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SPEAKING FROM A DISTANCE: PROMOTING ORAL SKILLS OUT-OF-CLASS

A MASTER'S THESIS

BY

MERİÇ AKKAYA-ÖNAL

THE PROGRAM OF TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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To my beloved family

Speaking From A Distance: Promoting Oral Skills Out-Of-Class

The Graduate School of Education

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by

Meriç Akkaya-Önal

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THESIS TITLE: Speaking from a Distance: Promoting Oral Skills Out-of-class

Supervisee: Meriç Akkaya-Önal

March 2015

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Curriculum and Instruction.

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ABSTRACT

SPEAKING FROM A DISTANCE: PROMOTING ORAL SKILLS OUT-OF-CLASS

Meriç Akkaya-Önal

M.A. Program of Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Aikaterini Michou

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March, 2015

This study aims to explore whether students perceive that the computer-mediated communicative (CMC) out-of-class speaking activities support the development of their oral speaking skills, whether students consider that the out-of-class speaking activities contributed to building their level of confidence with respect to using the target structures and vocabulary in the classroom, and the advantages and/or challenges they perceive in using computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities to improve their speaking skills.

A further aim of this study is to investigate whether the use of CMC out-of-class speaking activities supports the development of students' willingness to communicate (WTC), measured by using students' performance on PowerPoint (PPT) exercises over a period of five weeks. The research was conducted at a public university in Turkey with six participants, who were chosen among upper-intermediate level students on a voluntary basis. The data for this research were

collected via five different PPT slides, interviews at the end of each PPT and a final interview, which was conducted at the end of the study, one questionnaire and the rubric formed by the researcher to determine the CMC out-of-class activities' impact on learners'' WTC. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis from the interviews and the criteria indicated that participants perceived positive pedagogical and academic contributions from these digitalized out-of-class speaking activities. Also the study showed that there was a significant contribution to the students' WTC in the target language as they became more confident as well as more comfortable speaking English.

Key words: Willingness to communicate (WTC), speaking anxiety, technology in L2 and computer-mediated communication (CMC).

ÖZET

UZAKTAN KONUŞMA: SINIF DIŞI ÇALIŞMALARI TEŞVİK ETME

Meriç Akkaya-Önal

Yüksek Lisans, Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Öğretimi Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Aikaterini Michou

2. Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Louisa Jane Buckingham

Mart, 2015

Bu çalışma öğrencilerin bilgisayar ortamlı iletişimsel sınıf dışı çalışmaların, hedeflenen kelime ve gramer yapılarını kullanarak, özgüvenlerinde artışı destekleyip destelemediğini ve konuşma becerilerini geliştirmesi için yapılan bu sınıf dışı iletişimsel çalışmaları faydalı ve/veya zorlayıcı olarak algılayıp algılamadıklarını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu çalışmanın diğer bir hedefi de bilgisayar ortamlı iletişimsel sınıf dışı çalışmaların PowerPoint'te hazırlanan ve beş hafta süren çalışmaları kullanarak yabancı dilde iletişim kurma eğilimini destekleyip desteklemediğini araştırmaktır. Bu araştırma Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinde, ortanın üstü seviyesinde ve gönüllü olan altı katılımcıyla yürütülmüştür. Bu çalışmanın verileri, beş farklı PPT slaytları, her PPT sonrası ve de çalışmanın en son aşamasında yapılan mülakatlar, anket ve, son olarak, araştırmacı tarafından bilgisayar ortamlı iletişimsel sınıf dışı çalışmaların öğrencilerin yabancı dilde iletişim kurma eğilimini belirlemek için hazırlanan rubrik aracılığıyla toplanmıştır.

Sonuç olarak, katılımcılarla yapılan görüşme ve kriter sonrası elde edilen nicel ve nitel analiz, kendilerine hem pedagojik hem de akademik olarak katkı sağladığı için katılımcıların, dijitalleştirilmiş sınıf dışı konuşma etkinliklerini oldukça olumlu bulduklarını göstermektedir. Ayrıca, bu çalışma, öğrenciler İngilizce

konuşurken daha özgüvenli ve rahat hissettikleri için onların hedef (yabancı) dilde iletişim kurma eğilimlerine önemli bir katkı sağladığını da göstermektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Hedef dilde iletişim kurma eğilimi, konuşma kaygısı, yabancı dilde teknoloji ve bilgisayar ortamlı iletişim.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Thanks to the advances in technology, approaches to education have turned towards more digital and computer-mediated learning modes. The use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings is widely accepted by many researchers (e.g. Bax, 2003; Salaberry, 2001). [1]It is not surprising that many publishing companies develop synchronous CMC (SCMC) and asynchronous CMC (ACMC) materials to enhance students' use of the target language outside the classroom and, at the same time, support the provision of distance learning. Despite these technological improvements, speaking, one of the productive skills, may still be regarded as a complex process. MacIntyre (2014) states that teachers often regard the final goal of their language instruction as attaining communicative competency. Yet, being competent does not guarantee that the learners use the target language to communicate, for ''willing and able are two different things'' (MacIntyre, 2014, p. 216). Therefore, an important objective of language teaching should be producing students who are willing to use the language for authentic purposes (MacIntyre, 2014). However, having limited opportunities and being unwilling to communicate in class for psychological and/or emotional reasons such as lack of motivation and/or excessive amount of anxiety might be the main reasons that cause learners' to remain silent (MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei & Noels, 1998). In order to seek opportunities to communicate in second language (L2) and improve their oral skills, students have to

[1] The course book *SpeakOut* published by Pearson&Longman has its own online platform named MyEnglishLab, and is an example of SCMC and ACMC in and outside the classroom learning.

first demonstrate willingness to communicate (WTC) (MacIntyre, et.al., 1997). Similarly, Kang (2005) suggests if teachers create WTC in L2 learners, producing more active learners is a high possibility. She proposes that ‘‘L2 learners with a high WTC are more likely to use L2 in authentic communication and facilitate language learning’’ (Kang, 2005, p. 278). Second, since they can make independent efforts to learn the language through communication, without teachers’ help, they can become autonomous learners. Third, they can extend their learning opportunities, by taking part in learning activities both inside and outside classrooms with the help of CMC activities (Kang, 2005).

The use of out-of-class ACMC activities, however, can constitute an alternative approach to traditional activities including handouts to improve oral skills. This approach to building speaking skills is underrepresented in the literature. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate a) students’ perceptions about the use of digital language learning materials outside the class as supporting the development of their oral speaking skills, b) whether the use of computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities positively impact students’ WTC, specifically whether it leads to an increase in the integration of target vocabulary items and grammar structures in their oral performances, and c) what the advantages and the challenges they observe when doing computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities.

Background of the Study

Using technology in education has long been considered as an effective tool to involve learners in the process of learning. With the growth in technology, new ways of learning have arisen and these developments in technology have given rise to CMC. According to Simpson (2002), there are two types of CMC, which are synchronous

CMC, where communication happens in the real time, and asynchronous CMC, where the participants aren't necessarily interacting simultaneously (Simpson, 2002).

CMC can be used in EFL settings as it supports language learners by providing additional target language practice opportunities. Many researchers have reported the advantages of the use of CMC (e.g., Bax, 2003; Salaberry, 2001). Rapid developments in communication technology have completely changed how we communicate and interact, so students should be open to alternative modes of interaction, which reflect the communication in their personal lives. Therefore, ACMC can help students practice the target language and help teachers enable distance learning.

In a traditional teaching-learning environment, ACMC focuses mainly on literacy. Classic out-of-class activities place importance mostly on grammar and vocabulary practice and oral skills are considered as peripheral skills. However, students regard speaking as a challenging skill, and therefore, they tend to avoid speaking in class (MacIntyre, 2007). This may also lead to increased anxiety in L2, especially in oral communication. This can also be considered as evidence for students' viewing speaking as a difficult skill to manage. Although the reasons for having poor speaking skills among EFL learners are various, the main reasons might be the limited opportunities to be interactive in classrooms and/or as MacIntyre et al. (2005) claim, the willingness to communicate in the target language.

Willingness to communicate (WTC) is the concept of language learners' seeking and making use of opportunities to actually communicate in L2 (MacIntyre, Dörnyei & Noels, 1998). It can also be defined as readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using an L2 (MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clement & Noels, 1998). WTC is affected by not only social contexts but also learning contexts

(Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide & Shimizu, 2002). MacIntyre et al. (2000) studied the influences of social support with the students of French immersion versus nonimmersion programs. They found that as immersion students have language practices both inside and outside classroom, they have higher WTC (Yashima et al., 2004). WTC might be affected by communicative competence, which are linguistic, discourse and strategic competences as well as social psychological variables and personality traits. The degree of L2 competence may have a significant effect on WTC; likewise, certain personality traits may increase or hinder WTC. That is, the students' personalities play a significant role in their approach and motivation to learning a foreign language. Self-confidence, which is an important trait of L2 learners, includes two key concepts: perceived competence and a lack of anxiety (Clement, 1980, 1986). Perceived competence can be defined as experiencing one-self as capable and competent in interacting with the environment effectively. Perceived competence has a focus on the individual's behavior in achieving success, especially in situations where performance is at stake, like exams. Therefore, activities outside the class as a way to provide extra support for oral communication skills gain importance. Thus, boosting students' perceived oral competence and lessening the psychological and emotional barriers become crucial.

In order to enable out-of-class speaking practice, focusing on the language-learning curriculum, practice activities using computer technology (e.g., using the record function on PowerPoint) may provide the possibilities for communication offered by the electronic age. Research has been done on the use of technology to support SCMC (e.g., Abrams, 2003b; Beauvois, 1998; Kost, 2004; Payne & Whitney, 2002; Payne & Ross, 2005); however, little research has been undertaken on ACMC to support oral communication activities. Therefore, using a digital and interactive tool to create out-of-

class digital communicative activities and exercises may represent an innovative approach to supporting oral language skill.

Statement of the Problem

Over the last decades, there has been a dramatic increase in the development of technology that leads to new ways to learn better and faster, and these developments have given rise to CMC. There are two types of CMC, which are SCMC, where communication happens in the real time, and asynchronous ACMC, where the participants are not necessarily interacting simultaneously (Simpson, 2002). A number of researchers have reported that CMC, which supports language learners with target language practices, can be used in EFL settings, in which learner-centered education is in focus. In teaching-learning environment, ACMC focuses mainly on literacy skills and the traditional out-of-class activities that place importance mostly on grammar and vocabulary practices, and oral skills are considered as peripheral skills. Egan (1999) states that despite being an important skill, speaking has been largely neglected in schools and universities because of the stress on grammar and high teacher-students ratios.

Although the reasons for having poor speaking skills among EFL learners are various, the main reason might be having limited opportunities to be interactive in classrooms as it is difficult to undertake natural oral communication activities with a class of 25-30 and to fit in speaking activities into the grammar/vocabulary focused curriculum. The second reason could be the psychological and emotional factors affecting the communication. Lack of perceived competence and self-confidence as well as the high anxiety may cause demotivation and prevent oral communication (Clement,

1980, 1986). Finally, students not being willing to communicate in the target language might be another factor. The unwillingness to use the target language to communicate is recognized as one of the biggest hindrances for EFL learners (Burgoon, 1976). Based on the concept of ‘‘unwillingness to communicate’’, MacIntyre et al. (1998) propounded a new and positive concept, which is called ‘willingness to communicate’ (WTC). WTC is defined as a state of readiness to engage in L2 (MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei, and Noels, 1998). In order to increase students’ WTC, they should be supported with language practice opportunities. MacIntyre (2014) proposes that teachers should provide the greatest number of facilitating WTC factors. In addition, oral communication skills are assessed by high-stake tests and speaking exams of many university preparatory programs in Turkey; this translates into pressure on students to perform well in speaking exams. Therefore, it is an urgent need for EFL learners to do language practice both inside and outside the classroom. However, little attention in the literature has been devoted to how to develop speaking skills outside the classroom.

As the classroom environment is not necessarily particularly well suited to facilitating natural oral communication practice, out-of-class, asynchronous speaking activities may provide the additional support students need. Therefore, the need for speaking exercises outside the class gains importance. In order to enable this out-of-class speaking practice and focus the learners’ attention on the language-learning curriculum, ACMC can be a viable alternative for students to practice the target language not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom; however, to date, few studies have examined the effect of asynchronous computer-mediated communicative out-of-class speaking activities on the development of oral skills.

Hence, using digital technology as a tool to create out-of-class opportunities to practice target structures and lexis with certain prompts can constitute an alternative approach to traditional handouts.

Research Questions

1. To what extent do the out-of-class speaking activities support the development of students' oral speaking skills?
2. a) How does the use of computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities impact students' WTC?

   b) Specifically, do students consider that the out-of-class speaking activities built their confidence with respect to using the target structures and vocabulary in the classroom?
3. What advantages/challenges do students observe in using computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities to improve their speaking skills?

Significance of the Study

It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the benefits of CMC for learners in EFL settings. Due to the lack of research on computer-mediated communicative out-of-class speaking practice, the results of this study will contribute to the existing literature by giving further insight into the use of speaking activities outside the class. Thus, the study will demonstrate how additional language practice opportunities may be created by using computer technology.

At the local level, this study will demonstrate how digital technology can be used as a tool to increase students' opportunities to communicate orally in English. The use of innovative technology is likely to also positively affect students' motivation to learn. As Egan (1999) states computers have a role to play in learning to speak, and researchers

have asserted that CMC activities can help learners develop interactive competence (Blake, 2000; Chun, 1994; Smith, 2003). Students are expected to take advantage of the possibilities for communication offered by the electronic age and increase WTC by being more motivated. Owing to the positive results related to interactive communication, researchers (Blake, 2000; Chun, 1994; Smith, 2003) have claimed that learners can develop interactive competence through CMC activities.

Moreover, by analyzing students' performance on digitalized activities, this study will demonstrate how such activities can positively impact students learning. It will also attempt to contribute to curriculum development in terms of integrating out-of-class interactive and personalized activities into existing curriculum and, thereby, encourage the organization of the teaching-learning environment in a more learner-centered way.

Conclusion

In this chapter, an overview of the literature on the use of digital technology in the forms of SCMC and ACMC technologies in the EFL setting and the effects on learners' WTC have been provided. Furthermore, the introduction of the study through a statement of the problem, research questions, and the significance of the study has been presented. The next chapter will review the relevant literature on ACMC and SCMC technologies, speaking skill and speaking anxiety, materials development and focus on WTC to promote out-of-class speaking activities in more detail. In the third chapter, the methodology, which includes the setting, participants, instruments as well as methods and procedures of data collection, will be described. In the fourth chapter, the collected

data will be analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively and reported. Finally, the fifth chapter will present the discussion of the findings, pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The aim of this mixed-methods study is to investigate a) whether students perceive that the computer-mediated communicative (CMC) out-of-class speaking activities support the development of their oral speaking skills, b) whether the use of computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities positively impact students' willingness to communicate (WTC), c) whether students consider that the out-of-class speaking activities contributed to building their level of confidence with respect to using the target structures and vocabulary in the classroom, d) the advantages students perceive in using computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities to improve their speaking skills, and e) the difficulties/challenges they experience when doing computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities.

A further aim of this study is to investigate whether the use of computer-mediated communicative out-of-class speaking activities support the development of students' WTC, measured by using students' performance on PowerPoint exercises over a period of 5 weeks. WTC in this study is defined as students' demonstrating confidence in their ability to communicate in English by responding to oral exercises appropriately using more than the minimal response required to answer satisfactorily a prompt. As explicated by Clement, Baker, and MacIntyre (2003), WTC comprises both a social-contextual dimension and affective-cognitive factors. In this study, students exhibit WTC by demonstrating willingness to engage in communication about a given topic, displaying a positive attitude towards the communicative context (in this case, the use of

CMC and the specially designed PowerPoint exercises), motivation to use the target language, and confidence in their perceived ability to use the target language appropriately.

The specific research questions address in this study are the following:

1. To what extent do the out-of-class speaking activities support the development of students' oral speaking skills?
2. a) How does the use of computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities impact students' WTC?

   b) Specifically, do students consider that the out-of-class speaking activities built their confidence with respect to using the target structures and vocabulary in the classroom?
3. What advantages/challenges do students observe in using computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities to improve their speaking skills?

It is anticipated that the results of this study will provide for the development of digital and interactive tools to create out-of-class digital communicative activities and exercises and will support how to integrate them into the school curriculum as an instructional activity involving prep school students at Anadolu University.

Since the study a) will explore students' perceptions toward the use of computer-mediated communication outside the class to support L2 learning, especially speaking skills, and b) whether the use of computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities' positively impact on students' WTC, this chapter reviews the changing roles of technology and the use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) in language teaching. This study especially focuses on the use of asynchronous computer-mediated

communication (ACMC) as a tool for language learning. Second, the importance of speaking skill in L2 learning and speaking anxiety is examined. Third, the importance of materials development, particularly the use of technology for materials development is explained. Finally, the significance of WTC in foreign language learning is discussed.

