grammar. We do not do anything to improve our speaking or pronunciation skills' (S1). Correspondingly, another student remarked that 'we do not have opportunity to carry out speaking or writing activities, just grammar and vocabulary' (S4).

Besides grammar, reading is reported to be most commonly emphasized skill by both teacher and students participants: 'In general, we emphasize reading and grammar. Writing activities are very limited. For speaking activities, no matter how you encourage students, they do not speak, so you give up' (T4). These quotes illustrate that teachers are faced with a dilemma in deciding the skills to refer while teaching English: 'We attempt to use different activities referring to different skills of students such as reading and listening' (T2). However, teachers remarked that students' expectations play an important role in this process where 'students think that writing is boring and demanding. Therefore I give them as homework, and then I collect them and give feedback' (T5). Another participant also supported this and she said that 'students do not want to write in English. They think that it is very difficult.' (T1). For those reasons, teachers reported that they are urged to rely on reading, vocabulary and grammar. In the same vein, students reported that reading and vocabulary are other issues that are highlighted in their English language learning processes: 'In general, we do not do listening, speaking and writing activities. We only do vocabulary, grammar and reading activities' (S6).

Another issues reported about current teaching practices highlighted by teacher participants were the use of mother tongue in the class and following the course book: 'You lecture in Turkish. When you lecture in Turkish, you teach grammar' (T3). One participant also talked about her insistence of lecturing in English: 'In the past, I really tried hard to lecture in English. Nevertheless, students reacted against this and they see you as an enemy who wants to make English more difficult for them' (T1). These two quotes show that teachers design their practices according to students' expectations. In Turkish context, since students think that using English is very challenging for them, they are not eager to deal with activities which will develop their productive skills.

On the other hand, considering the role of course books in teaching processes, two teacher participants highlighted the overreliance of course books: 'we just follow the course book because you do not have time to teach anything apart from the course book activities' (T4). This is also supported by two student participants stating that 'in my all English classes, we always follow the course book' (S2&5).

Another issue which was highlighted by student participants was the reliance of multiple-choice type of questions. Considering the content of university examination, students remarked that they deal with this type of questions in most of their English classes: 'we learn the topics in the course book and then we practice multiple-choice type of questions which will be included in the university examination' (S5).

This dichotomy illustrates the fact that classroom practices do not represent the theoretical approaches proposed by curriculum designers. This problem of implementability of theoretical views followed in Turkey was also addressed in a quantitative study conducted by Grossman et al. (2007). They concluded that the majority teacher educators' think that education in Turkey is too political and they do not find the educational reforms useful. To address this, it is vital for policy makers and curriculum developers to develop a practice perspective by considering the characteristics of state schools, teachers and students in order to design implementable syllabi.

Teachers' and students' beliefs about reasons for the disconnection between beliefs and practice

In discussing the reasons hindering the consistency between their beliefs and practices, students mostly rely on university examination as the only reason for this accuracy-based language teaching procedure. Additionally, two student participants consider limited class hours as the problem hindering the consistency between their beliefs and practices. On the other hand, teacher participants discussed various factors influencing their choices in teaching English such as course books, the status of English in Turkey, exam-based policy, students' educational backgrounds, teachers' competences, no legal obligation for personal development, no opportunity to going abroad and overload syllabus (see Table 5).

Table 5: Reasons for the disconnection between teachers'/ students' beliefs and practices

Teachers	Students
Course book (5)	University examination (6)
The status of English (4)	Limited class hours (2)
Exam-based policy (3)	
Students' educational background (3)	
Overload Syllabus (2)	

As seen above, all student participants are in agreement that the content of university examination determines their current English language learning procedures. In this respect, one student participant asserted that 'we are concentrated on university examination now. Therefore, all studies we carry out are for being successful in that examination' (S2). In this context, another participant emphasized that 'we are living in an exam-oriented country. That's why our priority is university examination and the only proficiency I have now is solving multiple-choice type of questions' (S3). In the same vein, another participant reported that 'we can carry out different activities such as listening to music or watching movies in English but our teachers only focus on grammar and vocabulary. They do not value other activities. Neither do we. This is completely because of university examination' (S5).

This exam-based policy was also one of the recurring themes of teacher interviewees. Most teacher participants agreed that their main objective is to prepare students for the university examination because being successful students is dependent upon their performances in the university examination. They claim that the way students are selected to the university is very determinative in terms of students' expectations and attitudes towards English: 'I believe that English examination for university is very ineffective. They just rely on students' vocabulary knowledge and grammatical skills. Therefore, students do not want to speak in English. They do not care about pronouncing vocabularies correctly because they do not need to speak effectively to enrol in universities' (T3). In this respect, another participant stated that 'students do not feel the need of learning English now. They are concentrated on university examination. They think that they will learn English effectively in future, after they enrol in universities' (T2).

Another factor highlighted by student participants is the limited class hours. Two informants claim that they need to study on English more intensively and separate skill courses should be provided which focuses on their different skills: 'Because of limited class hours, we can only cover structural topics. Therefore, we cannot carry out different activities. If we had more class hours, we could focus on different skills' (T5&6).

In spite of students' emphases on these two factors, teacher participants discussed a variety of issues which lead them to present a teaching procedure which mismatches their espoused beliefs. Among those factors, course books are considered to be the main reasons for neglecting communicative skills in teaching English. All participants highlighted that course books are very unsatisfactory and under-theorized: 'As teachers, you have to use course books which are not methodologically appropriate and lacks suitable evaluation criteria. You do not have any other alternatives. Course books only include grammatical structures and it covers a wide range of structural topics in one unit. Reading texts and dialogue activities are not useful. There is no guidance in writing activities where only instructions are given such as it is your time to write but there is no information about how to write that paragraph' (T1). According to another teacher, 'I believe that the course books are above students' level. Vocabularies and reading passages are very difficult. And speakers in listening activities speak too fast. It is very demanding for students to cope with these activities and therefore, students find it very boring' (T3). Another participant talked about the adaptability of the course book. He gave some information about a seminar which is hold by authors of the course book and he said that the authors do not expect us to follow the course book but adapt it. However, he does not think that this is possible because 'it is very difficult for teachers lecturing around 28 hours in a week to design different activities' (T4).

On the other hand, one participant stated that he is not satisfied with the designing process of these course books: 'We know that these course books were not designed by experts but teachers working at state schools. These colleagues are like me. So, they designed this book as I could have designed it as a teacher by myself' (T3). Apart from these, two participants

complained about lack of voice about reporting weaknesses of these course books. They stated that 'when you complain about weak points of these course book to supervisors, they overreact to this and ask me to write a course book by myself' (T4&5). This attitude potentially de-motivate teachers because it is not wise to expect teachers to present effective teaching procedure where they do not even have a voice to criticise the weak points of materials that they have to use.

The status of English in Turkey is reported to be other determinative factor for the disconnection between teachers' beliefs and practices. In this vein, one participant suggested to question our objectives while teaching English: 'Do we learn English to show that we know its grammatical rules better than English people or to exchange information, to introduce our country, to communicate with people from different countries. Our current objective seems to be learning English grammar better than English people' (T3). Correspondingly, another participant highlighted the characteristics of good English language teacher in Turkey: 'If you know English grammar very well, if you can ask very difficult grammatical questions, then you are considered as a good teacher' (T1).

Students' educational background is another factor which affects teachers' teaching practices. Participants stated that students have learned English for five years by focusing on grammar before they enrol in secondary school. Therefore, they expect their teachers to teach English in the same way they had learned it in primary schools: 'Students have studied English through learning vocabularies, grammatical structures. And now, they do not want us to teach communicatively. They just expect us to show forms and structures. Otherwise, they find it very difficult' (T1). Another participant also stated that 'Before they came to this school, they had been studying English for five years. And when they come here, their pronunciation skills are very bad. So, it is very difficult to correct them because they already got used to pronounce that word wrongly' (T3).

Overload syllabus and time constraints were also reported to affect teachers' practices. Two participants highlight that they have to cover the topics of the syllabus on time which makes them be in rush while teaching English: 'The syllabus is much overloaded. You do not have any time to present different activities' (T5). In this respect, another participant also stated that 'we are racing against time to complete the syllabus. If it were not so overloaded, then we could have time to present communicative activities' (T2).

