SELF-ADVOCACY EXPERIENCES OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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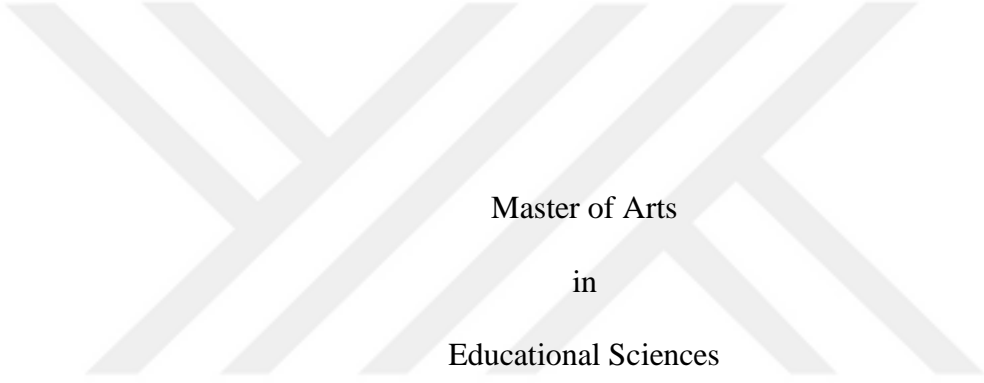
DUYGU BETÜL KOCA

BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY

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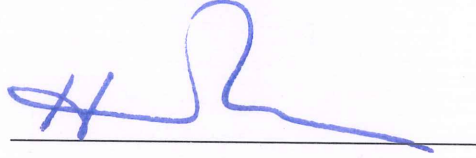Educational Sciences

by

Duygu Betül Koca

Boğaziçi University

2019

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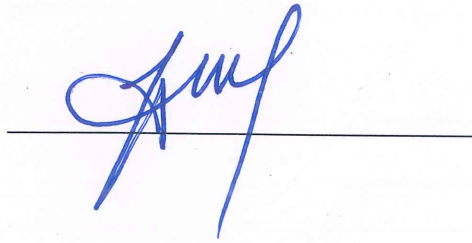The thesis of Duygu Betül Koca

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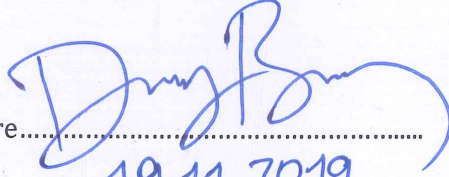
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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;

- this is a true copy of the thesis approved by my advisor and thesis committee at Boğaziçi University, including final revisions required by them.

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Date 19.11.2019

ABSTRACT

Self-Advocacy Experiences of High School Students

With Specific Learning Disabilities

The aim of the present study was to understand the self-advocacy experiences of high school students with specific learning disabilities. Within this aim, semi-structured interview questions were prepared in accordance with the conceptual framework of self-advocacy, which was constituted by Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, and Eddy (2005). In this direction, 12 interviews were conducted with six male and six female students, who were between 14 and 17 years old from different types of public high schools in Istanbul, Turkey. The demographic information of the students was obtained from the participating students' parents via an information form prepared by the researcher. The data were collected from May to the end of September 2019, in six different counseling and research centers (CRCs) and analyzed using the qualitative consensual method. Accordingly, four main themes — knowledge of self, knowledge of rights, communication, and leadership indicated in the conceptual framework of self-advocacy — were found. Even though the data were actively analyzed, no new theme emerged. According to the findings, the students shared their experiences mostly about 'knowledge of self', including their personal strengths, learning strengths and weaknesses, appropriate learning strategies, future goals, and social support resources, yet only seven students were able to define specific learning disabilities. In the light of these findings, implications regarding social justice and human rights are drawn for educators, school counselors, counselors who work at CRCs and policymakers.

ÖZET

Özel Öğrenme Güçlüğü Olan Lise Öğrencilerinin Öz-Savunuculuk Deneyimleri

Bu çalışmanın amacı özel öğrenme güçlüğü olan lise öğrencilerinin öz-savunuculuk deneyimlerini anlamaktır. Bu amaçla Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer ve Eddy (2005) tarafından oluşturulan öz-savunuculuk kavramsal çerçevesine uygun olarak yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme soruları hazırlanmıştır. Bu doğrultuda, Türkiye'de İstanbul ilinde bulunan farklı türdeki devlet liselerinden, 14 ile 17 yaş aralığında bulunan altı erkek ve altı kadın öğrenciyle on iki görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ek olarak, öğrencilere ait demografik bilgiler, öğrencilerin ebeveynlerinin katılımıyla, araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan bilgi formu aracılığıyla alınmıştır. Veriler Mayıs-Eylül 2019 tarihleri arasında altı farklı rehberlik ve araştırma merkezinde toplanmış ve karşılıklı anlaşmaya dayalı nitel araştırma yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Buna göre, öz-savunuculuk kavramsal çerçevesinde belirtilen; kendi hakkında bilgi, hakları hakkında bilgi, iletişim ve liderlik adlı altındaki dört tema bulunmuştur. Aktif olarak analiz yapılmasına rağmen yeni bir tema ortaya çıkarılamamıştır. Araştırma bulgularına göre öğrenciler deneyimlerini çoğunlukla kendi kişisel güçlü yanlarını, öğrenmekte güçlü oldukları ve güçlük çektikleri yanlarını, kendilerine uygun öğrenme stratejilerini, gelecek hedeflerini ve sosyal destek kaynaklarını içeren 'kendi hakkında bilgi' teması üzerine paylaşmış, fakat yalnızca yedi öğrenci özel öğrenme güçlüğü kavramını tanımlayabilmiştir. Elde edilen bu bulgular ışığında; eğitimciler, okul psikolojik danışmanları, RAM'larda çalışan psikolojik danışmanlar ve karar vericiler için sosyal adalet ve insan haklarına ilişkin çıkarımlar yapılmıştır.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone who passed through my life. You all helped me to become the person I am today, with both your positive or negative contributions.
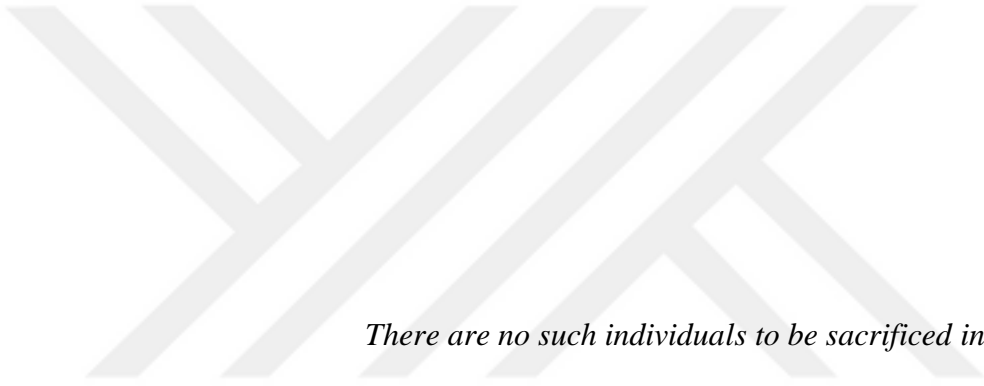
There are no such individuals to be sacrificed in education.

M. K. ATATÜRK

(Founder of the Turkish Republic)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Having a disability is a part of the human condition, and almost everyone

experiences difficulties in functioning permanently or temporarily at some point in

their lives (World Health Organization [WHO], 2011). According to the fifth edition

of Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V), having

neurodevelopmental disabilities, such as Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), may

cause difficulties in personal, social, academic, or occupational functioning of an

individual as well (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2013).

Basically, SLD is a term used for individuals who are somehow academically

unsuccessful, although they are not identified with intellectual or sensory disabilities,

and receive adequate education (Frank, 2014). Individuals with SLD are generally

associated with poor academic and educational outcomes (Cortiella & Horowitz,

2014).

In DSM-V, SLD is associated with reading (dyslexia), written expression

(dysgraphia) and mathematics difficulties (dyscalculia) (APA, 2013). However, in

the tenth edition of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related

Health Problems (ICD-10), SLD is entitled as "specific developmental disorders of

scholastic skills" with the code of F81 and categorized different from DSM-V

(WHO, 2016). For instance, in ICD-10, dyslexia is defined as "specific reading

disorder" with the code of F81.0, dysgraphia is seen as "other developmental

disorders of scholastic skills" with the code of F81.8, and dyscalculia is referred as

"specific disorder of arithmetical skills" with the code of F81.2 (WHO, 2016). Three

more subcategories are identified for SLD in ICD-10 on the contray of DSM-V. The

first one is "specific spelling disorder" with the code of F81.1, which includes the

1

difficulties on both abilities to spell orally and to spell in writings (WHO, 2016). The second subcategory is named "mixed disorder of scholastic disorder" with the code of F81.3, and this type consists of both arithmetical, reading and spelling difficulties (WHO, 2016). The last subcategory is indicated as "developmental disorder of scholastic skills, unspecified" with the code of F81.9 and it refers to that the difficulty of knowledge acquisition (WHO, 2016).

However, the term is given as "developmental learning disorder" in the 11th revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-11), which will be adopted in 2022 (WHO, 2019). Unlike ICD-10, both international classification systems; DSM-V (APA, 2013) and ICD-11 (WHO, 2019) determine the categories of SLD in a similar way. In ICD-11, dyslexia is defined as "developmental learning disorder with impairment in reading" with the code of 6A03.0, dysgraphia is seen as "developmental learning disorder with impairment in written expression" with the code of 6A03.1, and dyscalculia is referred as "developmental learning disorder with impairment in mathematics" with the code of 6A03.2 (WHO, 2019). Whereas only three subcategories are determined for SLD in DSM-V, two additional subcategories are identified in ICD-11 (WHO, 2019). The first one, namely developmental learning disorder with other specified impairment of learning with the code of 6A03.3, refers to the difficulties of learning academic skills different from reading, written expressions, and mathematics. The other one, namely developmental learning disorder, unspecified with the code of 6A03.Z, is stated as a residual category (WHO, 2019).

Additionally, individuals with SLD show unexpected low performance in daily life activities that require reading, writing or calculation skills, in contrast with their age expectations and Intelligent Quotients (IQ) (Margari, et al., 2013).

Furthermore, they may have trouble with temporal processing that contains verbal time estimation, time reproduction, and time discrimination; processing speed, and working memory (Moll, Göbel, Gooch, Landerl, & Snowling, 2016).

Consequently, all these difficulties that individuals with SLD face influence their professional and social lives. For instance, in the United States, 19% of students with SLD drop out of high school, and just 12% of them receive a certificate of completion (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). Furthermore, 23.3% of working-age adults without SLD (between 18 and 64 ages) are not in the labor force, but 46% of working-age adults with SLD (between the same ages) are not in the labor force (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). Ninety-two percent of individuals with SLD had less than $50,000 annual income, within eight years of leaving high school (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). As another example, in Turkey, Eurostat Disability Statistics (2014) reveals that more than 60% of students with special needs drop out of school early due to their disabilities. Also, according to a study conducted by Sakız, Sart, Börkan, Korkmaz, and Babür (2015), the quality of life (QoL) of the children with SLD is found to be lower than their peers who have no special needs, to the extent of physical and emotional well-being, self-esteem, relationship with family and friend, and school functioning, in Turkey. Moreover, the children's self-reports on perceived QoL were found similar to their parents' proxy reports on QoL of their children with regards to physical and emotional well-being, and relationship with family (Sakız et al., 2015). According to the study, even though the teachers reported lower levels of QoL for their students in the dimension of school functioning similar to their students with SLD, they indicated lower QoL levels than their students in terms of emotional well-being, self-esteem, and relationship with friends (Sakız et al., 2015). As a result, SLD is found as a situation that affects the students' lives not only in the

areas of schooling and academic performance but also into areas of physical and emotional well-beings (Sakız et al., 2015).

From this point of view, it is clearly seen that identifying SLD early and meeting the consequential education needs are important actions to be taken to help individuals with SLD to make significant changes in their academic, social, and emotional lives (Özçivit Asfuroğlu & Fidan, 2016). However, Walker and Test (2011) approached the issue differently and emphasized that the students with SLD should know their strengths, weaknesses, and needs as well as their educational and social rights in order to advocate themselves for expressing their difficulties and requesting implementations. Especially, self-advocacy is identified as an important factor for the success of individuals with SLD (Lock & Layton, 2001). Furthermore, students with SLD also found self-advocacy as an important skill (Kelly, 2015). Indeed, studies about self-advocacy trainings of students with SLD reveal positive educational and/or social outcomes on high school students with SLD (e.g., Brunello-Prudencio, 2001; Mishna, Muskat, Farnia, & Wiener, 2011; Prater, Redman, Anderson, & Gibb, 2014). Therefore, the main aim of this study is determined as understanding the self-advocacy experiences of high school students with SLD, from their own perspective. Examining the knowledge of the students with SLD about themselves and their rights, understanding their lived experiences on self-advocacy may reveal the pros and cons of their educational and social lives, while they are still in the educational system. In this way, counselors, educators, policy-makers, and researchers may consider the findings of the current study, while making decisions for students with SLD. Consequently, as it is indicated in the title of Charlton's (1998) book entitled *Nothing About Us, Without Us!*, possible changes

in educational and social policies about the students may be formulated through their voices.

According to the definition provided by Lee (1998), advocacy is "the process or act of arguing or pleading for a cause or proposal", whereas an advocate is "an individual who pleads for a cause" (p. 8). An advocate can be both individuals themselves, and also another individual who is pleading the cause (Lee, 1998). From this point of view, self-advocacy can be defined as being able to state assertively wants, needs, rights; to determine and pursue needed supports; to obtain and evaluate these needed supports; and to conduct their own affairs (Martin & Marshall, 1995).

Kozminsky identified with three important components of self-advocacy: knowledge, motivational features, and skills (as cited in Michael & Zidan, 2018, p. 119). According to the study, the first component 'knowledge' includes personal knowledge, such as strengths, and areas to develop, and environmental knowledge, such as resources, rights, and duties (as cited in Micheal & Zidan, 2018, p. 119). 'Motivational features' is explained with self-efficacy, and self-esteem; and the last component, the last component 'skills' is defined with decision-making, self-control, problem-solving, assertive communication, and similar skills (as cited in Micheal & Zidan, 2018, p. 119).

On the other hand, the components of self-advocacy, which were identified by Test, Fowler, Wood, Brewer, and Eddy (2005), are frequently used in the literature because the researchers reviewed more than 150 self-advocacy studies conducted between 1972 and 2003. Subsequent to this review, a conceptual framework was developed for self-advocacy with the outcomes of 20 data-based intervention studies. According to the conceptual framework, self-advocacy is divided into four main components (Test et al., 2005). The first component,

knowledge of the self, indicates the knowledge of one's own strengths, preferences, learning styles, and support needs, and so on (Test et al., 2005). The second one, knowledge of rights, represents the knowledge of personal, community and human rights (Test et al., 2005). The third one, communication, includes assertiveness, negotiation, body language, and listening (Test et al., 2005). The last component, leadership, is related to the knowledge of group's rights, political action, knowledge of resources, team dynamics and roles, and organizational participation (Test et al., 2005). Even though Roberts, Ju, and Zhang (2016) conducted a replication study for the conceptual framework with the self-advocacy studies conducted between June 2004 and June 2012, they did not encounter any different components of self-advocacy used in those studies.

Thus, due to the frequency of the conceptual framework in the self-advocacy literature, throughout this research study, self-advocacy experiences of high school students with SLD were examined concordantly with those four self-advocacy components constituted by Test et al. (2005).

1.1 Significance of the study

The ultimate goal of this study is to understand the self-advocacy experiences of high school students with SLD. In the literature, some studies include self-advocacy experiences of students with SLD. For instance, Rosetti and Henderson (2013) found self-advocacy as a theme while they were exploring the lived experiences of high school students with SLD. Additionally, Centerrino (2016) evaluated self-advocacy in high school students with SLD through case study analysis. Thus, the current study aims to contribute to the existing literature. It is unique in that it focuses for the first time on high school students with SLD in Turkey.

Furthermore, in this study, the self-advocacy experiences of the students were examined through the voices of students with SLD. However, previous studies on the experiences of individuals with SLD generally focused on the perspectives of the students' parents rather than the students themselves (Kenyon, 2013). For this reason, this data collecting method makes the study significant.

In addition, advocacy is a rarely studied concept in the field of counseling in Turkey (e.g., Gültekin, 2004; Keklik, 2010). However, those studies handled self-advocacy in a broader way than students' perspectives and beyond being a skill, with the advocate role of counselors. From this aspect, this study contributes a new perspective to the self-advocacy literature in Turkey.

From a broader perspective, according to the American Counseling Association (ACA) (2003), counselors must train their students in self-advocacy skills and assist them to develop a self-advocacy action plan. Yet, there has been only one known attempt of self-advocacy training by a non-governmental organization, conducted solely with students with Down syndrome in Turkey (The Association of Down Syndrome, n.d.). Thus, with the findings of the present study, counselors, educators, and policy-makers may increase their awareness of the issue and may design training while overcoming obstacles to self-advocacy.

Furthermore, this study may raise the awareness of self-advocacy in addition to helping counselors understand the issue better in order to become an effective social-justice advocate. When counselors become effective social-justice advocates, they promote the right of all students to reach high-quality educational opportunities against unfair school policies, administrative decisions, and practices (Bemak & Chung, 2008).

In Turkey, after students are identified with SLD, they are included within inclusive education (The Regulation on Special Education Services, 2018). According to the regulation, the students continue their education in a regular class setting, and an individualized education program (IEP) is implemented for each of them (The Regulation on Special Education, 2018). The IEP is prepared considering the capabilities and educational goals of the students and in line with the curriculum, by the IEP team, which consists of students, teachers, school principals, and parents (The Regulation on Special Education, 2018). However, Güzel (2014) found in a quantitative study that 113 out of 206 primary school teachers did not prepare an IEP for their students with special needs. Furthermore, in the study, 113 elementary school teachers indicated that they did not have adequate knowledge about preparing an IEP (Güzel, 2014). Similarly, Melekoğlu (2014) conducted a study with direct observations and survey techniques with 54 general education teachers who have a student with special needs in their class and investigated the current implementation of IEPs. It was found that even though IEPs were prepared for the students with special needs with 98.1% percentage, 85.2% of the students did not receive education regarding their individual differences. Likewise, Sakız (2017) conducted a case study with the counselors and the school managers of two schools and found that IEPs usually were not properly prepared, implemented or evaluated for the students with SLD (Sakız, 2017). Thus, this study can be helpful in understanding the current situation regarding IEP in high schools. This is important for exploring the experiences of the students in the education level in terms of self-advocacy. In this way, the obstacles to the IEP implementation may also be discovered by the students' perspective.

In conclusion, this study is essential in order to explore the self-advocacy experiences of high school students with SLD living in Istanbul, Turkey and to make them be heard by teachers, school counselors, researchers, and policy-makers. By doing so, the current study may increase the awareness of self-advocacy and also be an inspiration for further studies in terms of self-advocacy training and assessment methods.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the self-advocacy experiences of high school students with SLD, living in Istanbul, Turkey. Within this purpose, 12 interviews were conducted with six male and six female high school students with SLD. In this way, it was possible to understand what high school students with SLD experience related to academic difficulties, rights, communication, and leadership in their lives, in terms of self-advocacy. Thus, the current circumstances of educational and social practices became visible for educators, school counselors, and policy-makers. Those findings may contribute to further actions to be taken by professionals to improve the quality of educational environments for students with SLD.

In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on the experiences of high school students with SLD that consider the experiences from different angles. Some of these studies were conducted with adults with SLD, and/or higher level of education students with SLD regarding their past experiences (e.g., Ebo, 2016; Ehrli, 2015; Grella, 2014; Kenyon, 2013, Schechter, 2016), and some of them were conducted with high school students with SLD, directly (e.g., Banks, 2017; Harris, 2016; Rosetti & Henderson, 2013; Roth, 2015). However, many of those studies reached results related to advocacy (e.g., Banks, 2017; Centerrino,

2016; Ehrli, 2015; Grella, 2014; Harris, 2016; Henry, 2016; Rosetti & Henderson, 2013). Nevertheless, a few of them were conducted considering self-advocacy (e.g., Centerrino, 2016; Rosetti & Henderson, 2013; Roth, 2015).

In the literature, it can be seen that the studies on self-advocacy experiences or studies that reached the results regarding advocacy include the term of self-advocacy. For instance, Rosetti and Henderson (2013) conducted their study on the lived experiences of adolescents with SLD; they included the perceptions of the students on the meaning of self-advocacy and how they advocate for themselves. Likewise, Ehrli (2015) conducted a study with the aim of understanding the perspectives of the students with SLD through their lived experiences and found that the students (between 18 and 25 years old) believed that self-advocacy was an important skill that should be required for graduation from high school. Thus, the purpose of this study is to contribute to the existing literature by revealing the self-advocacy experience of students with SLD living in Istanbul, Turkey through their own expressions.

In the Turkish Education System, compulsory education was extended to 12 years with the reform of 2012 (Gün & Atanur Baskan, 2014). According to the system, which is also known as the 4+4+4 education system, children start school at the age of 66 months and study four years at a primary school, four years at a middle and 4 years at high school (Gün & Atanur Baskan, 2014). Consequently, students start high school when they are 13 or 14 years old, which corresponds to the formal operational stage in Piaget's cognitive development stages (Santrock, 2014). At this stage, an adolescent gains the ability to use hypothetical-deductive reasoning (Santrock, 2014). Thus, it was considered that high school students may share their self-advocacy experiences with different hypotheses and statements than younger

students may share. Additionally, individuals have an increased understanding that they have a disability when they reach adolescence (Kenyon, 2013). For these reasons, in the present study, high school students with SLD were chosen as participants in order to gain an understanding of the self-advocacy experiences of the students with SLD.

The research question was "What are the self-advocacy experiences of high school students with specific learning disabilities?"

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Understanding SLD

In 1962, Samuel Kirk was coined the phrase "learning disability" (Kirk, Gallagher,

Coleman, & Anastasiow, 2009), and in 1963, he presented the following definition of

this phrase at Exploration into the Problems of the Perceptually Handicapped Child

conference in Chicago, Illinois (Flaganan & Alfonso, 2011):

> A retardation, disorder, or delayed development in one or more of the
> processes of speech, language, reading, writing, arithmetic, or other school
> subjects resulting from a psychological handicap caused by a possible
> cerebral dysfunction and/ or emotional or behavioral disturbances. It is not
> the result of mental retardation, sensory deprivation, or cultural or
> instructional factors (Kirk & Bateman, 1962, p. 73).

In the direction of this definition, SLD is associated with challenges in one or more

skills in literacy, numeracy, and writing (Reid, Elbeheri, & Everatt, 2016). An

individual with SLD may have the difficulties perceiving and processing information

effectively and accurately (APA, 2013). In addition, SLD is related to other aspects

of learning that obstruct the individual from realizing his or her potential (Reid et al.,

2016). Biologically, SLD is explained as "neurological differences in brain structure

and function [that] affect a person's ability to receive, store, process, retrieve or

communicate information" (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014, p. 3).

Constitutionally, SLD is called "specific learning disability" in The

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) (2004), and is

defined as follows:

> (i) General. Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of
> the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using
> language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability
> to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations,

including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.
(ii) Disorders not included. Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of intellectual disability, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage (Sec. 300.8 (c) (10), para. 1-2).

In the frame of neurodevelopmental disabilities, four main criteria have been determined for identifying SLD in DSM-V (APA, 2013). The first criterion involves six different difficulties regarding learning and using academic skills, which were observed at least six months despite interventions implemented (APA, 2013). These are indicated as follows:

1- Inaccurate or slow and effortful word reading (e.g., reads single words aloud incorrectly or slowly and hesitantly, frequently guesses words, has difficulty sounding out words).
2- Difficulty understanding the meaning of what is read (e.g., may read text accurately but not understand the sequence, relationships, inferences, or deeper meanings of what is read).
3- Difficulties with spelling (e.g., may add, omit, or substitute vowels or consonants).
4- Difficulties with written expression (e.g., makes multiple grammatical or punctuation errors within sentences; employs poor paragraph organization; written expression of ideas lacks clarity).
5- Difficulties mastering number sense, number facts, or calculation (e.g., has poor understanding of numbers, their magnitude, and relationships; counts on fingers to add single-digit numbers instead of recalling the math fact as peers do; gets lost in the midst of arithmetic computation and may switch procedures).
6- Difficulties with mathematical reasoning (e.g., has severe difficulty applying mathematical concepts, facts, or procedures to solve quantitative problems) (APA, 2013, p. 66).

The second criterion refers to significantly low academic skills vis-à-vis age expectations (APA, 2013). According to the criterion, individuals' academic or occupational performances, or daily life activities are significantly affected in a negative way, and those negative effects should be confirmed by standardized achievement measures and comprehensive clinical assessments (APA, 2013).

However, if an individual is 17 years old older, a documented history regarding learning difficulties may be used for evaluation (APA, 2013).

According to the third criterion, SLD manifests itself during the school-age years, but it may not be observed completely until the academic expectations exceed the capacity of the individual (APA, 2013).

The last criterion indicates that SLD cannot be explained with other intellectual or neurological disabilities, psychosocial challenge, audial or visual problems, foreign language obstacles or inadequate educational instructions, and economical or cultural disadvantage (APA, 2013). In other words, SLD is not an intellectual disability or a global developmental delay; in fact, intellectually gifted individuals may also be identified with SLD (APA, 2013). According to the DSM-V, gifted individuals with SLD sustain their academic functions adequately with compensatory strategies such as exceeding efforts or receiving assistance until they face a further obstacle such as timed tests (APA, 2013). In a systematic literature review, the most common non-cognitive characteristics of the gifted individuals with SLD are indicated as "experiencing frustration, using compensatory techniques, close relationships with/supported by relatives, negative attitude toward school/area of difficulty, great perseverance, self-awareness, social withdrawal, and quiet/shyness, lack of confidence/low self-efficacy, fear of failure and highly (intrinsically) motivated" (Beckmann & Minnaert, 2018, p. 16).

As mentioned earlier, in DSM-V, the classification of SLD is specified in terms of difficulties in three domains: reading, writing, and mathematics (Dumas & Nilsen, 2003). Alternative terms are indicated for these difficulties. Dyslexia is defined for reading, dyscalculia is stated for mathematics (APA, 2013), and dysgraphia is used for writing difficulties (Dumas & Nilsen, 2003).

In detail, dyslexia refers to difficulties in decoding and recognizing printed words, reading fluently, understanding the meaning of what is read (Dumas & Nilsen, 2003), and reading rate (APA, 2013). According to Reid et al. (2016), "working memory difficulties (forgetfulness), difficulty in forming, learning, or remembering letters and their sequence in the alphabet, confusing words which sound similar, and reluctance to go to school and read" are some characteristics of dyslexia (p. 2).

Dysgraphia is related to writing difficulties which occur in handwriting, vocabulary, organizing written compositions (Dumas & Nilsen, 2003), accuracy of spelling, grammar, and punctuation (APA, 2013). Reid et al. (2016) indicated that "letter inconsistencies, mixtures of upper and lower case, irregular letter size and shapes, unfinished letters, being often a reluctant writer, poor visual perception, and poor fine motor skills" were common characteristics of dysgraphia (pp. 3-4). Additionally, while observing dysgraphia, the "individual's hand dominance, pencil grip, posture, paper position, pressure on paper, wrist movement, letter formation, left-to-right orientation, reversals of letters, spacing, letter size, formation consistency, style-joins in letters, speed, [and] fatigue factors should be taken into consideration" (Reid et al., 2016, p. 4).