Technology in Education

Technology and education are the terms that have been used together and connected to each other for a long time even in the very beginning of the methods. Teachers had the tendency to use the blackboard as the most common technological instrument previously as it was a perfect tool for them to yield one-way communication in classrooms. Later, the overhead projectors and audiotapes came into language teachers' lives with the use of language labs to facilitate learning through drills. The use of basic computer programs was the next innovation in language classrooms, and since then, with the development of new technologies, it has almost become a prerequisite for language teachers to incorporate these innovations into their teaching practice.

How these innovative technological instruments can be exploited with today's students who are eminently enthusiastic about technology is the point that is worth pondering by language educators. The use of technology has the potential to heighten students' interest and enjoyment in the learning process. It also provides a chance for learners to engage in this process in privacy at their own pace, and in a safe environment in which errors are corrected and the feedback is given (Egan, 1999). Therefore, these rapid developments of technology, specifically expanding use of computers, and the implementation of this cutting edge into classroom practice have created the need of computer-mediated communication (CMC) for language teaching and learning

(Simpson, 2002).

Computer-mediated Communication

Computer-mediated communication (CMC) can be defined as the communication through the use of two or more electronic devices, particularly computers. According to Simpson (2002), CMC is an umbrella term and is attributed to communication among people by means of computers to connect to each other. CMC is also defined as multimodal and often, but not exclusively, Internet-mediated communication (Warschauer & Meskill, 2000). Thurlow, Lengel and Alic (2004) describe CMC as any human communication achieved through, or with the help of, computer technology. ‘‘CMC is communication that takes place between human beings via the instrumentality of computers’’ is another definition proposed by Herring (Herring, 1996, p. 1).

CMC in Second Language Learning

CMC has been acknowledged for promoting foreign language (FL) learning, as it creates a more positive and flexible learning environment, which brings about more interaction, learner output and positive attitudes toward language learning when it is compared to face-to-face communication in classroom (Abrams, 2003). As cited by Arnold (2007), recent studies have pointed out that CMC might have a positive impact on FL communication apprehension due to its being more friendly and interactive, which, therefore, leads to minimization of the amount of constraint upon FL learners. According to Abrams, learners use a wider range of social and language functions than in face-to-face communication, and it is apparent that certain language features, like syntactic complexity, lexical sophistication, and amount of speech support the persistent

use of CMC (Abrams, 2001).

Modes of CMC

CMC has two modes, which are synchronous and asynchronous. In synchronous communication, the interaction takes place in real time and all participants are online at the same time. In contrast, asynchronous communication does not occur in real time, and the interaction is delayed. In other words, the participants aren't necessarily online simultaneously. Synchronous CMC (SCMC) includes different types of text-based online chat, computer, audio, and video conferencing; whereas, asynchronous CMC (ACMC) includes delayed interaction such as email, discussion forums, and mailing lists (Simpson, 2002).

Differences between SCMC and ACMC in terms of lexical variety, density, and syntactic complexity have been an ongoing debate. However, various similarities and differences between these two modalities are indisputable. Extensive learner-to-learner or learner-learner-teacher negotiation of meaning, more talking time for each learner than oral classroom communication, higher amount of output with richer and more diverse lexicon, written code and register are among the similarities. Yet, while the participants have extended planning, encoding and decoding time in ACMC, the responses are comparatively more immediate and the interlocutors have to be present simultaneously in SCMC. The use of outside resources is limited in SCMC, but the participants of ACMC can take advantage of limitless resources (Abrams, 2003).

Thanks to the delayed and space-free nature of the ACMC, the participants have the independence to communicate anywhere, which makes ACMC superior to SCMC in

educational purposes and thus promotes learning (Turoff, 1990). Sotillo (2000) also points out that on account of the delayed nature of asynchronous discussions participants have more opportunities to produce syntactically complex language.

In addition to having the freedom to choose where to study comfortably, ASCM also allows the learners to choose to work at a time that is convenient and comfortable for them. This flexibility appears to impact on learners' fluency as well. Egbert and Jessup (1996) argued that computer-enhanced environments offer greater potential for individualized learning and also more flexibility for learners. Egbert and Hanson-Smith (2007), Levy and Stockwell (2006), and Tiene and Luft (2001) also claim that flexibility leads to greater individualization for students in learning.

Teachers have mainly used email exchanges and online discussion boards as ACMC activities in different ways to promote learning, and there has been a common view of ACMC as a tool to improve lexis and written skills. However, Hirotani (2009) quested whether the differences of SCMC and ACMC affect learners' oral proficiency development.

Speaking

Speech is a basic quality of human species and it is the primary form of communication. As cited by Florez (1999), speaking is an interactive and mutual process of conveying meaning by producing, receiving and processing information (Brown, 1994; Burns & Joyce, 1997).

Since speaking involves the production of systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning, it is also defined as oral communication skill. Oral communication ability has

become increasingly important to many EFL students. In the past the primary focus of teaching FL was on grammatical rules, sentence patterns, memorization of vocabulary, and translation (Thanasoulas, 2002). Later on, during the mid-1950s, oral communication skills started to gain importance in second language instruction. However, for many years, language learners were taught to speak by repeating sentences and memorizing and reciting dialogues as in the Audio-lingual method. Audio-lingualism was prominent as it presented the first ‘‘clear perspective on the teaching of oral skills’’ (Bygate, 2001, p. 14). Other methodologies such as the Silent Way, Desuggestopedia, etc. had a focus on oral communication regarding the emphasis on native-like pronunciation and habit formation. During the 20th century, the researchers in second language acquisition realized the importance of interaction, and thus Communicative Language Learning (CLL) emerged. CLL places a stronger emphasis on oral communication than many previous approaches to language learning and teaching. Developments in teaching spoken language were matched by developments in assessing students' oral production.

While there have been different approaches to the assessment of oral communication, the different aspects of a student's oral performance may be evaluated by attention to fluency, accuracy and complexity (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, p. 139). Often assessments focus predominantly on accuracy. Accuracy refers to ‘‘how well the target language is produced by taking account the rules of the language’’ (Skehan, 1996b, p. 23). Fluency is the production of the language without many pauses and is produced easily. Complexity, on the other hand, is the extent to which the learner produces elaborated language (Skehan, 2001). According to Skehan, it also reflects

learners' preparedness to take risks and to restructure their interlanguage (Skehan, 1996). As proposed by Foster, Tonkyn & Wigglesworth (2000), complexity may be measured by the Analysis of Speech unit (AS-Unit). An AS-unit is defined as ''a single speaker's utterance consisting of an independent clause or a sub-clausal unit, together with any subordinate clause(s) associated with either'' (Foster et al., 2000, p. 365). This unit is mainly a syntactic unit, and is considered as a valid unit by researchers like Ellis (2005) while analyzing spoken language. The extracts below illustrate how AS-Units are calculated (Foster, et al., 2000, p. 365-367).

| That's right | (1 AS-Unit)

| You go to the main street of Twickenham | (1 AS-Unit)

| I have no opportunity to visit | (1 clause, 1 AS-Unit)

| and you be surprise :: how he can work | (2 clauses, 1 AS-Unit)

| and they pinned er a notice to his front :: what he had done | and marched him around the streets with a gun at his back | (2 AS-Units)

However, if the sequence of an adverbial clause, especially the final one, is loose, and if it is in the same tone unit, it can be considered part of the same AS-Unit as the speaker has planned to use it. The extracts below show the differences (Foster et al., 2000, p. 367).

| I can bring him tomorrow together :: where you can talk with him | (1 AS-Unit)

| specifically for reading scientific papers | because er all the papers that er

arrived to the library in Chile are English paper | (2 AS-Units)

Speaking Anxiety

Many teachers experience difficulty in implementing speaking activities in the classroom in which all students are provided with an equitable amount of speaking practice. Teachers may find it difficult to overcome some students' apparent unwillingness to participate in classroom activities. According to Li and Liu (2011), reticence in class hinders not only student learning and teacher effectiveness but also classmate benefits of learning (Li & Liu, 2011). Such reticence is often caused by feelings of anxiety. Li and Liu divide the causes of FL anxiety into three components: communication apprehension, test anxiety and negative evaluation (Li & Liu, 2011). Young (1991), on the other hand, identified six potential sources of language anxiety, some of which are associated with the learner, some with the teacher and some with the instructional practice. As cited in Liu (2013, p. 77), Young (1991) listed these reasons as ''1) personal and interpersonal anxieties; 2) learner beliefs about language learning; 3) instructors belief about language teaching; 4) instructor-learner interaction; 5) classroom procedures and 6) language testing''. Tsui (1996), on the other hand, claims that learners' lack of ability to understand what the teacher is saying in class, teachers' low tolerance of learner silence and learners' fear of making mistakes, which causes embarrassment, are the major reasons. Previous studies have also suggested some other possible reasons for language anxiety, especially during oral production in class. To illustrate, the foreign language learning (FLL) process is a risk-taking situation,

especially for adult learners. Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) believe adults generally perceive themselves as "reasonably intelligent, socially-adapt individuals". When speakers communicate in their native language, it is easy to understand the interlocutor or to make himself understood. However, in a FLL situation, there might be a mismatch between the learners' ‘‘true- self’’ and ‘‘limited-self’’ because of the lack of command of the foreign language. As a result of this, learners’ sense of themselves may be a ‘‘reduced personality’’, and they may feel that ‘‘they project a silly and boring image’’ (Littlewood, 1984, p. 59). Besides, although MacIntyre (2014) states that anxiety is felt at all levels of proficiency, most learners, especially at the initial stages of FLL, lack the linguistic tools needed to express themselves, and even when they do, they do not usually have the opportunity for this, for the interaction is mostly dominated by the class teacher (Littlewood, 1984).

Another reason for this reticence may be "the risk of making a fool of oneself" in a FL classroom (Allwright & Bailey, 1991, p. 175). Even if learners get the answer right, they may still make mistakes in how they say it including difficulties in pronouncing particular sounds or producing the correct stress or the intonation, and it is almost impossible to avoid being affected by feelings of anxiety when one is conscious of difficulties. Likewise, this may cause the fear of being regarded as ‘‘incompetent’’ (Allwright & Bailey 1991). Similarly, Tatar (2014) argues that silence in class may not be an indication of lack of knowledge or interest but may be a conscious choice for non-native speakers. The negative feelings or the fear of being regarded as incompetent inhibit learners from communicating in classroom (Tatar, 2014). In addition, as Kang (2005) suggests, unless teachers provide the greatest number of facilitating WTC factors, learners will not be able to capitalize on communication opportunities to interact (Kang,

2005). This is a serious hindrance for them to become competent L2 users and to improve their oral skills, and eventually, leads students to be unwilling to communicate.

Unlike writing, which consists of evaluating, critiquing, and revising, the way we speak is often considered to be a more intimate reflection of who we are (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 1996). However, in the classroom, discomfort with oral communication in a foreign language may lead learners to feel more inhibited (Tatar, 2014). Given that speaking can heighten anxiety and anxiety negatively affects fluency (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Therefore, the role of the environment becomes increasingly important. Maclntyre and Gardner (1991) claim that students who experience anxiety are at a disadvantage when compared to others. As a result, language teachers should take into consideration the possibility that anxiety is responsible for the student behaviors, such as reticence and unwillingness to communicate in class. This kind of awareness, as pointed out by Scarcella and Oxford (1992), also diminishes teacher impatience with nervous students who seem unwilling or unable to participate freely.

Anxiety has been found to negatively influence speaking performance (Aida, 1994). Anxiety has also been identified as contributing to how willing a learner is to try to communicate (MacIntyre, 2007; Young, 1991). Yet, attempts to create lower anxiety learning environments have not always been successful. Therefore, in order to deal with the anxieties caused by the personal reasons, language teachers should also focus on the environment. As Young (1991) noted, a language-learning environment can determine the anxiety level of students. That is, the environment plays a crucial role in speaking anxiety and spoken performance.

It can be quite difficult to make students speak in class as speaking publicly in the target language is anxiety provoking for many students although they may feel little stress in other aspects of language learning (Tok, 2009). Since anxious learners are less likely to volunteer to participate in oral activities, language teachers may sometimes face big problems to encourage their students to engage in in-class activities (Ely, 1986). In classrooms where the instruction is predominantly teacher-centered, one-way communication (teacher to student) still predominates and this type of communication takes precedence over interaction among students. As a result, students avoid doing in-class activities or communicating with their peers (Aykaç, 2005).

Taking into consideration all these factors, a variety of methods to help learners achieve improved oral skills were sought out by the educational institutions including language schools and universities (Chen, 2011). In order to provide more real interaction opportunities, these schools have opened their doors to native English speakers increasingly. In addition, class sizes have been reduced so that students have more interaction with their teachers in the target language (Chen, 2011).

The importance of better English oral communication skills has widely accepted in the ELT world, and most scholars and educators have been seeking ways to promote speaking skills. Computer-mediated communication outside the class is perhaps the easiest way to achieve this goal in this current age of technology.

CMC and Oral Communication

Oral communication, especially when it is spontaneous, might be challenging for FL learners, as it requires understanding the others and making oneself understood by

others. As Arnold (2007) states, these challenges may cause communication apprehension, which is a kind of shyness stemming from fear or anxiety to interact with others. However, computer-mediated communication (CMC) can have a positive impact on FL anxiety level. Researchers have discussed the psychological benefits of CMC, which in turn have advantages for linguistic competence. They believe that both asynchronous and synchronous CMC create a less stressful learning environment, which permit all learners to participate in the discussion (Bump, 1990; Roed, 2003; Warschauer, 1996). Some researchers like Beauvois (1998) and Warschauer (1996) also stated that CMC sessions caused almost no stress and anxiety. As a result, even unwilling and reticent individulals, who refrain from oral in-class interaction, often become volunteer to participate in the electronic setting (Kelm, 1992; Kern, 1995; Warschauer, 1996).

There are two major reasons that CMC makes the language learning setting less stressful and anxious. First, according to Roed (2003), CMC creates a rather anonymous environment, where the computer acts ‘‘as a shield from being on-stage’’ (Bradley & Lomicka, 2000, p. 362). The underlying reason for this stress-free environment is the absence of paralinguistics, like frowning, raised eyebrows, etc. and social clues such as age, gender, race, etc. in CMC (Warschauer et al., 1996). This makes learners less visible, and, therefore, can be considered as threat-free environment (Daly, 1991). For these reasons, according to Kung (2004), the use SCMC discussions can be a good language-learning tool. Second, students are granted flexibility, and thereby they have the opportunity to participate in language learning tasks at their own pace in CMC setting, especially asynchronous CMC because CMC allows participants to have more flexible time to plan and monitor their own learning process. It also allows participants

to compensate for the cognitive interference of anxiety during planning, monitoring and processing input.

Since the studies have shown that CMC offers possibilities to communicate in the target language, and help learners overcome their shyness and reticence, to my knowledge, the use of CMC outside the class may also help learners be successful in oral test performances as well as communicating orally in class.

CMC and other Factors that Affect Oral Proficiency

The effects of CMC on language abilities have been debated for a while, especially whether it has impact on oral communication skills. Beauvois (1997) reported in his pilot study that learners who took part in CMC surpassed their non-CMC peers in oral exams on pronunciation, grammatical accuracy, lexical choice and accuracy, and content. Similarly, Egbert and Jessup (1996) suggested that computer-enhanced environments offer greater potential for individualized learning and more flexibility for learners. As can be seen from studies on the effects of CMC on language proficiency, CMC provides an authentic, student-centered environment, and allows students "to play a greater role in managing the discourse" (Chun, 1994, p. 1).

In short, regarding the findings of the studies, there are three main assets in CMC: a) more participation from passive or reticent students, b) positive effects on language learning, and c) positive attitude towards the use of computer for communication. Psychological factors, which were positively affecting learners' attitude and participation, were also discussed in earlier studies (Ho, 2004).

However, there are other factors that affect oral proficiency. For instance, foreign

language anxiety, which is closely associated with speaking skill, is one of the best-known factors that hinder communication. This can result from the fear of being viewed as ridiculed by classmates when learners make mistakes in class. As a result, the teacher and the confident students become dominant, thereby; these students take the opportunity to practice more.

Another reason is the use of language learning strategies. There have been studies, which argue that successful language learners are apt to search for and create learning opportunities not only in-class and but also outside the classroom (Cohen 1998, as cited in Gao, 2008). In other words, a learner, who is willing to commit himself to learning the target language both taking the advantages of in-class activities and also the activities beyond the classroom, is more likely to use the language learning strategies, and thus, demonstrate initiate and learner autonomy.

In addition to language anxiety and language learning strategies, as Burgoon (1976) suggests, the unwillingness to speak in the target language is one of the biggest disincentives to communicate orally (Burgoon, 1976). This unwillingness can be observed in different forms such as apprehension, low self-esteem, lack of communicative competence, alienation, anomie and introversion (Burgoon, 1976). Similarly, as cited in Şener (2014), Cao (2011) claims that WTC in L2 classrooms is facilitated by a combination of classroom environmental conditions including topic, task, interlocutor, teacher and group size and linguistic factors. These types of learners who lack willingness tend to avoid communication and prefer to keep silent when possible. In order to help these learners to overcome these difficulties, which may result in poor speaking performance, learning should be supported with out-of-class activities

by making use of CMC. However, the materials that can serve this purpose should be developed and designed appropriately so as to encourage the learners achieve competence in language skills, especially in oral communication. Therefore, it is important to briefly examine the process of materials development and the use of technology in materials development and task design.