As discussed above, while students think that university examination and limited class hours are only reasons for accuracy-based English classes, teachers discussed various reasons which obstacles the possibility of providing a communicative teaching environment. This might be because of students' current objectives of being successful in university examination. For that reason, they see English as a tool for being successful in university examination and they study English to be successful in that examination. On the other hand, because of their experiences as being both learners and teachers of English, teachers can distinguish different reasons underpinning the disconnection between their beliefs and practices.

IMPLICATIONS

This study seeks for understanding the relationship between teachers' and students' beliefs about effective ways of English language learning and their current practices. Both predictable and unexpected outcomes were thrown up by this study which might generate some pedagogical recommendations.

Firstly, this study revealed that students hold similar beliefs with their teachers about the effective ways of English language learning and the usefulness of their current practices. In this context, both teacher and student participants believe that language should be learned communicatively and they reported that their current practices solely rely on structural units of target language.

As a result of this disconnection, both teacher and student participants highlighted that they are not satisfied with their current practices which mismatch their beliefs about effective ways of learning English. They addressed different external factors hindering the possibility of studying English communicatively.

The content of university education is reported to be main reason. For that reason, besides university examination, the content of English language examinations should be shifted to testing learners' proficiencies in using the target language. Otherwise, how communicative the

syllabus is, it is not probable for both teachers to implement that curriculum unless learners need to prove their competencies in productive skills to be successful in English examinations.

On the other hand, in this study, it is observed that Turkish teachers of English have no voice on their teaching procedures. They just follow the course book which is designed by MEB and naturally, this causes a dilemma because using an ineffective course book contradicts their beliefs. This leads to teachers' dissatisfaction and they become de-motivated to teach English effectively. Therefore, teachers should be given a 'say' which will bridge the gap between theory and practice (Gahin, 2001). In doing so, "language teacher education should not just suggest new teaching techniques, but that teacher educators need to allow teachers to explore their existing beliefs and try to assimilate new ideas by constructing new beliefs" (Maiklad, 2001: 296). In the light of this, constraints which acted against the implementation of teachers' beliefs should be taken into consideration so that teachers can present effective teaching procedure which is congruent with their beliefs about ideal way of teaching English.

Teachers were also concerned about the expertise of authors of the course books. To overcome this, it is vital for using course books which are designed by experts in material and course book design. In addition, both students and teachers declared that they are racing against time in order to cover topics. To address this, it might be useful to provide an adaptable curriculum where teachers can select to carry out particular activities according to the characteristics of their students.

Another point revealed in the current study is about the disconnection between students' primary and secondary education. Considering the nature of languages, it is very difficult to change learners' habits such as correcting wrongly pronounced words. For that reason, the emphasis on the use of target language should be the main policy of Turkish educational system where teachers aim at improving students' communicative skills starting from primary education.

CONCLUSION

Although this study has shed light on different issues in English language teaching practices provided in a secondary state school in Turkey, there are some limitations which should be taken into consideration in designing further research studies in this context.

First of all, the data were not supported by different data collection methods. As a result of this, the current study did not deal with teachers' and students' observed beliefs and practices. Participants' beliefs and practices were determined through their responses during the interviews. To address this, further research studies are needed which observe students' and teachers' practices in English language teaching practices.

As mentioned above, there is a shortage of research studies investigating the relationship between teachers' and students' beliefs. To address this, further studies in different fields are required to understand the relationship Turkish teachers' and students' beliefs about different issues.

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Appendix 2: Observation checklist

Date	Topics	Number of students	Starts	Activities	Observation number

TIME	LESSON PROCESS (Information about classroom procedure)	COMMENTS (Accuracy, fluency, anxiety, interaction length, simultaneous talk)

PAIR WORK				
	Student 1	Student 2	Length of the activity	Activity and comments
Pair 1				
Pair 2				
Pair 3				

GROUP WORK						
Group work	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3	Student 4	Length of the activity	Activity & Comments
Group 1						
Group 2						
Group 3						
Group 4						

Appendix 3: Student initial questionnaire

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire is a part of an EdD dissertation on action research project. The initial objective of the project is to understand your perceptions of your English language learning experiences, speaking performances and what you consider to be an ideal speaking class. The questionnaire comprises five main sections: personal information, English language learning experiences, self-evaluation, ideal speaking class and evaluation of the questionnaire.

This questionnaire is the initial part of the project the results of which will be significant for future studies. For that reason, your participation and responses are very important. Therefore, please read each item carefully and tick the answer which best applies to you. There are no correct or wrong answers and the results of the study will not evaluate or judge you. This is not a part of your course assessment and the responses you give will only be used for the purposes of this project. Your participation in the study is voluntary and, if you choose to participate, I assure you that your identity will remain confidential and anonymous.

Considering the above, if you wish to join the study, please tick the 'yes' box below and then go on to complete the questionnaire. If you prefer not to participate, please tick 'no' in the box. Thank you very much for your time and contributions.

Mehmet Sercan Uztosun
sercanuztosun@gmail.com

I agree to participate in this pilot research study

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

A Personal Information

1. **Gender**

Male	Female
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B English language learning experiences and views about English language proficiency

The first part of this section is about your English language learning experiences

1) Please tick the areas which were the main focus of teaching in your primary, secondary and high school education. You can tick more than one option.

	Primary School	Secondary School	High School
Grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pronunciation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The following section is about the different areas of English language. Please rate each item from 1 to 5 according to the following scale:

1.....5
Not at all Very much

2) Which areas are the focus of teaching in your university education now?

	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar					
Vocabulary					
Pronunciation					
Speaking					
Listening					
Reading					
Writing					

3) In which areas do you consider yourself proficient ?

	1	2	3	4	5
Grammar					
Vocabulary					
Pronunciation					
Speaking					
Listening					
Reading					
Writing					

4) Which of these areas are more important for you? Please give your reasons below.

C. Self-evaluation

1.

1.....5
Not at all Very much

How satisfied are you with your speaking ability in English	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---

2. Please elaborate on your above rating. Why did you rate your satisfaction level as above?

3. For each of the following areas please tick one statement of ability in each group.

Accuracy: I can.....

Maintain a high degree of grammatical control of complex language and the grammatical errors are rare.	
Monitor the grammar I use and avoid errors which cause misunderstanding	
Use some simple structures but I make basic mistakes	

Fluency: I can

Express myself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly in any subject of discussion	
Maintain a conversation with a fairly even tempo; although there are few noticeably long pauses	
Make myself understood in very short utterances although pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident	

Interaction: I can.....

Interact easily, using gestures and body language and intonation in order to get or to keep the floor or to make contribution.	
Initiate, maintain and take my turn in simple face-to-face conversations on topics that are familiar or of personal interest	
Ask and answer questions about personal details but I am rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of my own accord.	

Lexical range: I can.....

Use a wide range of vocabulary item about different topics effortlessly	
Keep communication going by selecting appropriate vocabulary items on familiar topics with occasional pauses to select the appropriate vocabulary	
Use limited repertoire of vocabulary items and I usually stick to particular basic vocabulary with long pauses to remember which vocabulary to use	

4. In relation to your oral proficiency, what are in your opinion, your weak points?

4.1. What are your strengths?

5. How do you feel about your speaking class? For each of the following questions, please tick the appropriate option.

1.....5
Strongly disagree Strongly agree

5.1. How do you feel about your contribution to speaking classes?

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I don't worry about making mistakes in English class.					
2.	I am very anxious when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.					
3.	During English speaking classes, I have nothing to say about the topic					
4.	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English speaking class.					
5.	I feel confident when I speak English in English class.					
6.	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.					
7.	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.					

5.2. How do you feel about the correction of your mistakes?

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I feel embarrassed when teacher corrects me in front of my friends.					
2.	I am happy to be corrected because it is a good way to learn.					
3.	I don't like it when the teacher corrects every mistake we make					

5.3. How do you feel about your preparation for the class?

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English speaking class.					
2.	Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.					
3.	I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.					

5.4. How do you feel about your understanding during the speaking lesson?

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says					
2.	I feel unconfident when I don't understand the topics that other students understand					
3.	I am worried that I don't understand what the teacher expects us to do					

5.5. How do you feel about your ability to take turn in discussions?

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I can take a good turn in conversations about any topic by asking relevant questions.					
2.	I can take turn in conversations if the topic is familiar to me.					
3.	I can answer questions directed by the interlocutor but have difficulty in directing the conversation by asking questions.					