Dyscalculia is specified in terms of difficulties in conducting basic arithmetic operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division), solving mathematical problems (Dumas & Nilsen, 2003), number sense, memory, and reasoning (APA, 2013). The common signs of dyscalculia were indicated by Reid et al. (2016) as "problems understanding the value of numbers and the relationship between numbers, (e.g. nine is one less than ten), being able to recall mathematical facts but with no real understanding" (p. 4).

According to DSM-V, when an individual has impairments in more than one domain, each domain should be coded (APA, 2013). Reid et al. (2016) explained that the main aim of this is to identifying existing challenges, beyond labeling, and indicated some overlapped challenges, especially between dyslexia and dyscalculia. These are "working memory difficulties, forgetfulness (long-term memory), the reversal of letters, difficulty remembering letters and of not enjoying school" (p. 9).

Despite these overlaps, the characteristics of SLD are heterogeneous, and no two students with SLD have exactly the same profile in terms of its mantifestation (Wong, Graham, Hoskyn, & Berman, 2008).

On the other hand, ICD-10 defined SLD as the difficulty of skill learning, which starts in early developmental stages (WHO, 2016). Additionally, SLD is not a simple consequence of intellectual disability, brain trauma or disease, or an opportunity gap for learning (WHO, 2016).

ICD-10 indicated six categories for SLD with different names. These categories are specific reading disorders with the code of F81.0, specific spelling disorders with the code of F81.1, specific disorders of arithmetical skills with the code of F81.2, mixed disorder of scholastic skills with the code of F81.3, other developmental disorders of scholastic skills with the code of F81.4, and developmental disorders of scholastic skills, unspecified with the code of F81.5 (WHO, 2016).

The first category of ICD-10 for SLD, specific reading disorders, includes significant and specific reading difficulties, and these difficulties should not be solely the results of intellectual disability, visual problems, or inadequate acquired knowledge (WHO, 2016).

Different from DSM-V, the second category is indicated as specific spelling disorders, in ICD-10 (WHO, 2016). This category refers to a specific and significant impairment in the development of spelling skills, except the specific reading disorder (WHO, 2016).

The third category, specific disorders of arithmetical skills, includes impairment in the mastery of basic computational skills of four operations rather than abstract arithmetical skills, such as trigonometry, and these difficulties are not explained with general intellectual disability, or inadequate acquired knowledge (WHO, 2016).

The fourth category of ICD-10 is mixed disorders of scholastic skills; it involves all the first three categories' criteria together (WHO, 2016). Like other categories, the mixed disorder of scholastic skills is not identified with regard to intellectual disability or inadequate schooling (WHO, 2016).

The fifth category, other developmental disorders of scholastic skills, is related to the developmental expressive writing disorder (WHO, 2016). Finally, the category of developmental disorders of scholastic skills, unspecified, refers to a knowledge acquisition disability, which is non-specified with other categories (WHO, 2016).

On the other hand, in ICD-11, SLD is called developmental learning disorder instead of specific developmental disorders of scholastic skills, as stated in ICD-10 (WHO, 2019). Besides, only five categories are included in this revision. While all categories are given new titles, the categories of specific spelling disorders and mixed disorder of scholastic skills in ICD-10 are excluded, and the category of developmental learning disorder with other specified impairment of learning is included in ICD-11(WHO, 2019). Thus, the five categories are referred to as

developmental learning disorder with impairment in reading, developmental learning

disorder with impairment in written expression, developmental learning disorder

with impairment in mathematics, developmental learning disorder with other

specified impairment of learning, and developmental learning disorder, unspecified

(WHO, 2019).

In ICD-11, the first category, developmental learning disorders with

impairment in reading, includes significant and persistent difficulties in learning

academic skills related to reading (WHO, 2019). Like dyslexia, this category

involves difficulties in word reading accuracy, reading fluency, and reading

comprehension (WHO, 2019).

The second category, developmental learning disorders with impairment in

written expression, refers to significant and persistent difficulties in learning

academic skills regarding writing (WHO, 2019). Difficulties in spelling accuracy,

grammar and punctuation accuracy and organization and coherence of ideas in

writing are indicated as examples of this category (WHO, 2019). In this respect, this

category corresponds to dysgraphia in DSM-V.

The third category, developmental learning disorders with impairment in

mathematics, means significant and persistent difficulties in learning academic skills

related to arithmetic, such as dyscalculia in DSM-V (WHO, 2019). According to

ICD-11, this category includes difficulties related to number sense, memorization of

number facts, accurate or fluent calculation, and accurate mathematic reasoning

(WHO, 2019).

The fourth category, developmental learning disorders with other specified

impairment of learning, is defined as a general category that explains significant and

persistent difficulties in learning academic skills other than reading, mathematics,

and written expression (WHO, 2019). The last category, developmental learning disorders, unspecified, is indicated as an unspecified residual category (WHO, 2019).

For all categories, the exclusionary criteria of SLD are updated in ICD-11 as "a disorder of intellectual development, sensory impairment (vision or hearing), neurological or motor disorder, lack of availability of education, lack of proficiency in the language of academic instruction, or psychosocial adversity" (WHO, 2019, para. 1).

On the other hand, the severity of SLD is indicated only in DSM-V as mild, moderate, or severe (APA, 2013). Mild SLD refers to impairments in one or two domains, and individuals with mild SLD may cope with the deficits with appropriate accommodation and support (APA, 2013). Individuals with moderate SLD need considerable support or accommodation for academic and social functions (APA, 2013). Lastly, severe SLD represents impairments in many domains, and individuals with severe SLD may not be able to succeed in all skills sufficiently despite individualized and specialized support and accommodation (APA, 2013).

Beyond these academic difficulties mentioned above, individuals with SLD may have difficulties in social life. According to a longitudinal study conducted with 1,361 students (55 of whom were identified with SLD) and repeated over six semesters. Even though many individuals with SLD belong to different peer groups and hold a similar social status with their peers in these groups, they have lower social status than individuals without SLD among peers in the classroom (Estell, et al., 2008). Specifically, they were found less likely to be nominated as best friends compared to their peers without SLD; and also their rates on peer-nominated popularity and social preferences were found to be lower than that of their peers without SLD (Estell, et al., 2008).

2.1.1 Prevalence and comorbidity of SLD

In DSM-V, SLD prevalence rates of school-aged children are indicated between 5% and 10% (APA, 2013). According to the Child Trends of National Health Interview Survey Data (2013), 7.5% of students between the ages of three and seventeen had been identified with SLD. Furthermore, 9% of all students with SLD are male and 5.9% are female (Child Trends of National Health Interview Survey Data, 2013). On the other hand, Cortiella and Horowitz (2014) indicated that 66% of students in all public schools diagnosed with SLD are male. In older ages, 2% of male individuals between 18 and 65 years of age, and 1.4% of female individuals at the same age range were identified with SLD (U.S. Census Bureau, as cited in Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014, p. 26).

The total comorbidity rate of SLD is indicated as 58.3%, and attention deficits and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is the most frequent comorbid of SLD, with 33.3% (Margari, et al., 2013). Likewise, DuPaul, Gormley, and Laracy (2013) stated that one out of three children with ADHD has SLD (approximately between 31% and 45%). These students face the common difficulties of both disorders, such as executive brain functioning, a general term for cognitive processes like reasoning, memory, problem-solving, and planning (Kane, Walker, & Schmidt as cited in Lux, 2016, p. 27).

Additionally, other comorbidities of SLD are as follows: anxiety disorder (28.8%), motor coordination disorder (17.8%), language disorder (11%), and mood disorder (9.4%) (Margari et al., 2013).

In Turkey, 41,318 high school students have different special needs, and they are involved in inclusive education (Arık, Polat, Korlu, & Düşkün, 2018). Even though, there is not a certain statistics of the high school students with SLD, it is

known that, SLD is the most prevalent condition among other disabilities, at 50% (The Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, 2014). Furthermore, according to a recent research conducted in Turkey, 92.5% of children with SLD between the ages six and fifteen, have a comorbid psychiatric disorder (Araz-Altay & Görker, 2018). Additionally, 82.3% of children with SLD have ADHD, 46.3% have specific phobia, 26.3% have oppositional defiant disorder, 25% have enuresis, and 22.5% have tic disorders (Araz-Altay & Görker, 2018).

2.1.2 Etiology of SLD

Many etiological factors act jointly on SLD, because SLD is a behaviorally defined disorder rather than a categorical one, and it represents a continuum that ranges from optimal to poor outcomes (Pennington, McGrath, & Peterson, 2019). Intrinsic and neurobiological factors (Martin & Volkmar, 2007), especially cognitive dysfunctions (Büttner & Hasselhorn, 2011), are commonly seen as possible causes of SLD with the adverse effects of external risk factors (such as poverty and lack of educational occasions) (Martin & Volkmar, 2007). Even though cognitive dysfunctions have been found to be related to SLD, there is no agreement on whether they are consequences, causes, or covariates of the emergence of SLD (Büttner & Hasselhorn, 2011).

Riley (2012) indicated that a dysfunction of the nervous system may cause SLD. This dysfunction may be explained by the genetic factors, heredity, childhood diseases, prenatal, perinatal, and postnatal problems, infections, and brain traumas (Riley, 2012). However, environmental contaminants, such as alcohol, lead, mercury, arsenic, nicotine or tobacco smoke may also have an adverse effect on the nervous system functions (Riley, 2012). In addition to these factors, Pennington et al. (2019)

state that a mother's nutrition and stress level may produce permanent epigenetic changes in the fetus, and therefore affect the brain's cognitive development. Also, postnatal experiences, which are not universal, act on synaptogenesis and synaptic pruning, which may cause typical or atypical cognitive development (Pennington et al., 2019).

In addition to these statements, social and cultural factors may have an effect on SLD (Dumas & Nilsen, 2003; Martin & Volkmar, 2007). Although SLD can clearly be seen in almost every culture, its manifestation may change (APA, 2013). Similar writing or reading mistakes based on the characteristics of the symbol of letters and number figures may be observed in the same language (APA, 2013). Therefore, the source of mistakes and cultural and linguistic differences should be taken into consideration in the assessment process of SLD, too (APA, 2013).

2.1.3 Developmental course of SLD

SLD is observed during the early years of school-age children in the context of meeting academic requirements (Kearney, 2017), and SLD continues throughout their lives (Margari et al., 2013; Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). Statistically, while 53% of children with SLD are identified between first and fourth grades, 23% are identified in kindergarten (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014).

In fact, SLD's manifestation usually varies based on the developmental stage and expectations of the environmental settings (Martin & Volkmar, 2007). According to DSM-V, preschool-aged children with SLD may have difficulties with nursery rhymes and games related to language, such as repetition or rhyming of sounds (APA, 2013). Pronouncing the words accurately, recognizing the letters of

their name, and remembering name of letters and numbers are difficult assignments for students with SLD (APA, 2013).

In kindergarten, the difficulties of children with SLD are related to being able to recognize and write letters (APA, 2013). Other examples are difficulty in finding syllables, connecting letters, and writing their own names (APA, 2013).

Elementary school-aged children with SLD may have challenges in word decoding, spelling, letter-sound inconsistency, and understanding number concepts (APA, 2013). In general, between first and third grades, these challenges continue in sequencing numbers or letters and connecting syllables (APA, 2013). Skipping parts of multi-syllable words, confusing the pronunciation of similar words, memory problems, and trouble with organizing homework and tasks are usually observed from the fourth to the sixth grades (APA, 2013).

From this point of view, the Matthew effect should be considered. It means that good readers become better in reading over the years and weaker readers may remain weaker than them, despite their achievements (Morgan, Farkas & Hibel, 2008). For instance, children with dyslexia, who have poor reading skills, may come to the targeted level on reading until their preadolescent or adolescent years, but their reading skills may still stay poor or get worse in terms of grade-level expectations (Wicks-Nelson & Israel, 2015).

In adolescence, even though word decoding may be an easy task for students with SLD, the reading may still be compelling (APA, 2013). Additionally, reading comprehension, understanding math facts, solving arithmetical problems, and written expressions are other difficulties of adolescents with SLD may face, and these problems may remain in adulthood (APA, 2013). Therefore, adults with SLD may avoid work-related demands that require reading, writing, and arithmetic (APA,

2013). Similarly, a research study conducted on dyslexia and dyscalculia by Wilson et al. (2015) also supports that the difficulties regarding SLD continue in adulthood. According to their study, adults with SLD have difficulties in core numerical tasks, phonological processing, and rapid naming (Wilson et al., 2015).

In other respects, even though the influences of SLD on adults differ intra-individually, comorbid disorders such as depressive symptoms and anxiety (Klassen, Tze & Hannok, 2011) still remain in adulthood (Gerber, 2012). Furthermore, they face other difficulties in adulthood, such as employment, personal-social and family lives (Gerber, 2012). Within this context, Aro et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study with 430 adults with SLD and 2,149 adults without SLD on mental health, education, and employment allowance. According to the findings, adults with SLD benefit more from payments which are given for psychiatric diseases, than adults without SLD, and they take more anxiolytics and antidepressants (Aro et al., 2019). Having a degree after compulsory education is more common in adults without SLD than adults with SLD, and a lower percentage of adults without SLD receive an unemployment allowance than the group with SLD (Aro et al., 2019).

2.1.4 Assessment of SLD

The emergent symptoms of SLD are noticed by teachers or caregivers in the early school years. An unexpected underachievement of a student raises a question mark. Grigorenko et al. (2019) point out that SLD cannot be tested in a laboratory environment, but they state that assessing SLD may be possible in an extended way in the future by including neurobiological, genetic, or behavioral indicators (p. 6). Nowadays, the aptitude-achievement discrepancy method is the most frequently adopted method for understanding students' unexpected underachievement (Büttner

& Hasselhorn, 2011). In this method, aptitude implies the student's general intelligence and is evaluated with a general intelligence test; achievement represents the student's specific performance on reading, writing or/and mathematics and measured with specific achievement tests (Büttner & Hasselhorn, 2011).

In this case, it should be considered that SLD affects learning in normal levels of intellectual functioning, that is, an IQ score of at least 70 ($\pm$ 5 measurement error) (APA, 2013). Additionally, the results of norm-referenced or criterion-referenced achievement tests must show at least 1.5 standard deviations (SD) below the age's mean or grade level of individuals (APA, 2013).

Contrary to this approach, it is argued that, in terms of SLD symptoms, some children may not meet the discrepancy between achievement and aptitude criteria (Büttner & Hasselhorn, 2011). Nevertheless, gifted individuals may not have poorer academic performance than their peers, although they meet the criterion that there must be a discrepancy between their IQ scores and achievement test results (Büttner & Hasselhorn, 2011).

Alternatively, the response to intervention (RTI) approach is utilized for a wider assessment of SLD (Wicks-Nelson & Israel, 2015). According to this method, a specific intervention, such as an evidence-based reading program, is supplied to all students in a class and their performances are monitored (Wicks-Nelson & Israel, 2015). Then, the students who have difficulty with the program are provided intensive instructions or more intensive assessments are conducted (Wicks-Nelson & Israel, 2015). Consequently, students who need more than those intensive methods are referred to special education services (Wicks-Nelson & Israel, 2015).

2.1.5 Interventions for SLD

In a school system, developing an evidence-based intervention method for a specific academic difficulty refers to selectinng and planning interventions as well as tailoring them, while at the same time coping with learning difficulties (Mascolo, Flanagan, & Alfonso, 2014). On the other hand, tailoring interventions means discovering and assessing a student's cognitive patterns, academic strengths, and weaknesses along with environmental factors, instructional materials, and other individual or situational factors that may affect learning (Mascolo, Flanagan, & Alfonso, 2014).

Wendling and Mather (2009) also claimed that, like the tailoring of an intervention method, understanding an individual's strengths and weaknesses is significant not only for clinical assessments but also for developing an effective intervention. According to them, the results of assessments may help develop and improve the instructions (Wendling & Mather, 2009). Monitoring students frequently via assessments can also help them see their improvement (Wendling & Mather, 2009).

According to Reid et al. (2016), these interventions should be designed as a combination of educational and psychological responses. They particularly suggested using the interventions related to improving self-esteem and control feelings, after an achievement gained (Reid et al., 2016). Accordingly, task analysis, working in groups, ensuring opportunities for discussion, allowing scope for creativity while providing some kind of structure, providing why questions, using visuals, color, and music are advised (Reid et al., 2016).

Furthermore, Reid et al. (2016) draw attention to the vicious circle which arises from the repetitive negative consequences of achievement, affect, self-concept,

loss of control, and feelings of helplessness that influence the students with SLD. Against these negative consequences, they advise developing achievable tasks for students with SLD (Reid et al., 2016). They also maintain that social interactions, like listening and sharing other people's ideas, may help students with SLD develop social skills and sustain their motivation (Reid et al., 2016).

2.2 SLD in the context of the Turkish education system

In Turkey, all procedures on referral, assessment, and accommodation related to special education are conducted on the basis of the regulation on special education 2018. Accordingly, the authorized counseling and research centers (CRCs) follow the procedure about individuals who may have special education needs. CRCs conduct psychological and educational assessments (The Regulation on Special Education, 2018). This referral can be made by a school or parents (The Regulation on Special Education, 2018). Then, the psychological assessment reports are constituted by the committee on special education evaluation at the CRCs (The Regulation on Special Education, 2018).

In general, CRCs decide to use an appropriate scales, such as Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-Revised (WISC-R), Stanford Binet Intelligence Scale, Leiter International Performance Scale, Children Apperception Test (CAT), Denver Developmental Screening Test and Peabody Vocabulary Test (The Directorate of Special Education Guidance and Counseling Services, n.d.), for the educational and psychological assessments (The Regulation on Special Education, 2018). Additionally, the first intelligence test of Turkey, the Anadolu-Sak Intelligence Scale (ASIS), was developed for assessments (Sak et al., 2016). ASIS gives information about the students' verbal, visual, and working memory

performance, including verbal reasoning, perceptual reasoning, short-term verbal memory, and visual processing (Sak et al., 2016).

After the required assessment process, if special education needs are deemed necessary, appropriate special education services are provided for the student in line with the report of the committee on special education evaluation in CRCs (The Regulation on Special Education, 2018). In terms of special education services, the education of students with SLD is provided solely with inclusive education (The Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, 2010). There is not any special education schools or special education classes for the students with SLD (The Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, 2015).

The Committee on Special Education Evaluation, which is constituted at CRCs, decides whether students with SLD need additional special education at special education and rehabilitation center (The Regulation on Special Education, 2018). Eight hours of individual and/or four hours of group education are suggested for students with SLD (The Regulation on Special Education Institutions, 2012) in the fields of preparatory to learning, literacy, and mathematics (The Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, 2008). Although this special education has no age restriction, it requires a special needs report for children that present with SLD (The Regulation on Special Education, 2018).

On the other hand, in school, the individualized education program (IEP) is developed as an individual curriculum by the IEP team with the participation of school teachers, parents, school counselors, and students (The Regulation on Special Education, 2018). The IEP specifies short-term and long-term educational goals, educational methods and materials, necessary accommodations, methods of preventing of behavioral problems, techniques for encouraging positive behavior

acquisition and personal information of students, in addition to resource room educational needs (The Regulation on Special Education, 2018).

The resource room is used for addressing further special education needs of students with special needs (The Regulation on Special Education, 2018). Students receive an education at the resource room for a maximum of 40% of their weekly education hours (The Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, 2016). The lessons and its hours are determined in accordance with the students' needs which are indicated by the IEP team (The Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, 2016). The students receive those lessons on weekends or at the time specified in their weekly course schedule for the same lesson (The Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education, 2016).

Lastly, the CRCs monitor the student's improvements and if there is a need for a new assessment, CRCs conduct the procedure again (The Regulation on Special Education, 2018).

In conclusion, from the perspective of special education services, the students with SLD have the right to benefit from IEP implementations, classroom accommodations, and resource room facilities, besides additional special education services at special education and rehabilitation centers, in Turkey.

2.3 Advocacy, self-advocacy, and self-determination

Advocacy is "the process or act of arguing or pleading for a cause or proposal" (Lee, 1998, p. 8). As a result of the advocacy movements of the 1940s, basic human rights, such as freedom, equality, security, living, and education, were guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). In this declaration, it is stated clearly that all rights and freedoms should be

implemented for everyone without any distinction, such as race, sex, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, property, birth or another status (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). Yet, in the context of international disability rights, even though it is possible to see activism of individuals with disabilities in the nineteenth century (Sabatello, 2014), a collective movement occurred during the 1960s and 1970s (Traustadóttir, as cited in Sabatello, 2014, p. 13). Noteworthily, the first conference was held by *People First*, one of the major advocacy movements of the era, with the idea that individuals with disabilities can be responsible for their own social organizations in 1974, in Salem, Oregon (Longhurst, as cited in Test et al., 2005, p. 43). At this conference, many chapters were developed for individuals with disabilities for advocating their individual and group rights (Test et al., 2005).

After similar movements of advocacy, many countries enforced different kinds of legal acts for the rights of individuals with disabilities. As a consequence of these gains, a global understanding of the issue increased, and the largest international organization, the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, was held (Sabatello, 2014). More than 7,000 participants including academics, national institutions and representatives of more than 800 non-governmental organizations gathered together for this conference and shared their experiences. By the end, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action has gained admission by the representatives of 171 States (United Nations Human Rights Office, n.d.). This declaration and action plan became a remarkable instrument on the international conceptualization of human rights in the parallel with the demands of advocacy movement on disability rights (United Nations Human Rights Office, n.d.). Its

recognition of the interdependence of democracy, economic development, and human rights are the most significant aspects of the declaration (Sabatello, 2004).

However, with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the first comprehensive human rights treaty of the 21st century has been signed by 161 counties in 2006. Turkey became a signator in 2007 (United Nations, 2006a). This treaty reaffirms clearly that all individuals with all types of disabilities can benefit from all human rights and also fundamental freedoms (United Nations, 2006b).

Even though the challenges continue on the rights of individuals with disabilities, in the results of developments up to now, self-advocacy, which is also called "from below," has emerged as a civil rights movement for individuals with disabilities (Sabatello, 2014).

Self-advocacy is basically "the ability to stand up for oneself and to help other people with disabilities stand up for themselves by speaking up, speaking out, and speaking loud" (Pennell, 2001, p. 223). Furthermore, it is "having the opportunity to know your rights and responsibilities, to stand up for them, and to make choices about your own life" (Pennell, 2001, p. 223). Pennell (2001) emphasized that self-advocacy is an ongoing learning experience. Individuals take risks and also make mistakes, allowing individuals to learn from their mistakes (Pennell, 2001).

Furthermore, Blick (2018) emphasized the flexible nomenclature in the self-advocacy and stated that "self-determination sometimes used as an umbrella term to signify many of the behaviors associated with self-advocacy" (p. 31). Likewise, Martin and Marshall (1995) stated this relationship that self-determined people know how to choose, and also what they want. Additionally, they use their self-advocacy

skills to obtain what they need they are aware of, in pursuit of their goals (Martin & Marshall, 1995).

Test et al. (2005) draw attention to the correspondence between the concept of self-determination and the definitions of self-advocacy. They indicated that most of the literature has seen self-advocacy as a component of self-determination (Test, et al., 2005). In addition to being a central feature of self-determination, Pennell (2001) moved beyond self-advocacy and approached the term as "a revolution for change, to enable people with and without disabilities to live in a harmony" (p. 223).

According to the findings of literature review on interventions for self-advocacy, Test et al. (2005) identified four main components: knowledge of self, knowledge of rights, communication, and leadership.

The first component, knowledge of self, is based on individuals knowledge and awareness about their own weaknesses and strengths, aims, learning style, accommodation and support needs, interests, and responsibilities (Test et al., 2005, Martin & Marshall, 1995). Furthermore, this component includes the ability to state the technical name of their diagnosis (Adams, 2015), knowledge about the characteristics of their disorder (Test, et al., 2005), the ability to state the nature of their learning difficulties verbally, and the ability to identify coping strategies that help overcome their learning difficulties (Durlak, Rose, & Bursuck, 1994).

The second component, knowledge of rights, is related to human rights including community, consumer, and educational rights (Test et al., 2005). Adams (2015) measured this component against some of the abilities of the students. These are "stating their accommodation plan's name, explaining why they have it, stating several accommodations indicated on it, describing the appropriate actions when it is violated" (pp. 145-146).

The third component of self-advocacy, communication, includes individuals with special needs communicating their knowledge of self and rights (Test et al., 2005). Effectively using negotiation skills, assertiveness, and problem-solving in individual and also in group settings are included in this component (Test et al., 2005). This component was measured by Adams (2015) with the questions regarding the ability of the students to describe appropriate situations where they can talk about their disabilities with adults or peers, requesting appropriate accommodation and support from adults using appropriate assertiveness skills, listening to those people's opinions, and problem-solving through negotiation and compromising with adults or peers.

Moreover, Phillips (1990) built a self-advocacy plan for communication skills and considered it important that high school students with SLD get the chance of stating their strengths and weaknesses to their teachers. Bregman focused on assertiveness communication and defined it as an effective and appropriate communication of feelings, needs, and desires, and the ability to say no (as cited in Test et al., 2005, p. 50).

The last component, leadership, is related to advocating for other individuals as a group with common concerns (Test et al., 2005). It includes "knowledge of group's rights, advocating for others or for causes, political action, team dynamics and roles, knowledge of resources, organizational participation" (Test et al., 2005, p. 49).

In self-advocacy intervention methods, leadership is based on students' leadership for their individualized education program, in addition to the skills for being a team member and performing duties (Test et al., 2005). Synder (2002) developed an intervention for students to be able to lead their IEP meetings. The

steps include the students introducing themselves and talking to their teachers about their past and their future goals (Synder, 2002). Leading the IEP meeting is considered important in self-determination (Synder, 2002).

Furthermore, Adams (2015) included a question to the self-advocacy measurement for investigating the ability of students to understand that other people can have the same diagnosis. Additionally, helping others to understand the overall characteristics of a disability, negotiating plans to work together for a change or an action on behalf of the overall groups, and leading the meetings organized to meet the needs of the group are questioned for this component (Adams, 2015).

Roberts, Ju, and Zhang (2016) reviewed the literature on self-advocacy interventions conducted between June 2004 and June 2012; they encountered the same four self-advocacy components constituted by Test et al. (2005) (Roberts, Ju, & Zhang, 2016). According to the study, the self-advocacy interventions focused mostly on the components that knowledge of self and communication (Roberts, Ju, & Zhang, 2016). However, all four self-advocacy components are included in only one intervention study conducted with high school students with different special needs (Roberts, Ju, & Zhang, 2016). Thus, it may be considered that the conceptual framework of Test et al. (2005) is still valid.

2.4 Advocacy in the field of counseling

One of the important principles of the counseling profession is acknowledgment of differences in "personal, social, and cultural identities" (Kalkan, 2018, p. 146). Beyond acknowledgments, according to Toporek, Lewis, and Crethar (2009), counselors embrace the responsibility of contributing to "positive human

development" (p. 260). Thus, counselors promote social change by drawing attention to injustice in society in the direction of their social justice training (Kalkan, 2018).

> Social justice involves promoting access and equity to ensure full participation in the life of a society, particularly for those who have been systematically excluded on the basis of race/ethnicity, gender, age, physical or mental disability, education, sexual orientation, religion, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics of background or group membership (Herlihy & Corey, 2018, p. 159).