Materials Development

Material is a term used for not only textbooks but also other language-learning tasks. These tasks can either be used in the classroom or outside the class. However, the development of language-learning materials necessitates caution in order to fully serve the needs of the learners.

In order to develop quality materials, various researchers discuss on various principles. Hall (1995), cited by Tomlinson (2010), suggests four principles of effective materials: the need to communicate, the need for long-term goals, the need for authenticity and the need for student-centeredness. According to Bell and Gower (1998), flexibility, emphasis on review, personalized practice, integrated skills and learner development are the basic principles for materials development. Also, as cited in Harwood, 2010, p. 83), Tomlinson (1998, 2010, 2012) claims materials should:

- Expose the learners to language in authentic use.
- Help learners to pay attention to features of authentic input.
- Provide the learners with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes.
- Provide opportunities for outcome feedback.

- Achieve impact in the sense that they arouse and sustain the learners' curiosity and attention.
- Stimulate intellectual, aesthetic and emotional involvement.

In order for the learners to make the best of materials, they should be exposed to a rich, meaningful and comprehensible input of language in use (Krashen 1985, 1993, 1999). That is, the language acquisition necessitates a lot of experience of the language being used in a variety of different ways and purposes. Also, the input should be meaningful and the learner should be able to understand enough of this input so as to gain positive access to it. To do this, materials should contain ample oral and written texts, which are authentic and contextualized (Tomlinson, 2010). Also, if learners are emotionally involved in the language acquisition process, and are positive towards this involvement, they will more likely to achieve communicative competence. Therefore, materials should be engaging, relevant and enjoyable as well as challenging enough. According to Tomlinson's principles of materials development, ''Learners need opportunities to use language to try to achieve communicative purposes'' (Tomlinson, 2010, p. 94). In other words, if students interact with one another, they need to clarify themselves as well as elicit meaningful and comprehensible input from the interlocutors. So as to do this, learners need to be provided by tasks that let them produce language and develop their abilities to communicate appropriately and with a focus that may move from fluency to accuracy according to the needs of the task.

Technology in Materials Development

Technology nowadays plays a crucial role in the materials development process,

not only as a means of creating them but also of delivering the content. As cited by Harwood (2010), Reinders and White (2010) claim that technology supports the learners' language-learning process and extend the opportunities outside the class. The contribution of the computerized materials for language learning and teaching is inevitable in language education; this language-learning process is named as computer-assisted language learning (CALL).

These computerized materials include tasks, web sites, software, online courses and virtual learning environments. So, it is clear that there may be more CALL materials than the materials used in face-to-face education. Although these materials are similar in some ways to traditional materials as they both aid learners to develop language acquisition, the computerized materials have also distinctive features. Godwin-Jones (2005) suggests some advantages of CALL materials including computer literacy development, communicative skills development, community building, identity creation, collaborative learning, and mentoring. Zhao (2005) identified further advantages including access to digital multimedia technologies; having authenticity with the help of the videos and the Internet; enhancing comprehensibility through learner control; opportunities for communication; providing feedback; offering computer-based grammar checkers and spell checkers; and tracking and analyzing students errors and behaviors.

Apart from these advantages, CALL materials also have organizational and pedagogical advantages. Access is one of the biggest benefits of these materials because CALL materials can be presented to learners independent of time and place (Harwood, 2010). This also provides learners opportunities to use the target language outside the

classroom. The second organizational advantage is the storage and retrieval of learning behavior records and outcomes. The progress of language learners and their test results can be stored electronically and brought back any time when necessary, which saves time and energy in that electronic storage lightens the teachers' and administrators' work load. In addition to access and storage, CALL materials can easily be shared and updated. These recycling of materials help developers save time as well. For the pedagogical advantages of CALL materials, authenticity may be the most outstanding one. The reason for this is that CALL materials help developers to design more authentic materials as it allows the selection of content of the target language. Another reason is that these materials can be similar to the ones learners use in their everyday life. The use of educational games for language learning is a good example of authenticity. Besides, they facilitate interaction and language use. Moreover, they provide opportunities for learners to use the language in a socioculturally meaningful context, in which these computer technologies provide materials tailored to a particular situation. The opportunity to have access to guidance and support, to record their progress and to complete real-world activities has undeniable effect on students' motivation and their ability to speak. Kukulska-Hulme (2009) states that mobile technology takes learning out of the classroom, and allow language learning to move between indoors and outdoors, across formal and informal settings. Also, Harwood (2010) suggests CALL activities can be consisted of moving objects, recording one's voice, etc., which are new types of activities in language-learning and can be enhanced in number and variety. Getting immediate feedback is another major advantage of CALL materials, and different forms of feedback can be give to the learners such as using sound, movement, visual, or a combination of all. Monitoring and recording learners' behavior and

progress is another pedagogical asset. Through the computer programs, learners' progress can be recorded and monitored. Also, it allows making suggestions easily. These kinds of materials can assist learners to have metacognitive awareness and help them prioritize their learning and, therefore, they can select their own way of learning strategies. The last, but not the least, advantage is learners' having control over how they benefit from CALL materials. These materials can be tailored to individual needs considering the level of challenge of the input or the amount of support one needs.

In short, since technology plays a prominent role in materials development, it is inevitable to ignore the support of CALL materials in language learning process. CALL materials have a number of advantages, both organizational and pedagogical. Easy access, storage and retrieval as well as sharing and recycling materials without consuming time can be categorized under the main organizational benefits. Authenticity, interaction, situated learning, immediate feedback, monitoring and recording learners' behavior and progress and learners' control over how they make use of these materials with the help of the development of metacognitive skills can be listed as the pedagogical advantages of CALL materials.

Since the aim of this study is to investigate whether digitalized out-of-class activities with the help of CMC have an impact on students' success, especially in oral communication skills, beside the development of computerized materials tailored to the needs of the students, I now consider another factor that can affect the oral proficiency, the role of WTC.

Willingness to Communicate

The concept of willingness to communicate (WTC) was initially formed with reference to first language communication. The concept was introduced to the communication literature by McCroskey and Baer (1985) who built upon the earlier work of Burgoon (1976) and others (MacIntyre, 1998). McCroskey and Baer (1985) defined WTC as the possibility of engaging in communication when the participants are free to choose to do so. However, according to McIntyre (1998), WTC was considered basically as a personality trait. MacIntyre (2007) investigated why some people wanted to speak up whereas others remained silent even though the opportunity was provided. He also stated that even after studying a foreign language for years, some learners were not L2 users (MacIntyre, 2007). There are various reasons for this such as individual, social linguistic, situational and other factors. McCroskey and his colleagues (1998) stated that WTC had a relationship with characteristics like communication apprehension, perceived communication competence, introversion-extraversion, self-esteem, and so forth. Yet, WTC is one of the key concepts for L2 learners' reluctance to volunteer to speak (MacIntyre, 2007).

There are many variables that may affect an individual's WTC. The communicators' familiarity with each other, the number of people in the setting, the formality of the context, the degree of evaluation of the speaker, the topic, and other factors can shape a person's WTC. However, the language may be the most striking variable (McIntyre et al., 1998). To be more specific, the change in the language for communication is indubitably influences the communication and its setting, as it potentially involves many of the variables that contribute to WTC.

WTC in the Second Language

Researchers have conducted a series of studies that indicate the various individual reasons affecting second language (SL) learning. Attitudes, motivation, language anxiety on proficiency or achievement are among the most known. However, a more recent concept, WTC, has emerged as another influential component (Yashima, 2002). The concept, which was originally associated with L1, was applied to L2 communication by McIntyre and Charos (1996). Since recent educational policies mostly put emphasis on communication skills, individual differences in L2 communication gained importance. MacIntyre (1994) developed a path model which was directly influenced by communication apprehension and perceived communicative competence. Figure 1 demonstrates how the combination of greater perceived communicative confidence and a lower level of communication anxiety lead to WTC (MacIntyre, 1994, as cited in Yashima, 2002, p. 55).

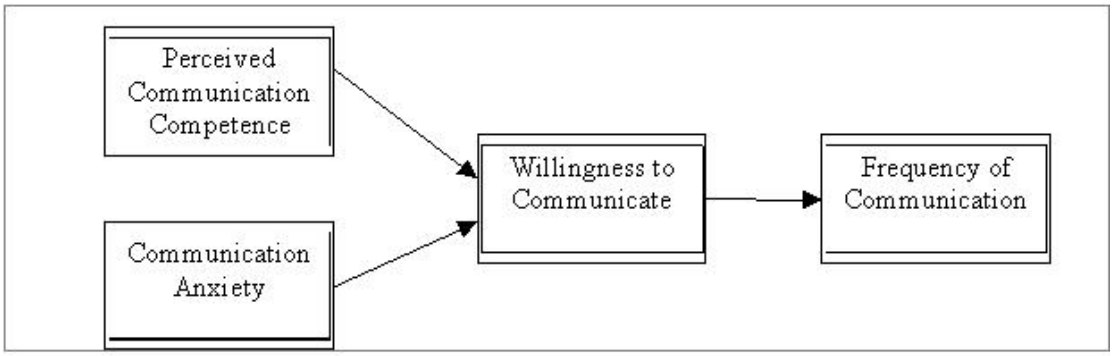

Figure 1. Portion of MacIntyre's (1994) willingness to communicate model

MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei and Noels (1998) created another heuristic model that shows the range of possible influences on WTC in the L2. The relationships among the constructs are displayed in a pyramid-shaped structure. The top of the pyramid

(Layer I) represents the communication behavior regarding L2 use, which is affected by both immediate situational factors and more enduring influences.

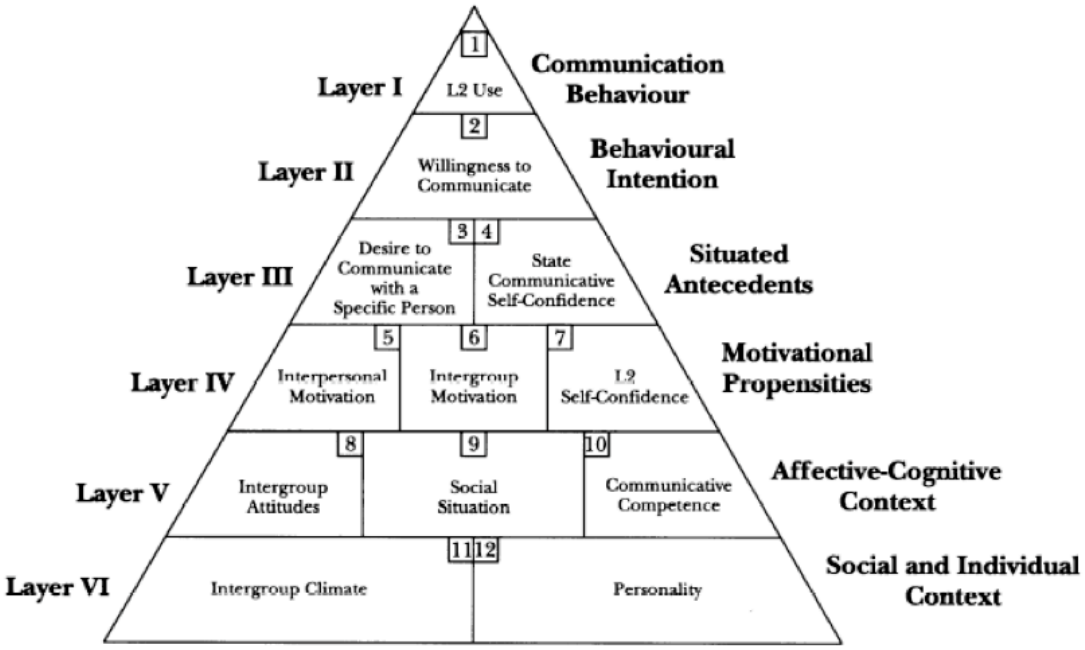

Figure 2. Heuristic model of variables influencing WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547)

The pyramid shape also indicates the proximity and immediacy of some factors with each other. Besides, the pyramid is built upon social and individual context (Layer VI) including personality so that it becomes the basis of the precedents. When moved from these basic influences through the top of the pyramid, the focus on L2 communication and the reasons of the proximity becomes more evident.

Layer I: Communication Behaviour

MacIntrye and his associates (1998) consider authentic communication in L2 as a ‘‘complex system of interrelated variables’’ (p. 547). The term ‘‘communication behavior’’ has a broader meaning including activities like speaking up in class, reading L2 newspapers, watching L2 television, or utilizing a L2 on the job. Yet, language

teachers often fail to create opportunities for L2 communication. MacIntrye et al. (1998) believe that the fundamental goal of learning a L2 is to stimulate language learners' willingness to undertake communication opportunities. In other words, establishing WTC should be an important objective for L2 education.

Layer II: Willingness To Communicate

WTC can be defined as readiness to engage in discussion at a specific time with a specific person or persons via L2. In a classroom setting, for instance, if students raise their hands after the teacher asks a question, all of the students who raise their hand express WTC in L2 because hand-rising is a non-verbal clue, indicating their willingness to attempt to the take part in the communicative event if they are given the opportunity. Also, they need to have sufficient amount of self-confidence with the target language so as to comprehend the question and respond to it. Students' previous language learning experience has developed their self-confidence, which is ''based on a lack of anxiety combined with a sufficient level of communicative competence'' (MacIntrye, et al., 1998, p. 548). Finally, students' personality traits contribute to language learning. To exemplify, a learner's choosing a conversational course rather than a literature course may be on account of the learner's personality traits.

WTC is closely associated with behavioral intention such as: ''I plan to speak up, given the opportunity'' (MacIntyre, et al., 1998, p. 548). Behavioral intentions have been examined mostly in the fields of psychology and communication. Among the best-known theories about behavioral intensions, The Theory of Planned Behavior holds that the most immediate cause of behavior is the person's actual control over his or her actions (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

According to The Theory of Planned Behavior, intention is the basic reason that leads to engagement in behavior, and as MacIntyre et al. (1998) states, ‘‘it is based on subjective norms, attitude toward the behavior, and perceived behavioral control’’ (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 548). Subjective norms are based on beliefs that people exhibit behavior when others want them to do so. Attitudes derive from beliefs concerning the outcomes of behavior and the desire to experience those outcomes. Lastly, perceived behavioral control is the belief that one can successfully carry out an action that will cause desirable consequences. As a result, intention has influence on behavior. MacIntyre et al (1998) applied this theory to their discussions of the determinants of WTC, and they believe behavior is greatly shaped by intention or willingness to act. That is, each individual has some control of his or her actions and is behaving so as to pursue his or her goals.

Layer III: Situated Antecedents Of Communication

As shown in Figure 2, WTC has two precursors, which are the desire to communicate with a specific person and state communicative self-confidence.

Box 3. Desire to communicate with a specific person

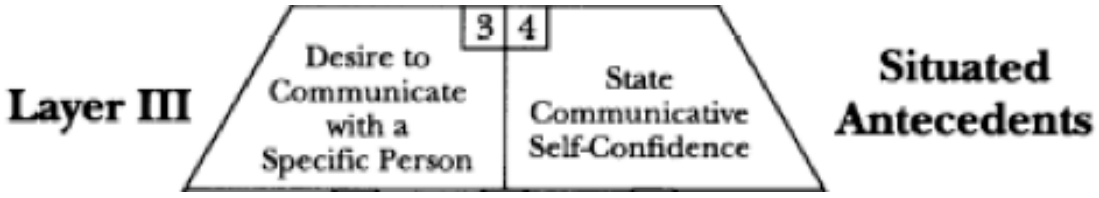

Figure 3. Layer III of MacIntyre’s pyramid shape: desire to communicate with a specific person (Box 3) (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547).

As shown in Figure 3, Box 3 refers to ‘‘desire to communicate with a specific person’’. This tendency occurs with a combination of interindividual and intergroup

motivations that take part in Layer IV below. In both cases, affiliation and control motives are thought to foster the desire to communicate (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Since research explains that affiliation exists with persons who are close to each other and have often met, physically attractive persons, and the ones who are similar to us in some ways, affiliation may be the most important factor in informal situations with an attractive, L2 speaking interlocutor (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Control, however, refers to task-related situation where speakers look for opportunities to influence each other's behavior. In other words, it can be defined as a motivation for interpersonal communication. Control may bring about L2 usage if speakers feel comfortable enough when they use the language effectively.