D. Ideal speaking class

In this section, I want to find out what you would like to experience in speaking classes with regard to teacher, yourself, activities and topics. There are a number of responses. Please select one according to your agreement.

1.....5
Strongly disagree Strongly agree

As a student, I enjoy		1	2	3	4	5
1.	working in pairs					
2.	working in groups					
3.	working as a whole class					
4.	selecting topics					
5.	selecting materials					
6.	getting prepared beforehand					
7.	learning vocabulary items					
8.	focusing on grammar					
9.	being responsible for my own learning					
10.	actively participating					
Is there anything else you enjoy?						

As a student, I expect the teacher to do the following:		1	2	3	4	5
1.	select topics					
2.	select materials					
3.	decide who will speak and for how long					
4.	be responsible for our learning					
5.	negotiate the course content with students					
6.	correct all the mistakes					
Is there anything else the teacher should do?						

		1	2	3	4	5
As a student, I enjoy the following topics:						
1.	Current affairs (i.e. news, newspapers)					
2.	Hobbies (i.e. sport, music)					
3.	Media (i.e. TV series, movies)					
4.	Personal matters (i.e. relationships)					
5.	Academic discussions					
6.	Cultural issues					
7.	Future plans					
Are there any other topics you enjoy talking about?						

As a student, I enjoy		<i>Description</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Interviews	<i>Conducting interviews with my classmates on a variety of topics</i>					
2.	Guessing games	<i>Guessing something (a picture, a diagram) by using clues</i>					
3.	Jigsaw tasks	<i>Sharing pieces of information with others to combine something</i>					
4.	Questioning activities	<i>Completing a task by asking questions</i>					
5.	Ranking exercises	<i>Putting different issues in order (value, job prestige etc.)</i>					
6.	Discussion games	<i>Having a discussion on different topics</i>					
7.	Problem solving	<i>Solving a problem by collaborating with my friends (fire rescue, room design)</i>					
8.	Role-play	<i>Role-playing different characters</i>					
9.	Oral Presentations	<i>Making individual presentations to whole class</i>					
10.	Vocabulary	<i>Doing speaking activities where I can learn new vocabulary items</i>					
11.	Common phrases used in speaking	<i>Studying appropriate responses (Well, not really; Is that right?; Sounds lovely, etc)</i>					
12.	Listening activities	<i>Listening to a talk on a topic and discussing</i>					
Is there anything else you enjoy?							

Dear participant,

Thank you for taking the time to answer this questionnaire. The next part of the project involves an interview. The interviews will be in Turkish and you will be expected to talk with me about the same issues. Your participation in the interview is important for me to understand the situation in depth. The interview will be carried out at a time when you are available and it will take around half an hour. If you wish to participate in interviews, please tick the 'yes' box below and print your name so that I can contact you.

Thank you very much for your time and contributions to my research study.

Would you be willing to participate in follow-up interviews?

Yes	No

If yes, please print your name:

Appendix 4: Student post-session questionnaire

Date...../...../.....

Dear Participant,

This short questionnaire aims at understanding your views about the effectiveness of this week's session. There are not correct or wrong answers of questions and your responses will play determinative role in designing next session. Therefore, please read instructions and items carefully and provide detailed information so that we can understand your opinions thoroughly.

Thank you very much for your feedback.

Mehmet Sercan Uztosun

1. Can you please evaluate this session overall?

1.....10
Very unsuccessful Very successful

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. How would you characterize this session?

1.....5
Not at all Very much

	1	2	3	4	5
Appropriate to my needs					
Useful					
Enjoyable					
Difficult					
Comments:					

3. This week, we did a How effective was this with regard to the following:

	1	2	3	4	5
The topic was interesting					
The activities provided lots of opportunities to speak in English					
The classroom atmosphere was positive					
The instructions were clear					
The speaking activities were good					
I felt relaxed					
I received useful feedback about my speaking performance					
I had enough opportunities to speak					
Comments :					

4. Class participation is defined as your level of input in English, in class discussion, small group discussions and other oral activities, regardless of your proficiency level in English. Reflecting on today's session, how would you rate your participation in class (rate yourself on a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being the lowest and 10 the highest)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Comment:									

4.1. Participating in group work (if this is a part of that week)

	Yes, definitely	Sometimes	No/Not yet
I offered my opinion			
I cooperated with my group members			
I communicated with my group members in English			
Comments			

4.2. Participating in pair work (if this is a part of that week)

	Yes, definitely	Sometimes	No/Not yet
I offered my opinion			
I cooperated with my partner			
I communicated with my partner in English			
Comments			

4.3. I participate in whole class discussion (if this is a part of that week)

	Yes, definitely	Sometimes	No/Not yet
I made comments			
I asked questions			
I answered questions			
I responded to other comments made by my classmates			
I clarified comments made by someone else			
I used new vocabulary			
I spoke in English without advanced preparation			
Comments			

5. Please tell us about

5.1. Something you learned in this session:

5.2. Something you enjoyed in this session:

5.3. Something you did not enjoy:

5.4. Something that was interesting:

5.5. Something that was not interesting:

5.6. Something that you found difficult:

5.7. Something that you want to try next lesson:

5.8. Anything that you would like to add:

If you are participating in the interviews, please print your name:

Thank you very much for your time and contributions.

Appendix 5: Student initial interview

Language learning Experience

How was your English classes in primary, secondary and high school?

Pick-up: Typical classroom? Activities, materials, topics?
What were positive/negative things for you in your previous English learning experiences?

Beliefs about language

Why do you think about the importance of different aspects of English?

Pick-up: Grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking, listening, reading, writing

Self-evaluation

In which of these areas do you consider yourself more proficient? Why, why not?

Pick-up: Grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking, listening, reading, writing

Which of these areas are more important for you? Why do you think so?

Pick-up: Grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking, listening, reading, writing

Are you satisfied with you current speaking ability? Why do you think so?

Pick-up: What are the main difficulties you have while speaking English?

What do you think about the strong and weak issues of your speaking ability?

Pick-up: Accuracy, fluency, interaction, vocabulary

Anxiety and participation

What do you think about your participation in speaking class?
Pick-ups: How often do you speak in classes? How do you feel just before you speak? How do you feel while you are speaking? How do you feel after you speak?

What do you think about your performance in speaking class?
Pick-up: Do you think that you are an active learner? Why, why not? Do you want to be more active? Why, why not? Do you feel that you are developing your speaking ability? Why, why not?

Ideal speaking class

What do you think about the characteristics of effective speaking class?
Pick-ups: The responsibility of the teacher? (in decision-making, during classroom) Your roles How do you want to study? (in pairs, groups, whole class, etc.) Activities? (role plays, games, songs etc.) Topics/materials? Who should decide those? Your voice in making decisions? In what?

Appendix 6: Teacher initial interview

Personal Information

Could you please tell me about your teaching experience?
Pick-ups: How long have you been teaching English? How long have you been teaching this course?

About the course

Could you please inform me about the course considering:
the main objectives of this course? the activities/materials do you use? the way you select the activities/materials? the way you assess students? the way you select your assessment tools? a typical class?

Beliefs about language

What do you think about the importance of different aspects of English? (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking, listening, reading and writing)
Pick-up: Why do you think so?

Evaluating students

How competent do you think the students' are in overall English?
Pick-up: Areas that they are more/less proficient?

How competent do you think the students' are in English speaking?
Pick-up: Their level? Accuracy, fluency, interaction, vocabulary?

Students' anxiety and participation

How would you describe the students' participation in your classes?
Pick-ups: Are they active or passive? Motivated or not? Eager to participate or not? Why?

How would you describe students' performance in your classes?
Pick-ups: Main difficulties they have while speaking? What to do to overcome these difficulties?

Ideal Speaking Class

As a leader of that course, what are your opinions about the characteristics of effective speaking class?
Pick-ups: Your responsibility (in decision-making, during classroom) Student's roles How do students want to study? (in pairs, groups, whole class, etc.) Activities? (role plays, games, songs etc.) Topics/materials? Who should decide those? Student voice in making decisions? In what?

C For each of the following areas please tick one statement of ability in each group.