Hence, social justice counseling aims to provide for individuals to pursue their life opportunities without obstacles (Lewis, Ratts, Paladino, and Toporek, 2011). But at the same time, social justice advocacy includes all efforts made for ensuring the individuals with social, economic, and political disadvantages become empowered (Kalaycı, 2018). From this point of view, Toporek and Liu (2001) defined advocacy in terms of counseling profession as "action taken by counseling professionals to facilitate the removal of external and institutional barriers to clients' well-being" (p. 387). Despite the fact that the field of counseling takes its steps on the way of advocacy from the beginning of its history, the concept of advocacy gained strength with the advocacy competencies published in 2003 by American Counseling Association (ACA) (Keklik, 2010).

The advocacy competencies of ACA were updated by Toporek and Daniels in 2018, and six advocacy competency domains were determined. The first domain, client/ student empowerment, is related to helping students "identify systemic barriers, learning approaches to address those barriers, helping them to evaluate those approaches as well as facilitating their reflective processing of their advocacy experiences" (Toporek & Daniels, 2018, p. 4). In this direction, counselors are able to identify their students' strengths and resources, the socio-economic and cultural factors they are affected by (Toporek & Daniels, 2018). They also identify their own cultural background and sociopolitical approaches regarding "power, privilege, and

oppression", aware of their students' behavioral and also cognitive signs regarding "systemic or internalized oppression", share their appropriate resources and tools with their students, train their students in self-advocacy skills, and assist them to maintain those plans (Toporek & Daniels, 2018, p. 4).

The second domain, client/student advocacy, is related to advocacy of counselors on behalf of their students (Toporek & Daniels, 2018). Counselors may advocate for their students due to their "fear of retribution, concerns about communication or cognitive challenges, or other factors" (Toporek & Daniels, 2018, p. 4). The third domain, community collaboration, requires counselors to work with a group or community to be able to "identify and address systemic barriers and issues" (Toporek & Daniels, 2018, p. 5). The fourth competency domain is called systems advocacy, and it refers to counselors' advocating on behalf of bigger groups such as "students within a school." Counselors are usually aware of the barriers that occur in the environment, so with the help of systems-level advocacy, they may remove those barriers (Toporek & Daniels, 2018, p. 7). Engaging with a staff committee in a school and alliances with stakeholders are examples of systems advocacy for counselors (Toporek & Daniels, 2018).

The other domain is collective action (Toporek & Daniels, 2018). As the name suggests, collective action advocacy competencies require that counselors "collaborate with groups to address such large scale issues," and "contribute as a group member" (Toporek & Daniels, 2018, p. 8). The last domain, social/ political advocacy refers to actions that counselors do as social agents (Toporek & Daniels, 2018). "Writing advocacy briefings regarding an issue, invitations to testify at hearings, appearing in mass media (e.g. podcasts, talk shows) to raise awareness of issues" are the examples of these actions (Toporek & Daniels, 2018, p. 9).

Consequently, advocacy is adopted in counseling at the macro-level through collective action and social/ political advocacy as well as at micro-level through client/student empowerment, and client/student advocacy (Toporek & Daniels, 2018). Counselors advocate for their students, clients or client/student groups either on behalf of them or in collaboration with them (Toporek & Daniels, 2018).

Bemak and Chung (2008) draw attention to the challenges of counselors working as social agents against social injustice. Counselors face some personal obstacles, such as being labeled as troublemakers; and they have fears, anger, and feelings of powerlessness (Bemak & Chung, 2008). They may confront resistance from school administrators and they were considered as they work beyond their scope. They may also be exposed a culture of fear due to lawsuits, violations, and so on (Bemak & Chung, 2008). While they are acting as social change agents and struggling for organizational changes, they may afraid of being fired from their jobs by school administrators (Bemak & Chung, 2008). However, when counselors take a stand against all these obstacles and continue to struggle for social justice, they help ensure more equal and high-quality education for their students (Bemak & Chung, 2008).

2.5 Common self-advocacy experiences of high school students with SLD

High school students with SLD experience many difficulties in their social and academic lives compared to their peers without special needs. A number of studies have examined these difficulties. For instance, Wainman (2010) found in a multiple case-study conducted with four high school students with SLD that adolescents feel emotional and social loneliness. Similarly, Al-Yagon (2016) showed with a quantitative study with the participation of 90 adolescents with SLD, 91 adolescents

with comorbid SLD and ADHD and 98 adolescents without special needs that adolescents with SLD feel more peer-dyadic loneliness than their peers without special needs. Furthermore, in Wainman's (2012) study, the students with SLD also stated that they were rejected by their peers and subsequently experienced social isolation. They found these experiences undesirable and stated that they want to have more social contact and social activities like their peers have (Wainman, 2010).

Additionally, students face more complicated academic requirements in high school. Therefore, many academic accommodations are included in education plans of the students with SLD. In regard to this issue, Ebo (2016) conducted a qualitative study with four undergraduate students with SLD, aiming to understand their experiences in college and their high school experiences with respect to accommodations. The three participants, who had already been identified with SLD before high school indicated that although at first they had preferred not to benefit from accommodations in high school, they found those very helpful after they received them (Ebo, 2016). Extended time for exams and having differentiated exams were found as the most common accommodations that the students received in high school (Ebo, 2016).

Yet, beyond having SLD, their anxiety levels and motivations play an important role in their academic success (Toprak, Topçu, & Aslan, 2018). However, 19% of students with SLD drop out of high school, and grade retention is highly associated with the drop-out level (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). On the other hand, one out of three students with SLD has a grade retention, and almost 100% of the students who repeat two grades drop out of school (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). A qualitative study which analyzed this dropout phenomenon through lived early school experiences and its effect on high school graduation with 12 high school

students with SLD found that positive relationships with adults—such as teachers, school staff, special education case manager, parents and family members—have an essential influence on the perceived school experiences of the students (Harris, 2016). The positive student-to-adult relationships provide academic success and graduation outcomes (Harris, 2016).

Ehrli (2015) handled the issue from a different viewpoint, and conducted a qualitative study with the aim of examining college students with SLD's perceived characteristics that enable them to graduate from high school. Appropriate skill instruction and accommodations, effective services, clearly determined goals for graduation, different teaching styles, and differentiated instructions were found as needs in the school-level characteristics for high school graduation (Ehrli, 2015, p. 67). The students with SLD in higher education attributed their high school graduation to three support components: strong family support and advocacy, nurturing and supportive teachers, and accommodations in the curriculum (Ehrli, 2015, p. 97).

In the theme of family support, in another qualitative study, validation from knowing peers with SLD, and mentorship were stated as other social support components by adolescents with SLD (Rosetti & Henderson, 2013, p. 8). According to the findings of the study, when the adolescents meet other people with SLD, they sense validation and relatedness, and when they encounter a teacher who has a disability or knowledge about disability, they feel accepted (Rosetti & Henderson, 2013).

Bakracevic Vukman et al. (2018) examined the social anxiety and perceived self-efficacy levels of the high school students with SLD during their first high school year. For this purpose, the social self-efficacy scale and social anxiety scale

for adolescents were administered to 105 high school students with SLD and 312 high school students without special needs at the beginning and at the end of their first high school year (Bakracevic Vucman et al., 2018). The findings showed that the perceived social self-efficacy levels of adolescents with SLD was found significantly lower than their peers without special needs (Bakracevic Vukman et al., 2018). In addition to this, their social anxiety level was found to be significantly higher than that of their peers without special needs (Bakracevic Vukman et al., 2018). In addition, the perceived self-efficacy of the students with SLD decreased significantly at the end of the school year, while their social anxiety level remained unchanged (Bakracevic Vukman et al., 2018). On the other hand, a longitudinal survey study revealed that the educational expectations of the teachers and parents for adolescents with SLD are lower than their expectations for adolescents without SLD who have similar achievements and behaviors (Shifrer, 2013).

In the light of these statements, it is possible to say that high school students with SLD have difficulties both socially and academically. They need social-emotional support and appropriate academic accommodations (Ehrli, 2015).

From this point of view, researchers focus on examining which characteristics have a positive influence in the success of individuals with SLD. For this purpose, Raskind, Goldberg, Higgins, and Herman (1999) conducted a 20-year longitudinal study through case records, public records, current testing, and in-depth interviews. IQ, achievement, and success attributes, which are defined as self-awareness, proactivity, perseverance, emotional stability, goal setting, and the use of effective support systems were found to be predictors of the success of the individuals with SLD (Raskind et al., 1999). Given the remarkable similarity of the identified success attributes to the self-advocacy components, many researchers have

claimed self-advocacy to be an important factor for the success of individuals with SLD (e.g. Kleiner, Harrison, Fisher, & Kleiner, 2010; Lock & Layton, 2001). Some studies on high school experiences of students with SLD emphasize the importance self-advocacy. For instance, Rosetti and Henderson (2013) conducted a qualitative study with the aim of exploring the lived experiences of adolescents with SLD. Five adolescents between the ages of 15 and 17 participated in the study, and most of them told about their experiences with self-advocacy without being prompted (Rosetti & Henderson, 2013). Additionally, another participant mentioned about how important they use self-advocacy as a tool (Rosetti & Henderson, 2013). The other participants told about becoming more comfortable after explaining their difficulties to teachers, thanks to self-advocacy skills (Rosetti & Henderson, 2013). However, one of the participants stated that he knows a lot of students with special needs who did not self-advocate (Rosetti & Henderson, 2013).

Like Rosetti and Henderson (2013), Grella (2014) conducted a qualitative study with 11 college students with SLD and asked them what they experienced in high school or college when they had difficulty and what they felt when their needs were not being met. The findings indicated that only a few of them used the concept of self-advocacy (Grella, 2014). But when participants were asked about the meaning of self-advocacy, all answered the concept with "autonomy, requesting assistance from others, and utilizing resources and supports" (Grella, 2014, p. 103). They also explained the concept as decision-making and assessment process that depends on specific situations, such as "getting needs met, facing difficulties, seeking advice, and requesting supports" (Grella, 2014, p. 104).

Regarding a component of self-advocacy—knowledge of self, Roth (2015) conducted a qualitative study aiming to identify the knowledge and understanding of

SLD of high school students with SLD. He asked 12 high school students with SLD if they had SLD or not. Ten of them replied affirmatively. The students defined SLD as learning differently than other individuals, especially in reading. They also explained the influence of SLD on memory and learning pace. Furthermore, the students did not show SLD as an excuse for not being good academically at school (Roth, 2015).

Further to that, Rosetti and Henderson (2013) asked adolescents with SLD how they would explain SLD to a person who does not know anything about SLD. The students answered the question in accordance with their own characteristics of learning styles and experiences (Rosetti & Henderson, 2013).

When self-advocacy was taken into consideration with its four components, Centerrino (2016) conducted a study with seven high school students with SLD and aimed to evaluate their understanding and use of self-advocacy skills. Students defined the role of their school and teachers in their development and the use self-advocacy skills at two levels (Centerrino, 2016). The first level, the macro-level, consists of school regulations, requirements and structure, which give the students legal opportunities to use their self-advocacy skills (Centerrino, 2016). The second level, the micro level, involves the interactions and connections with teachers, school support staff, and administrators, which encourage the students' abilities to develop and use self-advocacy skills (Centerrino, 2016). The students indicated that micro level elements provide them with a personal sense of security and communication to develop and cultivate their self-advocacy skills (Centerrino, 2016). Centerrino (2016) claims that when all four components of self-advocacy are taken into consideration, all students have some level of experiences that give them an opportunity to use self-advocacy skills. Yet, in the study, the students' understanding of the role of self-

advocacy in their preparation for post-secondary education was found to be limited (Centerrino, 2016). Five of the students indicated that they did not know the role of self-advocacy in their preparation for further educational opportunities (Centerrino, 2016).

On the other hand, the study indicated that even though seven high school students with SLD explained the leadership roles in their school (in classroom activities, athletics, and clubs), only six of them accepted the role and acted as a leader (Centerrino, 2016).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

The aim of this research study is to understand the self-advocacy experiences of high

school students with SLD. For this purpose, reaching the primary source, the

students themselves, and hearing the voices of them is important to be able to gain a

deep understanding of their self-advocacy experiences. Given the nature of this

purpose, qualitative research is the most appropriate method for data collection and

analysis (Kumar, 2011) because it enables the researcher to obtain an open-ended

understanding of participants' experiences (Creswell, 2015) as well as to be able to

comprehend the circumstances and reasons for human behavior (Lichtman, 2014).

Hence, qualitative research provides an opportunity to understand self-

advocacy experiences of high school students with SLD (Lichtman, 2014). This

inductive method may inform further research, and reveal new actions to be taken by

school counselors, teachers, and policy-makers. This dynamic method may therefore

enable researchers to find new meanings of human behavior and interaction

(Lichtman, 2014).

3.2 Procedure

Before calling participants to the research study, the Boğaziçi University Ethics

Committee for Master's and Ph.D. theses in Social Sciences and Humanities

(SOBETIK) ethical approval (See Appendix A) and the necessary legal permission

from the Istanbul Directorate of National Education for conducting a study were

obtained (See Appendix B). With these approvals, six out of 36 CRCs in Istanbul

were visited to reach high school students with SLD and their families. The convenience sampling was used for choosing CRCs. Then, those CRC managers, psychological counselors, and special education teachers were informed about the study's purposes and procedure. During this time, the CRC staff helped announce the study to families whose children met the criteria of the current study. After that, the CRCs scheduled meetings between the researcher and the voluntery families. Six female, six male students, and their parents volunteered to participate in the study. All parents gave consent for their children to participate.

Before data collection, the researcher informed the parents about the study, its aims, procedure, and confidentiality policy. After securing their approval, the consent form was given to them to read and sign (See Appendix C for the Informed Consent Form in English and Appendix D for the Informed Consent Form in Turkish). This consent form is related not only to the parents' agreement to participate themselves but also permission for their children to participate. After they signed, one copy of the signed consent form was given to the parents. Subsequently, the researcher read the questions in the demographic information forms and wrote the answers of the participatory parents. When the parents did not understand the questions, the researcher clarified. In total, four fathers and eight mothers participated in the study and gave permission for their children to participate. Right after the meetings with the parents, the students were invited to the meeting room. They were informed about the study, its aims, procedures, and confidentiality policy. After they confirmed their willingness to volunteer, the assent form was given them to read and sign (See Appendix E for the Informed Assent Form in English and Appendix F for the Informed Assent Form in Turkish). No incentives were provided.

All 12 students volunteered to participate in the interview and gave their permission for audio recording. During these semi-structured interviews, they were encouraged to tell their self-advocacy experiences. The duration of the interviews ranged from 16 to 55 minutes, with an average of 33 minutes. All meetings were held between May and the end of September 2019 at the authorized CRCs' educational assessment rooms, which are quiet and distraction-free.

3.3 Instruments

In this study, data was collected via two instruments. A demographic information form was the first instrument, and it was completed by the researcher using the parents' statements. The second instrument was semi-structured interviews. Further information about these two instruments is given in separate sections below.

3.3.1 Demographic information form

In light of the literature review and Turkish education system, a demographic information form was created by the researcher under the supervision of the thesis advisor and the thesis committee members.

Students' birth dates and relevant information about their school life, such as their grades, type of schools, their departments, and grade retention were asked in the first section of this form. A question about whether a school counselor works at the students' school was included. The form continues with questions about IEP and the meetings. In this section, the participating family member was asked whether an IEP had been implemented for their child and whether the family member had attended an IEP meeting. Another question in the form was related to whether the students know that they were diagnosed with SLD. The other questions were related to the

supportive education in the resource room at the schools and special education and rehabilitation centers. The last question was whether family members were a member of a non-governmental organization (NGO) related to SLD (see Appendix G for the Demographic Information Form in English and Appendix H for the Demographic Information Form in Turkish).

In conclusion, the demographic information form had a total of 13 questions. Each participating family member spent approximately five minutes to answer the questions. From time to time, the researcher read the questions for family members when they needed help.

3.3.2 Semi-structured interview questions

In order to understand the self-advocacy experiences of high school students with SLD, semi-structured interview questions were prepared in accordance with the conceptual framework of self-advocacy developed by Test et al. (2005). The researcher prepared them under the supervision of the thesis advisor and thesis committee members.

Twenty-seven open-ended core questions were determined for the interview, with additional sub-questions, totaling approximately 35 questions. These questions were about the participants' lives and self-advocacy components, jointly. They were also asked about experiences in the family, at school, and the friendship environments of the high school students with SLD, their academic difficulties, learning styles, personal strengths, goals, experiences regarding SLD, the meaning of SLD, human rights, IEPs, and IEP implementations. These were the key elements in the interviews. The interview script is included in both English and Turkish in Appendix I and Appendix J, respectively.

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3.4 Participants

Purposive sampling was held in this research study for the aim of gaining an understanding of the self-advocacy experiences of high school students with SLD. Accordingly, five eligible criteria were identified, and high school students with SLD, who met these criteria, were invited to participate into current study.

The first criterion high school student status. The second one was related to having the educational referral report, which indicates that the student has been identified with SLD. As mentioned previously, in Turkey, this report is prepared by authorized CRCs and indicates inclusive education. Having this report for at least the last two years was determined as the third criterion. The fourth criterion was having a valid "special needs report for children (ÇÖZGER)," formally known as a medical report of disability, which shows that the student has been diagnosed only with SLD. In this way, consistency between medical and educational diagnosis was also checked. The final criterion was determined as the students were identified with only SLD. However, the specific subcategories of SLD that the participants have difficulty with were not considered as criteria in the current study because the subcategories are not specified in the educational referral report and special needs report for children in Turkey. Briefly, the eligible criteria of the participants are sorted below:

1. Attending a high school,

2. Having an educational referral report, which indicates SLD,

3. Having the educational referral report for at least two last years,

4. Having a special needs report for children which shows SLD, and

5. Identified with only SLD.

Six males and six females who meet the criteria, participated in the study. The demographic information of participants including age, grade, gender, school, and grade retention was gathered from their parents via the demographic information form and is shown in Appendix K, where pseudo names are used to ensure confidentiality. Detailed information about the participants is given below.

Melih is a 15-year-old boy who is in 10th grade at a religious vocational high school. He participated in the study with his mother. According to his demographic form, he has no grade retention. His school has a school counselor, and an IEP implemented for him. But his family has not attended an IEP meeting. Even though he mentioned in the interview that he has difficulties with reading and writing, he does not take advantage of the resource room at school, because his family stated in the demographic information form that they did not request it,. However, he has been studying eight hours per month at the special education and rehabilitation center for six years. According to his demographic information form, he knows that he is identified with SLD and he confirmed that in the interview. His family is not a member of any NGO related to SLD, according to the form. On the other hand, in the interview, he stated that he usually spends his time after school with his friends from his neighborhood. But in school, he said that he just sleeps and cannot find anything else to do. His biggest interest is cars, and he wants to work for a car wash place in the future.

Another 10th-grade student, Aslan, is 16 years old and is a student in the department of accounting and marketing at a vocational and technical anatolian high school, without repeating a grade. According to his demographic form, his school has a school counselor, and an IEP is implemented for him. Yet, his mother does not remember if she had attended an IEP meeting or not. Even though his mother stated

that Aslan is aware that he has been identified with SLD in the demographic form, in the interview he said that he had not heard about SLD. Also, he did not mention anything about IEP implementation. Yet, when the audio-recorder was turned off, he asked whether his educational referral report is an obstacle to his becoming a police officer, because he wants to be a police officer. According to the form, he has been taking education at the special education and rehabilitation center since he was in fourth grade, but because his family does not have knowledge about the resource room, he does not take advantage it. His mother indicated on the form that she is not a member of any NGO related to SLD. Aslan said that he usually spends his time with his friends and family. He does homework with his close friends and plays football after school. He identifies himself as timid when he meets somebody for the first time. He likes his school life but he mentioned his difficulties experienced in lessons, especially in chemistry.

Yiğit is a 17-year-old boy who goes to a vocational and technical anatolian high school. He is in the last year of high school and is about to graduate from the department of machine design. According to his demographic information form, he has no grade retention. His father indicated that there is a school counselor at Yiğit's school, yet he has no information about IEP implementation or IEP meetings. In order to get information, he phoned Yiğit's mother. His mother said that an IEP is implemented for Yiğit and his mother attended an IEP meeting. However, Yiğit's father stated that if he had known information about the resource room, he would have asked for special education for Yiğit. His father indicated in the form that he is not a member of any NGO related to SLD. According to the form, Yiğit knows that he is identified with SLD but he does not want to get any special education from the special education and rehabilitation center. Besides, he mentioned that he does not

know what SLD is. In terms of hobbies, he told about playing for an amateur football club regularly and that he wanted to be a footballer in the future.

Aslı is 15 and continuous her education in the 9th grade in a vocational and technical anatolian high school. According to her demographic information form, she repeated first grade in primary school upon the request of her family. Her mother stated in the form that there is a school counselor at her school, yet she stated that she has no knowledge about IEP nor its meeting nor resource room. Her mother indicated in the form that she is not a member of an NGO related to SLD. According to the form, Aslı knows that she is identified with SLD, and she has been educated for four years at the special education and rehabilitation center. However, in the interview, Aslı stated that she is identified with attention deficit disorder, and never heard the term of SLD before. In terms of hobbies, she stated in the interview that she likes ice-skating. Even though she has been skating for nine years, nowadays she cannot continue due to health reasons. Instead, she plays chess at home and tries to teach other family members. She also indicated that even though she had difficulties in reading while she was in primary school, she overcame those difficulties and enjoys reading now. Also, she pointed out that she has many friends who she considers as sisters.

Gözde goes to a vocational and technical anatolian high school. She is in 10th grade and is in the department of child development. She is 15 and according to her demographic information form, she knows that she is identified with SLD. She did not repeat any grade level in her educational history. Her father indicated that Gözde's school has a school counselor and implements an IEP for Gözde. Unlike at her middle school, Gözde's high school, especially her school counselor, organized IEP meetings a few times, and the counselor invited Gözde and her family. Gözde

attended only the first meeting, but her father stated that he has no knowledge about the resource room. Gözde's father had decided to arrange private lessons for Gözde instead of sending her to receive special education services in the center. Gözde thinks about going to the center nowadays. According to the form, Gözde's father is not a member of an NGO related to SLD. In the interview, Gözde mentioned she gets along better with her mother than with her father. Her cellphone is very important for her. In fact, she cannot focus easily on her lessons because of her cellphone. She indicated in the interview that she has no difficulties with setting a friendship and finds herself very sociable. Even though she does not like her school, she is the only student that participates in group counseling for students with special needs, and she is very pleased with it.

Uğur is 15-year-old boy and is in the 10th grade in the department of marketing at a vocational and technical anatolian high school. According to his mother's statement in the demographic information form, he has not repeated a grade. His school has a school counselor and implements an IEP for Uğur. His family had not been called for an IEP meeting. His mother stated that Uğur knows that he is identified with SLD, and he has been taking the course from special education and rehabilitation center since he had started school. In the interview, he mentioned his educational referral report and knowledge of being identified with SLD. His mother stated in the form that she does not know about the resource room, and because of that, Uğur does not take educational support from there. Also, according to the form, his mother is a member of an NGO related to physical disability but not an NGO related to SLD. In the interview, Uğur told that he goes to a boxing club after school. He thinks he would be more content at his school if there was no school gang.

Kübra is a 15-year-old girl, who studies in the department of fashion design in a vocational and technical anatolian high school. She participated in the study with her mother. According to her demographic information form, Kübra has no grade retention. Her mother indicated in the form that Kübra's school has a school counselor and an IEP is implemented for her. However, her mother has not been called for IEP meetings. Her mother also indicated that she does not know anything about the resource room, so Kübra does not take classes there. Kübra has been taking classes from special education and rehabilitation center for only two months. Kübra's mother stated that Kübra knows that she is identified with SLD. Kübra confirmed in the interview that she knows. She mentioned that she has difficulties establishing a friendship. She tries to establish some good relationships with some of her peers. In fact, she stated that she sometimes takes the first step for a relationship, but cannot be very close to people. Like other participants' parents, Kübra's mother is not a member of any NGO related to SLD.

Kemal is 14 years old and is aware that he is identified with SLD, according to both his demographic information form and the interview. He participated in the research study with his mother. In fact, Kemal's mother told to the researcher that she especially wants to participate in the study because she has a lot of things to tell. She complained about the teachers' insufficient knowledge of SLD, and explained that teachers suppose SLD is only difficulties with reading rather than clumsiness or other characteristics. According to the form, Kemal is the first inclusive student in the history of one of the most successful anatolian high schools in Turkey. He continues his education there in the preparatory class, and he has no grade retention. In the interview, he stated that he expects his friends to be able to talk in common areas of interest. Because of that, he clarified that has trouble with establishing a

friendship because he desires to talk on very serious issues like history, but his peers choose unserious topics, such as football. Academically, Kemal stated that he had difficulties with reading and writing but now he found some strategies to cope with them. He stated that his school gives extra time for him in the exams, and he is allowed to bring a computer to school for assistance in the lessons. Kemal's mother indicated in the form that his school implements an IEP, but she added that even though she always in contact with the school counselor, she had not been called for an IEP meeting. According to the form, Kemal has not benefited from the resource room because his mother and his school did not find this supportive education necessary. He left the special education and rehabilitation center because the classes were not academically fulfilling. Additionally, his mother indicated in the form that she is not a member of any related NGOs because advocacy is not a matter of NGOs, it is a matter of a social government, according to her.

Burak is a 15-year-old boy in 10th grade in a vocational and technical anatolian high school's accounting department. He participated in the study with his father. According to Burak's demographic information form, his father does not know whether an IEP is implemented for him or not, nor does he know if Burak knows that he is identified with SLD. According to the form, Burak's school and the school counselor did not invite his family to an IEP meeting. In the interview, however, Burak stated that he knows that he is identified with SLD, and when he has difficulty passing an exam, his teachers make another exam for him. According to the form, Burak has been continuing his education in the special education and rehabilitation center since he was in 4th grade but does not take advantage of the resource room. He has not repeated a class. In the interview, he stated that even though he had difficulties in primary school in reading, he improved himself by

reading books. Nowadays, he spends his spare time playing online games. His father stated that he is not a member of an NGO related to SLD.

Emel is a 15-year-old girl at a vocational and technical anatolian high school. She completed the 9th grade and chose the department of child development. According to her demographic information form, which was filled through her mother's statements, she has not repeated a grade. Her school does not implement an IEP for her and her family had not been invited to an IEP meeting. Her mother stated that Emel is not able to take advantage of the resource room. Her mother also stated that Emel knows that she is identified with SLD. Emel confirmed this in the interview and mentioned her academic difficulties. She indicated that she can read only when she is alone. Noise is very uncomfortable for her. She also stated that she cannot catch the notes on the board in a lesson and gets help from her friends. According to the form, she has attended additional courses at the special education and rehabilitation center for two years. Her mother is not a member of any NGO related to SLD. In the interview, she stated that she has good relationships with her family, yet she stated that she has hesitation in communicating with her father. She prefers to talk to him only on vocational and academic issues. Additionally, she mentioned that she can take the first step to establish a friendship.

Candan is 16. She was a student in a vocational and technical anatolian high school, the department of child development and education. She is in 12th grade and has no grade retention. She participated in the study with her father. In fact, her father is the president of the parent-teacher association of the CRC authorized for Candan. Thus, as indicated in the interview, she is aware that she is identified with SLD. She mentioned that she may work at a CRC one day. According to her demographic information form, her school has a school counselor, and an IEP is

implemented for her. Candan's father attends the IEP meetings. Her father finds the level of education in special education and rehabilitation center adequate and does not find it necessary for Candan to take additional courses from the resource room. Her father is not a member of any NGO related to SLD. Candan stated in the interview that she has trouble communicating with her friends, because her friends do not talk in the way she prefers.