Box 4. State communicative self-confidence

Clement (1980, 1986) described self-confidence as made up of two key constructs, perceived competence and a lack of anxiety. MacIntyre et al (1998) made a distinction between trait-like self-confidence and state self-confidence, which is more a momentary feeling of self-confidence. State self-confidence has also two components, state anxiety, which is the emotional reaction due to feelings of tension and apprehension, and state perceived competence, which refers to the feeling of having the capacity to communicate effectively. In the situation of the increase in state anxiety, the individual reduces his or her self-confidence and, consequently, one's WTC. Various factors such as unpleasant prior experiences, intergroup tension, increased fear of assimilation, and increased number of people listening may increase the amount of anxiety. However, state perceived competence could rise if an individual has encountered this situation before, yet it is necessary that s/he has developed language

knowledge and skills. In brief, the desire to interact and state self-confidence are significant determinants of WTC.

Layer IV: Motivational Propensities

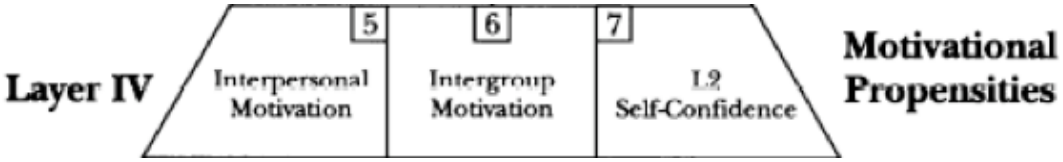

Figure 4. Layer IV of MacIntyre's pyramid shape (Box 4) (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p.547).

As can be seen in Figure 4, there are three variables that affect motivational propensities: interindividual motivation, intergroup motivation, and L2 confidence.

Box 5. Interpersonal motivation

Interpersonal communication situations can be explained by two factors, control and affiliation. Control initiates the communication between interlocutors, yet limiting the freedom of communicators, as this type of communication is mostly hierarchical task-related situations. Doctors who communicate to take control of the patients' behaviors, or teachers who control their students are examples of control. The second feature of interpersonal motivation is affiliation, which arises from the interest in establishing a relationship. The interlocutor's personal characteristics including attractiveness, similarity, physical proximity and the number of encounters, has a great influence on the affiliation (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Box 6. Intergroup motivation

Unlike interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation stems from belonging to

a particular group. The intergroup climate and intergroup attitudes would have a direct impact on intergroup motivation.

Similar to interpersonal motivation, intergroup communication situations can also be explained by two purposes, control and affiliation, and in intergroup relations, motivation to control would have the same communicative behaviors results as the interpersonal situation. In this case, however, the control is established between groups. Affiliation occurs when one desires to establish or keep a rapport with another group members. The most important features of interpersonal motivation are the attitudes and integrativeness (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Box 7. L2 self-confidence

Interpersonal and intergroup motivations form the affective and social features of motivation. L2 confidence, on the other hand, is about the relationship between the individual and the L2. It is the belief that a L2 learner can communicate in the target language adaptively and efficiently. L2 self-confidence has two components. The first one is cognitive and related to the learner's self-evaluation of his or her language skills. The second component is affective and is about language anxiety in classroom situation (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

In short, motivational propensities include interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation and L2 self-confidence. Interpersonal motivation is mostly individual and describes one's relationship with the interlocutors and the L2 itself. Control and affiliation are the key concepts that one chooses to speak with particular persons. These two motives are also connected with attitudes and the relationship between people not

only as individuals but also groups. Moreover, L2 self-confidence is influenced by communicative competence and communication experience as well as interlocutor's personality traits.

Layer V: The Affective And Cognitive Context

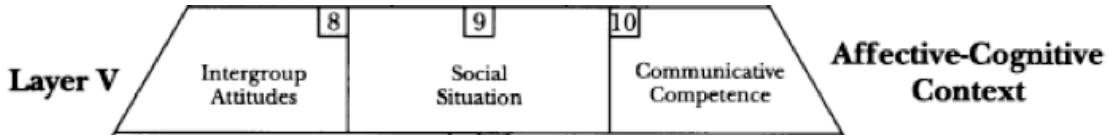

Figure 5. Layer V of MacIntyre's pyramid shape (Box 7) (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547).

As illustrated in Figure 5 above, the variables belonging to layer V are more individual-based. McIntyre et al. stated these variables have an influence on WTC and thus should be added into this model.

Box 8. Intergroup attitudes

Integrativeness is the first concept needed to be described and it is a construct, which has a connection with adjustment to various cultural groups and intergroup motivation. It is also defined by Gardner (1985) as ‘‘positive attitude toward the L2 community and a desire to affiliate with members of the L2 community without the desire to be like members of the L2 community.’’ (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 552).

Fear of assimilation, which is that fear that one will lose his or her identification and involvement with the Ll community by acquiring a L2, is the second concept. Integrativeness and fear of assimilation can be regarded as conflicted concepts within the individual because L2 communication may either be fostered or obstructed.

Beside integrativeness and fear of assimilation, motivation to learn is another key concept, which affects the attitudes towards L2. Enjoyment and satisfaction in the learning process may encourage the learner to go further into the learning process, which stems from positive learning experiences. The motivation to learn may foster the WTC because it can increase the amount of frequency and the quality of L2 communication (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Box 9. Social situation

L2 confidence, as Clement (1980) defines, is the experience that a learner has with L2 community members, and it occurs as a generalized attitude of the pleasantness of speaking in L2 and type of communicative event. To illustrate, a professor may give a lecture in L2 in an assured manner, but may not feel as confident when talking on the phone with a stranger. In looking at the social situation in WTC aspect, there are five factors that influence WTC: the participants, the setting, the purpose, the topic and the channel of communication. The individual's experiences affect these factors, and eventually, the level of WTC in different social situations (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Box 10. Communicative competence

There is a positive correlation between one's proficiency in L2, or in other words the amount of communicative competence, and the degree of his or her WTC. Linguistic competence, discourse competence, actional competence, sociocultural competence and strategic competence constitute the communicative competence of a learner. However, it is also argued that there are also incompetent communicators, yet they think they are competent enough and therefore have high WTC. Therefore, even though

communicative competence is an important factor of WTC, the cognitive links between actual and perceived competences should also be examined.

Layer VI: The Societal And Individual Context

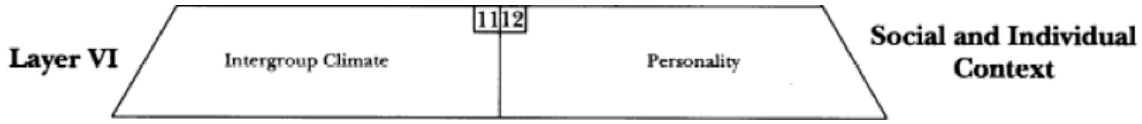

Figure 6. Layer VI of MacIntyre's pyramid shape (Box 10) (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547).

The context of communication includes two factors: the society and the individual. The societal context points out the intergroup climate in which interlocations take place. Yet, the individual context is about constant personality traits found to be particularly relevant to communication, as shown in Figure 6 (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Box 11. Intergroup climate

As Gardner and Clement (1990) state, intergroup climate has two complementary dimensions, which are the structural characteristics of the community and their perceptual and affective correlates.

Structural characteristics are built up with the groups' representation of the Ll and L2 communities regarding ethnolinguistic vitality and personal communication networks. Ethnolinguistic vitality is the relative demographic representation of two groups concerning their relative socioeconomic power and the social institutions they take place in. A communication network examines the group with which we communicate regularly. These two concepts provide the opportunities and the conditions that foster or do not foster the use of L2 (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Perceptual and affective correlates are mainly studied in the field of social psychology; however, the role of attitudes and values in the L2 community and the motivation that arranges social distance between ethnic groups is necessary to consider regarding WTC. Positive attitudes toward a L2 community may result in positive interactions with that group or vice versa, and one tends to learn the L2 and becomes willing to positively engage in L2 community. On the contrary, prejudiced attitudes and discriminative behavior or poor intergroup relations may have adverse affects, and thus causes the degree of WTC to decrease.

Box 12. Personality

Personality is another factor that affects how individuals react to other group members. For example, an authoritarian person may act aggressively and may not engage in the communities where there are people different from him or her, as this type of individual is highly conventional. While certain personality traits may hinder communication in L2 community, some other personality traits may foster communication in L2. MacIntyre and Charos (1996) indicate that each of the Big Five traits, which are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and openness to new experiences, strengthen the motivation or the WTC in L2.

Thus far, the research on WTC indicates the need of WTC as a significant component the L2 learning process, and the goal of L2 learning should be to increase WTC. In addition, the Heuristic Model of Variables Influencing WTC in Figure 2 illustrates the final step of L2 communication, as a language learner will be willing to use the language in authentic interaction with other individuals provided the opportunity

is given. However, another concern arises, the need to develop relevant materials to promote WTC.

Conclusion

In this chapter the place of technology in education and the use of CMC in second language acquisition were reviewed. Then, speaking and speaking anxiety in language learning were examined. Next, particular applications of CMC in support of teaching speaking proficiency and benefits and challenges were summarized. Then, the importance of materials development in second language learning and the theory and role of technology in materials development and task design were discussed. Finally, WTC and its role in L2 were presented. The next chapter will discuss the methodology of the current study in terms of the participants of the study, instruments of the study and procedural steps followed during the course of the study.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This mixed-method study with a small number of participants is an attempt to evaluate students' perception of the extent to which interactive digitalized didactic activities outside the classroom can contribute to improving EFL learners' speaking skills. This study also examines the learners' attitude toward out-of-class digital speaking activities through questionnaires.

The results of the study will supply curriculum information as to how digitalized out-of-class speaking activities might be integrated into the school curriculum of School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University.

This chapter has four sections, which consist of the participants and settings, the instruments, the research design and procedure, the researcher's role and, finally, data analysis. In the first section, detailed information about the participants and the settings of the study is introduced. The second section presents a description of the research design and the instruments of data collection employed in this study. This section will also provide detailed information about the research procedure, which includes the recruitment and training of the participants as well as data collection. The researchers role will be discussed in the third section. The final section will summarize the overall procedure for the data analysis.

Setting and Participants

The research was conducted at the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu

University in Turkey. The participants of the study were chosen from upper-intermediate level students who volunteered for the study.

There are, particularly, two main reasons why upper-intermediate level students were involved in the research. First, they had more knowledge and experience of foreign language learning when compared to other levels except advanced level. Second, they were scheduled to take the exit exam one module later, when they had completed the next level successfully. Therefore, this level is the most appropriate one for the study before they go to their departments.

Table 1 and 2 display the information about the students who participated in the study.

Table 1

Students' Biographic Data

Age	f
16-20	6
Gender	
Female	4
Male	2
Total	6

Note: f: Frequency

Table 2

Students' Academic Data

Academic status	f
1st year at the department	5
2nd year at the department	1
Departments	
Electrical and Electronics Engineering	1
Chemical Engineering	1
Computer Engineering	1
Industrial Engineering	1
Architecture	1
Communication Design and Management	1
Previous language experience	
studied at a private/ foreign language intensive high school	3
took language courses	1
graduated from Anatolian High School	2
took English course at primary and high	1
Duration of students' stay in an English speaking country	
None	5
1-3 week(s)	1

The researcher explained the purpose and the procedure of the study to the students at the initial stage of participant selection. Then, she invited them to participate in the study. 15 students signed the consent form and accepted to take part in the study at the outset. Out of 15 students, only 9 of them started with the introduction PPT. However, 3 students dropped out of the study resulting in 6 students who completed the study to the end. Table 3 shows the

number of participants for each stage of this research study:

Table 3

The Stages of the Research Study and the Number of the Participants for Each Stage

Stages	#	Aim of the stage
announcement and training	15	to inform students about the use of PPTs outside the class
PPT intro	9	to help students get acquainted with the study
PPT 1	6	focuses on unit 3 in their course book
PPT 2	6	focuses on unit 4 in their course book
PPT 3	6	focuses on unit 5 in their course book
PPT 4	6	focuses on unit 6 in their course book

As can be seen in Table 3, 9 students started to take part in the study. However, 6 participants contributed to the study from beginning to the end that started one week after the announcement and training. In other words, these 6 students (2 male and 4 female) constituted the core of this study as they were the ones involved in the study thoroughly by doing the activities on PPT slides and took the questionnaire at the end of the study.

Instruments, Research Design and Procedure

The data for this research were collected via five different PowerPoint (PPT) slides, one questionnaire and the criteria formed by the researcher to determine the CMC out-of-class activities' impact on learners' WTC.

PowerPoint Slides

There were five different PowerPoint presentations assigned to the participants, all of which were reviewed by three experienced colleagues, who were teaching at the same level.

Also the researcher herself had taught in the same level more than once, thus was accustomed to the course book and its workbook. All of the slides in these presentations were directly related to the units 3, 4, 5 and 6 from their course book. The first PPT was called as ‘‘intro’’ PPT and was prepared to help students get acquainted with the procedure. The researcher introduced herself in this PPT and asked students to introduce themselves by recording their own voices. Thus, participants had a chance to do some PPT use practice before the basic data collection. Also, the researcher could determine possible problems with the use of PPTs and could intervene in the process when necessary.

There were 6-8 slides in each PPT presentation and all of them included video and/or audio recordings in addition to target vocabulary items and grammar structures from the units of the course book. The number of the slides was determined regarding the units in the course books. In addition, the researcher increased the challenge through the end of the study by asking them to use more target vocabulary items and grammar structures. In the first PPT, for instance, students were supposed to use at least one of the target vocabulary whereas in PPT 4 they were asked to use at least three words.

As can be seen in Figures 7 and 8 below, the slides were directly related to the activities in the course book and/or the workbook (See Appendix L and M for an entire PPT unit and the related unit in the course book). The example in Figure 8 provides very similar instructions to the activity to those provided in Figure 7. One obvious difference, however, is that in Figure 8 students respond to a series of visuals and an audio cue, whereas in Figure 7 students respond primarily to written prompts.


LISTENING

4A How would you answer questions 1–8?

What's the best age ...

1 to choose a career?
2 to get married?
3 to have a baby?
4 to start a sport?
5 to learn a musical instrument?
6 to learn a new language?
7 to become president or prime minister?
8 to retire?

Figure 7. Task from the course book

Figure 8. Task from PPT 4

Each PPT had a minimum of 6 six and a maximum of eight slides counting the cover, the slide of researcher's comment and the closing slide. That is to say, each PPT included a minimum of four main slides. Besides, these PPTs had not only controlled but also freer activities. The first couple of slides were more controlled. In other words, students did more mechanic activities to recall and practice the target vocabulary items and grammar structures. To illustrate, students did a transformation drill activity, in which they rewrote the sentences according to the prompts given and recorded their answers orally as well (See Appendix M, Slides 2 and 3). In addition, controlled activities limit the range of answers that a student may

give. On the other hand, students' answers may have a greater degree of unpredictability as a wider range of responses would be considered appropriate. These slides with less controlled activities have some visual, written and/or oral prompts and students answered the questions by recording their voices, so the freer ones necessitated more production, particularly oral production. Also these freer activities were generally placed towards the end of the PPT (See Appendix M, Slide 4). In addition, in a PPT, which has four main slides, while two or three activities were controlled, one or two activities were freer exercises. Furthermore, each PPT has some open-ended questions, and students used the instructed vocabulary and/or grammar structures provided to answer these questions. They were generally asked at the end of the PPT and the researcher started a new PPT with her comment on students' responses to these open-ended questions in the previous PPT.

The use of PPTs including photos, pictures, audios and videos was new to the participants. The main reasons for using different methods of interacting with the participants were to grab their attention and make it more fun and educational at the same time. Furthermore, after assigning the PPTs, the learners sent their tasks when they completed them depending on their pace. Since each participant has an individual pace, the researcher did not intervene in his or her timing. This also allowed the learners flexibility with how to interact, which is very important in foreign language learning, especially among young learners. When they used this digital alternative out-of-class practice, they had the opportunity to choose to study at a time and space that was convenient and comfortable for them.

Interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to obtain more detailed and thorough information about each participant's perception about the digitalized out-of-class speaking activities and to attain comprehensive data about the PowerPoint slides and their effectiveness on their

language learning process. Therefore, the interviews were carried out after each PPT with each participant via different channels such as Skype, mobile phone, e-mails, smart phone applications and in-person interviews. The researcher was aware of the participants' different skills, habits and preferences. Therefore, being flexible and giving them the freedom to choose their own way of communication were the main reasons for using different methods of interacting with these young participants.

Likewise, the researcher had another interview with each participant at the end of the PPTs by asking questions pointedly about each PPT they had done thus far. The main reason for conducting the interviews after each PPT and at the end of the PPTs was to acquire more information about students' perceptions of their performance and WTC.

As the interview questions focused on eliciting students' evaluations of their own practice, they were related to the use of digital technology outside the class to practice oral skills, WTC and the number of trials before sending the PPTs.

The Questionnaire

The aim of the questionnaire was to inquire into students' impressions with regard to practicing spoken English through an asynchronous medium. Therefore, it was conducted at the end of the study. To prepare an appropriate questionnaire, the literature was reviewed; however, no questionnaire was found that inquired into students' perceptions of a new didactic instrument and its impact on WTC. Therefore, the researcher developed the questionnaire that was checked by the two faculty members and two colleagues. Based on their feedback the questionnaire items were revised. The items were formulated in response to the focus of the interview questions. That is, the items were decided on after the first interview so that it could better reflect the issues that appeared to be pertinent to the students.