Accuracy: I can.....

Maintain a high degree of grammatical control of complex language and the grammatical errors are rare.	
Monitor the grammar I use and avoid errors which cause misunderstanding	
Use some simple structures but I make basic mistakes	

Fluency: I can

Express myself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly in any subject of discussion	
Maintain a conversation with a fairly even tempo; although there are few noticeably long pauses	
Make myself understood in very short utterances although pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident	

Interaction: I can.....

Interact easily, using gestures and body language and intonation in order to get or to keep the floor or to make contribution.	
Initiate, maintain and take my turn in simple face-to-face conversations on topics that are familiar or of personal interest	
Ask and answer questions about personal details but I am rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of my own accord.	

Lexical range: I can.....

Use a wide range of vocabulary item about different topics effortlessly	
Keep communication going by selecting appropriate vocabulary items on familiar topics with occasional pauses to select the appropriate vocabulary	
Use limited repertoire of vocabulary items and I usually stick to particular basic vocabulary with long pauses to remember which vocabulary to use	

D. In relation to your oral proficiency, what are in your opinion, your weak points?

What are your strengths?

E **How do you feel about your speaking class? For each of the following questions, please tick the appropriate option.**

1.....5
Strongly disagree Strongly agree

1. How do you feel about your contribution to speaking classes?

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I don't worry about making mistakes in English class.					
2.	I am very anxious when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.					
3.	During English speaking classes, I have nothing to say about the topic					
4.	It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English speaking class.					
5.	I feel confident when I speak English in English class.					
6.	I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.					
7.	I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.					

2. How do you feel about the correction of your mistakes?

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I feel embarrassed when teacher corrects me in front of my friends.					
2.	I am happy to be corrected because it is a good way to learn.					
3.	I don't like it when the teacher corrects every mistake we make					

3. How do you feel about your preparation for the class?

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English speaking class.					
2.	Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.					
3.	I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.					

4. How do you feel about your understanding during the speaking lesson?

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says					
2.	I feel unconfident when I don't understand the topics that other students understand					
3.	I am worried that I don't understand what the teacher expects us to do					

5. How do you feel about your ability to take turn in discussions?

		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I can take a good turn in conversations about any topic by asking relevant questions.					
2.	I can take turn in conversations if the topic is familiar to me.					
3.	I can answer questions directed by the interlocutor but have difficulty in directing the conversation by asking questions.					

F Please tick one of the options that apply to you.

	<i>In this lesson, did you feel that;</i>	Yes	No	Sometimes
1.	you have responsibility for making decisions about the topics?			
2.	you have responsibility for making decisions about the activities?			
3.	the activities were selected according to your wants?			
4.	the activities were selected according to your needs?			
5.	the topics were selected according to your wants?			
6.	the topics were selected according to your needs?			
Comments				

1. As a student, how did you feel about giving feedback about the success of each lesson?

2. As a student, how did you feel about giving your opinions about the topics and activity of the next lesson?

3. Do you think that this research was something positive for improving your speaking ability?
 - 3.1 In what ways?

4. Do you think that you 'think differently' about lessons now, since experiencing this process?

5. What words would you use to describe some of the feelings you experienced when doing this research study?

6. Did this research lead you to think differently about your responsibilities as a student about classroom decision-making process?

7. Did this research lead you to think differently about your expectations from a speaking class?

Appendix 8: Student final interview

Language learning Experience

How was your English classes in primary, secondary and high school?

Pick-up: Typical classroom? Activities, materials, topics?
What were positive/negative things for you in your previous English learning experiences?

Beliefs about language

Why do you think about the importance of different aspects of English?

Pick-up: Grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking, listening, reading, writing

Evaluation of the term

Can please evaluate speaking classes in this term?

Pick-up: Were the lessons useful, enjoyable, appropriate to your needs, difficult

How were topics and activities?

Pick-up: Interesting, Provided opportunities to speak in English; classroom atmosphere

How was your performance?

Pick-up: Do you think that you were successful in speaking classes?

How was your participation?

Pick-up: Do you think that you were successful in speaking classes?

In speaking classes this term, what do you think about giving your opinions about the lesson?

Pick-up: Did you think that you have responsibility?
Did you feel that the activities/topics were appropriate to your needs/wants?

In speaking classes this term, what do you think about giving your opinions about next lesson lesson?

Pick-up: Did you feel that the activities/topics were appropriate to your needs/wants?
What were positive and negative points of this experiences?

Do you think that this research was something positive for improving your speaking ability?

Pick-up: In what ways?

Do you think that you 'think differently' about lessons now, since experiencing this process?

What words would you use to describe some of the feelings you experienced when doing this research study?

--

Did this research lead you to think differently about your responsibilities as a student about classroom decision-making process?

--

Did this research lead you to think differently about your expectations from a speaking class?

--

Self-evaluation

In which of these areas do you consider yourself more proficient? Why, why not?

Pick-up: Grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking, listening, reading, writing

Which of these areas are more important for you? Why do you think so?

Pick-up: Grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, speaking, listening, reading, writing

Are you satisfied with you current speaking ability? Why do you think so?

Pick-up: What are the main difficulties you have while speaking English?

What do you think about the strong and weak issues of your speaking ability?

Pick-up: Accuracy, fluency, interaction, vocabulary

Anxiety and participation

What do you think about your participation in speaking class?

Pick-ups:
How often do you speak in classes?
How do you feel just before you speak?
How do you feel while you are speaking?
How do you feel after you speak?

What do you think about your performance in speaking class?

Pick-up: Do you think that you are an active learner? Why, why not?
Do you want to be more active? Why, why not?
Do you feel that you are developing your speaking ability? Why, why not?

Ideal speaking class

What do you think about the characteristics of effective speaking class?

Pick-ups:
The responsibility of the teacher? (in decision-making, during classroom)
Your roles
How do you want to study? (in pairs, groups, whole class, etc.)
Activities? (role plays, games, songs etc.)
Topics/materials?
Who should decide those?
Your voice in making decisions? In what?

Appendix 9: Teacher final interview

Can please evaluate speaking classes in this term?

Pick-up: Did you meet your objectives? Did you feel that the classes were successful? Classroom atmosphere, topics, activities?

How was students' participations in this term?

Pick-up: Did they appear motivated?

How was students' performances in this term?

Pick-up: Are you happy with their contribution to the activities?

Do you think that asking students about the topics and activities has any effect on student participation and performance?

Pick-up: In what ways?

Do you see any differences between this class (where we do this research) and other classes?

Pick-up: In what ways?

What do you think about the success of this action research project?

Pick-up: In what ways?

Considering this action research, do you think that student negotiation is necessary for speaking classes?

Pick-up: In what ways?

As a teacher, does this action research study improve your professional development?

Pick-up: In what ways?

Appendix 10: Data collection procedure of the pilot study

Stages	Week	Date	Instrument(s)	Observation	Agenda
Stage1	1	2 May	Student initial questionnaire	1	Introduction and student consent Selecting interviewees
	2	9 May	Student initial interviews Teacher initial interview	2	Understanding the context
Stage 2	3	16 May	After session questionnaires and interviews 1	3	Intervention 1
	4	23 May	After session questionnaires and interviews 2	4	Intervention 2

Appendix 11: Teacher post-session questionnaire

Date...../...../.....

Please write briefly about the followings:

1. What were the objectives of this session?

2. Did you meet your objectives?

3. Did you feel that the session was successful?

4. How was classroom atmosphere?

5. Were activities useful for students?

6. Was the topic appropriate?

7. Were the tasks appropriate?

8. Did students appear motivated?

9. How was student participation?

Appendix 12: Data collection procedure of the main study

Stages	Week	Date	Instrument(s)	Observation	Content
Stage 1	1	19 September	-	-	Introduction and student consent
	2	26 September	Student initial questionnaire	1	-
	3	3 October	Teacher initial interview	2	Selecting 6 interviewees
	4	10 October	Student initial interviews	3	-
Stage 2	5	17 October	Post session questionnaires and interviews 1	4	Intervention 1
	6	24 October	Post session questionnaires and interviews 2	5	Intervention 2
	7	31 October	Post session questionnaires and interviews 3	6	Intervention 3
	8	21 November	Post session questionnaires and interviews 4	7	Intervention 4
	9	28 November	Post session questionnaires and interviews 5	8	Intervention 5
	10	5 December	Post session questionnaires and interviews 6	9	Intervention 6
	11	12 December	Post session questionnaires and interviews 7	10	Intervention 7
	12	19 December	Post session questionnaires and interviews 8	11	Intervention 8
Stage 3	13	26 December	Student final questionnaire and interviews; Teacher final interview	-	-

Appendix 13: Certificate of ethical research approval form

STUDENT HIGHER-LEVEL RESEARCH



Graduate School of Education

Certificate of ethical research approval

STUDENT RESEARCH/FIELDWORK/CASEWORK AND DISSERTATION/THESIS

You will need to complete this certificate when you undertake a piece of higher-level research (e.g. Masters, PhD, EdD level).