Aysun is a 15-year-old female student in a religious vocational high school. According to her demographic information form, which was answered by Aysun's mother, she continues her education in the tenth grade without grade retention. Her school has a school counselor. Even though an IEP was implemented for Aysun, she cannot take advantage of the resource room because there was no resource room in her school. According to the form, Aysun is aware that she is identified with SLD. In the interview, Aysun stated that she has chosen not to tell her friends in high school that she has SLD because when her friends in primary and middle school learned that she was going to special education and rehabilitation center, they did not want to be close to Aysun. As indicated in the form, she has been taking classes from the special education and rehabilitation center for eight years. Lastly, her mother stated in the form that she is not a member of any NGO related to SLD.

3.5 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted with a high school student with SLD who met the criteria of the study and with his mother in order to explore the clarity of the demographic information form and semi-structured interview questions.

The pilot study participant was a 15-year-old male high school student in the tenth grade. During the interview, even though he asked when the interview would

finish, he answered all 27 core questions. After the pilot interview, he found the questions understandable and clear, yet according to him, the interview was too long. The interview took 52 minutes. Therefore, no change was not made to the questions, but the researcher paid attention to make interviews shorter. The results of the pilot study are included in the findings of this study.

The participant came to the study with his mother. While the researcher was reading the questions of demographic information form to his mother, she did not state any confusion to the researcher regarding the questions. However, she asked for further information about the meeting of the Individualized Education Program and the researcher answered. The form was used for all participants without any change.

3.6 Data analysis

In this study, the consensus qualitative research method was used for analyzing the data. This analysis method is based on coding the data regarding self-advocacy into rational domains and then into broader categories until reaching the consensus of researcher team (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). Consensus is the most important process of this method (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). In this way, the data can be analyzed without bias or expectations of one person (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997).

After the data on self-advocacy experiences of the students were gathered, the researcher and the thesis advisor independently coded them into relevant domains of Test et al.'s (2005) conceptual framework of self-advocacy. Then, the researcher and the thesis advisor came together and discussed the findings of the derived domains, and they categorized these domains into broader categories by systematically comparing the data. After they reached a consensus on domains and categories, the

analysis was sent to another member of the thesis committee. This cycle was repeated until consensus was ensured. During this time, the reached domains were found to be coherent with the components of Test et al.'s (2005) comceptual framework of self-advocacy. Then, the researcher translated the findings into English and presented them.

3.7 Identity of the researcher

My career in counseling started at a high school in Istanbul, Turkey, after I graduated from Pamukkale University's guidance and psychological counseling department in 2012. For two years, I had an opportunity to develop a strong relationship with high school students. Then, I started to work at a counseling and research center in Istanbul, as a vice director. I worked there for five years and during these years, I found the chance to improve myself considerably on special education issues. However, in almost every meeting that I conducted with the families of the students with SLD, I heard the social injustice experiences they face. Those experiences were mostly related to the difficulties in reaching educational rights in the school environment. As a counselor, whenever I encountered those kinds of situations, I always advocated for the students' rights with direct communication with the teachers, special education teachers, school principals, and policy-makers.

When I wondered about the thoughts of the students with SLD on those difficulties, I noticed that most of the students did not know that they were identified with SLD. In fact, they did not know what SLD was, why they were at the center, which difficulties they have, and which implementations can help them overcome their difficulties. When I tried to investigate the issue in depth, I discovered that many high school students with SLD denied benefiting the special education services

from Special Education and Rehabilitation Center, even though they had academic difficulties. They told their families that they did not want to be labeled in the school. Also, some of them did not want to come to the center and talk about their academic difficulties. I thought that there were difficulties in self-advocacy. I felt the responsibility for being an advocate for the students. Therefore, I decided to listen to the self-advocacy experiences of the students with SLD, by providing them an area for expressing themselves, with my thesis advisor's suggestion. This study may draw attention to the issue and contribute to the students to be a self-advocate.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The present study aimed to understand the self-advocacy experiences of high school students with SLD. With this aim, in the light of the conceptual framework of self-advocacy of Test et al. (2005), semi-structured interview questions were prepared by the researcher under the supervision of the thesis committee. Then, the data were collected by interviewing six female and six male high school students who were identified with SLD only. Studying in a high school, having a special needs report for children, having an educational referral report, and having at least two years of educational diagnosis history were determined as eligibility criteria for the selection of participants. These criteria were determined in accordance with the Turkish special education system mentioned before in order to reach high school students with SLD.

During the phase of data collection, the participants were prompted to elicit their self-advocacy experiences and for the validation of their responses, the researcher reframed the responses for member checking.

The consensual qualitative research method was used for analyzing the data, and four main themes were determined coherently with the conceptual framework of Test et al. (2005) on self-advocacy. These themes are knowledge of self, knowledge of rights, communication, and leadership. Even though the data were actively analyzed for other possible themes regarding self-advocacy, no new theme was encountered. The interviews and the consensual analysis of the data were conducted in Turkish, and then the researcher translated the quotes that constituted the themes

into English. These quotes are given in the related sub-theme headings. The original statements of the participants' are presented in Appendix L.

4.1 Knowledge of self

The participants were asked about their knowledge of SLD and their thoughts on whether they have SLD, personal and academic strengths, learning difficulties, which kind of difficulties they have due to their SLD, strategies that enhance their performances and objectives after graduating high school. These questions were prepared based on the conceptual framework of Test et al. (2005).

Eight different sub-themes were determined in accordance with these questions. These are personal strengths, learning strengths and weaknesses, identifying appropriate learning strategies, future goals, identifying social support resources, describing SLD, ability to state the nature of SLD, and accommodation needs.

4.1.1 Personal strengths

The participants were asked about their personal strengths. Eleven of the 12 students with SLD were able to define their personal strengths. Three of these students talked about their personal strengths, adding sports. For instance, Uğur mentioned his personal characteristics at first, but he added sports. He said "I am calm and also I do not worry much about anything… and sports" (Uğur, Appendix L,1).

Likewise, Yiğit, who was a footballer in an amateur club, mentioned that he was good at football. Gözde mentioned her personal strengths only with sports, and she added other personal strengths as being an explorer like Candan. She added an example:

> I elaborate on everything, but only some issues. ... I'm an elaborative, looking for detail in everything. But I'm looking for the thing that I am obsessed by. For example, let's pass the lessons, completely myself, for example; let's say on YouTube, one of the easiest words passes there. "What is nomophobia?" for instance. I'm very curious. I do not look at something like this, but I search by myself and then it remains in my mind. (Gözde, Appendix L,2)

Candan and Aysun stated also that they had not thought about their personal strengths before. Aysun mentioned she thought about her strengths in the interview for the first time. She said: "My strengths, umm, I have never thought about that. My strengths… hmm, I can be an emotional for a little bit. For example, it may help with the issue that help [to others]" (Aysun, Appendix L,3)

While Melih talked about computer games as personal strengths, Burak told that he knows how to use the computer and he is good at mathematics. Similar to Burak, Kemal mentioned a lecture related to his personal strengths as follows:

> My voice, I believe I have a good voice. Towards the end of secondary school, I took voice training in the choir. I have in this aspect but analysis in general. Actually, I mean grammar by "analysis". And also physics. (Kemal, Appendix L,4)

Aslı defined her personal strengths as being loved by someone else and having indulgence. Aslan explained his personal strengths as he thought before acting not to make people upset. Additionally, Emel explained her personal strengths through being assertive and emphasized her imagination as follows:

> I do not talk much… For example, I'm not too quiet, so I have become even more assertive… I believe, my imagination. For example, there are animals in biology class, the teacher wants us to imagine them whether they have bone or not, he does not show the pictures so we behave according to the situation. (Emel, Appendix L,5)

On the contrary, Kübra did not state anything as her personal strengths. She said that she did not have any personal strengths and she was very introvert.

In conclusion, 11 of 12 high school students with SLD defined their personal strengths. Three of these students added sports to their personal strengths.

4.1.2 Learning strengths and weaknesses

In the interviews, students were asked about their academic difficulties. In accordance with the domains of SLD, these questions were prepared on reading, comprehension, math, calculating, and writing difficulties, separately. If participants did not mention any difficulty, they were asked about whether they have some difficulties in the past. All participants in the study were able to explain their learning strengths and weaknesses. In terms of reading, only Melih stated that he was still having problems in spelling. However, two participants mentioned that in the past, they read by sounding out. Aslı indicated that: "I was able to read very slowly in the first and second grades of primary school. I could sounding out. I could not [read] as the others did" (Aslı, Appendix L,6). Likewise, Kübra mentioned her past reading difficulties as "[normally] before the second grade, you spell out in first grade, and then you learn, and read very fluently. I started with spelling in the second grade ..." (Kübra, Appendix L,7). Additionally, Kübra mentioned the effect of noises while she was reading:

> Well, a little. I can understand a little, I have a little difficulty … Umm if I pay attention to something in a quiet environment or nothing happens, of course I can understand. I don't understand in the noisy environment at all, even I read 10 times or 20 times. (Kübra, Appendix L,8)

Like Kübra, Emel emphasized the effects of noise on reading:

> I cannot read if I'm in a crowded environment. But when I'm alone, I can read. Panic [causes it] … [In crowd] It's because noise comes out, in any case, someone is talking. For instance, when I read in a crowded environment, if someone speaks, I start over what I am reading. (Emel, Appendix L,9)

In other respects, two participants, Kemal and Aysun, mentioned that they read slowly. Kemal explained his thoughts as follows:

> But, when I learned reading, I mean I am a little bit slow actually. I cannot read aloud anything. When I read aloud, well, I directly skip a line. If I memorize before reading rather than reading aloud, it is easier, but while I am reading aloud, my reading speed is not equal to my speed of reading those lines. (Kemal, Appendix L,10)

From a different point of view, Candan explained her difficulties in reading with an example from class:

> [My difficulties in reading] Yes sometimes it happens. Like a stutterer … Sometimes I have difficulty in saying a word … I repeat the word … For example most of the time it happens when the teacher wants me to read something in a book. Well, it has happened several times, it happens because of the excitement. It does not happen when I start a paragraph, it happens when I am close to a weird word that I do not know the meaning of. (Candan, Appendix L,11)

Also, Uğur mentioned his past difficulties with combining syllables while reading and he added:

> What if the words that I do not know [their meaning] … [when I encounter them] I just stop at first, then I look at how it is, then… [if I cannot read it] I think that I could not read [the words], and I go on. (Uğur, Appendix L,12)

When the participants were asked about their difficulties in reading, like Uğur and Candan, five more participants stated their difficulties in reading words whose meaning they do not know. However, the other five students mentioned those kind of words when they were asked about their comprehension difficulties. Aslan explained his difficulties: "there are usually such confusing English words. For example, is it popularism? Or some words end with -lism at all… I struggle with reading such words" (Aslan, Appendix L,13). Like Aslan, Aysun also defined such words as English words. Also, Yiğit stated that "for example, I have difficulty when I read something we don't know the meaning of" (Yiğit, Appendix L,14). Aslı gave an

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example from her experience that she had on the interview day: "[I have] A little [comprehension difficulties]. Umm, for example, in history class today, I didn't understand a question [a word] I read… The teacher gives a lot of confusing words. It is very difficult to understand all those words" (Aslı, Appendix L,15).

Kübra gave an example of the words that she does not know as "for example, there are a few words in the book that I do not know, such as comedy, drama or something. The words that I don't know [their meanings]. I have trouble in understanding them" (Kübra, Appendix L,16).

Rather than unknown words, Melih mentioned abbreviated words that "for instance, how can I say, he writes hello as 'hll', always [I have difficulties in] understanding abbreviations. The teacher [sometimes] writes other things and I do not understand" (Melih, Appendix L,17).

On the other hand, four participants stated that they have no difficulties with reading. Yet three of them, Yiğit, Gözde and Burak, indicated that they had experienced some difficulties in reading in the past.

Regarding comprehension difficulties, besides unknown words, two participants, Candan and Aslan, told about their experiences on comprehension, and like Kemal, Candan emphasized her difficulties with reading aloud:

> I usually experience it [comprehension difficulty] very much … Well, let me say, when I read my own thing, my book, I start over reading the past I do not understand. But if it happens in class or at other activities in community, well, in a crowded place, when I read, I cannot shape the meaning, like, and then I read again silently. Because I do not understand when I read aloud. (Candan, Appendix L,18)

Aslan approached the issue in a different way and he indicated that he did not experience any difficulties in comprehension if the text he read was not too long. On

the contrary, Gözde explained her comprehension experiences in accordance with her wishes:

> Not like having a difficulty, but I do not want it. Like they push me to read. I do not understand like that because I do not want to. However, for example, when it comes to English lesson, I read it, I understand it very well, because I love it, it flows. (Gözde, Appendix L,19)

One participant, Burak, said he has no difficulty in comprehension. With regards to math, five participants indicated directly that they like math. Kemal said "Quite good … I mean math, calculating in mind is more enjoyable" (Kemal, Appendix L,20). Even though Melih stated that he likes math and being good at subtraction, he also mentioned that he has difficulties in division. He said that "My math is remarkably good, I was good at subtraction but I have not done it for some time, so I do not know. My multiplication is poor, I have no idea about other operations" (Melih, Appendix L,21).

However, six participants directly mentioned that they were not good at math. Aysun said for her mathemathical performance that "awful … I mean, four arithmetical operations are easy, I can do that. When it comes to the other subjects well, they are difficult" (Aysun, Appendix L,22). Gözde explained her difficulties in terms of curriculum:

> Actually, I can do [four arithmetical operations], but let's say that I do not know a topic, I should go back to the former topic. If I do not understand that, I should go back the previous one, as well. I head to go back to the beginning of all because they are all related to each other. Now we are, for example, studying on triangles but I don't know anything because I should go to the beginning of the topic … Umm, the ninth grade's topics are not included in the tenth grade's because they are different. Now in grade ten, we study the subjects I studied in grade eight. I need to go back to the subjects of eighth grade… [now] My division is average, but my multiplication is good. I do not know. I do not know anything. (Gözde, Appendix L,23)

Aslı emphasized especially her math difficulties in the subject of angles that: "I calculate but cannot find the answer… I strive for finding the answer, try hard, I do my best. However I give up when I cannot find… [I have difficulties in the subject of] Angles" (Aslı, Appendix L,24). Besides, Kübra stated that she was able to understand math slowly, and added that she experienced difficulties with addition and subtraction. Regarding four operations in math, like Gözde and Aslı, Emel mentioned her difficulties in this issue, after she made a confession: "To be honest, I could not still memorize the multiplication table. I remember that I have never memorized it since my childhood… For example, I have just learned addition and subtraction. However, I have difficulty in division and multiplication." (Emel, Appendix L,25)

Similar to Emel, two more participants, Candan and Aslı, mentioned their difficulties with multiplication tables. Aslı indicated that she knows the multiplication tables until the nine times table, and Candan stated that:

> Well, I love sets in math I mean, but I have been struggling with them, with the multiplication table. I'm still struggling. In fact, I should revise and memorize it, because I forget, unless I revise. Well, I think it is too late for memorization. I think, it is not achievable anymore." (Candan, Appendix L,26)

With regard to writing, eight participants indicated that they have not experienced any difficulty. Melih, however, mentioned difficulties in writing. He indicated that he can write on his notebook while looking at the text. Also, Emel stated that she has great difficulty in writing. Kemal shared his experience as follows:

> No, I can write without running an eye over the paper anyway. You know, I sometimes need to have look while swiping the paper, but actually it is okay if I do not. I mean, I can write as long as I lift the pen. (Kemal, Appendix L,27)

Furthermore, Kemal stated that he can write slowly. Similarly, Candan mentioned her slowness in writing:

> I sometimes write too slowly or I fail to follow or I have something else on my mind. Something that I wonder about to the subject comes up to my mind. I cannot ask at that time and take notes somewhere. Then I forget. So this is what usually happens. (Candan, Appendix L,28)

Two participants stated their general opinions on learning. Both statements were related to forgetting. Aslan mentioned his experiences that "in general, I study my lessons, but I feel excited in the exam, a feeling of fear, and I forget all the things in my mind" (Aslan, Appendix L,29). Candan added her experiences in regard to attention difficulties as follows:

> Well, I sometimes get distracted very easily. Somehow, I cannot focus my attention on [what I am reading]. I get very distracted by any kind of sound. When I am totally focused, and then the lecture is interrupted suddenly, I excessively lose my attention. I mean, I actually listen and keep those [the lecture] in mind when I go home, I mean, I do not repeat too much actually but when I revised, I think that I do not find the revision as helpful. Because I have revised it for a week. (Candan, Appendix L,30)

In conclusion, all 12 participants told their learning experiences and explained their learning strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, one participant, Burak, indicated that he has no difficulties with reading, writing, comprehension, and math. However, he mentioned his past experiences regarding difficulties in reading. In general, most of the participants stated that they experience reading and calculating difficulties. Yet writing is one of the strengths of most of them.

4.1.3 Identifying appropriate learning strategies

During the interviews, all participants were asked about what they do to overcome the learning difficulties that they have mentioned. Eleven students indicated at least

one strategy that may help them with their learning. Aslan gave an example of his strategies he used when he studies for his courses:

> I study by writing, usually after reading something, I keep it in my mind and try to read it while looking at somewhere else, in order to keep it in my mind …. Starting from the short questions and moving on with the ones seems to be the most useful way. You can reach the long ones gradually. (Aslan, Appendix L,31).

Like Aslan, Emel mentioned memorizing as a learning strategy that:

> Let's suppose that, from the notebook, lecture notes are written, there are lines that I have underlined. I note them down. Then, I read the book, again. I write down what I have noted before in my notebook … I memorize as much as I can. I revise until going to school, especially the ones that I was not able to memorize. (Emel, Appendix L,32)

Likewise, Candan mentioned that she tries memorizing, but she also added that studying alone as a way of dealing with problems in learning:

> Studying alone is easier for me. Because I can concentrate more quickly … I always get my book and read it in my bed instead of going to bed or studying at my desk. I prepare worksheets in A5 size. I write important things, try to memorize, such as things in literature, and in biology classes. (Candan, Appendix L,33)

Candan also was one of four participants who benefit from technological assistance. She stated that she recorded her voice while she was studying, and then she listened to the recording. Yiğit explained his use of technology: "well, I normally write down the things on the board or take pictures of it [board] … [In math] well; I cannot calculate the difficult subjects. I calculate them by using calculator on the phone" (Yiğit, Appendix L,34). Moreover, Kübra and Burak stated that they watched videos online while they were studying. Kübra explained her experiences as:

> First, I watch the video on the internet. After that, I write down things that I do not understand in my notebook, and then I ask my friends. If they cannot solve them, I ask for help from teachers. I mean, I get help like that ... They help because they know about my difficulties ... I mean, I understand slowly. (Kübra, Appendix L,35)

Like Kübra, three more participants stated a strategy that they use or request help

from their teachers or peers. Aslı shared her thoughts about getting help as follows:

> I don't like to study at home, but at least I ask my questions to someone at school. Well, at home my mother and father were graduated from primary school, primary school, fifth grade, and my sibling does not understand, he studies at a secondary school. As I cannot get help from my family, I recommend myself to study at school. I think this is appropriate for me because I cannot get help at home. (Aslı, Appendix L,36)

Emel mentioned her experiences regarding getting help when she was unable to copy

the text from the board:

> [When I cannot write] Umm, I borrow [the notebooks] from my friends, then I write the notes that I have borrowed from my friends in my notebook. Then I try to learn the subject from other people. (Emel, Appendix L,37)

Furthermore, Gözde mentioned the great influence of the music in her learning

experiences as:

> Well, I can study by writing, I understand. I can also understand by reading up. It happens like, I usually turn on the music and I can understand better, but my mom says I cannot get it like that. I try to explain to my mother. I try to study without music. She tells me do it without music, otherwise the song will come to my mind and I forget everything with the song. So, I struggle a little bit, while studying without music. It looks like quite different but I can understand with music, create something that I like, in my mind. (Gözde, Appendix L,38)

Also, she added her experience which happed in the day of interview:

> Yes, I can do it better like that. Today; we had our exam on basic religious science. the history teacher gave the exam. I took the exam by listening music secretly and now I do not think that I will fail. I expect more than eighty points … [Sometimes] I made up a song, [the lecture] is in the lyrics. (Gözde, Appendix L,39)

On the other hand, Melih is the only participant who did not identify any appropriate

learning strategy. He stated that he can ask his sister to do his homework in exchange

for money.

In conclusion, 11 high school students identified appropriate learning strategies which help to enhance their academic performance. Four of them stated that they utilize technology, and four of them indicated that they get help from others.

4.1.4 Future goals

All participants were asked about their asprirations after high school, whether they think about going to university, and what they want to be. All 12 participants shared their ideas about what they want to do after high school and going to college. However, eight of them stated an occupation directly. Burak emphasized three times that he wants to be a police officer. Three of those eight participants indicated sports-related jobs. Yiğit was one of them; he stated that he wants to be a fitness instructor. Likewise, Uğur mentioned that he wants to be a physical education teacher. Aslı stated her dream job as ice skating coach and said "I love it, I mean while I doing it. I can even think about doing it as a job" (Aslı, Appendix L,40).

Three participants stated that even though they want to go to university, they could not decide about what they want to be. However, when Kemal was asked what he wants to be, he answered "No, I will be a beggar, I have searched it, the circumstances fit me … First of all, I want to be happy." (Kemal, Appendix L,41).

In conclusion, even though three participants stated uncertainty with their dream job, all participants were able to state at least one future goal for their future, including going to college and an occupation that they want to do.

4.1.5 Identifying social support resources

All participants were asked about whom they take support from, and who is the most supportive person in their lives. All 12 participants explained their social support resources. Melih stated that his friends support and advocate for him all the time. Emel, Yiğit, and Aysun indicated that their families were their social support resources. Candan stated her friends as social support resources and some of her teachers:

> For example, I have a teacher I have known for three years who gives me advice and says "Do this or do like that." I can tell his or her everything in a comfortable way. You know, I have friends, Arzu, I have three or four teachers. Elif and Sinem. I feel comfortable when I talk to them and I feel myself understood, they try to find solutions to every problem. We can do this, we can do that (Candan, Appendix L,42)

Aslan also mentioned his teachers and he added his parents and friends. At the end of his statements, he found the most supportive ones as his parents. However, Burak was the only participant who saw the school counselor as a social support resource. When he asked the most supportive person, he mentioned his vice principal in school.

Aslı, who wants to be an ice skating coach, cited her ice skating coach as her social support resource: "ice skating coach, and he is Şaban. No more. I mean, I see him as my brother" (Aslı, Appendix L,43). Gözde mentioned her group counseling sessions rather than her family, and mentioned this group as a social support resource:

> I do not get any support from my family, I had just a support for one thing. That was yesterday, it is my first support given by them, I suppose. They supported me in deciding which department I should study in, and what it is like. My cousin studies child development, so they told me to call her. In fact, if I shared with my family, they would support. But, my friends understand me better. I always share with my friends, but only with some of them. Now I have this group [group counseling for inclusive students] I talk to my friends who are out of this group. (Gözde, Appendix L,44)

On the other hand, Kemal indicated himself and his cat as a social support resource, yet when he asked about the most supportive resource, he counted in his friends and his father.

In conclusion, all 12 participants stated at least one social support resource. Four of them indicated their mothers as the most supportive ones in their lives. Six participants in total mentioned their families as social support resources. Three participants referred their school teachers as social support resources. One of those three participants stated his school counselor as a social support resource. Even though participants mentioned their school counselors during interviews, only one participant mentioned school counselor as a social support.

4.1.6 Describing SLD

During the interviews, the students were asked about whether they know the meaning of SLD. If the students indicated that they knew something about the meaning of SLD, they were further asked what they knew, whether they were diagnosed with it, and how they can explain this term to someone who does not know anything about. If the students stated that they did not know, SLD was explained shortly.

Seven students with SLD indicated that they knew what SLD means. Emel indicated that she learned the term from her mother, and said "Yes, [I know what SLD means]. My mom explained it, again. She said 'You learn late. So you cannot learn everything right away. You learn late, but you learn properly.' " (Emel, Appendix L,45). Burak explained the term as "inability to focus on an issue, inability to learn … It requires too many explainations to understand, you cannot

understand things at once" (Burak,Appendix L,46). Similar to Burak, Aysun

explained SLD related to understanding: "I would say, inability to understand a

subject" (Aysun, Appendix L,47), and gave an example from her learning

experiences. Like Burak and Aysun, six other participants also described SLD

regarding their learning experiences. From a different point of view, when Kemal

asked about the meaning of SLD, he approached to causes of SLD:

> Specific learning difficulties occurred as a result of dyslexia, so the reason
> may change, dyslexia caused this situation. What is the cause of SLD in a
> person. Hyperactivity may be the cause, I don't know, but … It varies from
> person to person. You have difficulties in learning but this changes from
> person to person, as the name specific learning disabilities implies. It explains
> everything very clearly. (Kemal, Appendix L,48)

In other respects Gözde explained terminological definition of SLD:

> The teacher told us that: 'This is a little bit more different than normal
> people, it can be experienced in every issue; one may also be gifted, one may
> have problems in perceiving, there is a language difficulty.' I mean, she told
> us everything. (Gözde, Appendix L,49)

Even though Gözde was the only participant who describe SLD terminologically, she

and three more participants indicated that they were not identified with SLD. Gözde

explained her thoughts about the issue as follows:

> I mean, in my opinion I do not have SLD. I do not think that I am, because I
> am normal, I live the life the way it is. I lie down, I get up, I just do not want.
> I cannot do anything because I do not want to. (Gözde, Appendix L,50)

Yiğit stated that he has had attention deficit since he was 13 or 14 years old, and now

he thinks that he has nothing. Yet when SLD was described by the researcher, he

gave an example from his difficulties: "for instance, when I read something, I read

three times maximum" (Yiğit, Appendix L,51)

Like Yiğit, two more participants, Uğur and Aslı, mentioned about they have attention deficits. However, when Uğur was prompted, he said "learning disability or so" (Uğur, Appendix L,52).

As a conclusion, even though all eight students did not refer to the meaning of SLD, all of them stated for themselves that they were identified with SLD.

4.1.7 Ability to state the nature of SLD

During the interviews, the participants asked what kind of difficulties they had, and if they stated that they were didentified with SLD. Seven participants explained the nature of their SLD. When Melih stated that he was identified with SLD, he was asked about what kind of difficulties he had. Then, he explained his experiences as "in reading and writing" (Melih, Appendix L,53). Kemal also mentioned the nature of SLD, academically, as "for example I have difficulty in writing" (Kemal, Appendix L,54).

However, Kübra included math while she was stating the nature of own SLD, as "I have math [difficulties], also a little bit reading. I sometimes had difficulties in understanding the words while reading. Just these" (Kübra, Appendix L,55).

Similar to Kübra, four more participants mentioned their experiences on understanding. One of them, Uğur, stated: "when something is told many times, I am able to understand" (Uğur, Appendix L,56). Likewise, Aysun gave an example of her experiences of understanding, mentioning her SLD, and she said:

> For example, the teacher explains but I do not understand it. But, when the teacher explains it again, and also the teacher at the center [Special Education and Rehabilitation Center] clarifies, I can understand step by step. (Aysun, Appendix L,57)

Emel comprared herself to her peers: "when the teacher gives a lecture, I do not get it, my mind is quite empty, as if I do not understand anything" (Emel, Appendix L,58). Candan used almost the same sentences as Emel while telling her experiences:

> For example, when the teacher explains something, my [other] friends understand at once, but I do not understand at a time, I want to learn more detailed that is why I get stuck on something. (Candan, Appendix L,59)

Furthermore, she added her experiences about expressing herself:

> On the other hand, I wish there was no such thing [SLD] because sometimes I have difficulty in expressing myself. I wonder is that [SLD] the reason? … I sometimes think yes [SLD is the reason]. And I am very hesitant, but I usually say yes; because I see my friends, they can write better. They can express themselves better. [They] can write down on a paper. That is good. (Candan, Appendix L,60)

In conclusion, during the interviews, seven students stated nature of their SLD. All of them described SLD in terms of academical difficulties, and four of them emphasized experiences related to understanding.