The questionnaire had three sections. In the first section, participants were asked to give personal responses about the PowerPoint slides that were prepared for each student individually. The aim of the second part was to estimate students' perception about these asynchronous out-of-class speaking activities. Therefore, this part could be evaluated as a complement of the first part. In the final section, all participants were requested to give personal information along with the information about their educational background.

a. The first section was a 10-item Likert-scale scaled from 1-6. Garland (1991) pointed out the respondents have to make a choice either a positive or a negative point in a four-point scale. For this reason, in order to avoid the tendency to choose the mid-point in the scale, which is preferred to ''please the interviewer or appear helpful'', the researcher chose to prepare a 6-point Likert scale (Garland, 1991, p.4).

   Participants were expected to choose a number from 1-6 depending on how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements. The last two items were open-ended in order to measure students' reasons why they chose their answers. Section one sampled students' opinions about how the study went and their opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of digitalized out-of-class speaking activities in language learning. Also students' computer use and their impressions towards the use of ACMC were investigated.

b. The second part was comprised of five open-ended questions and students were expected to give short answers to these questions. The reason for this was to measure their perception about these asynchronous out-of-class speaking activities in more depth. Also it was carried out to learn their opinions about the use of these PowerPoint slides as a possible ELT speaking activity outside the class. This part allowed students to write what they thought about the ACMC to practice oral skills

with the help of the guiding questions and allowed the researcher to have an idea about their perception towards these digitalized out-of-class oral activities.

c. The final section consisted of seven questions and gave information about students' personal information and their previous language experience. Students' biographic and academic data allowed the researcher to comprehend and interpret their responses more effectively and thoroughly.

Rubric and Checklist

In order to answer the third research question, the researcher developed a rubric, which was tailored to this study and a checklist to use during the evaluation of the PPTs (Appendix J). The aim of the checklist was to help the researcher to undertake the analysis by converting the evaluation of the PPTS into a more manageable form. The aim of using the rubric was to ascertain whether ACMC out-of-class activities had a positive impact on students' WTC. Therefore, the rubric was primarily created on the basis of the pyramid model of MacIntyre (1998) (See Figure 2 for the model).

In the pyramid model Layer V is associated with 'affective-cognitive context', and the communication component in the WTC rubric refers to students' communicative competence. To be more specific, the statement in the communication component in the rubric ''Overall, the listener has had **no** real **problems** understanding the learner's message'' illustrates the students' communicative competence situated in Layer V.

Layer IV is about motivational propensities, and the task completion, language complexity and the variety of vocabulary and structure were categorized according to this layer. To illustrate, ''The learner has used **more than** the required number of **target** vocabulary items appropriately and **integrated** the targeted items **from previous exercises**'' corresponds with the Layer IV (Motivational propensities), which is firmly associated with

L2 self-confidence. In other words, if a student not only fulfills the activity but also adds a variety of vocabulary or structure from the previous units, this will indicate that the student is more motivated and has L2 self-confidence. To be more specific, the researcher asked students to use at least three of the vocabulary, but if a student used more than three, s/he used 'more than' the required number. As a further step, this student shows his/her desire to communicate with a specific person, in this case, with the researcher, which is stated in Layer III of the pyramid. The WTC is placed in Layer II and Layer I is the ultimate goal, the use of L2, which can also be observed in students responses to the slides when the task completion, language complexity, the variety of vocabulary and the variety of structure are taken into account.

Yet, the researcher was aware of the importance of consistency in evaluating students' work. Therefore, she bore in mind the significance of inter-rater reliability and checked her grading of the students PPTs by randomly selecting 2 of the students and invited another teacher, who was trained before, to rate them according to the criteria. Besides, a checklist was also formed to keep record of students' performance in one. For each PPT, the researcher used the checklist with the rubric to make the process more manageable. (See Appendices J and K).

Since the rubric was designed to evaluate students' WTC by examining their responses to the PPTs, it was sensible to form it in two parts, controlled exercises and freer exercises. However, the researcher looked at the variety of vocabulary, variety of structure and communication only for the freer exercises, as the control exercises would not give accurate information about the variety of language and communication. In addition, while analyzing students' spoken language in terms of syntactic complexity, the mean of the AS-Units for each PPT was calculated, in order to determine the syntactic complexity of

participants' oral production. This helped the researcher evaluate their WTC in the target language.

Research Design and Procedure

The first step of the study was the introduction of PowerPoint slides. A brief training on how to use the PowerPoint slides was held and a handout with Turkish instruction was given for each participant. The data were gathered from the students' responses to each PPT slide, the interviews after each PPT and at the end of all of the PPTs and a questionnaire that was distributed at the end of the study.

This study involves mixed research methods. Qualitative research provides a tool to underpin a decision, behavior or attitude in order to explore subjects more in depth and was complemented by a questionnaire. Therefore, an exploratory mixed research design was employed in the study. Since exploratory research, one of the functions of qualitative research, tries to identify the factors or influences that lie behind attitudes, beliefs and perceptions as well as the motivational factors that lead to decisions and actions (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013).

These interactive PPT slides, used as an alternative means of out-of-class practice, were closely related to the units in their course books. Therefore, these students didn't receive any extra support, beyond what other learners in their classroom received. These PPTs include video and audio recordings as well as the target grammar and vocabulary structure. Students needed to reply to these PPT slides by recording their own voices. When using this digital tool, students had the opportunity to work at a time and space that was convenient and comfortable for them. Also, in order to avoid having one-way interaction, the final slides had an open-ended question and the researcher could give her opinion or reply to students' questions, if any, in the next PPT, which also gives the researcher a chance to

observe their performance and interact with the students in an asynchronous way.

The Researcher's Role

The researcher has been teaching at the university in which the study was conducted for 8 years. Therefore, she is familiar with the students' needs and interests as well as their weaknesses. For the students, the researcher was an instructor and they addressed the researcher as their teacher although she was not teaching in the class.

In the training session, the researcher provided information about the study and its requisites and introduced PowerPoint (PPT) in Microsoft Office programs. She demonstrated how to use a PPT as well as how to record their own voice on the PPT slides prepared for them. In order to make things clear, the researcher utilized the first PPT by focusing on the instructions. She also distributed handouts in which students could find the instructions and the contact detail of the researcher. In order to prevent any misunderstanding, the handouts were prepared in Turkish and explained the use of icons in the PPT.

In addition, the researcher answered the students' questions and guided them when necessary during the study. These roles of being not only a trainer but also a facilitator might have an influence on the success of the study.

Data Analysis

The data analysis was done in a mixed research method. In order to answer the first and second research questions, the researcher analyzed the interviews. Therefore, she did content analysis of each interview, and the themes were identified. To answer the third research question, the researcher created a rubric and a checklist to determine the progress of students and the increase in the amount of their willingness to communicate in L2. Finally, the questionnaire was used to explore the advantages and disadvantages of these interactive PPT slides in reply to the last research question.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the methodology used to carry out the study was described in terms of its setting and participants, research design and procedure, researcher's role and data analysis. In the next chapter, the details of the data analysis as well as the results found out will be discussed in detail.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The study investigated not only the learners' perceptions about the use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) through digital technology outside the class in support of oral language skills but also its impact on students' willingness to communicate (WTC) with a number of six respondents.

Data Analysis Procedure

With the objective of collecting rich and thick data, different sources were used while compiling the data including the interviews, the questionnaire and the rubric for WTC. This allowed the triangulation of data, which was considered as a way of validating the qualitative research evidence (Ritchie, et al., 2013). According to Gibson and Brown (2009), gathering data through different methods, also named as triangulation of the data, can be beneficial when a researcher wants to check the trustworthiness of different sources of data or when the same phenomenon from different perspectives is to be examined. Thus, the researcher preferred to triangulate the data so as to obtain deeper insight about students' perceptions on the computer-mediated communicative activities outside the class.

Data were gathered in four stages during the study. First, each participant was interviewed right after each PPT was completed. Second, participants filled out a questionnaire, which inquired into participants' overall perceptions about using computer screens to do out-of-class oral practice in a digitalized way. Third, after completing all PPTs, each participant was individually interviewed again. Finally, each participant's performance on each slide was examined with the help of the rubric developed by the researcher.

A mixed research approach was implemented while collecting and analyzing the data in order to understand and interpret learners' perceptions and attitudes (of digitalized out-of-class speaking activities). This approach gave greater insight into learners' point of view. To explore the results of the interviews, [interviews at the end of each PPT and final interview], a content analysis was carried out. Content analysis was used because most of the themes were pre-determined by the interview questions and the researcher intended to determine the frequency of the occurrence of each theme. Therefore, the researcher started by transcribing the audio and the video (recorded by the program *Call Recorder*) recordings of the interviews. The unfocused transcription form was preferred since ''unfocused transcription involves outlining the basic intended meaning of a recording of speech'' (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 116). Also it does not involve a concern with the intonation of voices, overlap in talk or gestures or gazes. The main focus is simply on characterizing what was meant within the interview data (Gibson & Brown, 2009).

The analysis was done by first determining categories based on the interview questions and highlighting each theme with a different color to be able to identify the recurring themes easily. Next, the transcriptions of the interviews for each participant were examined and the recurring information from the responses of each participant was noted. Overlapping themes were categorized under a title. At the end of the analysis of the interviews conducted right after each PPT, three main themes were identified: attitudinal, pedagogical and technical considerations. When the final interview data were analyzed, the researcher achieved five categorizations: psychological, pedagogical, interactional, technical and administrative considerations.

This chapter was divided into four sections in which each question is addressed with the aid of the findings that emerged from the data analysis procedures in the study;

participants and interview data, questionnaire, the analysis of participants' performance and the final interview.

Participants and Interview Data

Participants

All of the participants were between 16-20. Apart from interviewee # 5 (I#5), all of them were at the School of Foreign Languages (SFL) for a year and had started from elementary level without repeating any level. I#5 was the only student who repeated the beginner and upper-intermediate levels once, and it was his second year at SFL.

Interview Data

Interview data were collected at the end of each PPT through various channels such as mobile phones, applications like Skype and Call Recorder, and in-person. The major reason for varying the channels was that since young people are used to interacting with their peers through various electronic media, the researcher adapted the means of communication to suit the participants' preferences at any point of the study. Kukulska-Hulme (2009) suggests this kind of mobile learning has positive attributes to learners and increase the potential of personalized, situated, authentic and informal learning. During the implementation, the researcher recorded the interviews and took notes at the same time. The interviews were semi-structured, in which the interviewer asks ‘‘key questions in the same way each time and does some probing for further information’’ (Ritchie, et al., 2013, p. 111). That is, the interviews gave students not only opportunities to raise issues related to completing the tasks but also helped the researcher identify and understand these issues more deeply.

In order to respond to RQ1 and RQ2a and shed light on students' perceptions of using digital out-of-class speaking activities, the researcher asked six questions in the first three

interviews and added three more questions in the last interview conducted at the end of the last PPT. These questions were labeled as interview question #7 (IQ7), interview question #8 (IQ8) and interview question #9 (IQ9).

A thematic analysis of the interview data was conducted. In order to do this, the researcher began by transcribing the data gathered from the interviews, and continued looking for patterns or recurring themes so as to code them. Results of the qualitative analysis of the data gathered through the interviews were grouped in accordance with the three main themes identified: attitudinal, pedagogical and technical considerations.

Attitudinal Considerations

In order to shed light on students' perceptions of using digital activities out-of-class to promote oral skills, the participants were asked four questions. The first interview question (IQ1) asked how they felt about and how they evaluated speaking to the researcher through the computer screen. Three of the participants found it a bit challenging as they had not done this before. The following extract illustrates the feelings of interviewee #6 (I#6):

> The first time is always difficult. And since I hadn't done this kind of activities before, it was different to me. But we started with an intro PPT to learn the process. Also I have the chance to delete and record my voice again. And I am sure I will do much better next time (I#6).

Two of the participants felt anxious at first. The main reason for being anxious was the fear of making mistakes, and is presented below:

> It was a little anxious. I was worried in case I would tell something wrong. But I relaxed after doing the recordings (I#5).

> I believe speaking is much more difficult than writing, so I hesitated at the beginning (I#2).

However, like all other participants, I#2 mentioned her relief after a few practices. Unsurprisingly, all of the participants thought they started to relax in the ongoing process because the participants became relaxed when they realized how easy it was and when they found that it was private for them.

IQ2 asked how these activities affect their speaking skills with follow-up questions, whether they thought the practice had helped them express themselves better and whether they were comfortable while speaking. All of the participants agreed on the positive effects of these activities on their oral skills. All participants believed that these activities contributed to their self-expression in English and they started to feel more comfortable speaking in the target language. In order to fully understand their perceptions of the change and the development in their speaking abilities, the opinions of two interviewees are cited below:

> First, I noticed how much I fell behind my speaking skills. I learnt I had to focus on this more. This was really good for me. Fortunately, I did it (I#1).

> I felt comfortable and I think I will be more comfortable speaking in class too (I#2).

The third attitude-related question in the interview, which was asked after the last PPT, was IQ7, ‘‘Now that they completed these activities, do you think you will be more comfortable speaking in class from now on?’’ Every one of the participants considered these out-of-class activities helped and would help in the next modules in terms of feeling comfortable during speaking. The extract below illustrates the opinion of I#3:

> I think I’ll be more comfortable expressing myself in class. I believe it (I#3).

The final attitude-related question, which was asked after the last PPT again, was IQ8, and asked whether students' felt any change in the level of self-confidence when speaking in English. Each and every participant portrayed a very positive attitude towards these activities and the whole study. All of the participants answered 'yes' to this interview question, and below is the description of another participant's feelings:

> When I got rid of my concerns, I started to believe in myself. When I realized that I could do the activities, I said it (speaking) was not that difficult (I#5).

In brief, although they found it challenging and different at the very beginning, all of the participants portrayed a positive attitude towards these digitalized out-of-class activities. They also believed that these activities boosted their self-confidence and helped them feel more confortable in terms of doing speaking practice, particularly in class.

Pedagogical (Academic) Considerations

In parallel with the first research question, the third interview question (To what extent did this activity allow you to revise and practice the target vocabulary items and grammar structures and integrate them into your speaking?) was asked; and it aimed to elicit whether these out-of-class activities support the development of students' oral skills and help them develop pedagogically.

Half of the participants believed this study was an opportunity for them to practice the grammar structures and vocabulary items outside the class. Also they declared that they were aware of this and started to integrate these structures into their speaking. To illustrate, I#6 claimed that most students learn the grammar structures; however, integrating these into the speech is the final and the most difficult stage. The extracts below illustrate the opinions of some of the students about the integration of grammar structures and vocabulary items into

their speech:

> We [students] do the written activities, but merging this into our speech and building up our own sentences is a very efficient way of (speaking) practice. With these activities, we use certain structures and vocabulary so that we can practice them (I#2).

> I find these activities quite useful as I practice the target grammar and vocabulary we learnt in class and help me use them in daily speech (I#5).

The other half suggested the PPTs were good instruments to revise these language rules and vocabulary items. The extracts below illustrate the opinions of these students:

> I used the structures that I hadn't use before, which was great (I#1).

> Seeing the words and the grammar there (on PPTs) is a good thing to revise them because while I was doing PPT 1, I noticed that I forgot most of the words. Merging them into the speech for revision and using them while speaking is very useful (I#3).

In addition to having practice and revision, these activities helped I#1, I#3 and I#4 with regard to the improvement of their pronunciation. These participants claimed they started to correct their mispronunciation and wrong stress and intonation while speaking in English as depicted below:

> I heard how I expressed and pronounced something. I hadn't had this chance before. These were really useful for me (I#1).

> These activities helped me correct my mispronunciation and wrong intonation (I#3).

In a nutshell, all of the participants agreed on the constructive effects of seeing and using these grammar structures and vocabulary items on slides to support the development of their

oral skills. Thanks to these PPTs, participants took the opportunity to both practice and revise the structures and the vocabulary they had learnt in class. Therefore, they perceived improvements in their ability to use the language.

Technical Considerations

In an attempt to understand the participants' perceptions of technical factors related to these digitalized speaking activities, the participants were asked three questions as listed below:

> IQ3 What do you think about the number of slides?
> IQ4 Did you listen to your recordings before sending them to the researcher?
> IQ5 Have you ever deleted any of the recordings before sending? If so, why?

For IQ3, all of the participants were happy with the number of the slides in each PPT. Almost all of the participants were of the view that the number of the slides were 'neither too long to bore, nor too short'. A couple of students' opinions about the number of slides are presented below:

> There were ideal number of slides; otherwise, it would be insufficient. Also there could have been even more. You could have added a few more slides (I#1).

> There could have been more PPTs and we could do more in other modules throughout the year as well (I#6).