To activate this certificate you need to first sign it yourself, and then have it signed by your supervisor and finally by the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee.

For further information on ethical educational research access the guidelines on the BERA web site: <http://www.bera.ac.uk/blog/category/publications/guidelines/> and view the School's statement on the 'Student Documents' web site.

READ THIS FORM CAREFULLY AND THEN COMPLETE IT ON YOUR COMPUTER (the form will expand to contain the text you enter). **DO NOT COMPLETE BY HAND**

Your name: Mehmet Sercan Uztoşun

Your student no: 590035096

Return address for this certificate: Room 2 94 Old Tiverton Road, EX4 6LQ

Degree/Programme of Study: EdD in TESOL

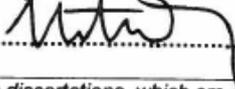
Project Supervisor(s): Dr. Jill Cadorath; Dr. Nigel Skinner

Your email address: msu201@exeter.ac.uk

Tel: 07766197130

I hereby certify that I will abide by the details given overleaf and that I undertake in my dissertation / thesis (delete whichever is inappropriate) to respect the dignity and privacy of those participating in this research.

I confirm that if my research should change radically, I will complete a further form.

Signed:  date: 13.04.2011

NB For Masters dissertations, which are marked blind, this first page must **not be included** in your work. It can be kept for your records.

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

Certificate of ethical research approval

Your student no: 590035096

Title of your project: AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY INTO THE STUDENT-NEGOTIATED SPEAKING COURSE CONTENT AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL IN TURKEY

Brief description of your research project:

This study will concern speaking skill in learning English as a foreign language because developing students' speaking skills is one of the major problems of English language teaching in Turkey. To address this, this study will consult students' voice and the content of the speaking course will be designed by negotiating students. To do this, data will be collected to understand students' expectations from speaking courses. In relation to the nature of action research studies, initially, the problems hindering the effectiveness of speaking classes will be identified and data will inform the next step where the classroom content will be designed accordingly. This process will be repeated several times in order to improve problematic issues observed in previous action research cycle. Finally, this study will aim to make some practical implications about teaching speaking in Turkey in the light of the changes observed in students' self-evaluation about their speaking ability, classroom participation, anxiety level and motivation for speaking in English.

Give details of the participants in this research (giving ages of any children and/or young people involved):

The study will be carried out at English language teaching department at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey. An intact classroom that has experienced preparatory class last year will be selected among 1st grade classrooms. Additionally 6 students will be selected on purposive accounts considering their performances in classroom. These students will have different characteristics such as motivated, de-motivated, bored, shy, chatty etc. The performances of these students will be observed during the semester and they will be interviewed after each intervention. Considering the size of classrooms in the aforementioned department, approximately 35 students will participate in this study and they will be around 18 years old.

Give details regarding the ethical issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality (with special reference to any children or those with special needs)

Initially, necessary official permission will be taken from faculty administration and the classroom instructor. After that, the consent form of Graduate School of Education of Exeter University will be adapted and students will be asked to sign that form before data collection. In this form, students will be informed that the participation in this study will be on voluntarily basis, that they have the right to withdraw at any time. They will also be made aware that the information they give will be used for the purposes of this research project, and will not be shared with third parties, their anonymity will be preserved and data will only be stored by the researcher and will be destroyed after the analyses.

Give details of the methods to be used for data collection and analysis and how you would ensure they do not cause any harm, detriment or unreasonable stress:

Three main data collection methods will be used as questionnaires, observations and interviews. Three different questionnaires will be administered to the whole class. The initial questionnaire which will be administered at the beginning of the study will include questions about students' demographic information, educational background, views about speaking, self-evaluation of their speaking and communication ability, anxiety level and motivation to speak in English. The similar questionnaire will also be implemented at the end of the term to understand if there are any changes in these variables.

Thirdly, another questionnaire will be administered at the end of each session to collect data about students' views about the effectiveness of the intervention and their suggestions for the next class. Besides questionnaires, I will make non-participant observations. In the first weeks of the term, these observations will serve for identifying problems hindering the effectiveness of the classroom and I will decide the kinds of interventions to deal with these problems. On the other hand, I will also observe the intervention processes by focusing on 6 students of the class. After that, these students will be invited to interviews which will aim at understanding the reasons behind their performances in that session. Additionally, the instructor will also be interviewed during the term with the aim of collaborating with her because she will be teaching the course.

During these processes, students will be ensured that our intention is to understand their progress rather than judging their performances. Therefore, I will try to create friendly environment in data collection processes in order make participants feel secure. On the other hand, questions directed in any data collection tool will serve for understanding the situation in depth. Therefore, questions will not be included which might cause negative reactions and which are detrimental to personal privacy.

Give details of any other ethical issues which may arise from this project (e.g. secure storage of videos/recorded interviews/photos/completed questionnaires or special arrangements made for participants with special needs etc.):

The hard copies of the questionnaires will be destroyed after the analyses. The audio recorded interviews will be stored in my computer and they will be deleted after I transcribed them. The interview protocols will not be shared by third parties.

This form should now be printed out, signed by you on the first page and sent to your supervisor to sign. Your supervisor will forward this document to the School's Research Support Office for the Chair of the School's Ethics Committee to countersign. A unique approval reference will be added and this certificate will be returned to you to be included at the back of your dissertation/thesis.

N.B. You should not start the fieldwork part of the project until you have the signature of your supervisor

This project has been approved for the period: MAY 2011 **until:** JULY 2012

By (above mentioned supervisor's signature): J. Casarath **date:** 13/4/11

N.B. To Supervisor: Please ensure that ethical issues are addressed annually in your report and if any changes in the research occurs a further form is completed.

SELL unique approval reference: 2/10/11/65

Signed: Salah T. Al... **date:** 4/5/2011
Chair of the School's Ethics Committee

This form is available from <http://education.exeter.ac.uk/students/>

Chair of the School's Ethics Committee
last updated: August 2009

Appendix 14: Letter of research permission



T.C.
ÇANAKKALE ONSEKİZ MART ÜNİVERSİTESİ
EĞİTİM FAKÜLTESİ
YABANCI DİLLER EĞİTİMİ BÖLÜMÜ
İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI

SAYI: B.30.2.ÇAÜ.0.12.00./3/302/09
Konu: Araştırma İzni

07.09.2011

Sayın: Arş. Gör. Mehmet SERCAN UZTOSUN

İlgi:07.09.2011 tarihli dilekçeniz.

İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalımızda Arş. Gör. olarak görev yapan Mehmet Sercan UZTOSUN'nun doktora tezi çalışmaları kapsamında Anabilim Dalımızda anket uygulaması uygun görülmüştür;

Bilgilerinize rica ederim.

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Aysun YAVUZ
İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı Başkanı

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
CANAKKALE ONSEKİZ MART UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
TEACHING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT
THE HEAD OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING DEPARTMENT

Number: B.30.2.CAU.0.12.00./3/302/09
Subject: Research permit

07.09.2011

Dear: Res. Assist. Mehmet Sercan Uztosun

RE: Your letter dated 07.09.2011

This is the certify that, the study being carried as a part of his doctoral studies by Mehmet Sercan Uztosun, a research assistant working at English Language Teaching Department, has been approved to be conducted in the department;

Respectfully submitted for your information.

(signature)

Assist. Prof. Dr. Aysun YAVUZ
The head of English Language Teaching Department

Appendix 15: Sample of analysing the questionnaire data

Student initial questionnaire

Please elaborate on your rating above. Why did you rate your satisfaction level as above?