4.1.8 Accommodation needs

During the interviews, participants were asked whether they were pleased with their schools or not, and what would make them pleased or more pleased. Also, they were prompted from time to time in order to elicit their accommodation needs. Only one participant indicated their accommodation needs.

Gözde, who was also the only participant who had attended an IEP meeting, stated that she has accommodation needs for literature class. She said, "the history teacher did not do [IEP], only the math teacher does it, but I think the literature teacher should do it also" (Gözde, Appendix L,61).

4.2 Knowledge of rights

The participants were asked about their knowledge of human rights, including disability rights and educational rights, whether SLD affects their educational rights, what the meaning of IEP is, whether they have an IEP, their IEP implementation, and why they come to the CRC. These questions were prepared based on the conceptual framework of Test et al. (2005). In the light of the statements of participants, two sub-themes emerged, namely human rights, and educational rights.

4.2.1 Human rights

The participants were asked about what kind of rights they had after a brief explanation of human rights. And if they did not mention educational rights, they were also asked about what kind of rights they had at schools. In this manner, they informed about both human and animals can have rights, and mentioned human rights declaration. Nine students with SLD made statements regarding human rights.

Four of these students stated the right to freedom. Emel explained freedom as being able to shop: "We can shop in which grocery we want. We can also buy what we want. Which means, we can go anywhere we want, we do not depend on someone." (Emel, Appendix L,62)

Uğur is also one of those students counted for freedom. Yet, he added those rights, the right to vote, the right to work, and the right to live. Three other participants also talked about the right to live. Kemal mentioned the right to equality: "As far as I know, every human being has it by birth. For example, living is the greatest right. All people are equal without recognizing any condition. Are not human rights something that arose in France?" (Kemal, Appendix L,63)

Similar to Kemal, Gözde mentioned equality. Also, she stated the right to property and the right to have secure places. Likewise, Kübra talked about the right to security and explained it in terms of females and violence: "I have the right to defend my rights as a female or if I am a victim of violence. I have the right to come and say that out loud." (Kübra, Appendix L,64)

Different from other students, Aslan mentioned customer rights:

> Let's imagine that you bought a coat or a jacket. When that jacket is worn out, there is a place for human rights, is it in the local authority or the municipality? … I have found books a couple of times, so I took a look at the ones about the constitution. I have read a little. (Aslan, Appendix L,65)

And he included some of his thoughts about educational rights. He was the only participant who mentioned the right to education, and he said: "I have the right to have education. … I think they [teachers] should show what I show. They have their responsibilities, as well" (Aslan, Appendix L,66).

Burak mentioned his responsibilities in the school when he was asked about human rights. Aysun stated that she may have some rights, but had not thought it before.

In conclusion, nine of the 12 students with SLD mentioned human rights as including freedom, the right to equality, the right to live, the right to education, the right to vote, the right to work, consumer rights, the right to defend, and women's rights.

4.2.2. Educational rights

During the interviews, participants were asked about their educational rights if they had not previously mentioned education as a right. Six participants stated their rights in the school. Aslan and Kemal mentioned that they have the right to education.

However, while Aslan indicated only that he had right to education, Kemal said he has the right to listen to lectures, and said: "I have the rights to take classes, listen to the lectures, and to go out when school is over" (Kemal, Appendix L,67). Uğur approached the issue in a different manner by stating that "to ask what I do not know" (Uğur, Appendix L,68). Yiğit emphasized that he has the right to think in school. Aslı mentioned that she has the right to take a break in school.

Similarly, Kübra mentioned what she can do in her break time when she was asked about her rights in school: "In the school yard, we can sit wherever we want in the lunch break. If we want, we can go to the school canteen. If we want, we can stay in the classroom" (Kübra, Appendix L,69). Furthermore, Kübra added to the rights in school equality as "There must be equality in the schools where both females and males study. Maybe, some schools do not have it but they have to" (Kübra, Appendix L,70).

Furthermore, the participants who were aware of that they were identified with SLD were asked whether SLD has an effect on their educational rights or not. If they did not know the necessary educational implementations to guarantee their rights, a brief explanation was provided to them.

Only Burak and Uğur stated that their educational rights were affected after they were identified with SLD. While Uğur explained those effects by taking additional exams, Burak indicated that SLD has an effect on his educational rights but he did not know what kind of implementations can be done.

Even though Kemal stated that SLD has not had an effect on his educational rights, he mentioned one exception. He explained that "No, they just give me extra time in exams if I am slow. But I was the first student to finish the last exam, because it was easy" (Kemal, Appendix L,71).

When the students were asked about why they had come to CRC, Uğur and Kemal shared their knowledge about their rights. Both of them addressed their educational referral report. For instance, Kemal stated, "We came in order to renew my report, at the beginning of last year" (Kemal, Appendix L,72).

In conclusion, six students mentioned their rights in the school. Two indicated that their educational rights were affected after they were diagnosed with SLD. Additionally, two high shared their knowledge on their rights, particularly regarding the CRC.

4.2.2.1 Individualized Education Program

In addition to educational rights in the school, participants were asked whether they had heard about IEP. The participants who had heard about IEP were also questioned about what they knew about IEP. Five participants stated that they had heard about IEP. Yet only three of them stated that they had heard about something called IEP but did not know what exactly SLD was. Melih explained the term IEP as follows:

> Someone, who does not know reading and writing like me or the individuals with IEP, how can I say, the individuals, who do not know reading and writing, are considered as an individual with intellectual disability, so I am like that, too. I do not know any more than that. (Melih, Appendix L,73)

Candan, who studies in the department of child development, stated she remembered the term from lectures, and said "individual education plan, we talked about it in the class, but I cannot remember it easily right now. There is an IEP, which explains the learning process. Individual education plan is related to reports, I guess" (Candan, Appendix L,74).

In conclusion, even though five students mentioned that they had heard of IEP, two of them were able to articulate a definition.

4.2.2.2 Individualized Education Program Implementations

In order to understand the participants' knowledge and understanding of their IEP implementations, they were asked whether an IEP was implemented for them, and if so, what they knew about how it was implemented. Seven participants mentioned experiences of IEP implementations.

Candan indicated that an IEP was implemented for her, and shared her experiences as follows:

> They give a priority, for example, we took special education lectures as a class. There were 11 individuals who studied in special education in the class. Well, they gave me a priority because I attended … For example, when I wanted to answer a question, I was given the first word. (Candan, Appendix L,75)

Moreover, during the interview with Candan, she asked after a brief speech about IEP that "is it like long term goals, and short term goals?" (Candan, Appendix L,76). Candan was the only participant that mentioned goals in IEP. The other six participants stated their IEP implementations in terms of additional time or credit for exams, and exams that were prepared especially for them. For instance, Gözde shared her experiences as "only math questions are different, yes. The questions are different. For example, if a teacher asks 12 questions to them, he or she asks me 10 questions. He or she changes the questions as well" (Gözde, Appendix L,77). Kübra also mentioned her exams were different from those of her peers.

Kemal, who has writing difficulties at most, stated that he was given additional time for exams, and he was allowed to bring a computer to school in order to assist him to write. He explained these experiences as follows:

> Having additional time in exams and like that … But for example, I had an English teacher who was German. She helped a lot. For example, I was allowed to bring a laptop for writing at school. But I do not use it anymore. My report was renewed one or two weeks after the school had started, when I got my report on the first exam I had been completed, I was shocked. (Kemal, Appendix L,78)

However, when Kemal was prompted regarding IEP, he mentioned his opinion as follows:

> But I do not have such a heavy situation anyway. I can read now. So, additional time is given to me in exams, this is the only decision. I do not bring the computer, I do not need it anymore. It even makes things harder." (Kemal, Appendix L,79)

Uğur also mentioned that additional exams were prepared for him, and said, "well, the school counselor does more things and deals with them more " (Uğur, Appendix L,80). Similar to Uğur, Burak mentioned different exams and said: "when I get low grades from exams, the teachers call me to their side and give me a new easy exam" (Burak, Appendix L,81). Likely, Melih mentioned that the teachers call the name of students with special needs before the exam. He says, "if your name and surname are written, he understands that he is the one with IEP, they shout your name and surname, and you go and take your exam paper" (Melih, Appendix L,82).

In conclusion, seven students told their experiences regarding their IEPs. Even though only one student, Kemal, indicated that an IEP is not implemented for him, he explained the accommodations in exams and class.

4.3 Communication

The participants were asked about how they negotiate when they have conflicts with friends or teachers and about their behavior while requesting accommodation from teachers and whether they communicate with teachers about the learning difficulties

that they have. These questions were prepared based on the conceptual framework of Test et al. (2005). Four sub-themes were found in the direction of the statements of participants, namely, communicating about SLD, affective and appropriate communication of needs, assertive communication, and negotiation.

4.3.1 Communicating about SLD

All participants were asked whether they mentioned their learning difficulties to their teachers and friends or not. Six participants mentioned experiences related to communicating with their friends and their teachers on their SLD.

One of these students, Kemal, indicated that he told his teachers by himself that he was diagnosed with dyslexia . Similarly, Uğur also mentioned that he told his teachers that he had an educational referral report.

However, Aslı stated that she did not want anyone to know that she was diagnosed with SLD. She added to her statements that "one of [my friends] knows, but it is because I know she will not tell anyone." (Aslı, Appendix L,83).

Similar to Aslı, Uğur stated that he talked about SLD with one of his friends. However, Kübra stated her experiences with her teacher, including her feelings:

> [I said to my school counselor that I have SLD] Because, I was ashamed before, of course. Maybe I was thinking that everyone would insult me … But actually, it is not like that, because everyone in class knows my situation. (Kübra, Appendix L,84)

On the other hand, Aysun stated that she kept it a secret that she was identified with SLD. She explained her experiences as "this issue is only in my family, and my teachers know. Well, I do not have any problems when my friends do not know" (Aysun, Appendix L,85).

As a conclusion, six students mentioned their experiences on their communications about their SLD. Only one of them mentioned that her friends did not know that she was identified with SLD.

4.3.2 Affective and appropriate communication of needs

During the interviews, the high school students were asked whether it is easy for them to ask their teachers to repeat the lecture one more time when they do not understand. Furthermore, they mentioned in the interviews their experiences with regard to communicating their needs to adults or their peers, without being asked. Thus, this sub-theme, affective and appropriate communication of needs, was observed.

All 12 participants indicated that they could easily request something from their teachers when they needed to. However, only seven of them shared their experiences in communicating their needs effectively and in an appropriate way. Gözde mentioned a memory:

> I want to tell my incident… Well, I was not able to read the teacher's handwriting … She used handwriting like scribbling something, I mean I got so bored while reading those writings. I said 'I can not read your handwriting at all'. I asked that if it is okay for her to get a print out from the computer rather than writing herself. (Gözde, Appendix L,86).

Similar to Gözde, four more participants, Melih, Aslan, Candan and Kübra, narrated their experiences of communicating about their needs with their teachers. Burak shared his experiences as follows:

> I said that I would give it a try, I would say that I did not understand. Then, he [the teacher] began to explain. After he explained, I did not persist again because I had not understood it again. (Aslan, Appendix L,87)

In addition to this, two participants, Emel, and Kübra, mentioned that they ask for help from their peers, in accordance with their needs. Aysun stated that when she does not understand, she asks her mother to explain whatever the section she could not understand.

In conclusion, all 12 students stated that they could easily request help from their teachers for their needs. Two of them shared their communication experiences regarding their friends, and one of them shared regarding family.

4.3.3 Assertive communication

After the data analyses, the assertive communication sub-theme emerged from the statements of the participants regarding their communication with friends, in accordance with the conceptual framework of Test et al. (2005).

Two students gave the examples of assertive communication while they were talking about the conflicts that they had with their friends. Emel explained her experiences as follows: "I tell, I tell directly to her face. But she does not want to understand" (Emel, Appendix L,88). Similar to Emel, Kemal explained his experiences:

> I don't know, it's proportional to their general attitude. For example, at first I say verbally. If he does not do it directly against me, or if he does not continue, there is not any trouble. But I mean, I do not have any discussions with people I don't care about that much. (Kemal, Appendix L,89)

In conclusion, two students mentioned assertive communication-related experiences with their friends.

4.3.4 Negotiation

All participants were asked whether they had any conflict with their friends and if they had, they were asked what they did to resolve this conflict. Even though seven participants indicated that they had conflicts with their friends, only Yiğit answered the question in terms of negotiation by stating "well, we come an agreement by talking politely… If there is a problem, we solve it by talking" (Yiğit, Appendix L,90).

4.4 Leadership

The participants were asked about whether they had attended an IEP meeting, how they would lead a meeting, how they would define SLD to a person who did not know anything about SLD, and how they advocated if someone treated them unfairly. These questions were prepared based on the conceptual framework of Test et al. (2005). In the light of statements of participants, five sub-themes evolved, namely, understanding others with special needs, advocating for others or causes, helping others understand what SLD is, negotiating change for action on behalf of the overall group with SLD, and leading an individualized education program.

4.4.1 Understanding others with special needs

During the interviews, three students mentioned their peers with special needs. Kübra shared her experiences in detail by stating the following:

> I have a friend, she understands but she does not study hard, like me. For instance, she does even not take exams … she is given different exams but she does not take them. Well, she slurs over the exams saying she has a disease. For example, she sneaks off from the exams, and I think it is not correct … For example, [she has special needs like me] It makes me feel good, but I think she should behave like me, of course … she cannot gain something without studying, well, but she does not study. (Kübra, Appendix L,91)

Aysun talked about her peers with special needs as follows:

> Well, for example, they told the class [that they receive special education from special education and rehabilitation center]. For examples, others misbehaved toward them. For example, I have a friend, Elif. She receives special education, too. She has been excluded but I do not want to exclude her because I know how it feels, so I do not exclude her. (Aysun, Appendix L,92).

Kemal mentioned other individuals with special needs while he explained SLD. He stated that the cause of SLD might vary from one person to another.

4.4.2 Advocating for others or causes

All participants were asked if there was anybody around them who is treated unfairly and if so, what they do in this situation. Even though eight students stated that they knew someone who was treated unfairly, but only three of them shared their self-advocacy experiences. Kemal approached the issue as cultural:

> Gypsies [are unfairly treated]. So there is racism in the country in general… I do [something] I go and scold the security guard, I say, 'What are you doing?' He does not even care. There was a gypsy child the other day. The man slapped him to get them out of the subway. (Kemal, Appendix L,93)

Yiğit mentioned that he interfered in the situation to advocate for the individual who was treated unfairly. Gözde shared her experience of advocating for all students. According to Gözde, some students were not able to read the teachers' handwriting, but no one could ask the teacher for a change because they were afraid of the teacher. But Gözde mentioned that she advocated for all the students, after communicating with the teacher for her needs, as follows:

> I told a teacher that I cannot read [his or her handwritings on the exams]. I mean, I don't think the class can read either. Then, my friends whispered from behind, they said, we cannot tell this to the teacher because of our fear. The teacher did not hear them. He or she said, 'I will fix my handwriting for you.' He or she never did. Everything was the same, even a single point. I

told that. Unless people talk, it will not be seen, it cannot be understood. For example, I was the first person that opened my mouth, but even so, nothing has changed. If they had defended me, it could have happened. I think it is our right. (Gözde, Appendix L,94)

In conclusion, all 12 students indicated that they had encountered individuals who are treated unfairly. Only three of them, however, shared their experiences related to advocating for others.

4.4.3 Helping others understand what SLD is

The students who were aware of that they are identified with SLD were asked how they explain the term of SLD to people who know nothing about it. Six students helped others to understand SLD.

Gözde explained the term in a long way, using special terminological, but Uğur, Burak, Aysun defined the term just as a learning inability in accordance with their learning difficulties. On the other hand, Kemal and Candan defined the term by making comparisons. While Kemal make the comparison on himself, Candan handled the term in a broader way by explaining as follows:

> For example, I would go between two people. So I would probably say that, I would tell their inability to understand the issue, getting low, inability to focus on somewhere, constantly being distracted, inability to pay attention, inability to express oneself. Or I would compare two people. One with a specific learning disability and the other as normal, I compare things they do, and they do not do. (Candan, Appendix L,95)

4.4.4 Negotiating change for action on behalf of the overall group with SLD

Kübra mentioned her wishes for change and for action on behalf of the overall group with same disabilities, by stating: "I do not know, well, how should I say? It is necessary to gather and find an activity or give a lecture to all students who understand late like me" (Kübra, Appendix L,96).

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According to the findings of this study, only one participant mentioned an experience of negotiating change for action on behalf of the overall group with SLD.

4.4.5 Leading an individualized education program

The participants were asked whether they attend their IEP meetings. One participant, Gözde, stated that she had been IEP meetings. She told about her experience as follows:

> I attended [to SLD meeting]. My father with me ... The teachers were talking about me. Of course, I was in 9th grade… At the meeting, they talked about me … If I say anything or not, I do not remember. Well, the principal and the vice principal were there, too. They were trying to solve the problem. They even prepared different exams for me, but not every teacher did it. Like the teachers, whom I suppose as I need, were doing. They asked me if I could overcome that lesson. They took my opinion the teachers' into account… That was how they talked to about me and my exams, talked about my exams, whether they will be changed or not. (Gözde, Appendix L,97)

The other participants stated that they did not attend their IEP meeting. Furthermore, two parents, Yiğit's and Candan's, stated in the demographic information form that they attended an IEP meeting without their children. Likewise, in the interviews, Yiğit and Candan indicated they had not attended an IEP meeting, either.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The current study aimed to understand the self-advocacy experiences of high school students with SLD. Within this aim, being diagnosed with only SLD, attending a high school, having an educational referral report, having the report at least for two years, and having a special needs report for children were the criteria for participating in this study. Then, 12 interviews were conducted with students who volunteered: six male and six female. Additionally, the parents of the participants volunteered to answer questions on a demographic information form about the educational background of their children.

The interviews were semi-structured; the questions were prepared in accordance with the conceptual framework on self-advocacy constituted by Test et al (2005). Accordingly, approximately 35 questions regarding the self-advocacy experiences were asked to the high school students with SLD, adolescents between 14 and 17 years of age. The average ages was 15. The interviews ranged from 15 to 55 minutes each, with an average of 33 minutes.

In order to analyze the collected data, the consensus qualitative analysis method was utilized. Accordingly, the researcher and the thesis advisor independently coded the data into relevant domains of the conceptual framework of the self-advocacy of Test et al. (2005). Then, the researcher, the thesis advisor, and a member of the thesis committee worked on the findings and the relevant domains until a complete consensus was reached. Then, in light of the findings, the researcher discussed the results under seven different headings, namely knowledge of SLD, self-awareness, self-determination, understanding educational rights, asking for help

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through effective and appropriate communication, leadership, and social justice. The supportive statements of the participants were included in the discussion. The original ones of those are presented in Appendix L.

5.1 Knowledge of SLD

According to the findings of the current study, it appeared that eight of the 12 students with SLD indicated that they were identified with SLD. When these findings are compared with the findings of Roth's study (2015), a similar result can be seen that not every student with SLD knew that they had been identified with SLD. Roth (2015) conducted a qualitative study with 12 high school students with SLD, aiming to identify knowledge and understanding of the students about SLD, and found that 10 of 12 high school students with SLD stated that they had this difficulty.

However, when the demographic information forms were taken into consideration, it can be understood that parents did not perceive the situation as the same, since 11 of 12 parents informed the researcher that their children were aware that they had been identified with SLD. One of the probable causes of this discrepancy may be the inadequate knowledge of the parents about SLD. Thus, some parents may not establish open communication with their children on the topic of SLD due to the fact that they will struggle with explaining the term. Thus, the parents may not know what exactly their children know about SLD.

Additionally, some students may have difficulty comprehending and remembering the terminology due to the nature of their SLD. For instance, in the interview, Gözde mentioned a similar cause regarding the information written on her educational referral report by stating: "Umm, I read it but I do not remember it. I

even asked my father what that was, I mean, I searched a lot. Then, I learned it of course, but I do not know what was exactly written [on the referral report]" (Gözde, Appendix L,98).

On the other hand, students may have trouble accepting SLD and may be anxious about being labeled as disabled. Thus, they may not want to talk about SLD, especially with a stranger—the researcher in this case—because according to the 20-year-longitudinal study on acceptance of SLD conducted by Higgins, Raskind, Goldberg, and Herman (2002), the acceptance of SLD is an ongoing process, and the individuals with SLD face many events where they are assessed by teachers, medical doctors, and parents about "what is wrong with them" (Higgins, et al., 2002). The students may also see the SLD labelas an obstacle to achieving their desires. Thus, they may not want to talk to anyone about SLD, especially in a formal environment (e.g. the CRC assessment room).

In addition to that, the students generally described themselves as slow learners, and they did not emphasize that they learned differently. The reason for this situation may be the misinformation of the students about their learning process. The students may also not want to explain their learning styles as 'different' because of that labeling problem. Furthermore, they may be confused about the nature of their own SLD and the characteristics of other special needs, because three students also mentioned that they were identified with attention deficit, even though their special needs reports did not indicate any other comorbidity. Thus, it can be easily seen that there is a misunderstanding between the characteristics of SLD and the concurrent symptoms of other special needs. Similarly, Lambert et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative study on the definition of SLD by students with an SLD. They collected the memoirs and interviews of 30 students with SLD who were called "insiders,"

from different books and found that only five insiders defined SLD as a learning differently. However, three insiders mentioned that all people learn in different ways, six insiders stated that they need more time while they were learning, three insiders stated that they need more help in the learning process, five insiders explained SLD as a neurological condition of the brain, four insiders defined SLD as a disability with effects on their lives, and 19 insiders used the word "normal" while describing SLD (Lambert, et al., 2019).

In the current study, most of the students defined the term by describing their difficulties. This finding supports the findings of the study of Rosetti and Henderson (2013). Similarly, in their research, it was found that adolescents with SLD explain the term SLD to a person who does not know anything about SLD with reference to their own learning difficulties (Rosetti & Henderson, 2013). This result may be explained by the fact that defining SLD is difficult due to the heterogeneity of the manifestation of SLD (Grigorenko, et al., 2019, p. 3).

5.2 Self-awareness

According to the findings of the current study's first theme, knowledge of self, all students shared their opinions and experiences on at least one of their personal strengths, learning strengths and weaknesses, appropriate learning strategies, future goals, and accommodation needs. These sub-themes are related to self-awareness, which includes the ability to identify needs, interests, strengths, and weaknesses (Martin & Marshall, 1995). In this regard, it can be concluded that all participants (N = 12) may be considered as having some degree of self-awareness.

Not surprisingly, the students defined their personal strengths mostly in non-academic contexts. Additionally, they explained their future goals mostly in terms of

non-academic dream jobs. These findings may be interpreted as a result of the nature of SLD regarding academic difficulties and also a considerable level of self-awareness.

From a different point of view, the present findings seem to be consistent with the study of Centerrino (2016), which aimed to evaluate the students' understanding of self-advocacy. He found that all seven students mentioned their learning profiles, and they explained how they "accessed, processed, and expressed information" at the school (p. 95).

Furthermore, one of the participating students in the current study stated that her level of awareness about herself increased during the interview. She explained her feelings as follows:

> I will think about it again, when I go home, but actually I have never thought about all these things before, I have never thought some of our talks. How can I say, I define myself better. You asked me questions, I said what I like and you kept talking on it. I uncovered myself. I understand that when there is something that I want, I can do it. (Gözde, Appendix L,99).

In conclusion, in the light of the findings, the participating students can be considered as having a powerful baseline for self-advocacy, due to the fact that self-awareness is the basis of self-advocacy, because individuals first learn their strengths, weaknesses, and needs and only then can they advocate for themselves (Doll, Sands, Wehmeyer, & Palmer, as cited in Schreiner, 2007, p. 300).

5.3 Self-determination

When the students were asked what advice they would give to people who have difficulties similar to theirs, they reviewed their pathway to their current success and shared their ideas. For instance, Kübra explained her advice as follows:

> Of course, I struggled, I worked hard and all … At first, how can I say, you
> can learn everything with the help of someone older or just someone. You
> know you cannot do everything without someone older or a friend, or when
> you take a step into something, you will learn it gradually by making
> mistakes. (Kübra, Appendix L,100)

These kinds of statements can be interpreted as self-determination beyond self-advocacy because self-determined people are aware of their personal needs, choose their goals, and persistently track the way to their goals; they may stay one step ahead of decision-making (Martin & Marshall, 1995). Also, they can define how they can get what they want (Martin & Marshall, 1995).

Martin and Marshall (1995) explained self-determination as the ability to state one's own needs, wants, and rights assertively, determine support needs, pursue fulfilling all these needs, obtain what they need and evaluate them, and conduct their own matters. Even though all participants of this study shared a considerable number of their experiences on identifying their own needs, wants, and support needs, they did not share as much about their experience of obtaining what they want and evaluating what they obtained. From this point of view, it may be understood that the students need to know the steps for asking appropriate implications from the right individual in the educational system such as counselors and teachers.

5.4 Understanding educational rights

The findings of this study reveal that even though six high school students identified educational rights in the perspective of human rights, only two participants stated that SLD had an impact on their educational rights in order to reach equal standards of educational rights. Most of the students had not heard about IEP. When these findings are taken into consideration, it can be understood that the students did not know exactly their educational rights with respect to their special needs. Their

understanding of their rights is a prerequisite for being able to self-advocate (Schreiner, 2007, p. 302).

A possible explanation for this might be that the the school principals did not inform students and their parents about their right to have a voice in the development of the students' IEP implementations; according to the demographic information form, only three parents had been invited to an IEP meeting. Furthermore, only one was in an IEP meeting. Additionally, the students and their parents may not have made an adequate attempt to learn the educational rights of individuals with special needs in order to get equal educational rights.

That few students had heard about IEP may originate from the fact that the students may not know just the name of their plans, because at least half of the participating students shared their experiences on IEP implementations from time to time in the interview. Similar to the findings of Ebo (2016), extended time for exams and differentiated exams were found as the most common accommodation that the students indicated that they received. Yet, when the extent of IEP is taken into consideration, it may be concluded that the participating students have limited knowledge of IEP implementations. This conclusion is supported by the findings of the demographic information form; no students participating in the current study benefitted from the resource room. The students may not have had knowledge of the special education services in resource room due to the fact that they did not receive this kind of special education. Even though an IEP was implemented for most of the students, none of them mentioned their long-term and short-term attainments identified in their plans. A probable explanation of this result may be that most of the students had not been in their IEP meetings. Thus, the students may be considered as

having limited knowledge of IEP implementations. Facilitating student involvement in their IEP is valuable for self-advocacy (Van Reusen & Bos, 1994).

Centerrino (2016) defined all these understandings of rights, procedures, and support services as "process awareness" (p. 96). Understanding of rights and IEP, knowledge of the possible steps taken against the violation of plans, the disability process, and their responsibilities in this process were included this process awareness. Centerrino (2016) reached findings that were different from the current study in terms of process awareness. Centerrino (2016) found the process awareness at a high level of most of the high school students with SLD.