The IQ4 and IQ5 asked whether students listened to their recordings and whether they deleted any of them before sending them to the researcher. Apart from I#3, all of the participants answered 'yes' to the IQ4. I#3 confessed she felt uncomfortable when she

listened to her own voice even though she tried for the first PPT. However, the other participants found it quite useful for they noticed their strengths and weaknesses while listening to their own recordings. These participants listened to their recordings at least twice before putting them into the final. The reason for listening to their own recordings was not to make any mistakes; therefore, they checked their sentences, vocabulary and pronunciation while listening to their recordings. In addition, they wanted to meet the requirements of the tasks on slides.

For IQ5, all of them stated they deleted at least a few of their recordings before sending them back to the researcher. As shown in Figure 9 below, the reasons for the deleting were technical problems, realizing their mistakes, incomplete/insufficient recordings and the wish to make better recordings. Half of the participants, I#1, I#2 and I#5, had some technical issues such as interfering noise from the computer and/or the setting and poor voice quality. I#3 started to use another microphone while recording his voice as a solution to this problem. I#2 and I#5 deleted their recordings from time to time in order to avoid low quality voice. All of the students, except I#5, deleted their recordings and recorded once again when they realized their mistakes. I#1 explained this as:

> When I found my mistakes, sometimes a grammar or a vocabulary mistake, I fixed it and rerecorded it (I#1).

I#1 and I#5 found some of their recording insufficient and/or incomplete and therefore, wanted to record their voices again. They both said that they did not want to do the exercises only for the sake of doing them. They were aware of their weak points such as correct word choice and tried to strengthen them. The majority of the participants, I#1, I#2, I#4 and I#6, felt they could do a better job and recorded their work again. For I#4, it was sometimes difficult to get her tongue around while recording her voice. Therefore, she

wanted to record them once again so that her pronunciation and sentence structure quality would be much better. Also, I#2 alleged that when she recorded again and again, she did it according to the previous one and progressed by fixing her mistakes. She also reported that she added extra things (structure and/or vocabulary) to her speech to make it a better recording.

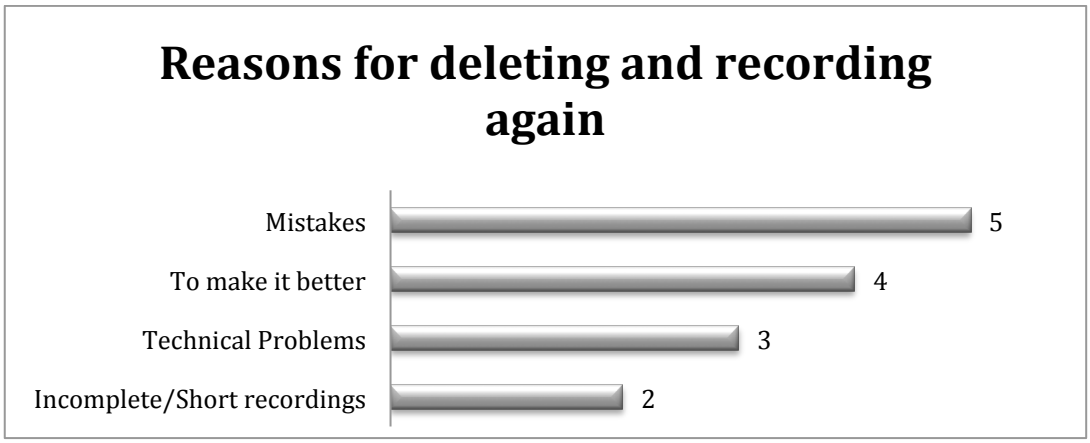

Figure 9. Reasons for deleting recordings

The Questionnaire

Since data collection and analysis may occur simultaneously and continuously in qualitative studies, the questionnaire items were shaped and finalized in light of the information gleaned from the very first interview with each participant. The researcher took into consideration the participants' responses to the interviews at the end of each PPT and decided on the questionnaire items. One of the aims of the questionnaire is to complement the interview data and provide insight into how these digitalized out-of-class activities impact their oral skills and willingness to speak in L2. For this purpose, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the questions in the first section of the questionnaire, except the open-ended questions in section two. These questions were interpreted qualitatively and analyzed through the thematic analysis and coding of the responses.

This part consisted of two sections. Section I analyzed the first part of the

questionnaire by using descriptive statistics, and Section II was the analysis of the second part of the questionnaire, in which open-ended questions were asked.

In Section I, a six-point Likert-Scale including ten questions was used to elicit participants' overall perceptions about using computer screens to do out-of-class oral practice in a digitalized way. Table 4 below illustrates the results of the questionnaire:

Table 4
The Questionnaire Items and the Participants' Responses

	Number of participants					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Agree to some extent	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Q1 It was difficult to understand how to do these activities at the outset		1		1	4	
Q2 It was easier to do the following activities after the first one	3	2	1			
Q3 I find it effective to do speaking practice through computer screen	5	1				
Q4 I believe these activities are useful for speaking practice	5	1				
Q5 I believe these activities are useful for oral communication	5	1				
Q6 I believe these activities are useful for vocabulary use	5	1				
Q7 I believe these activities are useful for the use of grammar structures	6					
Q8 There are more advantages than disadvantages to these activities	6					
Q9 I deleted the recordings that I did not like and recorded again because	5	1				
Q10 The second recording was better because	6					

Participants' Overall Perceptions about the Implementation of The Activities

The aim of the first two items was to elicit participants' overall perceptions about the implementation of the activities. The frequency of the answers to Q1 and Q2 was examined in order to understand whether it was difficult for students to understand how to do these out-of-class activities at the outset, and whether it was easier to do the following activities.

As is shown in Table 4, although one participant was unsure and one participant agreed with the statement, the majority of the participants disagree with the first statement. That is, they did not encounter serious problems about how to do these activities at the outset.

Similar to Q1, Q2, ‘‘It was easier to do the following activities after the first one’’, asked about participants’ perceptions about the implementation of the activities at the beginning. Table 4 reveals that all of the participants agreed with the statement in different proportions. Yet, half of them strongly agreed that they did the activities easily after the first one.

Participants’ Perceptions about Using Computers for Speaking Practice

In order to reveal participants’ impressions towards using computers for oral practice outside the class, Q3, ‘‘I find it effective to do speaking practice through computer screen’’ was asked. As the results show, all participants agreed with the statement with a very high frequency. To be more precise, almost all of the participants strongly agreed that these activities were useful for them as they practiced oral skills through the medium of computers.

Participants’ Perceptions towards The Activities for Speaking Practice and Oral Communication

The aim of Q4 and Q5 was to bring out participants’ impressions towards these activities and elicit whether these activities were useful for speaking practice and oral communication. As illustrated in Table 4, the results for Q4 and Q5 revealed the similar consequences for nearly all of the participants scored ‘strongly agree’ and only one participant scored ‘agree’ for both questions.

Participants’ Perceptions towards the Activities for Language Use

Questionnaire items 6 and 7 were included in order to ascertain whether the participants benefitted from these activities in the sense of language use. Therefore, Q6 asked whether these activities were useful for them to use target vocabulary items; and Q7 addressed whether they were useful for them to use certain grammar structures they learnt at school.

As illustrated in Table 4, again, the majority of the participants strongly agreed that these activities were useful for vocabulary use. Similar to the previous results, only one participant was scored 'agree', which means all participants granted the assistance of these activities in terms of vocabulary use.

The responses to Q7, however, depict each and every participant shared the same opinion and stated that they strongly agreed with Q7. In other words, all of the participants found these activities quite beneficial for the use and practice of grammar structures without exception.

Participants' Overall Perceptions about the Advantages/Disadvantages of the Activities

In order to shed light on whether the advantages or the disadvantages of these out-of-class speaking activities preponderated, Q8 was asked. Without exception, each participant thought the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. That is to say, each and every participant believed they took advantage of these activities in general.

Participants' Overall Perceptions about their Recordings

The last two questionnaire items were examined in order to draw out the participants' perceptions about their own recordings. To be specific, Q9 sought to discover whether students' deleted and recorded any recordings more than once with its reasons, and Q10 asked about whether the latter recordings were superior or not and the reasons why it was

better.

Unsurprisingly, all participants agreed with the item in Q9 with a high frequency, shown in Table 4. Namely, all participants deleted one or more of their own recordings because they either evaluated their recordings as insufficient and wanted to make better recordings or realized their mistakes and wished to correct them. Another reason for rerecording was they faced certain problems such as technical issues.

For the last item, as illustrated in Table 4, all participants concurred the latter recording was superior to the previous ones because they were aware of their mistakes as they were more experienced and corrected their mistakes after hearing themselves.

To sum up, the results of the questionnaire revealed that participants were quite positive towards these out-of-class speaking activities in terms of practicing oral communication skills as well as grammar and vocabulary. In addition, all of the participants perceived the advantages outweighed the disadvantages.

In Section 2, five open-ended questions were asked. The main aim of these open-ended questions was to investigate the participants' perceptions towards the digital out-of-class speaking activities, and the answers to these questions were categorized accordingly.

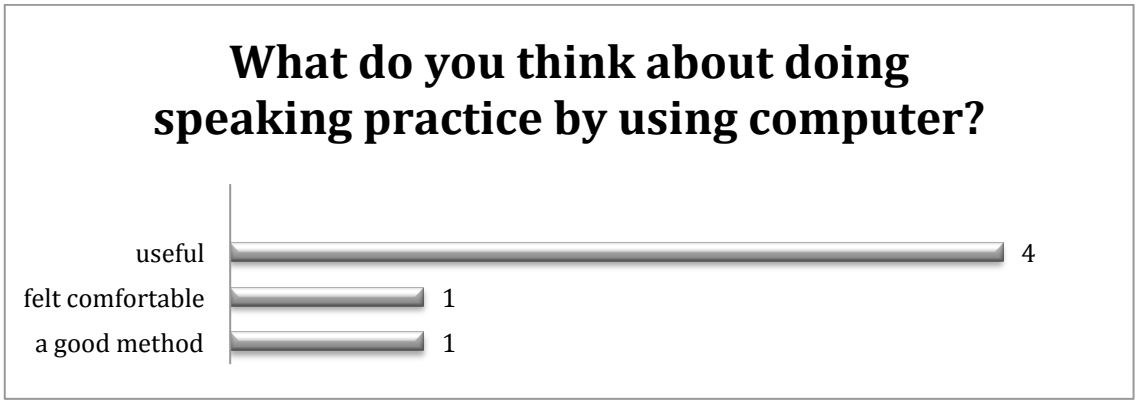

Figure 10. Speaking practice via computer

The first question was asked to reveal their perception about doing speaking practice

via computers. As can be seen in Figure 10, for the first question, all participants portrayed a very positive attitude towards these out-of-class speaking activities. Four of them stated they found the activities quite useful. One of these participants added this was different and also useful for future academic years as most interviews could be online. One of them replied as ‘‘a good method to do speaking practice’’ and the other participant expressed he became more comfortable and relaxed.

The second question asked the advantages of these out-of-class activities if there were any, and the answers, represented in Figure 11, were categorized under the headings: motivation/encouragement for studying outside the class, improvement of language skills, and stress-related advantages.

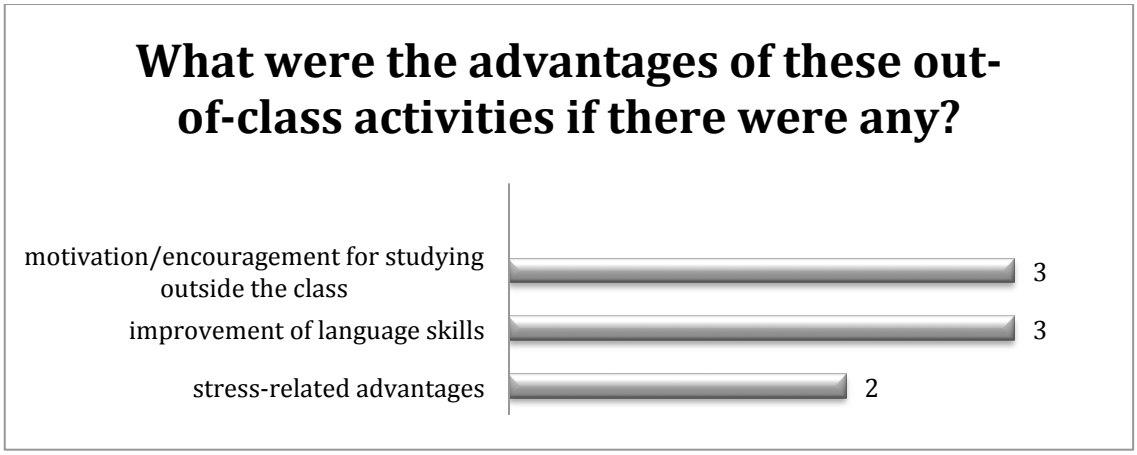

Figure 11. Advantages of out-of-class activities

Half of the participants, participants 3, 4 and 6 (P#3, P#4 and P#6) found these activities very encouraging for out-of-class study. P#3 evaluated this study as ‘‘a chance to practice in a planned and systematic way’’, and in a similar vein; another participant, Participant 6 (P#6) found in-class activities insufficient to develop their speaking skills.

Three participants, P#2, P#5 and P#6, claimed these activities improved their language skills. According to P#2, she learnt how to use a word accurately and meaningfully

in a context as the examples on the slides were quite guiding and instructive. P#5 expressed this improvement as ‘‘getting high score from the speaking test’’, and P#6 considered as ‘‘promoter for grammar learning’’.

Two participants reported they overcame their stress while speaking and started to speak more comfortably and confidently. P#5 stated he started to relax and feel more comfortable while speaking English. In addition, P#1 explained his stress-free situation as ‘‘being more active in class’’.

The third question asked about the disadvantages of these activities if any, and Figure 12 shows the results below.

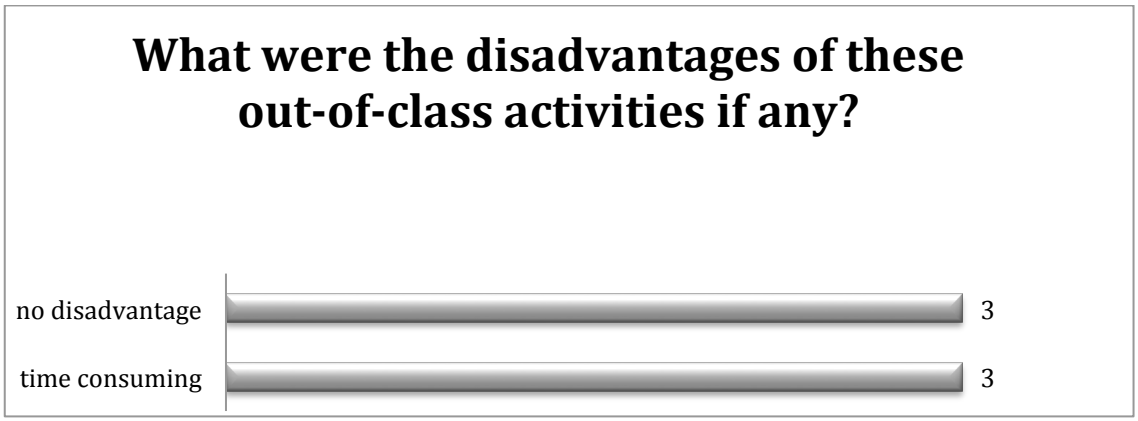

Figure 12. Disadvantages of out-of-class activities

Half of the participants replied there were no disadvantages whereas the other half thought the activities were sometimes time consuming. The extract below illustrates the opinion of P#2:

> I spent a lot of time to do some of the activities on PPTs. Maybe this can be a disadvantage (P#2).

For the fourth question, how they evaluated their later recording if they did more than one, all of the participants said ‘‘better’’ in different statements because they made fewer

mistakes. P#1 stated that he not only corrected his mistakes but also enriched his speech and its context. Besides, P#2 declared she spoke more carefully while recording and, therefore, made fewer mistakes. P#4 also described her opinion as ‘‘more satisfying than the previous one’’.

In response to the final question, which inquired into whether they would like to join in a similar study if they were given the chance, all students expressed their willingness to participate in such a study. P#6 would like to do these activities in every module throughout the year. P#4 was looking forward to doing the upcoming activities for the next module, and P#3 stated one of the benefits of this study was ‘‘a facilitator to study systematically outside the class’’.

WTC Rubric

In an attempt to respond to the second research question, the participants' performances in each PPT were observed and examined one by one according to the rubric (developed by the researcher) based on MacIntyre's (1998) pyramid model (See Figure 2 for the model).

In order to have reliable analysis, two colleagues from the same institution scored the participants' WTC by using the rubric. Since the participants completed four PPT presentations, the second researcher checked these PPTs of each student by using the rubric and the checklist. However, because of the limited sample size, the researcher was not able to apply a quantitative analysis to the data set. Instead, it will be discussed as descriptive data.

The aim of the rubric was to examine whether the computer-mediated out-of-class activities positively impact their willingness to communicate. For this reason, two main parts constitute the rubric; controlled and less controlled (freer) exercises, and it was comprised of five categories; task completion, language complexity, variety of vocabulary, variety of structure and communication. Since controlled exercises necessitated students' attention to

the target structure or function and were framed by the researcher, the analysis of variety of vocabulary and structure as well as communication categories were out of question; that is, only task completion and language complexity were analyzed.