Res.	Comment	Coding
1	Although I can in some degree express the opinion that I formed in my mind, I don't think I can speak effectively and fluently.	Not fluent 1
2	Because my speaking performance is not at good level yet. At least, this is not the level that I want and feel necessary. But I am not very bad.	
3	No matter how much we want, we cannot speak fluently. In fact, we can speak but we get stuck I guess. We know, we can form our sentences but sometimes we can't.	Not fluent 2
4	I don't have any difficulty in speaking but sometimes, when it is necessary to talk about a particular topic, I have difficulty to express if I don't have the necessary lexical knowledge. On the top of that, because of lack of opportunity to practise, I cannot reiterate the vocabulary items that I just learned.	Lack of lexical 1 Lack of practice 1
5	I don't have difficulty in classroom participation. If the topic is of my interest, I can speak easefully without the afraid of making mistake. If I don't like the topic or I don't know anything about it, my participation gets lower.	Satisfied 1 Interesting topic 1
6	Speaking means speaking in any circumstances. But I can speak with acquaintances because I feel comfortable. I have difficulty with people that I just meet. At the same time, because of testing technique, whenever I see an English word, I think its Turkish equivalent. But when I speak, I cannot recall the English of my intended message.	Anxiety 1 Edu. Background Not recalling word
7	I took preparatory class to improve my performance but it wasn't as expected. Yet, improvement depends on the person but I feel like I don't have any desire.	No motivation 1
8	I can easily understand spoken English. But I cannot respond immediately when I speak. This is because lack of practice and lexical knowledge.	Lack of practice 2 Lack of lexical 2
M1	I am not happy with my speaking performance and I feel incompetent. The reasons are lack of self-confidence, feelings shy and other weaknesses.	Anxiety 2
10	I am neither good nor bad.	
11	I don't think I am very interested in. If I am unsuccessful in some areas, this is the reason.	No motivation 2

M2	I feel shy about making grammatical mistakes and feel less comfortable when I don't know the topic. Lack of vocabulary is the other factor.	Anxiety 3 Interesting topic 2 Lack of lexical 3
F2	I think so long when I want to express something.	Not fluent 3
F1	I feel very excited before I start speaking. I forget all words.	Anxiety 4
15	My pronunciation is different. I don't feel competent in pronunciation.	Pronunciation 1
16	I think my speaking is at middle level. Only for one year is covered speaking is lessons.	Lack of practice 3
17	I am not very happy because there is not adequate opportunity for speaking.	Lack of practice 4
M3	We are yet first year students. Of course we have some weaknesses. But no giving up, continue developing.	Determined 1
19	Because I take speaking classes very late.	Lack of practice 5
20	I have difficulty in forming sentences together during speaking.	Forming sentences
21	I cannot speak well and fluent enough. I cannot narrate things I know.	Not fluent 4
22	I am very dissatisfied. Because when I start speaking English, I get nervous and I cannot get focused and explain what I think.	Anxiety 5
23	Sometimes you cannot express what you think. Therefore, I rated 3.	Unable to express
24	Since I do not practise enough, my speaking performance is neither very good nor very bad.	Lack of practice 6
25	I can speak English at the level of expressing myself but I believe this should be at higher level. That's why I think so.	Basic level
F3	I don't study enough. When I study, I am surprised to see things I can accomplish. I hope the activities will contribute.	Determined 2
27	I think my only lacking point is vocabulary knowledge.	Lack of lexical 4
28	I am not very insufficient. But I am not sufficient as well.	
29	I have difficulty in pronouncing words when I speak English. This causes disconnection between what I want to say and what I say. That's why I find my speaking level at medium.	Pronunciation 2

Lack of practice: 6

Anxiety: 5

Lack of lexical: 4

Not fluent: 4

Appendix 16: Sample of analysing interview data

Student post-session interview

Interview transcripts	Coding
R: How was the lesson yesterday? First you narrated words then you did a role-play.	
F2: Yesterday, the lesson was very enjoyable and useful. This is because we cannot explain, we get stuck. This happens to me as well. When we start explaining something, if we cannot recall a word, we pretend as if we never start speaking and form a new sentence. It was really very useful, we enjoyed it and the phrases that our teachers showed was very useful. I never try to express myself by using different words.	Enjoyable and useful
R: Did you find opportunity to speak in the role play activity?	
F2: Yes, very much. We extended the scenario with my partner, such as I am about to die but you concern your hair style etc. It was very good.	Appropriate to needs
R: Did the circumlocution activity really give you opportunity to use circumlocution when narrating words?	
I: Yes it did. Using these phrases was useful for expressing yourself. I always use particular phrases but not I feel I can use different phrases.	Opportunity to speak
R: Do you think that you will use circumlocution when you speak English?	
I: Yes I do.	Appropriate activity
R: Did you find the activities difficult?	
I: It was not difficult initially but we had difficulty in the third round. We could narrate only two words. I don't know why this happened. The class was very noisy, I could not hear my partner. And we picked difficult words to narrate.	Difficult words to narrate
R: For the role play activity, some students commented that they found it difficult to adapt their roles. Did you feel the same and find it difficult to make dialogues?	Noisy class
I: No. We also extended the conversation. Maybe they did not want to do that activity. We continued speaking and produced new scenarios.	
R: In the questionnaire, you wrote that you had difficulty in speaking this week.	Positive performance pair work
I: I speak during the activities but I cannot speak when the teacher asks something to do whole class.	
R: You mean that the problem is speaking in front of the class.	
I: Yes, I cannot speak in front of the class. I feel shy.	Avoid speaking in front of the class

<p>R: For next week, your friends wanted to do another guessing activity. Why do you think these activities are favoured more?</p> <p>I: They are both very useful and enjoyable. Everybody tries to do something. Otherwise, when the activity is difficult, we start speaking in Turkish. I try to speak English but everybody speak Turkish sometimes. This happens when the activity is difficult. When it is easy or enjoyable, everybody participates.</p> <p>R: OK. Thank you very much.</p>	<p>Anxiety Guessing games= useful, enjoyable, encourages participation</p>
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Appendix 17: The results of perceived competency in sub-areas of speaking

Area	Level	Statement	f	%
Accuracy	1	Maintain a high degree of grammatical control of complex language and the grammatical errors are rare.	8	27,6
	2	Monitor the grammar I use and avoid errors which cause misunderstanding	20	69
	3	Use some simple structures but I make basic mistakes	1	3,4
Fluency	1	Express myself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly in any subject of discussion	13	44,8
	2	Maintain a conversation with a fairly even tempo; although there are few noticeably long pauses	14	48,3
	3	Make myself understood in very short utterances although pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident	2	6,9
Interaction	1	Interact easily, using gestures and body language and intonation in order to get or to keep the floor or to make contribution.	7	24,1
	2	Initiate, maintain and take my turn in simple face-to-face conversations on topics that are familiar or of personal interest	18	62,1
	3	Ask and answer questions about personal details but I am rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of my own accord.	4	13,8
Lexical range	1	Use a wide range of vocabulary item about different topics effortlessly	3	10,3
	2	Keep communication going by selecting appropriate vocabulary items on familiar topics with occasional pauses to select the appropriate vocabulary	26	89,7
	3	Use limited repertoire of vocabulary items and I usually stick to particular basic vocabulary with long pauses to remember which vocabulary to use	0	0

Appendix 18: The results of affective states of participants in speaking classes

<i>Contribution to speaking class</i>			
<i>Item</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
I feel confident when I speak English in English class.	29	3,39	.99
I am very anxious when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.	29	2,75	1.04
I worry about making mistakes in English class.	29	2,75	1.07
During English speaking classes, I have nothing to say about the topic.	29	2,64	.82
I feel relieved when I do not speak in English classes	29	2,39	1.03
It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English speaking class.	29	2,32	1.02
I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	29	2,07	1.18
I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English	29	1,64	1.12
Valid N (listwise)	29		

<i>Correction of mistakes</i>			
<i>Item</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
I am happy to be corrected because it is a good way to learn.	28	4,35	.91
I don't like it when the teacher corrects every mistake we make	28	2,50	1.23
I feel embarrassed when teacher corrects me in front of my friends.	28	1,53	.69
Valid N (listwise)	29		