From a different point of view, the findings of this study indicate that a smaller number of participating high school students with SLD (N = 2) explained why they visited a CRC in terms of rights. CRCs are one of the places where the students can find an answer to questions about their rights as individuals with special needs because educational assessments, parent educations, and IEP preparations for special education and rehabilitation centers were made at CRCs by the special education specialists and counselors (Sart et al., 2016). Possible explanations for this result may be the inadequate physical conditions of CRCs, and also the insufficient number of experts working on CRCs, noting that a couple of educational assessments or meetings may happen at the same time in CRCs (Sart et al., 2016). On the other hand, students may not be well informed at the school, before coming to the CRC. This situation is maybe the result of the fact that school counselors have to work alone in crowded schools (Sart et al., 2016). Additionally, most of the parents become an advocate on behalf of their children, and pursue the legal procedures (Blinn, 2017). Thus, the students may suppose that pursuing legal procedures is their parents' responsibility.

Consequently, it may be considered that increasing the awareness of students and parents in the context of the educational rights of individuals with SLD is a requirement for self-advocacy.

5.5 Asking for help through affective and appropriate communication

The findings of the current study indicate that all students are able to ask their teachers help for their learning difficulties. Most of the students were aware that they can ask help from their school counselors, but many of the students (N = 7) shared some experiences of not being understood by their teachers. Some of them indicated that even though they requested accommodation in accordance with their needs through affective and appropriate communication, these requests were not met. For instance, when Gözde requested the exams to be prepared as printed out rather than in handwriting, she indicated that nothing changed. Melih, who had great difficulties in reading, mentioned his argument with his teacher because the teacher insisted on him to read in the class, even though he clearly stated that he could not read. These experiences may be explained by teachers' lack of knowledge about SLD. A recent study also supports these explanations (Arttırıcı, 2018). According to the study, only 3.9% of 203 teachers who work in a vocationaltechnical high school have a high level of knowledge about SLD (Arttırıcı, 2018). Similarly, during the interviews, Uğur indicated his wish that teachers knew more about SLD.

Another possible explanation for this situation may be related to the teachers' knowledge about special education. They may not know how they can help or understand their students in accordance with the students' needs. On the other hand, the teachers may consider their students with SLD lazy because SLD is an invisible disability (Karande et al., 2019). Furthermore, from a different point of view, the

teachers may have trouble accepting special needs (Sart et al., 2016). Additionally, teachers may feel over-burdened by many responsibilities in the school. Thus, they may consider their students' needs and IEP implementations as work overload.

5.6 Leadership

According to the findings of the current study, the participating students shared fewer experiences of leadership than experiences of other themes. Sub-themes included understanding others with special needs, advocating for others or causes, helping others to understand SLD, negotiating change for action on behalf of the overall group with SLD, and leading of own individualized education program. Even though the findings of leadership experiences were fewer, eight out of 12 participants indicated at least one experience of leadership.

A possible explanation for these results may be the lack of knowledge of the students on how they can lead. For instance, when Aslan's friends were bullying a student with special needs, he mentioned that he preferred to change their focus:

> We have a friend named Atakan, [my classmates] play jokes on him and humiliate him. If the teacher gets involved as well, I usually try to stop those conversations, you know in order not let it continue … I raise my hand and begin to speak or I stand up, and I say something [different]. (Aslan, Appendix L,101)

Another possible explanation for these results may be the low level of perceived social self-efficacy, which is "the capacity to organize and implement the actions necessary for achieving certain results or goals" (Bakracevic Vukman et al., 2018, p. 586). As mentioned earlier, the perceived social self-efficacy levels of students is lower than that of their peers' (Bakracevic Vukman et al., 2018). Kübra gave a example of this, stating, "I do not have self-confidence; if I were self-confident, I

would tell everyone to do this or to do that. I could talk about what is unfair" (Kübra, Appendix L,102).

Only one student indicated that she had led her IEP meeting. Thus, when all leadership findings of the study are taken into consideration, it can be seen that providing less opportunity to the students to be a leader of their own decisions may decrease the students' experiences of leadership.

5.7 Social justice

During the interviews, three students shared experiences of social injustice with respect to their special needs. In this context, Aslı stated that when she confronted social injustice, she asked her mother to advocate for her. She shared her experiences as follows:

> Hazal has been my friend since the fifth grade. She learnt about my [educational referral] report. I do not know how she learnt. She spread it around school that Aslı had a certificate of insanity. I told my mother that Hazal said I had a certificate of insanity. So I wanted my mother to come to school and talk to them. My mother came and said… I mean, it was a gossip. Everyone ran away from me at that time… My mom said I did not have a certificate of insanity, I was just identified with a specific learning disability… Then, everyone came and apologized to me. (Aslı, Appendix L,103)

Additionally, two participating students mentioned that they were ashamed of being an "inclusive student" in school and they wanted to keep this as a secret in order not to be discriminated against by their classmates.

Furthermore, two participants mentioned their peers with special needs who did not self-advocate. This supports the findings of Rosetti and Henderson (2013). According to them, one out of four students had encountered a peer with special needs who did not self-advocate.

A possible explanation for these social injustice experiences in the school environment maybe peer bullying (Sart et al., 2016). Peer bullying may become a cause of violation of human rights, because all individuals have the right to equal opportunities (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). This explanation reveals the requirement of the promotion of social change against social injustice (Kalkan, 2018). In this context, even improper implementation of IEP may be considered examples of social injustice, because it may create an obstacle to self-advocacy. It may also exclude students with special needs from equal education opportunities.

Another explanation for those social injustices experienced in the school environment may be the absence of or inadequate self-advocacy interventions for students with special needs. It can be considered that, with self-advocacy training in school, the students' self-advocacy attempts may be yield more positive results against social injustice.

As mentioned earlier, counselors may confront many obstacles in both personal and professional manners (Bemak & Chung, 2008). For instance, they may confront resistance from school administrators and fear being fired if they struggle for organizational changes (Bemak & Chung, 2008). They may despair because of those obstacles against being a social agent. Social injustice in school may be the consequence.

5.8 Limitations of the study

The current study was conducted with the aim of understanding in depth the self-advocacy experiences of high school students with SLD. While this study was being conducted, some limitations were observed. The first limitation is related to under-

representation. In this study, the findings cannot represent common self-advocacy experiences of all students throughout the whole country.

Secondly, the interviews were conducted only with public school students and mostly from vocational and technical high schools. Thus, the findings reached in this study may not predict the self-advocacy experiences of high school students with SLD who attend private schools or other types of high schools.

As mentioned earlier, students with SLD may have difficulties with memory (Reid et al., 2016). Due to this likelihood, students may not have remembered their experiences in detail and therefore may not have mentioned these. They may not have talked about other self-advocacy experiences during the interviews. Consequently, all these circumstances can be seen as the third limitation of the study.

Due to practical constraints, the researcher and the participants had not met before the interviews. Therefore, the students may have had trouble trusting the researcher and telling their private experiences. Because of this reason, all self-advocacy experiences of the students may not have been revealed. This possibility can be seen as the fourth limitation of the study.

Additionally, the self-advocacy experiences and difficulties were not understood in accordance with the specific subcategories of SLD, because the subcategories are not specified in the educational referral report and special needs report for children in Turkey. Thus, the findings of the study represent SLD with its all subcategories rather than a special one. This situation can be considered as the fifth limitation of the current study.

Finally, this study includes the students' experiences solely from their own perspectives, and it is far beyond the observations of their teachers, families, and school counselors about the issue. Thus, approaching the self-advocacy experiences

of students from only their own perspectives is the sixth limitation of the current study.

5.9 Recommendations

The present study aimed to understand the self-advocacy experience of high school students with SLD and to make these visible for educators, school counselors, and policy-makers. In light of the findings, recommendations for educators, school counselors, counselors who work at CRCs, policy-makers, and future studies are indicated below.

5.9.1 Recommendations for educators

The semi-structured interview questions of the current study were prepared based on the self-advocacy experiences of high school students with SLD at school in accordance with the conceptualized framework of Test et al. (2005). Thus, the interviews focused primarily on their school lives. Therefore, recommendations for educators are regarded as substantial.

First, educators should understand the value of self-advocacy for students with special needs. They should accept that students with special needs have many rights that are granted by regulations. Educators need to listen, understand, and care for their students. In addition, they may respect the students' educational, social, and personal needs.

Second, educators should accommodate the needs of students with special needs in developing their curricula and they should pay attention to their students' needs, wants, strengths, and what their students have rather than learning weaknesses. In order to do that, they should establish an environment where their

students can communicate their needs comfortably. In this way, students may feel understood and have no trouble talking about their learning styles.

Finally, educators should cooperate with school counselors in training students to become self advocates. Educators can attend the self-advocacy intervention sessions and state their opinions to the students on their learning styles, strengths, and accommodation needs. Furthermore, they can help their students to develop a strategy to be able to cope with their difficulties. In this way, the students may be able to identify their strengths and needs more easily. More importantly, they may feel valuable in the eyes of their teachers.

5.9.2 Recommendations for school counselors

School counselors help students with special needs learn their rights. In the present study, some of the participants mentioned that they preferred to talk about their special needs with school counselors, especially at the beginning of high school. In fact, some of them wanted their school counselors to share their difficulties with other teachers. Therefore, school counselors should take advocacy issues very seriously.

First of all, school counselors may start educating themselves on special education needs, rights, and advocacy in the light of ACA social justice competencies (Toporek & Daniels, 2018). It is highly recommended that they have a high level of knowledge about laws and provisions for individuals with special needs. They can also attend different meetings and conferences and get supervision from academicians to become a more effective social justice agents. Additionally, they should be sure to have sufficient listening and communication skills.

Secondly, school counselors should increase awareness about disorders and the rights of individuals with special needs, not only for the student body as a whole, but for families, teachers and school executives and the neighborhood around the school. They can organize a local advocacy awareness week and hang posters to help draw attention to the issue. Then, they should develop training for all school staff. By doing so, they can prevent the violation of rights that students may face.

The findings of the current study show that, even though participants are aware of their strengths and the resources available to them, smaller numbers of them use self-advocacy skills.

Therefore, the third recommendation is for school counselors to increase students' self-advocacy skills. They can guide their students with special needs and their families, first about disorders and their relevant characteristics. When Eurostat's (2014) findings about high rates of school dropouts in Turkey are considered, developing intervention methods for self-advocacy skills may be life-changing for students. They should also focus on channeling students to higher education opportunities. In this way, they may define their strengths and needs and demand appropriate accommodations in accordance with their rights. Thus, they may become self-advocates, and moreover, be the leaders who make necessary changes in laws and regulations in the context of social justice.

Fourth, school counselors can provide an environment for where students with special needs can share their feelings and thoughts in the process of learning to advocate for themselves. They can organize group counseling sessions and group activities with the participation of teachers, families, and peers. Prepared programs on self-advocacy, such as a LEAD group, which was developed by Pocock et al. (2002) may be instructive for school counselors.

Finally, school counselors should share their good practices regarding advocacy with their colleagues and help them become advocates. They can also encourage their colleagues to inform policy-makers about changes that need to be made. In the end, they may increase social consciousness in terms of advocacy.

It should not be forgotten that school counselors cannot undertake all necessary movements of self-advocacy on their own. Thus, asking for help from teachers and school administration can always be a good option for them.

5.9.3 Recommendations for counselors who work at CRCs

CRCs is the place where students have to come to get their educational referral report for reaching their educational rights. They sometimes are the first place where the students or other individuals are identified with special needs. They can get accurare information about their rights and information about special needs. Thus, the counselors who work at CRCs should explain all the information that individuals and their families must know about the special need and the steps that they should take regarding those special needs, including self-advocacy. They should be sure that the individuals and their families understand completely all the information they got. Brochures or booklets may help counselors in this, because it should not be forgotten that everyone has the right to be informed. In particular, the individuals themselves should be informed about the special needs that they have been diagnosed with, if they are to become an effective self-advocate.

Explaining why individuals are at the center may be useful for counselors for future assessment sessions. Individuals are informed that they can get help from the center whenever they want.

Counselors may also organize self-advocacy training for individuals with special needs, apart from what the school counselors offer. These centers have the access to the data of individuals living in the district and may suggest they participate in the training. By doing so, the students or individuals can meet others from the same region and they may lead to better solutions for their difficulties.

Finally, counselors can develop informative videos for educators about special needs, educational rights, advocacy, and self-advocacy and explain how educators can develop an IEP properly, how they can respond to the needs of individuals with special needs, and how they can become an advocate on behalf of their students and other individuals in society who have special needs. Furthermore, counselors can encourage students to take videos to their teachers about their rights. In this way, the counselors support the self-advocacy movement and include educators.

5.9.4 Recommendations for policy-makers

The findings of the study indicate that even though many high school students with SLD are aware of their difficulties and are able to cope using their own strategies, few of them have knowledge about their rights. Hence, the first thing that policy-makers should do is to draw up a national action plan to inform all individuals with all kinds of special needs about their rights.

This plan should start with conducting more studies on understanding the experiences of individuals with special needs such as the current one and analyzing the needs in different locations across the country. After the needs analyses are completed, the policy-makers should define all these needs clearly and organize a nation-wide seminar to share the results with teachers, school counselors, social

workers, academicians, executive boards of NGOs, professionals from various districts' national education directorates, parents, and—most importantly—students themselves. After the seminar, policy-makers should finance the local projects, which may increase the number of advocates and social justice agents in society, including school counselors and teachers, and develop measurement tools and intervention methods on self-advocacy skills. In the light of scientific findings and good practices, a sourcebook should be prepared that includes comprehensive content on rights, and group counseling activities. Furthermore, training should be organized for school counselors, school administrators, and teachers with the aim of teaching the methods, conducting measurements, and implementing those intervention methods in school.

Moreover, the policy-makers should determine short-term and long-term goals aiming to gain self-advocacy skills in annual work plans of the counseling services in schools. The regulations and laws on the issue should definitely be reformed in the direction of these goals.

More importantly, this national plan should be sustainable. Need analysis studies and workshops should be systematically reorganized. Regulations and laws should be updated accordingly. Also, the curricula of the university counseling departments should be revised for making advocates of degree candidates in school counseling in the direction of ACA social justice competencies.

CRCs should be one of the continuity centers for this movement. CRCs can organize sharing groups to help school counselors and teachers who have difficulties in the implementations of self-advocacy interventions. New solution suggestions from these group meetings should be reported to policy-makers annually.

These centers should check students' progress on self-advocacy every time that students apply to the center to renew their educational referral reports. These evaluations should be three times a year for the students whose special need has been identified for the first time. For these observations, the Turkish Board of Education of the Republic of Turkey Ministry of National Education should work with academicians to develop a measurement tool for self-advocacy in accordance with the local ones, and present this to the centers. The Turkish Board of Education should develop and include an intervention module on self-advocacy for adults with special needs, who are pursuing their education in a special education and rehabilitation center. The decision to implementat this intervention module should belong to CRC Committee on Special Education Evaluation.

The transition of students with special needs to higher education opportunities must be considered by policy-makers. The necessary needs of the students should be accomplished especially for transitions to the university. With respect to the students' personal needs, technological advancements and other accommodations must be used in university exams. Transition rights and accommodations should be defined by law and recognized as rights of education.

From a different viewpoint, policy-makers should solve the identification problems of SLD experienced in CRCs. Even though counselors may able to conduct educational and psychological assessments, they cannot develop an educational referral report on SLD without special needs reports for children. Sometimes students are not able to obtain their educational rights in a timely way because getting special needs reports for children from hospitals is time-consuming. The policy-makers should authorize the CRCs of educational identification of SLD.

In general, SLD is not identified in accordance with its subcategories in special needs reports for children or educational referral report. Thus, the students with SLD frequently face assessments in the domain where they do not have difficulty. So policy-makers should attempt to develop an identification model for SLD with reference to the subcategories, namely dyslexia, dysgraphia, or dyscalculia, into identification including medical and educational systems.

Policy-makers should also provide an environment for social workers to be educated on advocacy. These social workers should extend the advocacy intervention methods to the parents and anywhere that individuals with special needs benefit from social services, such as hospitals, municipalities, courthouses, citizenship affairs, etc. In this way, awareness in the community will be increased, the number of advocates will rise, and eventually, individuals with special needs will be able to claim their rights. In addition to that, the policy-makers should include social workers in school environments in order to empower social-justice.

Finally, it should not be forgotten that education is teamwork in all manners. A profession in the education system is not able to undertake full responsibility for social justice. Social workers and special education teachers are the most critical occupations for helping the students, their families, and educators to become an advocate and for providing social justice in a school or CRC environments. Thus, policy-makers should increase the number of staff and profession fields in schools and CRCs.

5.9.5 Recommendations for future studies

Some recommendations are presented for future studies in order to better understand the self-advocacy experiences of high school students with special needs. Firstly,

similar studies should be conducted with more participants from different backgrounds, including individuals with other kinds of special needs and different combinations in order to examine the differences of experiences between these groups. Longitudinal studies may be helpful to understand individuals' experiences within the process, and accessing further experiences may be facilitated if a trusting relationship has been developed between the researcher and participants. In this way, the effects of characteristics of schools and the socio-economic status on self-advocacy experiences may be revealed, especially in Turkey.

Second, current measurement tools should be updated related to age, regardless of the kind of special needs for future studies. These tools may be transformed into forms, which can be used by teachers, school counselors, social workers and so forth. Thus, identifying the students' knowledge and skills may become easier.

Third, future studies may develop group counseling sessions and intervention methods for different age groups, and then examine theor effectiveness as a self-advocacy measurement tool. It may give the opportunity to professionals to approaching the issue systematically.

Finally, there is a need to investigate the perceptions, the knowledge, and the experiences of the families of students with special needs with respect to their children's self-advocacy experiences. While the present study was being conducted, it was observed that some parents were not aware of their child's rights. Future studies may focus on the reason behind the families' unawareness. On the other hand, some parents wanted to tell their experiences with advocacy. In fact, some of them said that they wanted to participate in the study in order to be heard, especially

in the context of rights violations. In this way, future studies may give policy-makers a broader frame of current circumstances about advocacy.

To conclude, the participating students shared their self-advocacy experiences mostly on knowledge of self. They were able to explain what they had and what they needed. However, leadership was found as the component on which students shared their experiences the least. They had almost no voice in their rights. From this point of view, counselors should consider that the students should be informed about their rights, especially their IEP plans, in order to develop their communication and leadership skills to become self-advocates.

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APPENDIX A

ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

T.C.
BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Yüksek Lisans ve Doktora Tezleri Etik İnceleme Komisyonu
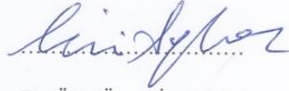
Sayı: 2019-49

9 Mayıs 2019
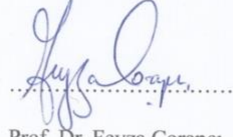
Duygu Betül Koca
Eğitim Bilimleri

Sayın Araştırmacı,
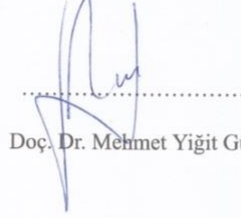
"Özel öğrenme güçlüğü olan lise öğrencilerinin savunuculuğa ilişkin deneyimleri" başlıklı projeniz ile ilgili olarak yaptığınız SBB-EAK 2019/42 sayılı başvuru komisyonumuz tarafından 9 Mayıs 2019 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve uygun bulunmuştur.

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi İnci Ayhan

Prof. Dr. Feyza Çorapçı

Doç. Dr. Mehmet Yiğit Gürdal

RAPORLU

Doç. Dr. Ebru Kaya

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Şebnem Yalçın

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION OF ISTANBUL PROVINCIAL DIRECTORATE OF NATIONAL

EDUCATION

T.C.
İSTANBUL VALİLİĞİ
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürlüğü

Sayı : 59090411-20-E.10521874   28/05/2019
Konu : Anket ve Araştırma İzin Talebi

VALİLİK MAKAMINA

İlgi: a) 14.05.2019 tarihli ve 9453550 Gelen Evrak No'lu dilekçe.
        b) MEB. Yen. ve Eğ. Tk. Gn. Md. 22.08.2017 tarih ve 12607291/ 2017/25 No'lu Gen.
        c) Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü Araştırma ve Anket Komisyonunun 28.05.2019 tarihli
           tutanağı.

    Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü yüksek lisans öğrencisi Duygu Betül KOCA'nın **"Özel Öğrenme Güçlüğü Olan Lise Öğrencilerinin Savunuculuğa Ait Deneyimleri"** konulu tezi kapsamında, ilimiz genelinde bulunan resmi rehberlik ve araştırma merkezleri ve özel rehabilitasyon merkezlerinde anket uygulama istemi hakkındaki ilgi (a) dilekçe ve ekleri Müdürlüğümüzce incelenmiştir.

    Araştırmacının söz konusu talebi; bilimsel amaç dışında kullanılmaması, **uygulama sırasında bir örneği müdürlüğümüzde muhafaza edilen mühürlü ve imzalı veri toplama araçlarının kurumlarımıza araştırmacı tarafından ulaştırılarak uygulanması, katılımcıların gönüllülük esasına göre seçilmesi, araştırma sonuç raporunun müdürlüğümüzden izin alınmadan kamuoyuyla paylaşılmaması koşuluyla, okul idarelerinin denetim, gözetim ve sorumluluğunda, eğitim-öğretimi aksatmayacak şekilde ilgi (b) Bakanlık emri esasları dâhilinde uygulanması, sonuçtan Müdürlüğümüze rapor halinde (CD formatında) bilgi verilmesi kaydıyla** Müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmektedir.

    Makamlarınızca da uygun görülmesi halinde olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Levent YAZICI
İl Millî Eğitim Müdürü

Ek:
1- Genelge.
2- Komisyon Tutanağı.

OLUR
28/05/2019

Ahmet Hamdi USTA
Vali a.
Vali Yardımcısı

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Research: Self-advocacy experiences of high school students with specific learning disabilities

Research Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Z. Hande SART

E-mail address: ...@boun.edu.tr

Phone: 0212 … … …

Researcher: Duygu Betül KOCA

E-mail address: ...@gmail.com

Phone: +90 … … …

Dear parent,

This scientific research project titled "Self-advocacy experiences of high school students with specific learning disabilities" is conducted by Assoc. Prof. Z. Hande SART. The aim of this study is to understand the self-advocacy experiences of students with specific learning disabilities in their daily lives. The necessary permission was obtained from the Ministry of National Education. We invite you, our parents and students, to help us with this research. We would like to inform you about the research before your decision. If you wish to participate in the research after reading this information, please sign and submit this form to the researcher.

If you agree to participate in this research, we will ask you to fill out a 13-question Demographic information form about your child. This questionnaire contains information about the student's educational background and personal information. It will take a maximum of 10 minutes to complete this questionnaire.

Afterwards, we will conduct an individual interview with the student participating in the study in which 30 questions about his experiences with self-advocacy in his daily life. This interview, which will last approximately 50 minutes, includes areas of difficulty for the student, features that he finds her/himself as strong, future goals, learning experiences, communication with the environment, personal and educational rights, and support sources. This interview is intended to be recorded in audio in order for the researcher to receive all the answers. If you do not have permission, the researcher will write down the student's answers instead of receiving an audio recording.

This research study is conducted for a scientific purpose and the confidentiality of the participant information is important. In the research, the pseudonym will be used instead of the name of the students. Audio recordings will be stored in a locked locker for the duration of our research project and deleted when the research is over. Selected audio recordings can be used in the training of

Psychological Counseling and Guidance students or scientific presentations without specifying the identity of the children.

Any course points and any rewards will not be given to participants. In the interview, the student may remember the negative experiences of the past and may experience negative emotions in this case. If the student you parented feels negative emotions during or after the study, the researcher will provide you with psychological support without any compensation.

Participation in this research study is entirely optional. If you participate, you also have the right to withdraw your consent at any stage of the study without any reason. If you would like to receive additional information about the research project, please contact Assoc. Prof. Z. Hande SART in the Department of Educational Sciences at Boğaziçi University (Phone: 0212 … … …, Address: Boğaziçi University, North Campus, Faculty of Education, …, … Bebek, Istanbul). You can consult the Boğaziçi University Ethics Committee for Master's and Ph. D. Theses in Social Sciences and Humanities (SOBETIK) about your rights related to research.

If you agree to participate in this research project, please write your name and sign to the space left blank below.

I (the name of the attending parent)……………………………. read the text above and fully understood the scope and purpose of the study I was asked to participate in, and the responsibilities of myself voluntarily. I had the opportunity to ask questions about the study. I realized that I could leave this work whenever I wanted and without giving any reason, and if I did, I wouldn't meet with any negativity.

In these circumstances, I agree to participate in such research voluntarily, without any pressure or coercion.

If you agree to participate in this research project, please sign your last name to the space left blank below.

The Name and Surname of the Attending Parent: ....
Signature:...

If you agree that the student you are parented participate in this research project, fill out and sign the sections left blank below and give this form to the researcher.

I,(parent's name) .... I have read the above text and fully understood the scope and purpose of the study, the responsibilities of the student to whom I am a parent, and the responsibilities of myself   voluntarily.   I'm   the   parent   (student's   name) .... I understood that s/he could leave the work whenever s/he wanted to and without having to give any reason, and if s/he did, s/he would not encounter any negativity.

In these circumstances, I voluntarily, without any pressure or coercion, where I am the parent (student name) .... I agree to my child to participate the study.

In these circumstances, I agree to participate in such research voluntarily, without any pressure or coercion.

The Name and Surname of the Attendee's Parent: ....
Signature:...

I took/ I did not want to take a sample of the form (in which case the researcher keeps this copy).

Researcher's Name-Surname:...
Signature:...
Date (day/month/year):..

INFORMED CONSENT FORM (TURKISH)

Katılımcı Veli Bilgi Ve Onam Formu

Araştırmanın adı: Özel öğrenme güçlüğü olan lise öğrencilerinin öz-savunuculuk deneyimleri

Proje Yürütücüsü: Doç. Dr. Z. Hande SART

E-mail adresi: ...@boun.edu.tr

Telefonu: 0212 … … …

Araştırmacının adı: Duygu Betül KOCA

E-mail adresi: ...@gmail.com

Telefonu: +90 … … …

Sayın veli,

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü öğretim üyesi Doç. Dr. Z. Hande SART "Özel öğrenme güçlüğü olan lise öğrencilerinin öz-savunuculuğa ilişkin deneyimleri" adı altında bilimsel bir araştırma projesi yürütmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı özel öğrenme güçlüğü bulunan öğrencilerin günlük hayatlarında yaşadıkları öz-savunuculuk deneyimlerini incelemektir. Bu konuda gerekli izin Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı'ndan alındı. Bu araştırmada bize yardımcı olmanız için siz velilerimiz ile öğrencilerimizi projemize davet ediyoruz. Kararınızdan önce araştırma hakkında sizi bilgilendirmek istiyoruz. Bu bilgileri okuduktan sonra araştırmaya katılmak isterseniz lütfen bu formu imzalayıp araştırmacıya teslim ediniz.

Bu araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ettiğiniz takdirde sizden velisi olduğunuz öğrenci hakkında 13 soruluk Demografik bilgi form doldurmanızı rica edeceğiz. Bu anket öğrencinin eğitim geçmişine yönelik bilgiler ile kişisel bilgileri içeriyor. Bu anketi doldurmak en çok 10 dakikanızı alacaktır.

Ardından, araştırmaya katılan öğrenci ile günlük hayatında öz-savunuculuk ile ilgili yaşadığı deneyimlere dair yaklaşık 30 soruluk bir bireysel görüşme yapacağız. Yaklaşık 50 dakika sürecek olan bu görüşme öğrencinin güçlük çektiği alanlar, kendini güçlü bulduğu özellikler, gelecek hedefleri, öğrenme deneyimleri, çevre ile iletişimleri, kişisel ve eğitsel hakları, destek kaynakları gibi konuları içeriyor. Bu görüşme, araştırmacının cevapların tamamını alabilmesi amacıyla ses kaydına alınmak istenmektedir. İzniniz olmadığı takdirde araştırmacı ses kaydı almak yerine, öğrencinin cevaplarını yazarak not alacaktır.