Controlled Exercises

When controlled exercises were considered, the first category, task completion, was fully achieved. That is to say, the participants fulfilled almost all task requirements. However, through the end of the PPTs, the performances of the majority were more than satisfactory as they not only completed the tasks entirely but also went beyond the requirements of the tasks. In other words, they tried to extend their speech unaided. To illustrate, in PPT 3 slide 3, one of the controlled activities, students required to complete the words in sentences by looking at the first letter given. As a follow-up activity on the next slide, the answers were given and they were asked to form a similar sentence by using one these words in the examples. P#3, for instance, used one of those words as well as another word in the examples (shown in italics in the extract below) and extended her speech with seven AS-Units (See page 17 for the calculation of AS-Units). In other words, the number of the independent clauses in her speech were counted and shown below.

| I want to get the best grade next year when I‘m going to study my department | And I want to be in the first place in my department | My friends said it’s an *unrealistic* idea | and it’s just imagine | But I don’t agree with them | It’s about ambition | and if I want enough and study enough I’ll get that | (7 AS-Units)

In the second category, language complexity, the structure types were examined. At the very beginning, almost all of the participants used single-clause structures. However, interestingly, they started to use both simple and complex sentences towards the end of the PPTs with minor structural problems. These attempts were also evidence in the increase in

motivation and self-confidence, which led the participants to the next layer in the WTC pyramid: the desire to communicate (MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei and Noels, 1998).

Freer Exercises

Similar to the controlled exercises, in freer ones, the learners attempted to fulfill almost all of the requirements of the tasks and in most of the tasks, they showed a satisfactory performance. Also through the end of the PPTs, the participants attempted to use not only simple structures but also complex ones despite some structural problems. For instance, in PPT 4, slide 5, students were asked to choose three topics on the slide and talked about the best age to do those things illustrated in pictures (See Appendix L). Even though there were some grammatical problems, P#6, for example, used more complex structures as well as a structure they learnt in the previous unit. The extract below illustrates a part of student's response.

> Three and four is the best age to learn new language *because* children *who* get aged [old], [their] brains open new ideas, new information. And also *if* people learn new language *when* they was a child *when* they was a kid, they wouldn't forget that language (P#6).

Different from the controlled exercises, in less controlled exercises the learners started to record and send longer tracts of talk when they got accustomed to the process. To be more specific, the learners spent more time on their recordings and because the duration of one recording was not enough, sometimes they saved more than one recordings on the slides. As shown in Figure 13 below, the same participant, P#6, uploaded three different recordings successively while answering the question on the slide.

Figure 13. A student's recordings on a slide

In order to measure the syntactic complexity of their oral production, the number of AS-units was calculated. To exemplify, P#6 produced 13 AS-Units in PPT 2 in total, yet she had 18 AS-Units in PPT 4. In the example below, an AS-unit boundary is marked by an upright slash …|…

PPT 2 Slide 4

| Actually I've got a favorite saying | but nowadays I found a saying that I like it | That's 'Kalbi kırmaya tek bir söz yeter ama kırılan kalbi tamir etmeye ne bir söz ne de bir ömür yeter' | It's a little bit arabesk saying | but the saying in English is that ' A one word would be enough to break a heart | but neither a word nor a life wouldn't be enough to repair the broken heart | (6 AS-Units)

PPT 2 Slide 5

| And now I'm staying on my bed in my room | and my room is a little bit messy | And actually usually my room is messy | So I wish I were a tidy person | And now a big part of my clothes are dirty | And I should have washed them at last weekend | because now I can't wash them | (7 AS-units)

PPT 4 Slide 5

| Three and four is the best age to learn new language | because children who get aged [old], [their] brains open new ideas, new information | and also if people learn new language when they was a child when they was a kid, they wouldn't forget that language | I think 45 is the best age to be a president | because I think a president should have a lot of experience about politics about life or broad issues | and also he or she should be energetic | 2 or three is the best age to start to do sports | of course sports that are basic ones | and doing sport is important | because doing sport support children's physical and psychological improvements | (10 AS-Units)

PPT 4 Slide 6

| Perhaps in the future I'll be working in a Zen company | maybe I'll have had a lot of design prize | And in the future that's quite likely that the number of population will be getting higher | or another saying the number of population will have been more higher er higher than now | so I couldn't decide which one I should choose | an so I have said both of them | and in 2030 or maybe 2035 that's pretty unlikely that Brad Pitt will have been a handsome guy | because he is getting elder | (8 AS-Units)

As shown in the examples above, while doing PPT 2, P#6 produced six AS-units in Slide 4 and seven AS-Units in Slide 5 whereas she produced ten AS-Units in Slide 5 and eight AS-Units in Slide 6 in PPT 4 when the independent clauses and the adverbials in the same tone were calculated.

Since the number of the freer exercises in each PPT differed, the mean length of AS-Units was calculated by dividing the number of AS-Units by the number of freer exercises in each PPT. To exemplify, in PPT 4 there are 2 freer activities on two different slides, Slides 5 and 6, whereas in PPT there is only one free activity, Slide 6. Therefore, the number of the

AS-Units in PPT 4 was divided by two to calculate the mean number of AS-Units. Table 5 below illustrates the results.

Table 5

Mean Number of AS-Units

	Average Number of AS-Units			
Participants	PPT # 1	PPT # 2	PPT # 3	PPT # 4
P1	6	7	7	10
P2	10	9	8	8
P3	4	4	4	5
P4	6	7	11	9
P5	2	8	7	10
P6	7	6	5	10

As can be seen in Table 5, although there is not an increase in the mean number of AS-Units, in most cases the syntactic complexity increases in the last PPT as the participants used more AS-units in the final PPT compared to the previous ones.

In short, the comparison of the lengthened duration of their talk during the freer activities was used as evidence of how much they were willing to communicate in the target language. For the variety of vocabulary and structure, the learners tended to use more than the required number of the vocabulary items and targeted structures as they became more motivated, relax and self-confident. Some of the participants were not content with the number of the vocabulary items and integrated the targeted items from the previous lessons. They not only used more than the required number of vocabulary and structures but also used them appropriately and accurately. For the final category, communication, the participants' oral production was trouble-free. That is, the listener had no real problems understanding each learner's messages as they were perceived as smooth and effortless.

Final Interview

The purpose of the final interview was to respond to RQ2a as well as RQ3a and RQ3b and elicit participants' overall considerations about these digital out-of-class speaking

activities. Therefore, the researcher conducted this interview after the interviews at the end of each PPT and the questionnaire. Each participant was shown his/her each PPT and asked eleven questions. The answers to the questions were transcribed and coded. The researcher identified five categories, which were psychological, pedagogical, interactional, technical and administrative considerations.

Psychological Considerations

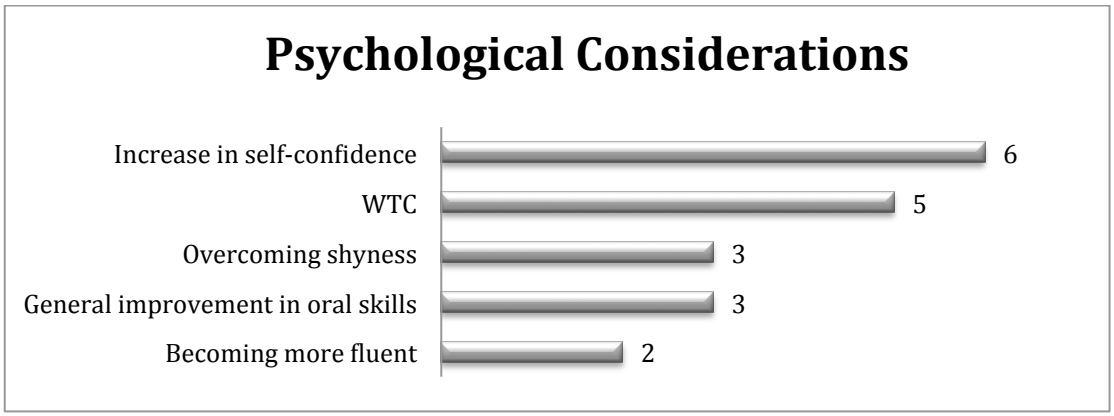

Figure 14. Psychological considerations

As can be seen in Figure 14, when the psychological aspects were considered, five main considerations stood out. These were: increase in the amount of willingness to speak, increase in self-confidence, overcoming the shyness, becoming more fluent and improvement in oral skills, shown in Figure 14.

First of all, all of the participants were enthusiastic from the beginning to the end of the study, and no one neglected to do any one PPT activity. On the contrary, they started to spend more time and talk more through the end of the study (See page 75-76 for a student's responses to PPT 2 and PPT 4 and the mean number of AS-Units of all students). In other words, the students were more willing to speak in English through the end when compared to the very beginning of this study. The extracts below illustrates a couple of opinions about the students' willingness to communicate in English:

> Now I am more eager to do speaking practice because I feel the improvement in my oral skills (I#4).

> I would like to do these activities again but, this time, in a long term (I#1).

Second, the students felt the boost in their self-confidence with the help of these out-of-class activities and the immediate feedback they got from the researcher. When the participants used these digital activities, they felt the flexibility both in time and in space. In other words, they could choose to do the tasks at a time and space that was convenient and comfortable for them. This flexibility also helped the learners become more self-conscious and confident. The following extracts illustrate their opinions about the increase in self-confidence:

> When you (the researcher) sent us the next PPT with your comments, it became a dialog. Therefore, this resulted in the increase in my confidence (I#2).
>
> I feel more courageous to speak now (I#5).

In addition, I#4 believed there was no real person staring at her right in front of her while she was speaking. Thus, she found it more comfortable and helped her believe in herself.

Third, half of the participants considered this whole study as a different experience that helped them overcome their shyness while speaking. I#5 claimed he was less shy about speaking in English and thought these activities were a good preparation for the speaking exams as well. Also, the extract below shows the feelings of another participant:

> I cannot talk in class. I am shy. But these activities helped me develop myself (I#4).

Fourth, two participants, I#2 and I#5, recognized the increase in the fluency in their speeches. According to these participants, the main reason was to record their voices again and again. They progressed by correcting their mistakes, which meant doing a number of recordings. Thus, they became more accustomed to speaking in English

Finally, three participants, I#2, I#3 and I#4, declared the improvement in their oral skills as a whole. These activities helped them identify their mistakes and gave them the chance to make up for. The extract below was taken from the I#2 and summarizes their opinion:

> When I listen to myself, I realized my mistakes, my bad speech. This was sometimes demotivating. But I confronted myself and corrected my mistakes (I#2).

Pedagogical (Academic) Considerations

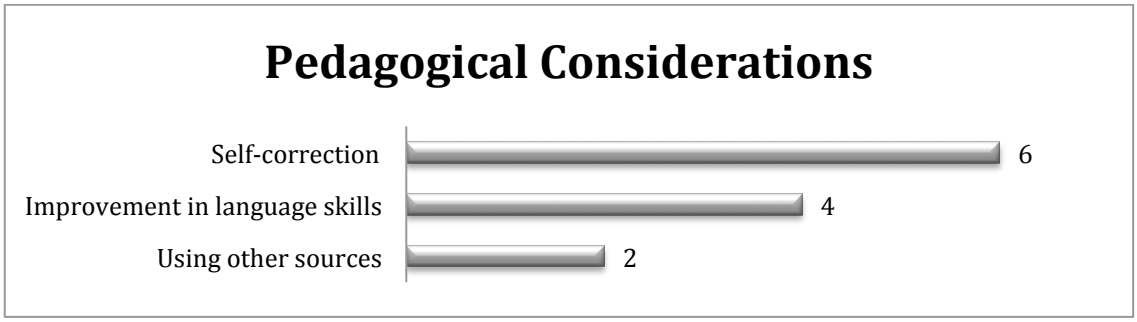

Figure 15. Pedagogical considerations

When the participants' responses to the interview questions were addressed pedagogically, they were categorized into three groups: self-correction, improvement in language skills and using other sources, as represented in Figure 15.

First of all, all participants stated they were happy with these activities as they were given the chance to notice their mistakes and correct them. They believed self-correction helped them progress pedagogically for they could record themselves numerous times. For example, at the end of the PPTs I#5 started to speak extemporaneously. That is, he did not need to take many notes and repeat the recordings more than once. Besides, I#6 assumed forming one's own sentences was one of the toughest things in language learning, and if one could do that, she could learn better. She also believed making mistakes and then being able to correct them was the biggest advantage of this study, and allowed her to make headway

academically. Likewise, I#1 admitted he could identify his mistakes while speaking as he did more practice.

Second, four participants noted the improvement of their language skills, primarily listening, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar besides speaking. Although the aim of the study was to help students improve their speaking skills outside the class, they demonstrated a considerable progress in other skills. For instance, I#2 believed they also did listening practice outside the classroom, which was different to her. The reason for that was the tendency to do mostly grammar and vocabulary practice as out-of-class activities. Similar to what I#2 believed, I#1 said he had only heard English in class hours, mostly from his teachers, and from the TV series, as this was one of his hobbies before. However, by means of these activities, he had the chance to listen to the audios on slides. Moreover, he considered listening to his own voice as a development for correct pronunciation because he gained self-awareness about his own pronunciation. Also, I#3 stated she took a step further in language use and vocabulary range because she wanted to do her best in the recordings, therefore, she tried to develop her language skills.

Third, beside the course book and workbook, two of the participants asserted they used different sources while doing the activities. To illustrate, I#6 claimed she used the Internet and the online sources in order to brainstorm. After she generated ideas and found useful phrases apart from the ones on the slides, she did her recordings. Likewise, I#1 stated he always started with a preliminary investigation about the topics on slides, and used different sources including websites, online dictionaries, and search engines such as Google.

Interactional Considerations

All of the participants stated that it was much easier to talk to the screen because they were aware that if they made a mistake, they could correct it by changing their recording. Also, when compared to the face-to-face communication, the interaction with the researcher

through the PPTs was more comfortable to all participants. The following extracts exemplify their opinions about talking to the screen rather than face-to-face talk:

> If I made a mistake, I could get back what I said (I#6).
>
> When I talk to someone face-to-face, I feel I may bore the person with my repetitions. But here, you have the chance to fix them (I#2).
>
> This was more comfortable; especially if I did not know the person I was talking because I felt shy then. 'But at least I know there is just a screen in front of me (I#3).

Technical Considerations

As the delivery of the PPT necessitated technology, the participants were both satisfied and dissatisfied with this situation. First of all, since this kind of speaking practice was new for them, they were excited because they not only did speaking practice but also used the current technologies, which was using PPTs with audio and videos in this case. I#6 reported that the biggest advantage of this study was to record their voices on slides and she believed she learnt a lot. She also stated that there were no technological programs or materials integrated into their school curriculum. On the other hand, half of them experienced some technical problems such as unable to download the PPT or unable to watch the videos due to the different extensions that their computers do not support and/or low quality of voice and the color of the fonts on slides.

Administrative Considerations

The PPTs were sent to the participants through Edmodo, a structured platform devised for educational purposes. The administration was trouble-free for three reasons: the ease with which students became accustomed to using Edmodo, the ease of downloading and uploading the documents, and the ease with which students were able to contact one another and the researcher.

Firstly, all of the participants were accustomed to this program as they used it at school. Second, the participants stated that they found it quite easy to download the PPTs the researcher sent and upload their own work as well. Another advantage of Edmodo was its capacity to handle large files. It allowed the users to upload large documents on the system in a very short time. Besides, I#6 reported that it was easier to get in touch with the researcher when needed.

To sum up, the participants found Edmodo quite user-friendly as they were already accustomed to the program. In addition, participants found it easier to download and upload documents, which were large in size, and to communicate with the researcher and the other participants when necessary.

Conclusion

In this chapter the analysis of the data collected through students interviews, at the end of each PPT and at the end of the whole study as an overall interview, students' performance on the PPTs analyzed via the rubric and a questionnaire were presented.

In order to gain more comprehensive data, the participants were interviewed not only after they completed each PPT but also at the end of the study. The aim of the interviews was to elicit students' overall perceptions about the digital out-of-class speaking activities. Beside the interviews, in order to understand the extent of the use of computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities positively impact on students' willingness to communicate, each participant's performances on each slide was examined and evaluated by using the rubric designed for the purpose of evaluating participants' WTC. Also, in order to have greater insight into learners' point of view, the questionnaire was conducted, and it was consisted of open-ended questions as well as six point Likert-scale items.

Both the frequencies of the questionnaire items, their performances on the PPTs and the interviews showed that participants were very positive towards these digitalized out-of-

class speaking activities as they contributed them pedagogically and academically. Apart from some technical issues such as interfering noise and bad quality of the recordings, all participants were satisfied with the study. They perceived they improved their speaking ability as they felt more comfortable and relaxed while doing these activities on PPTs through the screen. Moreover, they believed this kind of interaction was easier and more relaxed when compared to face-to-face communication in which there was no chance to take back what they had said. Besides, with the opportunity of recording as many times as they wished, they improved their speaking skills as well as their language use and pronunciation. They also thought that the administration of these PPTs via Edmodo was quite practical as it was user-friendly.