<i>Preparation for the class</i>			
<i>Item</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English speaking class.	29	3,75	1.15
I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	29	3,20	1.236
Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.	29	2,58	1.26
Valid N (listwise)	29		

<i>Understanding during the class</i>			
<i>Item</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
I am worried that I don't understand what the teacher expects us to do	29	2,79	1.14
I feel unconfident when I don't understand the topics that other students understand	29	2,79	1.39
I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says	29	2,55	1.47
Valid N (listwise)	29		

Appendix 19: The results of topics and activities that students want to study

Topics to cover

<i>Item</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>
Hobbies (i.e. sport, music)	29	4,13	1,15
Current affairs (i.e. news, newspapers)	29	4,06	,92
Cultural issues	28	3,75	1,26
Future plans (career, family)	28	3,75	1,32
Media (i.e. TV series, movies)	29	3,68	1,22
Personal matters (i.e. relationships)	29	3,17	1,53
Academic discussions	29	2,68	1,46
Valid N (listwise)	28		

Activities to carry out

<i>Activity types</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Common phrases	29	4,27
Vocabular	29	4,17
Jigsaw	29	3,86
Discussion	29	3,82
Problem solving	28	3,75
Guessing	29	3,72
Roleplay	29	3,58
Questioning	29	3,58
Ranking	28	3,53
Listening	29	3,34
Presentation	29	3,20
Interviews	27	2,74
Valid N (listwise)	25	

Appendix 20: Lesson contents of interventions

Intervention 1	Topic: Conversation Gambits	Instructions: 1. One person asks the question. The person who asked the questions must not answer. Use phrases such as <i>I personally believe, To my mind etc.</i>	3. Person A has bought a new house and s/he invites Person B to see the house. Person A thinks that the house is wonderful but Person B does not like it. Use phrases such as <i>To tell you the truth, Frankly, etc.</i>
	Objectives: Using the opening, responding and linking gambits	2. Explain your opinions about your partner's talk about controversial topics. Use phrases such as <i>you must be joking, I agree etc.</i>	4. Work in pairs as a journalist and politician with the following interview questions. Use the phrases such as <i>in other words, So you mean that etc.</i>
	Activities: Pair-work; Role-play		
Intervention 2	Topic Clouds of smoke	Instructions: 1. Divide the class into smokers and non-smokers	3. Split each group in half and pair it with an 'opposing' group
	Objectives Expressing likes and dislikes, negotiating, reaching consensus	2. Ask the groups to brainstorm and write down a few ideas: Their right to breathe clean air vs. Their right to smoke when and where they want	4. Ask them to try and reach a consensus
	Activities Group work; Pair work		
Intervention 3	Topic Guessing game	Instructions 1. The game will be played in fours, one pair versus another	4. They will pair up with other pairs after completing the activity.
	Objectives Describing a known word	2. One participant picks a piece of paper at random and defines or describes its subject	5. If the pair can guess the correct answer, they will keep the paper
	Activities Pair work	3. While they speak, other pair will monitor and check if they follow the rules	6. The pair with the highest number of words will be the champion and they will win a chocolate.
Intervention 4	Topic Famous people	Instructions 1. Without letting the student see it, the teacher fixes a name tag to each student's back.	4. They have to find out by asking yes/no questions 'who' they are.
	Objectives Asking and answering questions about famous people	2. The names are of famous people from Turkey and other countries	5. The student who has most name tags on his back is declared the winner and s/he will earn a prize.
	Activities Pair work	3. The students circulate around the room.	
Intervention 5	Topic Picture difference, Decorating a house	Instructions 1. Students are divided into pairs	1. The students in the group are all going to share a house
	Objectives Negotiating and reaching a consensus	2. Each student gets a different version of a picture and they have to discover the differences through speech alone	2. There is enough money to buy any colour paint plus €500 for other items.
	Activities Group work	3. They are not allowed to see each other's pictures.	3. Discuss how you would like to decorate your house. You must ALL agree on which colour(s) to paint all the rooms and on which items you will buy with your money

Intervention 6	Topic Job prestige	Instructions 1. Students are given a list of 20 occupations.	4. Students are grouped into 3 and they compare their lists with his/her partner and make a new list by reaching agreement.
	Objectives Giving reasons	2. Each student is asked to rank 5 of them according to their view of importance	5. Each group comes in front of the class and they write their lists, by explaining their reasons.
	Activities Group work, individual presentation	3. They make their own lists individually. The teacher then asks students to talk about their lists	
Intervention 7	Topic Describing words	Instructions 1. The game will be played in fours, one pair versus another	4. Role-play card A. You are in a hurry because you are going out in half an hour and want to wash and dry your hair beforehand. Your phone rings.
	Objectives Using circumlocution	2. A pool of pieces of paper bearing the Turkish names of the subjects to be guessed will be placed between each pair	Role-play card B. You and your boy or girlfriend have just split up and you desperately need someone to talk to. You ring up your friend.
	Activities Pair work Role-play	3. One participant picks a piece of paper at random and describes the word to his/her pair	
Intervention 8	Topic Guessing famous people	Instructions 1. The class is divided into four groups of 7	4. S/he cannot give any further explanation.
	Objectives Asking and answering questions	2. A member of a team will come to the front and pick up a name card of a famous person	5. After each member asks questions, the group negotiate and guess who the famous person is.
	Activities Group work	3. Each member of his/her group will ask a question and s/he will answer those questions by role-playing that famous people	6. If they know, they will earn 3 points, if not, the other groups can ask another question and make a guess and win the point

Appendix 21: The results of the characteristics and effectiveness of each intervention

Questionnaire Item		Intervention							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
The characterisation of the session	Useful	4.35	4.32	4.53	4.55	3.92	3.85	4.72	4.17
	Appropriate to my needs	3.92	4.06	4.32	4.34	4.00	3.66	4.63	3.92
	Enjoyable	3.67	4.23	4.76	4.73	3.92	3.48	4.68	4.53
	Difficult	1.96	1.70	1.53	1.59	2.04	1.76	2.04	1.66
The effectiveness of the session	The instructions were clear	4.17	4.56	4.12	4.74	4.07	4.33	4.54	4.46
	The classroom atmosphere was positive	3.93	4.56	4.74	4.67	3.96	3.77	4.68	4.42
	The speaking activities were good	3.82	4.31	4.41	4.54	3.92	3.73	4.59	4.10
	The topic was interesting	3.82	4.37	4.38	4.51	3.77	3.29	4.59	4.10
	I felt relaxed	3.79	4.25	4.61	4.54	4.11	3.66	4.54	4.42
	The activities provided lots of opportunities to speak in English	3.72	4.37	4.64	4.48	4.03	3.77	4.72	3.92
	I had enough opportunities to speak	3.13	4.00	4.58	4.38	3.81	3.62	4.54	3.92
	I received useful feedback about my speaking performance	3.03	3.77	4.35	3.83	3.44	3.07	4.36	4.00

Appendix 22: The Wilcoxon signed rank results of language areas

		Descriptive		Wilcoxon signed rank						
		Mean	Std. Dev.		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	Sig.	
Grammar	Before	3.72	.64	after - before	Negative ranks	6	5	30	-.28	.776
					Positive ranks	5	7,2	36		
	Ties	18	-		-					
	Total	29								
After	3.68	.64	Negative ranks	5	6.9	34.5				
			Positive ranks	9	7.8	70.5				
Ties	15	-	-							
Total	29									
Vocabulary	Before	3.27	.75	after - before	Negative ranks	5	6.9	34.5	-1.18	.237
					Positive ranks	9	7.8	70.5		
	Ties	15	-		-					
	Total	29								
After	3.43	.61	Negative ranks	5	14.5	72.5				
			Positive ranks	16	9.9	158.5				
Ties	8	-	-							
Total	29									
Pronunciation	Before	3.13	.78	after - before	Negative ranks	5	9	45	-1.57	.114
					Positive ranks	16	11.6	186		
	Ties	8	-		-					
	Total	29								
After	3.46	.71	Negative ranks	5	9	45				
			Positive ranks	16	11.6	186				
Ties	8	-	-							
Total	29									
Speaking	Before	2.96	.73	after - before	Negative ranks	9	7.7	70	-1.02	.303
					Positive ranks	10	12	120		
	Ties	10	-		-					
	Total	29								
After	3.09	1.08	Negative ranks	8	8.5	68.5				
			Positive ranks	11	11	121.5				
Ties	10	-	-							
Total	29									
Listening	Before	2.82	.88	after - before	Negative ranks	8	8.5	68.5	-1.12	.263
					Positive ranks	11	11	121.5		
	Ties	10	-		-					
	Total	29								
After	3.09	1.08	Negative ranks	5	9.6	48				
			Positive ranks	10	7.2	72				
Ties	14	-	-							
Total	29									
Reading	Before	3.58	.77	after - before	Negative ranks	5	9.6	48	-.72	.469
					Positive ranks	10	7.2	72		
	Ties	14	-		-					
	Total	29								
After	3.87	.79	Negative ranks	5	9.6	48				
			Positive ranks	10	7.2	72				
Ties	14	-	-							
Total	29									
Writing	Before	3.48	.78	after - before	Negative ranks	5	9.6	48	-.72	.469
					Positive ranks	10	7.2	72		
	Ties	14	-		-					
	Total	29								
After	3.53	.76	Negative ranks	5	9.6	48				
			Positive ranks	10	7.2	72				
Ties	14	-	-							
Total	29									