Bu araştırma bilimsel bir amaçla yapılmaktadır ve katılımcı bilgilerinin gizliliği esas tutulmaktadır. Araştırmada öğrencilerin ismi yerine takma isim kullanılacaktır. Ses kayıtları da araştırma projemiz süresince kilitli bir dolapta muhafaza edilip araştırma sona erdiğinde silineceklerdir. Seçilmiş ses kayıtları

çocukların kimliği belirtilmeden Psikolojik Danışmanlık ve Rehberlik öğrencilerinin eğitiminde veya bilimsel nitelikte sunumlarda kullanılabilir.

Katılımcı bireylere herhangi bir ders puanı verilmeyecek, bir ödüllendirme yapılmayacaktır. Yapılacak görüşmede öğrenci geçmişte yaşadığı olumsuz deneyimleri hatırlayabilir ve bu durumda olumsuz duygular da yaşayabilir. Velisi olduğunuz öğrencinin çalışma sırasında veya sonrasında olumsuz duygular hissetmesi halinde, istediğinizde araştırmacı sizlere herhangi bir karşılığı olmaksızın psikolojik destek verecektir.

Bu araştırmaya katılmak tamamen isteğe bağlıdır. Katıldığınız takdirde çalışmanın herhangi bir aşamasında herhangi bir sebep göstermeden onayınızı çekmek hakkına da sahipsiniz. Araştırma projesi hakkında ek bilgi almak istediğiniz takdirde lütfen Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü Öğretim Üyesi Doç. Dr. Z. Hande SART ile temasa geçiniz (Telefon: 0212 … … …, Adres: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, Kuzey Kampüs, Eğitim Fakültesi, …, … Bebek, İstanbul). Araştırmayla ilgili haklarınız konusunda Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Sosyal ve Beşerî Bilimler Yüksek Lisans ve Doktora Tezleri Etik İnceleme Komisyonu'na (SOBETİK) danışabilirsiniz.

Eğer bu araştırma projesine katılmayı kabul ediyorsanız, lütfen aşağıda boş bırakılan alana adınızı soyadınızı yazarak imzalayın.

Ben, (katılımcı velinin adı) ...., yukarıdaki metni okudum ve katılmam istenen çalışmanın kapsamını ve amacını, gönüllü olarak üzerime düşen sorumlulukları tamamen anladım. Çalışma hakkında soru sorma imkânı buldum. Bu çalışmayı istediğim zaman ve herhangi bir neden belirtmek zorunda kalmadan bırakabileceğimi ve bıraktığım takdirde herhangi bir olumsuzluk ile karşılaşmayacağımı anladım.

Bu koşullarda söz konusu araştırmaya kendi isteğimle, hiçbir baskı ve zorlama olmaksızın katılmayı kabul ediyorum.

Katılımcı Velinin Adı- Soyadı:...
İmzası:...

Eğer velisi olduğunuz öğrencinin bu araştırma projesine katılmasını kabul ediyorsanız, aşağıda boş bırakılan bölümleri doldurup imzaladıktan sonra bu formu araştırmacıya geri verin.

Ben, (Velinin adı) ...., yukarıdaki metni okudum ve velisi olduğum öğrencinin katılması istenen çalışmanın kapsamını ve amacını, gönüllü olarak benim üzerime ve velisi bulunduğum öğrencimin üzerine düşen sorumlulukları tamamen anladım. Çalışma hakkında soru sorma imkânı buldum.

Velisi olduğum (öğrencinin adı) ………………....………………..'ın çalışmayı istediği zaman ve herhangi bir neden belirtmek zorunda kalmadan bırakabileceğini ve bıraktığı takdirde herhangi bir olumsuzluk ile karşılaşmayacağını anladım.

Bu koşullarda söz konusu araştırmaya kendi isteğimle, hiçbir baskı ve zorlama olmaksızın velisi bulunduğum (öğrenci adı) ……………….…….…..'ın katılmasını kabul ediyorum.

Katılımcı Velisinin/ Vasisinin Adı-Soyadı: ....

İmzası:

....

Formun bir örneğini aldım / almak istemiyorum (bu durumda araştırmacı bu kopyayı saklar).

Araştırmacının Adı-Soyadı: ....

İmzası: ....

Tarih (gün/ay/yıl):...../......./.......

APPENDIX E

INFORMED ASSENT FORM

Dear student,

My name is (the name of the researcher).. and I'm working on advocacy. I'm trying to learn about high school students' experiences.

And you can help me to understand what high school students think about advocacy and what kind of problems they see.

You should know that deciding to help is entirely your choice.

There are no right or wrong answers to the questions I'm going to ask during the study. Whether or not you want to be in the study, please make sure you talk to your parents first.

I asked the family for permission to participate in the study; But even if your parents approve, you can still say you don't want to join. Your participation will not affect your course notes and there will be no reward as a result of our interview.

If you don't want to participate in the study, you don't have to participate. If you decide to stop after I start asking questions, no problem. At the same time, no one, including your family, will know what you're going to share here. If you want to join, you can sign this form. I'll give you a copy of the form.

I'd like to record audio so I don't forget the answers you gave me in the study. If you allow this, the records will be deleted when the investigation is over. If you don't allow it, I'll be writing your answers to a notebook.

If you have any questions about the study, you can ask. If you have anything you don't think of now, but you want to ask later, you can call me or ask your parents to call.

 If you feel negative emotions during or after study and want to talk about them, you can reach me in the same way.

Do you want to start talking to me?

Participant's Name-Surname: ....
Signature: ....

Researcher's Name-Surname: ....
Signature: ....
Date (day/month/year): ....

INFORMED ASSENT FORM (TURKISH)

Katılımcı Öğrenci Bilgi Ve Onam Formu

Sevgili öğrenci,

Benim ismim (araştırmacının adı) …………………..……. ve savunuculuk konusunda çalışıyorum. Lise öğrencilerinin bu konuda deneyimlerini öğrenmeye çalışıyorum.

Sen de bana lise öğrencilerinin savunuculuk hakkında ne düşündüğünü ve ne tür problemler gördüklerini anlamamda yardım edebilirsin. Bilmelisin ki yardım etmeye karar vermek tamamen senin seçimin.

Çalışma boyunca soracağım soruların doğru ya da yanlış bir cevabı yok. Çalışmada olmak isteyip istememe kararını lütfen ilk önce ailen ile konuştuğuna emin ol.

Çalışmaya katılımın için aileden izin istedim; fakat ailen onaylasa bile sen yine de katılmak istemediğini söyleyebilirsin. Katılman ders notlarını etkilemeyecek ve görüşmemizin sonucunda bir ödüllendirme yapılmayacak.

Eğer çalışmaya katılmak istemiyorsan katılmak zorunda değilsin. Soruları sormaya başladıktan sonra durmaya karar verirsen, sorun değil. Aynı zaman burada paylaşacaklarını ailen de dahil olmak üzere kimse bilmeyecek. Katılmak istersen bu formu imzalayabilirsin. Formun kopyasını da sana vereceğim.

Çalışmada verdiğin cevapları unutmamak için ses kaydı yapmak istiyorum. Buna izin verirsen alınan kayıtlar araştırma bitince silinecek. Eğer izin vermezsen cevaplarını deftere not alıyor olacağım.

Çalışma hakkında kafanda herhangi bir soru varsa sorabilirsin. Şimdi aklına gelmeyen fakat daha sonra sormak istediğin bir şey olursa beni arayabilir ya da ailenden aramalarını isteyebilirsin.

Çalışma sırasında ya da sonrasında olumsuz duygular hisseder ve bu duyguların hakkında konuşmak istersen yine aynı şekilde bana ulaşabilirsin.

Benimle konuşmaya başlamak ister misin?

Katılımcının Adı-Soyadı:...

İmzası:...

Araştırmacının Adı-Soyadı:..

İmzası:...

Tarih (gün/ay/yıl):....../......./...........

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

This form is prepared for obtaining demographic information of the participant

student for the study. We kindly request to fill in your answers to relevant blanks of

the information that asked. If you have confessions about the questions, you may ask

to the researcher. Thank you for your participations.

Pseudonym:

Student's	
Date of birth: Gender:	School: Grade: Department of the study, if any
Did your child repeat a grade?	A) Yes, he/ she have a grade repetition. In which grade he/ she repeat a grade?...............
	B) No, he/ she did not repeat a grade.
Is there a school counselor at your child's school?	
Does Individualized Education Program apply for your child?	
Do you attend to Individualized Education Program, shortly IEP, meeting?	
Does your child know that he/ she has Specific Learning Disability?	
Does your child take an advantage of the resource room in the school? A) Yes. How many hours does your child take an advantage of the resource room in a week? …………………….	

B) No, because …………..

Does your child get educated from Special Education and Rehabilitation Center? A) Yes. 1- Since when does your child get educated at Special Education and Rehabilitation Center? ………………………. 2- How many hours does your child get educated at Special Education and Rehabilitation Center in a month? …………………….. B) No, because, …………………………………………………………..
Do you a member of any non-governmental organisation regarding with specific learning disability? If so, which one? ……………………………………………………………………………………

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM (TURKISH)

Demografik Bilgi Formu

Bu form katılım sağlayan öğrenci hakkında bazı bilgilere erişim için hazırlandı.

İstenilen bilgileri ilgili kutucuğun karşısına yazarak doldurmanızı rica ediyoruz.

Sorular hakkında karışıklık yaşamanız halinde araştırmacıya başvurabilirsiniz.

Katılımınız için teşekkür ederiz.

Takma isim:

Öğrencinin,	
Doğum Tarihi: Cinsiyeti:	Okulu: Sınıfı: Varsa devam ettiği bölüm/ dal:
Çocuğunuz sınıf tekrarı yaptı mı?	A) Evet, sınıf tekrarı yaptı. Hangi sınıfa giderken sınıf tekrar yaptı?...............
	B) Hayır, sınıf tekrarı yapmadı.
Çocuğunuzun devam ettiği okulda psikolojik danışman var mı?	
Çocuğunuza Bireyselleştirilmiş Eğitim Programı uygulanıyor mu?	
Bireyselleştirilmiş Eğitim Programı ya da kısaca BEP toplantısına katılıyor musunuz?	
Çocuğunuz kendisinde özel öğrenme güçlüğü olduğunu biliyor mu?	

Çocuğunuz okuldaki destek eğitim odasından faydalanıyor mu? A) Evet. Çocuğunuz okuldaki destek eğitim odasından haftada kaç saat faydalanıyor? …………………… B) Hayır, çünkü, ………………………………………………………..
Çocuğunuz Özel Eğitim ve Rehabilitasyon Merkezinde Eğitim alıyor mu? A) Evet. 1- Çocuğunuz ne zamandan beri Özel Eğitim ve Rehabilitasyon Merkezinde eğitim alıyor? ……………………. 2- Çocuğunuz ayda kaç saat Özel Eğitim ve Rehabilitasyon Merkezinde eğitim alıyor? …………………….. B) Hayır, çünkü, ………………………………………………………..
Özel öğrenme güçlüğü ile ilgili herhangi bir sivil toplum kuruluşuna üyeliğiniz var mı? Varsa, hangisi? …………………………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX I

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Instruction: After detailed information about study were given through consent and assent forms to both the parent and the student separately, interview is conducted with the student alone as indicated in the procedure. Then, the following instruction will be read, and the interview will be started.

  "I tell you about myself and the study, now I will start audio recording. (If the student has no permission, audio recording will not be started.) . If you are ready, we will start to interview. Firstly, do you have a question for me?" (If student has, it will be answered.)

1- I want to know about you. Would you tell me about yourself? What do you do after school? What do you like to do?

2- Let's talk about your family. How is your relationship with them? How do you spend your time at home?

3- Have you got friends that you like to spend time with? (If yes) Are they from your school? What do you do at school? Have you got a close friend? (If yes) How do you spend your time together?

(If it is not mentioned) Have you got friends outside of school? How do you spend your time together?

4- Do you happen to have any conflict with your friends? (If yes) What do you do to solve this conflict?

5- Do you have difficulty in making friends? (If yes) What kind of difficulties are they? Do you take the first step to make a friendship?

6- Let's talk about your school life. How it is going on? Do you pleased with your school?

(If yes) What would make you more pleased?

 (If not) What would make you feel pleased?

7- How is your relationship with your teachers? Can you ask questions to them easily? For instance, do you want them to repeat the lecture when you do not understand?

8- Do you happen to have any conflict with your teachers? (If yes) What do you do to solve this conflict?

9- Is there anything you wish that your teachers knew about you?

10- How are your courses? How do you study them, in general?

(If student hesitates) Do you study on your own? Does anyone help you?

(If student hesitates) Imagine that you have an exam tomorrow? How do you study for it? Pick a course.

11- Do you have any difficulty when you read something? (If yes) What do you do in this situation?

(If not) Did you have it in the past? What kind of difficulties did you have? What did you do cope with them? Do you advise any suggestion that you think worked?

12- Do you have difficulties in understanding while you are reading? (If yes) What kind of difficulties do you have? What did you do to cope with these? Do you advise any suggestion that you think worked?

13- Do you have difficulties in taking notes at course or copying the board? (If yes) What do you do in this situation? Do you advise any suggestion that you think worked?

14- Do you like math? Do you have difficulties in calculating?

15- (If student mentions difficulties for former questions) Did you tell your difficulties to your teachers? (If yes) What did you say?

16- At which lessons do you feel you are good or think that you good? In your opinion, which characteristic of you makes you good at them?

17- What are your strengths, when you think about yourself in general?

18- What are your aspirations after high school? Do you want to go to a college? What do you want to be?

19- As you know, I have reached you through this center. You have come here before. Do you know why you came here before?

(If yes) Did you talk about the issue with someone? What do you know about?

(If not) This center determines your courses that you take from the special education and rehabilitation center. Besides, the center informs your school about required adjustments for your education. The center helps you to claim your rights.

20- Do you know what specific learning disability is?

(If yes) What do you know? In your opinion, have you got specific learning disability? What kind of learning disabilities? How do you explain the term of specific learning disabilities to someone who does not know anything about it?

(If not) Specific learning disability means that some people have difficulties in learning something. These difficulties could be in reading, writing or calculating.

21- Have you ever heard human rights, maybe you studied it at your lessons. Actually, living beings have rights, animals have, too. People have legal rights. Many countries sign human rights declaration to protect human rights. When you think about it, what kind of rights have you got?

(If it is not mentioned) Let's think about the school. What kind of rights do you have at school?

22- (If student says that I have specific learning disability for twentieth question) Does your specific learning disabilities have an impact on your rights? (If yes) What kind of impact does it?

(If not) You may overcome your difficulties in learning with some adjustments in classroom. For instance, getting additional times at exams, etc.

23- Have you ever heard about Individualized Education Program, briefly IEP?

(If yes) What do you know about? Is IEP applied for you? How it is applied?

(If not or there is a misinformation) It is a readjusted education program of some students, in order to enable all student to equal education rights. Teachers, student and student's parent organize a meeting to constitute IEP.

24- Have you ever attend a meeting of Individualized Education Program?

(If yes) Would you tell me, what happened?

25- Is there anybody treated unfairly, around you? (If yes) What do you do in this situation?

26- Is there any social activity that you attend to, at school? Is there a club you are a member of? (If yes) What kind of activities do you do?

27- Who are your supporters in your life? Who gives you support at most?

Termination instruction: "Thank you for sharing your experiences with me. (If the student mentioned the difficulties) You mentioned the difficulties at school. You are aware of the difficulties. Also, you overcome them, and found your own solutions. I see that you are trying to find other solutions. Do you want to say something to me about this issue?" (If yes) It is listened, and the interview is terminated.

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (TURKISH)

Yarı Yapılandırılmış Görüşme Soruları

Yönerge: Bireysel görüşmeye, araştırmanın prosedüründe belirtildiği gibi, öğrenci ve ailesi ayrı onam formları ile araştırma hakkında detaylı bilgilendirme yapıldıktan sonra, yalnızca öğrenci ile birlikte başlanır. Ardından;

"Sana kendimden ve araştırmadan bahsetmiştim, şimdi ses kaydını başlatıyorum. (İzin vermemişse başlatılmayacak) Hazırsan görüşmeye başlayalım. Öncelikle bana sormak istediğin soru var mı?" yönergesiyle birlikte soru varsa cevaplanarak görüşme başlatılır.

1- Seni tanımak istiyorum bana kendinden bahseder misin? Okul dışı zamanlarında ne yaparsın? Nelerle uğraşmak hoşuna gider?

2- Biraz da ailenden bahsedelim mi? Ailenle iletişiminiz nasıldır? Evde nasıl vakit geçirirsiniz?

3- Birlikte zaman geçirmekten hoşlandığın arkadaşların var mı? (Evet ise) Bu arkadaşların okuldan mı? Okulda neler yaparsınız? Yakın arkadaşın var mı? (Evet ise) Birlikte nasıl zaman geçirirsiniz?

 (Bahsedilmediyse) Okul dışından arkadaşların var mı? Birlikte nasıl zaman geçirirsiniz?

4- Arkadaşlarınla anlaşmazlığa düştüğün olur mu? (Evet ise) Bu durumu çözmek için ne yaparsın?

5- Arkadaşlık kurmakta zorluk yaşar mısın? (Evet ise) Neler yaşarsın? Arkadaş olmak için ilk adımı senin attığın olur mu?

6- Biraz okul hayatından konuşalım. Okul hayatın nasıl gidiyor? Okulundan memnun musun?

(Memnun ise) Ne olsa daha mutlu olurdun?

(Memnun değilse) Ne olsa mutlu olursun?

7- Öğretmenlerle iletişimin nasıldır? Onlardan rahatça bir şeyler isteyebilir misin? Örneğin konuyu anlamadığında tekrar anlatmalarını istediğin oluyor mu?

8- Öğretmenlerinle anlaşmazlığa düştüğün olur mu? (Evet ise) Bu durumu çözmek için ne yaparsın?

9- "Öğretmenlerim keşke hakkımda şunu bilseydi" dediğin bir şey var mı?

10- Derslerin nasıldır? Genelde derslerine nasıl çalışırsın?

Cevap verirken tereddüt ederse: Tek başına mı çalışırsın? Birileri yardım eder mi?

Cevap verirken tereddüt ederse: Örneğin yarın bir dersten sınavın var. Nasıl çalışırsın? Hangi ders olsun sen seç?

11- Bir şey okurken zorlanıyor musun? (Evet ise) Bu durumda ne yapıyorsun?

(Hayır ise) Geçmişte yaşadın mı? Nasıl güçlükler yaşadın? Güçlüklerin üstesinden gelmek için neler yaptın? Bunlar işe yaradı dediğin, tavsiye edeceğin neler var?

12- Okurken anlamakta zorlanıyor musun? (Evet ise) Nasıl güçlükler yaşarsın? Bu durumun üstesinden gelmek için neler yaptın? Bunlar işe yaradı dediğin, tavsiye edeceğin neler var?

13- Derste not alırken, tahtadan bir şey geçirirken, zorlandığın oluyor mu? (Evet ise) Bu durumda ne yapıyorsun? Bunlar işe yaradı dediğin, tavsiye edeceğin neler var?

14- Matematikle aran nasıldır? Hesaplama konusunda güçlük yaşadığın olur mu?

15- (Önceki sorularda yaşanan güçlüklerden bahsediliyorsa) Öğretmenlerine yaşadığın güçlüklerden hiç bahsettin mi? (Evet ise) Neler söyledin?

16- Kendini iyi hissettiğin, başarılı olduğunu düşündüğün dersler hangileri? Sence, hangi özelliğin bu derslerden başarılı olmanı sağlıyor?

17- Genel olarak kendini düşündüğünde, sence güçlü yanların neler?

18- Liseden sonra hayalin ne? Üniversiteye gitmeyi düşünüyor musun? Ne olmak istiyorsun?

19- Biliyorsun ki sana bu merkez sayesinde ulaştım. Daha önce de buraya gelmişsin. Buraya daha önce neden geldiğini biliyor musun?

(Evet ise) Bu konuda birileriyle konuştunuz mu? Neler biliyorsun?

(Hayır ise) Bu merkez senin özel eğitim ve rehabilitasyondan alacağın dersleri belirliyor. Ayrıca, eğitimin için okulda gerekli düzenlemelerin yapılması için okuluna bilgi veriyor. Sana bazı hakların tanınması için yardımcı oluyor.

20- Özel öğrenme güçlüğü ne demek biliyor musun?

(Evet ise) Neler biliyorsun? Sence sende özel öğrenme güçlüğü var mı? Ne gibi güçlükler?

Hiç bilmeyen birine özel öğrenme güçlüğü kavramını nasıl anlatırsın?

(Hayır ise) Özel öğrenme güçlüğü bazı bireylerin bir şeyler öğrenirken güçlük yaşaması demek. Bu güçlük okurken, yazarken ya da hesap yaparken yaşanabilir.

21- İnsan haklarını duydun mu, belki derslerinde görmüşsündür. Aslında canlıların hakları var, hayvanların da hakları var. İnsanların kanunen belirlenmiş hakları vardır. Birçok ülke insan haklarına dair evrensel bir beyanname imzalayarak insan haklarını korumuşlardır. Bunu düşündüğünde, senin bir birey olarak ne tür hakların var?

(Değinilmemişse) Örneğin okulu düşünelim. Okulda ne gibi hakların var?

22- (20. Soruda özel öğrenme güçlüğüm var demiş ise) Özel öğrenme güçlüğü yaşıyor olman senin haklarını etkiler mi? (Evet ise) Nasıl etkiler?

(Hayır ise) Öğrenirken bazı konularda yaşadığın kişisel güçlüklerin üstesinden sınıf ortamındaki düzenlemelerle gelebilirsin. Örneğin sınavlarda ek süre verilmesi gibi.

23- Bireyselleştirilmiş Eğitim Programı, kısaca BEP diye bir şey duydun mu?

(Evet ise) Hakkında neler biliyorsun? Bu program senin için uygulanıyor mu? Nasıl uygulanıyor?

(Hayır ya da yanlış bilgiye sahip ise) Her öğrencinin eşit eğitim haklarına sahip olması için, bazı öğrencilerin eğitim programlarının düzenlenmiş halidir. Öğretmenler, öğrenci ve öğrencinin velisi bir araya gelip toplantı yaparlar ve bu programı oluştururlar.

24- Hiç Bireyselleştirilmiş Eğitim Programı, kısaca BEP, toplantısına katıldın mı?

(Evet ise) Neler oldu anlatır mısın?

25- Etrafındaki başka kişilerin haksızlığa uğradığı olur mu? (Evet ise) Anlatır mısın bu durumda ne yapıyorsun?

26- Okulda katıldığın bir sosyal etkinlik var mı? Üyesi olduğun bir kulüp var mı? (Varsa) Ne gibi etkinlikler yapıyorsunuz?

27- Hayatında destek aldığın kişiler kimler? Sana en fazla destek veren kişi kim?

Bitirme yönergesi: "Benimle deneyimlerini paylaştığın için teşekkür ederim. (Eğer zorlandığından bahsetmişse) Okulda zorlandığın durumlardan bahsettin, görüyorum ki üstesinden gelmişsin, kendince çözümler bulmuşsun, bu durumların farkındasın. Çözümler üretmeye çabaladığını da görüyorum. Bana bununla ilgili söylemek istediğin bir şeyler var mı?" ifadesi yöneltilerek söylemek istenenler dinlenir ve tekrar teşekkür edilerek görüşme sonlandırılır.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS WITH SLD

Name	Age	Gender	Grade	Grade Retention	School Counselor	IEP	IEP meeting	Aware of having SLD	Resource Room		Special Education and Rehabilitation Center				Member of an NGO regarding SLD
									Receiving Education	If no, why?	Continuing	If yes, since when?	If yes, montly hours?	If no, why?	
Melih	15	M	10	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	DW*	Y	6 years	8	-	N
Aslan	16	M	10	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	DAK**	Y	6 years	8	-	N
Yiğit	17	M	12	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	DAK	N	-	-	Yiğit does not want to go.	N
Aslı	15	F	9	1st grd.	Y	DK***	N	Y	N	DAK	Y	4 years	8	-	N
Gözde	15	F	10	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	DAK	N	-	-	Gözde will start.	N
Uğur	15	M	10	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	DAK	Y	10 years	8	-	N
Kübra	15	F	10	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	DAK	Y	2 months	8	-	N
Kemal	14	M	Prep.	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	DW	N	-	-	Kemal finds insufficent.	N
Burak	15	M	10	N	Y	DK	N	DK	N	DAK	Y	7 years	8	-	N
Emel	15	F	9	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	DAK	Y	2 years	8	-	N
Candan	16	F	12	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	DW	Y	10 years	8	-	N
Aysun	15	F	10	N	Y	Y	N	Y	N	DAK	Y	8 years	8	-	N

Abbreviations: Y: Yes N: No *DW: Family does not want. **DAK: Family does not have adequate knowledge. ***DK: Family does not know

QUOTATIONS (TURKISH)

1- "Sakin olmam bir de böyle bir şeyi fazla takmıyorum… Bir de spor." (Uğur)

2- "Her şeyin ayrıntısına inerim ama bazı konularda… Detaycıyım, detay arıyorum her şeyde. Ama böyle aklıma takılanı arıyorum. Şöyle mesela, dersleri geçelim tamamen kendim mesela Youtube'a girerim diyelim en kolayından orada bir tane kelime geçer. Nomofobi nedir mesela. Ben çok merak ederim böyle bir şeylerden bakmak değil de kendim araştırırım sonra işte aklımda kalır. " (Gözde)

3- "Güçlü yanlarım, hmmm, hiç düşünmemiştim. Güçlü yanlarım, mmmm, biraz duygusal olabilirim... Mesela hani mesela şey yardım konusunda çok iyi olabiliyor [başkalarına]." (Aysun)

4- "Sesim. Ses konusunda iyiyim. Ortaokulun sonlarına doğru koroda şan eğitimi almıştım. O açıdan var ama genel olarak analiz yani. Analiz dediğim grammar. Bir de fizik falan." (Kemal)

5- "Çok konuşmam. … Mesela şey çok sus pus olmuyorum yani daha da atılgan oldum. … Hayal gücüm bence. Çünkü biyolojide mesela hayvanlar var. Mesela o hayvan atıyorum kemikli mi kemiksiz mi hoca mesela hayal ederek düşünün diyor. Çünkü göstermiyor resmini biz de ona göre hareket ediyoruz." (Emel)

6- "İlkokul 1'de 2'de çok yavaş okuyordum. Heceleyerek okuyordum. Diğerleri gibi şey yapamıyordum." (Aslı)

7- "2.sınıfta ilk önce 1.sınıfta hecelersin ve öğrenirsin ya hani su gibi okursun. Ben ikinci sınıfta heceleyerek başladım." (Kübra)

8- "Yani birazcık. Birazcık anlayabiliyorum birazcık zorluk çekiyorum… Iı, sessiz bir ortamda dikkatimi verirsem ya da bir şey olmazsa anlayabiliyorum tabi ki. Gürültülü ortamda hiç anlayamıyorum. 10 defa okusam da 20 defa okusam da olmuyor tabii ki." (Kübra)

9- "Eğer böyle kalabalık bir ortamdaysam okuyamıyorum. Ama mesela tek olduğumda okuyabiliyorum. Panik [buna neden oluyor] … [Kalabalıkta] Ya çünkü illa ki bir ses çıkıyor. İlla ki biri konuşuyor. Mesela hani kalabalık ortamda okuduğumda biri hani konuşsa başa alırım onu, okuduğum şeyi." (Emel)

10- "Ama okumayı öğrenince yani biraz yavaşım açıkçası. Sesli okuyamıyorum hiçbir şeyi. Sesli okuduğumda direk satır hatası yapıyorum yani. Sesli okumayıp da bir şeyi ezberleyip öyle okursam daha kolay ama sesli okurken benim okuma hızım o satırları okuma hızıma eş değil." (Kemal)

11- "[Okumada güçlüklerim] Evet bazen oluyor. Kekeme gibi… Bir kelimeye takılabiliyorum bazen… Kelimeyi tekrar ediyorum. ... Mesela genellikle şu şeyde oluyor, öğretmen kitapta bir şey okutmak isteyince oluyor. Hani çünkü birkaç kez olmuştu, heyecandan oluyor. Paragrafa ilk başladığımda olmuyor sonlara doğru yaklaştığımda veya anlamını bilmediğim garip gelen kelimelerde oluyor." (Candan)

12- "Ya şeyse, bilmediğim kelimeler falan. … [karşılaştığımda] İlk önce duruyorum öyle, bakıyorum nasıl bir şey, öyle devam ediyorum. … [Okuyamazsam] Okuyamadım diyorum, devam ediyorum." (Uğur)

13- "Genelde böyle karışık İngilizce kelimeler oluyor. Mesela popülarizm mi öyle -lizmli biten cümleleri biraz, … böyle kelimeleri okumakta zorluk çekiyorum." (Aslan)

14- "Mesela anlamını bilmediğimiz bir şey okuduğumda zorlanıyorum." (Yiğit)

15- "[Okuduğumu anlamakta zorlanıyorum] Biraz. Iı, bugün dersimiz tarih dersinde mesela okuduğumu anlamadım 1 soruyu… Kelime yani. O kadar karışık kelimeler vermiş. Onların arasında anlamak çok zor." (Aslı)

16- "Mesela kitaptan içinde birkaç kelime var bilmediğim, komedi, dram falan olsun. Bilmediğim kelimeler. Bunları anlamada zorladığım oluyor." (Kübra)

17- "Yok, mesela nasıl diyeyim merhabayı 'mrb' yapıyor, hep kısaltmaları anlamada [güçlük çekiyorum] ya da başka bir şey yazıyor, anlamıyorum." (Melih)

18- "Genellikle onu [okuduğunu anlamada güçlüğü]çok yaşıyorum. … Yani şöyle diyeyim, yani hani okuyunca kendi bir şeyimi kitabımı okuyunca anlamadığım yeri bir daha baştan okuyorum. Ama bu hani şeyde olursa sınıf içinde başka bir etkinlik hani toplum üzerine kalabalık bir yerde okuyunca okuyorum anlam biçimlendiremiyorum hani ondan sonra kendim okuyorum bir daha içimden. Ya kendim sesli okuyunca anlayamıyorum çünkü." (Candan)

19- "Ya, zorlanmak değil de hani istemiyorum ya. Zorla okutuyorlarmış gibi. Böyle okuduğumda anlamıyorum çünkü istemiyorum. Ama mesela İngilizce dersine gelelim. Okuyorum, çok iyi anlıyorum çünkü seviyorum akıcı geçiyor." (Gözde)

20- "Bayağı iyi… Yani. Matematik kafadan hesaplamaları yapmak daha zevkli." (Kemal)

21- "Matematiğim on numara, çıkartmam güzeldi ama bayadır yapmadım bilmiyorum, çarpma hafif, öbürlerini bilmiyorum." (Melih)

22- "Berbat… Şey yani dört işlem kolay, onu yapabiliyorum. Diğer konulara gelirsek yani o biraz zor." (Aysun)

23- "[Dört işlem] Ya aslında yapıyorum ama şimdi şöyle, mesela bir konuyu bilmiyorum diyelim onun gerisine dönmem lazım, onu anlamıyorum, onun da gerisine dönmem lazım. Hepsi birbiriyle bağlantılı olduğu için en başa dönmem lazım. Mesela şuan üçgenlerdeyiz ve ben hiçbir şey bilmiyorum. Çünkü gerilere dönmem lazım… Hım şimdi şöyle, dokuzda işlediklerimiz onda yok çünkü farklılar. Sekizde işlediklerimi şu an onda görüyorum. Sekizdeki konulara inmem lazım… [Şuan] Bölme orta ama çarpma iyi gibi. Ya bilmiyorum, hiçbir şey bilmiyorum." (Gözde)

24- "Hesaplıyorum ama sonucu bulamıyorum… Uğraşıyorum, cevabı bulmak için uğraşıyorum elimden geleni yapıyorum sonra bulamayınca pes ediyorum… Açı [konusunda]." (Aslı)

25- "Doğruyu söylemek gerekirse çarpım tablosunu hala ezberleyemedim. Küçüklüğümden beri hatırlıyorum da ezberleyemedim hiç… Mesela toplamayla çıkarmayı daha yeni öğrendim. Ama bölme çarpma falan çok zorluyor." (Emel)

26- "Şey olarak kümeler konusunda hani seviyorum ama şurada çok zorlanıyorum, çarpım tablosunda. Hala çok zorlanıyorum. Aslında tekrar etsem ezberlesem hani unutuyorum çünkü tekrar etmedikçe. Zamanın geçtiğini düşünüyorum hani ezberlemek konusunda. Artık olmaz diye düşünüyorum ama" (Candan)

27- "Yo, ben kâğıda bakmadan yazı yazabiliyorum zaten. Hani böyle arada kâğıdı kaydırırken bakmam gerekiyor ama bakmasam da olur aslında. Kalemi kaldırmadığım sürece ben yazabiliyorum yani." (Kemal)

28- "Bazen çok yavaş yazmam oluyor, yetişememem veya aklımda başka bir şey olması o sıra, başka bir şey gelmesi. Merak ettiğim bir şey oluyor genelde konu üzerine. O sırada soramıyorum bir yere not alıyorum. Sonra unutuyorum. Yani genellikle öyle oluyor." (Candan)

29- "Genel olarak derslerim aslında çalışıyorum ama sınavda bir heyecan geliyor içime, bir korku hissi geliyor, kafamdakilerin hepsini unutuyorum." (Aslan)

30- "Yani yoksa hani bazen çok çabuk dikkatim dağılıyor. Dikkatimi bir türlü oraya veremiyorum. Herhangi bir seste mesela çok dikkatim gidiyor veya tam odaklanmışken dersi bölünce çok acayip gidiyor. Yani dinliyorum eve gelince aklımda tutuyorum yani tekrar hani çok da etmiyorum aslında ama edince de hani bir faydasını görmedim diye düşünüyorum. Bir hafta boyunca çünkü tekrar yaptım." (Candan)

31- "Yazarak çalışıyorum, genelde bir şeyi okuduktan sonra onu aklımda tutup bi yere bakıp okumaya çalışıyorum, aklımda kalsın diye… Kısa sorulardan başlayıp uzunlara doğru gitmek en yararlısı gibi geliyor. Önce kısaları, sonra zaten kısaları okuduktan sonra zaten uzunlara yavaş yavaş erişebiliyorsun." (Aslan)

32- "Defterden, konu yazıyor diyelim ki, o konuyu kitaptan altını çizdiğim yerler oluyor. Onları not alıyorum. Sonra yeniden okuyorum o kitabı. Not aldıklarımı deftere yazıyorum... Ezberliyorum ezberleyebildiklerimi. Ezberleyemediklerimi de işte okula gidene kadar tekrarlıyorum." (Emel)

33- "Tek başına çalışmam daha kolay oluyor bana göre. Çünkü daha çabuk konsantre olabiliyorum... Ya odama gidip masaya değil de yatağa gidip defteri alıp okurum sürekli. Çalışma kâğıtları hazırlarım A5 boyutunda. Yazarım önemli şeyleri, ezberlemeye çalışırım mesela edebiyat olsun biyoloji olsun." (Candan)

34- "[Tahtayı] Normal yazıyorum yani ya da fotoğrafını çekiyorum… [Matematikte] Yani zor konularda hesaplayamıyorum. Telefondan hesap makinesinden yapıyorum." (Yiğit)

35- "İlk önce video izlerim internetten. Ondan sonra anlamadığım konuları yazıp deftere arkadaşlarıma sorarım. Onlar çözemediği olduğu zaman hocalardan yardım isterim. Öyle yani öyle yardım isterim... Durumumu bildikleri için yardım ediyorlar... Yani geç anladığım için" (Kübra)

36- "Şimdi ben evde çalışmayı sevmiyorum ama okulda en azından birine soruyorum. Şimdi evde annem babam ilköğretim bitirmiş, ilkokul 5. Kardeşim de zaten anlamıyor, ortaokul. E ben de evde soramadığım için okulda çalışmayı tavsiye ediyorum kendime, uygun görüyorum." (Aslı)

37- "[Yazamadığımda] Hım, arkadaşlarımdan [defterlerini] alıyorum ödünç olarak sonra arkadaşlarımdan aldığım notları defterime geçiriyorum. Sonra o konuyu bir daha soruyorum öbür kişilere." (Emel)

38- "Şimdi ben yazarak ders çalışabiliyorum, anlıyorum. Okuyarak da anlayabiliyorum. Şöyle oluyor, genelde müzik açıp daha iyi anlayabiliyorum ama annem diyor ki kızım öyle anlamazsın diyor. Ben anneme açıklamaya çalışıyorum. Müziksiz yapmayı deniyorum, müziksiz yap diyor aklına şarkı gelir sınavda da şarkıyla unutursun falan diyor. Böyle böyle hani müziksiz yaptığım için biraz zorlanıyorum. Ne bileyim çok değişik gelebilir ama müzikle anlayabiliyorum aklımda bir şey oluşturabiliyorum sevdiğim bir şeyi." (Gözde)

39- "Evet. Mesela çok iyi yapabiliyorum öyle. Bugün bizim temel dini bilgiler sınavımız vardı tarih hocası giriyordu. Onu dün çaktırmadan müzik falan dinleyerek yaptım ve mesela şuan hiç kalacağımı düşünmüyorum. 80'den yukarı not bekliyorum. … Ya da kendim bir şarkı falan uyduruyorum, [bilgiler] onun içinde oluyor." (Gözde)

40- "Ben seviyorum yani yaparken onu. Hatta onun mesleğini yapmayı bile düşünebiliyorum." (Aslı)

41- "Yok ben dilenci olacağım. Baktım koşullar buna uyuyor… Önce mutlu olayım istiyorum." (Kemal)

42- "Fikirlerini veren düşüncelerini hani şöyle yap böyle yap diyen kişiler üç senedir tanıdığım bir öğretmenim var mesela. Rahat bir şekilde her şeyimi anlatabilirim. Hani arkadaşlarım var Arzu, üç dört tane öğretmenim var. Elif ve Sinem hoca. Onlara anlatınca rahatlıyorum hani beni anlayan hissine kapılıyorum. Yani çözüm arıyorlar her konuya. Şöyle yapabiliriz, böyle yapabiliriz." (Candan)

43- "Buz pisti hocası o da Şaban Hoca. Başka da yok. Yani ona nasıl desem, abim gibi görüyorum yani kardeşim gibi görüyorum." (Aslı)

44- "Ailemden destek hiç almıyorum, sadece şey için almıştım. O da dündü, ilk desteğimdi galiba. Iıı, hangi bölümü seçeyim nasıldır falan diye. Onda bana destek verdiler, kuzenim de çocuk gelişimi okuyor onu ara falan dediler. Hani aslında ben ailemle paylaşsam onlar destek çıkar ama ben paylaşmıyorum. Çünkü arkadaşlarım beni daha iyi anlıyor. Hep arkadaşlarımla paylaşıyorum ama bazı arkadaşlarımla. Şimdi bu grup var [kaynaştırma öğrencileri için grup rehberliği] ben bu grup dışında diğer arkadaşlarıma anlatıyorum." (Gözde)

45- "Evet [özel öğrenme güçlüğü ne demek biliyorum]. Onu da annem anlattı yine. Geç öğreniyorsun. Yani her şeyi hemen öğrenemiyorsun. Geç öğreniyorsun ama tam öğreniyorsun." (Emel)

46- "Böyle konu üstünde fazla duramamak, öğrenememek… Çok fazla anlatılması gerekiyor böyle tek geçişle anlayamıyorsun." (Burak)

47- "Bir konuyu hani çok anlamamak diyelim." (Aysun)

48- "Özel öğrenme güçlüğü bende disleksi sonucu oluştu, yani sebebi değişebiliyor bende disleksi sebep oldu bu duruma. Kimde ne sebep olur belki hiperaktivite sebep olabilir bilmiyorum ama… Yani kişiye göre de değişiyor öğrenmede sıkıntı yaşıyorsun ama kişiye göre değişiyor. Adı üstünde özgün öğrenme güçlüğü, adı açıklıyor aslında her şeyi gayet net bir şekilde." (Kemal)

49- "Şöyle dedi hoca bize, 'normal insanlardan biraz daha farklı bu her konuda olabilir; üstün zekâlı da olabilir, algılamada sorun olabiliyor, dil yetersizliği oluyor'. Hani her şeyden bahsetti bize." (Gözde)

50- "Ya bence yok ya. Ben olduğunu düşünmüyorum çünkü normalim hayatı gelişine göre yaşıyorum. Her normal insan gibi yatıp kalkıyorum sadece istemiyorum. İstemediğim için de hiçbir şey yapamıyorum." (Gözde)

51- "Mesela ben bir şey okurken maksimum üç kere okuyorum." (Yiğit)

52- "Öğrenme güçlüğü falan" (Uğur)

53- "Okuma yazmada." (Melih)

54- "Mesela ben yazı yazarken zorlanırım."(Kemal)

55- "Bende matematik var birazcık da okuma. Okurken bazen birkaç kelimeyi geç anlıyorum. Onlar var sadece." (Kübra)

56- "Ya bir şeyi çok deyince anlıyorum anca." (Uğur)

57- "Mesela hoca orada anlatıyor ama anlamıyorum. Ama sonrasında hoca tekrar tekrar anlattığı zaman bir de kurumda hoca anlattığı zaman o zaman belki yavaş yavaş anlayabiliyorum." (Aysun)

58- "Mesela derste anlatılan konuyu hiç anlamıyorum hani böyle bomboş gibi. Sanki hiçbir şey anlamamışım gibi." (Emel)

59- "Öğretmen mesela bir şey anlatınca diğer arkadaşlarım anlıyor hani bir kerede ama ben bir kerede anlamıyorum mesela daha çok detaylı öğrenmek istiyorum. Hani takıldığım yerler oluyor onun için diye düşünüyorum." (Candan)

60- "Bir yandan da keşke böyle bir şey olmasaydı diyorum çünkü bazen kendimi ifade etmekte zorlanıyorum. Bundan dolayı mı kaynaklanıyor diye düşünüyorum.... Bence evet, bazen. Ve çok kararsız kalıyorum ama genellikle evet diyorum çünkü diğer arkadaşlarıma bakıyorum daha güzel anlatabiliyorlar daha güzel yazabiliyorlar. Kendilerini ifade edebiliyor. Bir kâğıda yazabiliyor. Çok güzel." (Candan)

61- "Tarih hocası yapmadı [BEP], sadece şuan matematik hocası yapıyor, ama bence edebiyatçı da yapmalı." (Gözde)

62- "İstediğimiz marketten alışveriş yapabiliyoruz. İstediğimiz şeyleri de alabiliyoruz. Yani istediğimiz her yere gidebiliriz, birine bağlı değiliz." (Emel)

63- "Bildiğim kadarıyla yani her insan buna doğuştan sahiptir. En büyük hak yaşamak mesela. Bütün insanlar hiçbir durum tanımadan eşittir. İnsan hakları Fransa'da ortaya çıkan bir şey değil mi?" (Kemal)

64- "Kadın olarak hakkımı savunma gibi veya şiddet mağduru gibi savunma haklarım vardır hani. Bunu çıkıp da söyleyebilme hakkım var tabii." (Kübra)

65- "Mesela bir mont aldın diyelim, ceket aldın. O ceket mesela yıprandığında insan hakları bir şeyi varmış muhtarlıkta mı belediyede mi? … Birkaç kere de kitap bulmuştum anayasayla ilgili onlara bir göz atmıştım o kadar. Biraz okumuştum." (Aslan)

66- "Eğitim görmeye hakkım var. … Benim gösterdiğim şeyleri onların [öğretmenlerin] da göstermesi gerekiyor bence. Onların da sorumluluklarıdır." (Aslan)

67- "Dersime girmek, dersimi dinlemek, okul bitince okuldan çıkmak gibi haklarım var." (Kemal)

68- "Bilmediğimi sorma şeyi falan." (Uğur)

69- "Okulda ise öğle aralarında mesela bahçede istediğimiz yere oturabiliriz. İstersek kantine gideriz. İstersek sınıfta dururuz." (Kübra)

70- "Kızla erkek karışık okullarda eşitlik olması lazım. Belki yoktur bazı okullarda ama olması lazım." (Kübra)

71- "Yoo. Bir tek sınavda yavaş yapıyorsam sınava ek süre veriyorlar. Geçen ben sınıfta sınavı ilk bitiren kişi olmuştum. Çünkü hocam sınav kolaydı." (Kemal)

72- "Benim geçen sene başındayken benim okuldaki raporumu yenilemek amacıyla gelmiştik." (Kemal)

73- "Benim gibi okuma yazma bilmeyen mi ya da bütün BEP'li nasıl diyeyim, mesela okuma yazma bilmeyenler, okuma yazma olmadığı için zihinsel engelli kişi oluyor o yüzden ben de böyle oluyorum. İlerisini bilmiyorum." (Melih)

74- "Bireysel eğitim planı. Derste görmüştük ama şu an kolay hatırlayamıyorum. BEP var öğrenme sürecini anlatan. Bireysel Eğitim Planı raporlarla alakalıydı galiba." (Candan)

75- "Şey öncelik veriyorlar mesela geçen sene özel eğitim dersi alıyorduk bölüm olarak. 11 kişilik sınıfta özel eğitim okuyan kişi sayısı. Hani katıldığım için hani ya öncelik tanıyorlardı… Mesela soru soracağım, sen ilk sor gibisinden." (Candan)

76- "Uzun dönemli amaç kısa dönemli amaç gibi mi? (Candan)"

77- "Sadece matematik soruları farklı oluyor evet. Sorular farklı. Mesela onlara 20 soru soruyorsa bana 10 soru soruyor, değiştirerek soruyor." (Gözde)

78- "Sınavlarda ek süre verilmesi falan… Ama mesela benim İngilizce öğretmenim vardı bir tane Alman olan. O mesela baya yardımcı oldu. Benim okulda yazı yazmak için bilgisayar 'laptop' getirmeme izin var mesela. Ama kullanmıyorum ben artık. Zaten okul açıldıktan 1-2 hafta sonra oldu rapor yenilenmesi derken o geldiğinde o durum ilk sınavlar olmuş ben onun bir şokundayım zaten yazmaya alışmışım yani." (Kemal)

79- "Ama benim o kadar ağır bir durum da olmuyor zaten. Artık okuyorum. Yani sınavlarda ek süre veriliyor sadece o kararlaştırıldı. Bilgisayar ben getirmiyorum artık zaten ihtiyacım olmuyor. Hatta zorluk çıkarıyor." (Kemal)

80- "Ya rehberlik öğretmeni daha çok şey yapıyor, uğraşıyor." (Uğur)

81- "Sınavlarda düşük alınca hoca yanına çağırıyor yeni bir tane sınav yapıyor kolay."(Burak)

82- "Adın soyadın yazıyorsa orada, anlıyor ki BEP'lisin, zaten oradan bağırıyorlar ismimi ve soy ismini, gidip kâğıdını alıyorsun." (Melih)

83- "[Arkadaşlarımdan] Bir tanesi biliyor. Ama o da hiç kimseye söylemeyeceğini bildiğim için." (Aslı)

84- "[Rehber öğretmene özel öğrenme güçlüğüm olduğunu söyledim] Çünkü başta utanıyorum tabi. Herkes belki aşağılayacak diye düşünüyorum, belki… Ama aslında öyle değil çünkü herkes biliyor benim durumumu sınıftakiler." (Kübra)

85- "Sadece bu konu aile içi ve öğretmenlerim biliyor hani arkadaşlarım bilmeyince pek bir sıkıntı olmuyor." (Aysun)

86- "Ben bir olayımı anlatmak istiyorum. … Şimdi ben hocanın sınav yazısını hiç okuyamıyordum… El yazısı yazıyordu, kendisi karalıyordu böyle içim daralıyordu o yazıyı okurken. Dedim ki hocam dedim ben sizin yazınızı hiç okuyamıyorum dedim. Kendiniz yazmak değil de [sınav evraklarını] böyle bilgisayardan çıkarsanız olur mu dedim." (Gözde)

87- "Bir deneyeyim dedim, anlamadığımı söyleyeyim dedim. Ondan sonra [öğretmen] anlatmaya başladı. Anlattıktan sonra gene anlamadığım için daha da üstelemedim." (Aslan)

88- "Söylüyorum direk yüzüne söylüyorum. Ama o da anlamak istemiyor."

(Emel)

89- "Ne bileyim genel tavırlarıyla belli orantılı oluyor. Mesela ben ilk başta belirtiyorum sözlü olarak falan, ondan sonra direk olarak bana karşı yapmadıysa veya sürekli olarak sürdürmüyorsa bir sıkıntı çıkmıyor. Ama yani hani o kadar çok önemsemediğim insanlarla tartışma da çıkmıyor da." (Kemal)

90- "Güzelce konuşup anlaşırız, yani… Ortada bir olay varsa çözeriz yani konuşarak." (Yiğit)

91- "Bir tane arkadaşım var, o anlıyor ama benim gibi çok çalışmıyor. Sınava bile girmiyor mesela… Mesela o sınavlara girmiyor. Ayrı sınav oluyor o sınavlara girmiyor. Yani şu hastalığım var diye geçiştirerek girmiyor sınavlara. Kaçıyor mesela sınav ortamlarından ve bu doğru değil bence… [Benim gibi olması]Mesela iyi gibi bir şey hissettiriyor ama onun da birazcık benim gibi davranması gerektiğini düşünüyorum tabii ki… Evet, çalışmadan bir şey elde edemez tabi ki. Ama o yapmıyor mesela." (Kübra)

92- "Hani onlar mesela onlar söylediler bizim sınıftakilere felan işte onlara böyle kötü davranıyorlardı mesela lisede de öyle Elif diye bir arkadaşım var. O da

özel eğitime gidiyor. Onu da herkes dışlıyor ama hani ben dışlamak istemiyorum o duygunun ne yaptığını bildiğim için pek dışlamıyorum onu o yüzden." (Aysun)

93- "Romanların [haksızlığa uğradığı olur]. Yani ırkçılık var ülkede genel olarak… Yapıyorum [bir şeyler] gidiyorum azarlıyorum güvenlik görevlisini ne yapıyorsun diyorum. Adamın umurunda bile olmuyor. Geçen gün işte böyle bir çingene çocuk vardı. Tokat atmıştı adam onları çıkarmak için metrodan." (Kemal)

94- "Ben dedim ki hocam ben okuyamıyorum yani sınıfın da okuduğunu düşünmüyorum açıkçası dedim. Sonra arkadan arkadaşlarım fısıldadı korkumuzdan diyemiyoruz hocam dediler. Hoca bunları duymadı. Tamam Gözdeciğim, senin için yazımı düzeltirim dedi, hiç düzeltmedi. Noktasına kadar her şeyi aynıydı. Hani söyledim. İnsanlar ağzını açmadıkça şey görünmüyor hani anlaşılmıyor. Ben mesela ağzını açan ilk kişiymişim, yine bir şey değişmedi. Savunsalardı beni olurdu belki. Bu bizim hakkımız bence ya." (Gözde)

95- "İki kişi arasından giderdim mesela. Yani şöyle diyebilirdim büyük ihtimalle. Bir konu üzerinde anlayamaması, geri olması, dikkatini oraya verememesi, sürekli dikkati dağılması, bir şeye odaklanamaması, kendini ifade edememesi diye anlatırdım. Veya karşı karşıya getirtirdim iki kişiyi. Biri özel öğrenme güçlüğü olan diğeri gayet normal birini. Karşı karşıya getirirdim yaptıkları, yapmadıkları şeyleri." (Candan)

96- "Ya bilmiyorum yani nasıl diyeyim. Genellikle böyle bir kişilere yani beni gibi veya hani geç anlayan öğrenciler bir arada toplayıp ders verilmesi lazım veya bir etkinlik bulunması lazım." (Kübra)

97- "[BEP toplantısına]. Katıldım. Babam da vardı hatta yanımda... Öğretmenler beni anlatıyordu. Tabi 9.sınıftaydı…Toplantıda işte beni konuştular, beni anlattılar… [Bir şeyler] Söylemişimdir de hatırlamıyorum. Şey müdür, müdür yardımcısı falan da vardı hatta. Böyle bir sorunu çözmeye çalışıyorlardı. Hatta sınavları farklı yapıyorlardı bana ama her hoca değil. Hani hocaların bu gereksinimi düşündüğüm kişiler yapıyordu. Bana demişlerdi sence sen bu dersi yapabilir misin falan demişlerdi. Hem benim hem de hocaların görüşlerini ortaya koymuşlardı… Böyle beni konuşmuşlardı, sınavlarımı konuşmuşlardı farklı olup olmamasını." (Gözde)

98- Hım, okumuştum ama hatırlamıyorum. Hatta babama bu ne falan demiştim sonra sormuştum baya araştırmıştım yani. Sonra öğrenmiştim tabi de [raporda] ne olduğunu tam bilmiyorum." (Gözde)

99- "Böyle eve geçince yine düşünürüm ama onun dışında, aslında bunları daha önce hiç düşünmemiştim. Konuştuklarımızın bazılarını hiç düşünmemiştim. Ne bileyim, kendimi daha iyi tanımladım. Siz bana soru sordunuz, sevdiğim bir şeyi söyledim o konudan gittiniz. Ben kendimi çözdüm. İstediğim bir şey olunca onu yapabildiğimi anladım." (Gözde)

100- "Çabaladım tabi ki çok çalıştım öyle yani… İlk önce nasıl diyeyim genellikle bir büyüğünden yardım alarak veya birisinden yardım alarak öğrenebiliyorsun her şeyi. Hani bir büyüğün veya bir arkadaşın olmadan her şeyi yapamazsın veya bir şeye adım atacakken yanlış yapa yapa öğreneceksin." (Kübra)

101- "Atakan diye bir arkadaşımız var, [sınıf arkadaşlarım] onunla dalga geçerler, küçümserler. Hoca da dahil oluyorsa zaten genelde o konuşmayı kestirmeye çalışırım, yani daha çok devam edilmemesi için… Parmak kaldırıp söz alırım veya ne bileyim ayağa kalkarım, [farklı] bi şeyler derim." (Aslan)

102- "Özgüvenim yok. [Özgüvenim olsa] Her şeyimi anlatabilirim veya haksızlığı azaltabilirim böyle böyle yapmayın veya böyle böyle yapın diye her şeyi anlatabilirdim. Her şeyi anlatabilme durumum olurdu yani haksızlığa karşı." (Kübra)

103- "Kendi 5.sınıftan beri benim arkadaşım Hazal diye. O benim raporumu öğrenmiş. Nasıl öğrenmiş bilmiyorum. Ve okula yaymış Aslı'nın deli raporu var yaymış… Anneme dedim böyle böyle Hazal dedim benim hakkımda deli raporu var diyor o yüzden gel söyle dedim. Annem de gelmiş söylemiş. ... Yani bu dedikodu yani bütün herkes benden uzaklaştı o anda… [Annem] Onun diyor deli raporu yok diyor, o diyor sadece özel öğrenme güçlüğü diyo. ... Sonra geldi hepsi özür diledi." (Aslı)