Appendix 23: The Wilcoxon signed rank results of sub-areas of speaking

		<i>Descriptive</i>		<i>Wilcoxon signed rank</i>						
		<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>Sum of Ranks</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	
<i>Accuracy</i>	<i>Before</i>	1.75	.51	<i>after - before</i>	<i>Negative ranks</i>	3	5	15	-1.00	.317
					<i>Positive ranks</i>	6	5	30		
	<i>Ties</i>	20								
	<i>Total</i>	29								
<i>Fluency</i>	<i>Before</i>	1.62	.62	<i>after - before</i>	<i>Negative ranks</i>	5	10.3	51.5	-1.61	.106
					<i>Positive ranks</i>	13	9.1	119.5		
	<i>Ties</i>	11								
	<i>Total</i>	29								
<i>Interaction</i>	<i>Before</i>	1.89	.61	<i>after - before</i>	<i>Negative ranks</i>	5	7	35	-2.07	.038
					<i>Positive ranks</i>	12	9.8	118		
	<i>Ties</i>	12								
	<i>Total</i>	29								
<i>Vocabulary</i>	<i>Before</i>	1.89	.30	<i>after - before</i>	<i>Negative ranks</i>	1	3.5	3.5	-1.63	.102
					<i>Positive ranks</i>	5	3.5	17.5		
	<i>Ties</i>	23								
	<i>Total</i>	29								
	<i>After</i>	2	.36							

Appendix 24: The Wilcoxon signed rank results of affective issues

		Descriptive		Wilcoxon signed rank						
		Mean	Std. Dev.		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z	Sig.	
I feel confident when I speak English in English class.	Before	3.39	.99	after - before	Negative ranks	8	11.1	69	-1.09	.272
					Positive ranks	11	6.6	121		
	Ties	9								
	Total	28								
I worry about making mistakes in English class.	Before	2.75	1.07	after - before	Negative ranks	16	11	177.5	-.412	.102
					Positive ranks	9	16.3	147.5		
	Ties	3								
	Total	28								
I am very anxious when I know that I'm going to be called on in English class.	Before	2.75	1.04	after - before	Negative ranks	12	9.5	115	-.818	.413
					Positive ranks	7	10.7	75		
	Ties	9								
	Total	28								
During English speaking classes, I have nothing to say about the topic	Before	2.64	.82	after - before	Negative ranks	15	11.9	179.5	-1.78	.075
					Positive ranks	7	10.5	73.5		
	Ties	6								
	Total	28								
It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in my English speaking class.	Before	2.32	1.02	after - before	Negative ranks	9	11.1	100	-1.13	.259
					Positive ranks	8	6.6	53		
	Ties	11								
	Total	28								
I always feel that the other students speak English better than I do.	Before	2.07	1.18	after - before	Negative ranks	9	14.6	132	-.182	.855
					Positive ranks	13	9.3	121		
	Ties	6								
	Total	28								
I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English	Before	1.64	1.12	after - before	Negative ranks	7	8.6	60.5	-.524	.600
					Positive ranks	7	6.3	44.5		
	Ties	14								
	Total	28								
I am happy to be corrected because it is a good way to learn.	Before	4.35	.91	after - before	Negative ranks	8	11	88	-.658	.511
					Positive ranks	12	10.1	122		
	Ties	8								
	Total	28								
I don't like it when the teacher corrects every mistake we make	Before	2.5	1.23	after - before	Negative ranks	13	13.1		-.245	.806
					Positive ranks	12	12.7			
	Ties	3								
	Total	28								

I feel embarrassed when teacher corrects me in front of my friends.	<i>Before</i>	1.53	.69	<i>after-before</i>	<i>Negative ranks</i>	9	6.2	56.5	-.206	.837	
						<i>Positive ranks</i>	6	10.5			63.5
	<i>After</i>	1.5	.98			<i>Ties</i>	13				
						<i>Total</i>	28				
I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in English speaking class.	<i>Before</i>	3.75	1.15	<i>after-before</i>	<i>Negative ranks</i>	20	13.6	272	-3.56	.000	
						<i>Positive ranks</i>	4	7			28
	<i>After</i>	2.65	1.4			<i>Ties</i>	5				
						<i>Total</i>	29				
I get nervous when the English teacher asks questions which I haven't prepared in advance.	<i>Before</i>	3.2	1.23	<i>after-before</i>	<i>Negative ranks</i>	17	14.1	241	-2.14	.032	
						<i>Positive ranks</i>	8	10.5			84
	<i>After</i>	2.46	1.34			<i>Ties</i>	4				
						<i>Total</i>	29				
Even if I am well prepared for English class, I feel anxious about it.	<i>Before</i>	2.58	1.26	<i>after-before</i>	<i>Negative ranks</i>	15	13	195	-1.30	.192	
						<i>Positive ranks</i>	9	11.6			105
	<i>After</i>	2.18	1.09			<i>Ties</i>	5				
						<i>Total</i>	29				
I am worried that I don't understand what the teacher expects us to do	<i>Before</i>	2.79	1.14	<i>after-before</i>	<i>Negative ranks</i>	13	14.2	185	-1.46	.142	
						<i>Positive ranks</i>	10	9.1			9.1
	<i>After</i>	2.41	1.16			<i>Ties</i>	5				
						<i>Total</i>	28				
I feel unconfident when I don't understand the topics that other students understand	<i>Before</i>	2.79	1.39	<i>after-before</i>	<i>Negative ranks</i>	10	12	120	-1.53	.125	
						<i>Positive ranks</i>	8	6.3			51
	<i>After</i>	2.40	1.16			<i>Ties</i>	11				
						<i>Total</i>	29				
I get nervous when I don't understand every word the English teacher says	<i>Before</i>	2.55	1.47	<i>after-before</i>	<i>Negative ranks</i>	17	14.1	241	-1.08	.277	
						<i>Positive ranks</i>	8	10.5			84
	<i>After</i>	2.31	1.28			<i>Ties</i>	4				
						<i>Total</i>	29				
I can take turn in conversations if the topic is familiar to me.	<i>Before</i>	3.79	.94	<i>after-before</i>	<i>Negative ranks</i>	6	10.5	63	-1.35	.176	
						<i>Positive ranks</i>	13	9.7			127
	<i>After</i>	4.06	.75			<i>Ties</i>	10				
						<i>Total</i>	29				
I can answer questions directed by the interlocutor but have difficulty in directing the conversation by asking questions.	<i>Before</i>	3.51	1.15	<i>after-before</i>	<i>Negative ranks</i>	15	10.5	158.5	-2.61	.009	
						<i>Positive ranks</i>	4	7.8			31.5
	<i>After</i>	2.78	.94			<i>Ties</i>	10				
						<i>Total</i>	29				

I can take a good turn in conversations about any topic by asking relevant questions.	<i>Before</i>	2.62	.86	<i>after-before</i>	<i>Negative ranks</i>	5	9.5	47.5	-2.42	.015
					<i>Positive ranks</i>	16	11.4	183.5		
					<i>Ties</i>	8				
					<i>Total</i>	29				
	<i>After</i>	3.5	1.84							

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