The interview results also showed that all of the participants would like to participate such a study again if given that chance. In other words, they were willing to communicate in English outside the classroom and do more speaking practice in a digitalized way. The next chapter will include further discussion of the findings in the light of the related literature.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Overview of the Study

This study aimed to cast light on not only the learners' perceptions about the use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) through digital technology outside the class in support of oral language skills but also its impact on students' willingness to communicate (WTC). This study was conducted with 6 participants in the School of Foreign Languages at Anadolu University.

In the process of this mixed research study, six students from the same level were exposed to a five-week training in a Turkish university context. In an attempt to fulfill the aims of the study, four sets of data were collected: interviews after each PPT, interviews at the end of the study, WTC rubric for participants' performances and student questionnaire. At the end of each PPT, participants were interviewed through various channels, including Skype, mobile phone, e-mail and in-person interviews. The participants were free to choose the medium of interviews as they had different skills, habits and preferences. The researcher asked questions about the PPT that students had completed in order to elicit their point of views about that particular PPT and its slides as well as participants' overall perception about the study. The interview questions were mainly about their opinions and perceptions while doing these activities, and their perceptions about their own performances. The questions also inquired into psychological considerations and asked whether these activities were helpful in terms of expressing themselves orally and whether they helped lower their anxiety level while speaking in English. Beside attitudinal and psychological aspects, the researcher also asked some questions about students' perception of pedagogical development as well as technical considerations.

The final interviews were more detailed and comprehensive compared to the ones

conducted right after each PPT. The researcher, in accordance with the coding, achieved five categorizations, which were psychological, pedagogical, interactional, technical and administrative considerations.

The third data tool was the rubric designed by the researcher to observe participants' performance on each PPT and monitor their willingness to communicate. The purpose of the rubric was to examine whether the computer-mediated out-of-class activities positively impact on students' willingness to communicate. For this reason, the rubric was divided into two parts: controlled exercises and less controlled (freer) exercises. It was comprised of five categories; task completion, language complexity, variety of vocabulary, variety of structure and communication. While controlled exercises involved students' attention to the target structure or function and were framed by the researcher, the less controlled ones necessitated learners' using the target language in a communicative way.

The final data tool was the questionnaire, which was conducted before the final interview, and was consisted of two parts. In the first part six-point Likert-scale was used. The second part was composed of five open-ended questions. The aim of the questionnaire was to elicit participants' overall perceptions about using computer screens to do out-of-class oral practice in a digitalized way.

The data gathered through the study were analyzed in four stages. First, the interviews at the end of each PPT were categorized and coded to explore perceptions of these digitalized out-of-class activities as a promoter of oral skills. Second, the questionnaire was analyzed by using descriptive statistics to reveal participants' perceptions towards these out-of-class speaking activities. Third, final interviews were conducted on an individual basis to gain greater insight into their point of views. Finally, the rubric was used to examine students' WTC.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. In the first section, the major findings of the study will be summarized and discussed. Next, pedagogical implications drawn from the findings will be presented. Finally, in the third and fourth sections, the limitations of this study and suggestions for further research will be presented.

Discussion of Findings

The discussion related to the findings of the study will be presented in accordance with the research questions. The discussions of the findings, which shed light on the research questions, will be discussed separately.

Research Question 1: To what extent do the out-of-class speaking activities support the development of students' oral speaking skills?

In an attempt to respond to the first research question (RQ), two different tools were used. First, the interviews at the end of each PPT were conducted. Interview data were collected through various channels such as mobile phones, applications like Skype and Call Recorder, and in-person. In order to respond to RQ1 and shed light on students' perceptions of using digital out-of-class speaking activities, the researcher asked two questions, Q1 and Q2, in the first three interviews and added two more questions, Q7 and Q8, in the last interview conducted at the end of the last PPT. As a second tool, the participants were distributed a questionnaire. The questionnaire included two sections, the first of which consisted of 10 six-point Likert Scale items and the second consisted of five open- ended questions. From the first section, questions 3, 4 and 5, and from the second section, only questions 1 and 4 were used to answer the first research question.

The first interview question (IQ1) directly asked how they felt about and how they evaluated speaking to the researcher through the computer screen. Half of the participants found it a bit challenging at the beginning as they had not done this kind of an activity

outside the class before. Also, two of them felt anxious at first, and the main reason for being anxious was the fear of making mistakes. However, these participants also declared that they got accustomed to this practice as they continued doing the PPTs, and their level of fear and anxiety disappeared in time. The primary reason for this disappearance was their perception of self-improvement in the use of target language.

IQ2 asked how these activities affect their speaking skills with follow-up questions, whether they thought the practice had helped them express themselves better and whether they were comfortable while speaking. Each and every participant agreed on the positive affects of these activities on their oral skills. They believed that these activities contributed to their self-expression in English. They started to feel more comfortable speaking in the target language both in class and outside the class.

The third perception-related question in the interview, which was asked after the last PPT, was IQ7, and asked whether they thought they would be more comfortable speaking in class from now on as they had completed these activities. Every one of the participants considered these out-of-class activities helped them speak in the target language easily and would help them feel more comfortable in the next modules during speaking English. The results to IQ1, IQ2 and IQ7 suggested similar results to Yu's study (2011), revealing that a person's willingness to communicate may be influenced by his self-evaluation. That is, if a person believes he has gained knowledge and skills of the second language, he may perceive himself as having the competence to communicate, and there will be an increase in his WTC (Yu, 2011). Likewise, as cited in Sener (2014), some other studies revealed that students who perceived themselves as competent in communicating are more willing to initiate communication (Cao, 2011, Hashimoto, 2002, Matsuoka 2006, Peng & Wood, 2010, Yashima, 2002).

The final perception-related question, which was asked after the last PPT again, was IQ8. The question asked whether they felt any change in the level of self-confidence when speaking in English. Each and every participant portrayed a very positive attitude towards these out-of-class speaking activities and the whole study. All of the participants claimed that they felt the change in the level of self-confidence when speaking in English. They also stated that they would like to join in a similar study once again if given the chance. The results for IQ8 may be linked to the results of Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide and Shimizu (2004), whose study revealed that having self-confidence is an important factor to be willing to communicate. Some other studies also suggested that less anxious and high self-confident students seemed to be more willing to speak inside the classroom (Cao, 2011, Hashimoto, 2002, Matsuoka 2006, Peng & Wood, 2010, Yashima, 2002 as cited in Sener, 2014, p. 105). Sener (2014) also stated that when there was an increase in students' self-perceived communication competence, their WTC level increased in direct proportion, and that the WTC level decreased when the anxiety level increased which was revealed in some other studies

Beside the interview questions, the researcher conducted a questionnaire so as to answer the first research question. Therefore, Q3, Q4 and Q5 from the first part as well as Q1 and Q4 from the second part of the questionnaire were analyzed.

In order to reveal participants' perceptions towards using computers for oral practice outside the class, Q3 was asked. All participants agreed on the effectiveness of doing speaking practice through computer screen. In other words, five of the participants strongly agreed that these activities were useful for them as they practiced oral skills through the medium of computers and one participant said s/he agreed with the statement. The reason for this might be the era they live in. In today's world, it is impossible to escape from

technology, and almost all learners make use of it as in the case of this study. Therefore, using technology to practice speaking English as an out-of-class activity was crucial for the development of their oral skills. They not only did speaking practice, but also received timely feedback from the researcher during the implementation of the study. Therefore, these out-of-class speaking activities seemed to support the development of their oral speaking skills.

The aim of Q4 and Q5 was to bring out participants' perceptions towards these activities and aimed to elicit whether these activities were useful for speaking practice and oral communication skills. All of the participants were content with the implementation of using these digitalized out-of-class activities. They had not had the opportunity to do speaking practice outside the class before they participated in the study. They believed these activities gave them the chance to develop their oral communication skills. The findings of many researches revealed that using computer-mediated communication might have positive effects on language performance (Beauvouis, 1998, Kern 1995, Warschauer, 1996). In a similar vein, Hirotani (2009) had the chance to observe the positive relationship between CMC language use and the participants' development of oral performance.

The first question of the second section in the questionnaire was asked to reveal students' perception about doing speaking practice via computers. They were all positive towards this practice and the main reasons are listed below:

- found it useful
- found it different
- felt comfortable during the implementation
- found it a good method to do speaking practice
- became more comfortable and relaxed while speaking.

For the fourth question, how they evaluated their later recording if they did more than once, all of the participants said ‘‘better’’ in different ways because they started to make fewer mistakes. Since they had the chance to correct their mistakes, they also started to enrich their speech and its context. As a result of this, they started to develop their speaking skills thanks to the feasibility of recording again and again until they were satisfied with it.

In brief, although they found it challenging and different at the very beginning, all of the participants portrayed a positive attitude towards these digitalized out-of-class activities. The participants believed that these out-of-class activities supported the development of their oral skills. They also believed that these activities boosted their self-confidence. Clement (1980, 1986) described self-confidence in two key constructs, perceived competence and a lack of anxiety. In this case, the participants started to feel more competent while using the target language by means of these activities as they helped them feel more confortable in terms of doing speaking practice, particularly in class. The main reasons why students perceived these out-of-class speaking activities as a mean of developing their oral communication skills were the use of technology for out-of-class practice, the spontaneous feedback from the researcher during the implementation and the chance to record their voice until they were satisfied. They also found these activities useful and the implementation was different to them. Therefore, they regarded it as a good method for speaking practice outside the class. The participants also were of the view that they felt more comfortable and relaxed, and the level of anxiety while speaking in the target language was diminished any longer. The findings are in line with some researchers’ findings. For instance, An and Frich (2006) suggested that asynchronous CMC mode is favored by the participants as it provides more time to think, reflect and develop ideas (as cited in AbuSeileek & Qatawneh, 2013, p.188). In addition, according to a study conducted by AbuSeileek and Qatawneh (2013), learners who used ACMC mode outperformed those who used SCMC with respect to the use of question

types and strategies. Also Munezane (2013) revealed a negative path from anxiety to linguistic self-confidence. That is, ‘‘more anxiety leads to less confidence, whereas if one is less anxious in communication in an L2, he or she is more confident in communicating in an L2’’ (Munezane, 2013, p.193).

Research Question 2: a) How does the use of computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities impact students' WTC?

In an attempt to answer the second research question, the final interview questions Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6 and Q7 were asked, and the participants' performances in each PPT were observed and examined one by one according to the rubric developed by the researcher. The rubric was divided into two parts; controlled and less controlled (freer) exercises so as to examine whether these computer-mediated out-of-class activities positively impact on their willingness to communicate. It consisted of five categories: task completion, language complexity, variety of vocabulary, variety of structure and communication. In addition, in order to identify the language complexity of each participant, the AS-units, developed by Foster (2000), were calculated. However, the analysis of variety of vocabulary and structure as well as communication categories were out of question for the controlled exercises as they necessitated students' attention to the target structure or function and were framed by the researcher. In other words, for the controlled exercises, only task completion was analyzed.

When controlled exercises were taken into consideration, task completion, the first category in the rubric, was fully achieved. In the second category, language complexity, the structure types were examined. At the very beginning, majority of the participants used single-clause structures. However, interestingly, they started to use both simple and complex sentences at the end of the PPTs with minor structural problems. These attempts were also evidence to the increase in motivation and self-confidence, which led the participants to the next layer in the WTC pyramid: the desire to communicate (MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei

and Noels, 1998). Similarly, as Yashima (2002) indicated, the level of motivation is one of the major factors that affects the linguistic outcomes such as achievement or proficiency.

As in the controlled exercises, in freer ones, the learners attempted to fulfill almost all of the requirements of the tasks and in most of the tasks, they displayed a satisfactory performance. Also through the end of the PPTs, the participants attempted to complex structures with some grammatical mistakes. Different from the controlled exercises, in less controlled exercises the learners started to record and send longer tracts of talk when they got used to the implementation process. To be more precise, the learners spent more time on their recordings and because the duration of one recording was not enough, sometimes they saved more than one recordings on the slides (See Figure 13). In short, the comparison of the lengthened duration of their talk, from the beginning through the end of the study, during the freer activities was the evidence of how much they were willing to communicate in the target language. Besides, the learners tended to use more than the required number of the vocabulary items and targeted structures as they became more motivated, relaxed and self-confident.

According to Gardner (1985), motivation is one of the key concepts in L2 learning, and he emphasized the importance of motivation in L2 as it affects the attitudes of learners towards L2. The participants' being dissatisfied with the number of the vocabulary items and integrating the targeted items from the previous lessons was the evidence of the increase in participants' motivation to use the target language. They not only used more than the required number of vocabulary and structures but also used them appropriately and accurately. For the final category, communication, the participants' oral production was trouble-free as the students' messages were perceived as smooth and effortless. The results for the second RQ may be supported by Cao (2012) in his study with six English for Academic Purposes

students. He revealed that 'learners with higher WTC would be inclined to produce more complex language than the students with lower WTC' (Cao, 2012, p. 32).

Second, the questions 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 from the final interview were asked as a complement to the rubric so as to deduce whether the use of computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities positively impact students' WTC. Q3 asked whether the participant's felt stronger/ better in the last exercise. Similarly, Q4 and Q5 aimed to elicit whether they felt more confident in the last one and whether they felt more confident talking to the researcher through screen. Q6 was intended to elicit whether they felt more willing to talk to the researcher in the last one more. Q7 directly asked whether they would like to do this kind of practice again in the next modules. The responses to these questions were categorized under the title of psychological considerations. According to the analysis of the interviews, first of all, all of the participants were enthusiastic from the beginning to the end of the study, and no one neglected to do any of the PPT activities. On the contrary, they started to spend more time and tracts of their talk were longer through the end of the study (See Table 5). In other words, the students were more willing to speak in English through the end when compared to the very beginning of this study.

Figure 14 in Chapter 4 illustrates the psychological aspects with five main considerations. These were: increase in the amount of willingness to speak, increase in self-confidence, overcoming shyness, becoming more fluent and improvement in oral skills. To be more precise, in parallel with the results drawn from the WTC rubric, the final interview analysis showed that the students felt stronger and better in the last PPT as they did more practice outside the class, and were more confident talking in the class and talking to the researcher through the computer screen. Similarly, as can be seen in the Figure 14, the participants' WTC in L2 was boosted as all participants felt the increase in self-confidence, and five of them became more willing to communicate in the target language. As cited in

Sener (2014), Bektaş (2005) conducted a study in Turkish context and revealed that the participants' WTC was positively related to their perceived linguistic self-confidence.

To sum up, the use of computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities positively impacted students' WTC. The learners' not only completing the tasks entirely but also going beyond the requirements of the tasks as well as their attempts to use the target language in complex structures and longer tracts were the evidence of this study's positive impacts on students' WTC. McIntyre (1997, 2014) stated that enjoyment and satisfaction in learning process as well as the provision of the greatest number of facilitating WTC factors might encourage the learner to go further into the learning process, which stems from positive learning experiences. This motivation to learn fostered the WTC, for it increased the amount of frequency and the quality of L2 communication of each participant.

Research Question 2: b) Specifically, do students consider that the out-of-class speaking activities built their confidence with respect to using the target structures and vocabulary in the classroom?

In parallel with the sub-question of the second research question, the interviews at the end of each PPT and the questionnaire were used. The third interview question, ‘‘To what extent did this activity allow you to revise and practice the target vocabulary items and grammar structures and integrate them into your speaking?’’ was asked in order to better understand whether these out-of-class activities supported the development of students' oral skills and helped them develop themselves pedagogically. Half of the participants perceived this study as an opportunity to practice the grammar structures and vocabulary items outside the school borders. Besides, they stated that they were aware of their improvement in the use of target language and started to integrate these structures into their speaking. In addition to practicing the targeted structures and vocabulary items, the other half suggested the PPTs were good instruments to revise these language rules and vocabulary items. In other words, practicing

and revising these targeted structure contributed to their level of confidence, and they started to feel more comfortable while using these structures in their oral production both in and outside the class. The results of a study with novice/intermediate Japanese learners about the transferability of CMC to oral performance conducted by Hirotani (2009) revealed a similar finding as the Japanese learners who used more syntactically complex structures in ACMC discourse, also used more complex sentences in their oral performance.

In addition to IQ3, questionnaire items 6 and 7 from the first section were asked in order to ascertain whether the participants benefitted from these activities with regards to language use. For this reason, Q6 asked whether these activities were useful for them to use target vocabulary items; and Q7 addressed whether they were useful for them to use certain grammar structures they learnt at school. The majority of the participants, five out of six, strongly agreed that these activities were useful for vocabulary use. The responses to Q7, however, revealed each and every participant were of the same mind and stated that they strongly agreed with Q7. In other words, all of the participants found these activities quite beneficial for the use and practice of grammar structures without exception.

In short, the participants remarked upon the constructive effects of seeing and using these grammar structures and vocabulary items on slides to support the development of their oral skills. Thanks to these PPTs, participants credited these activities for both practicing and revising the structures and the vocabulary they had learnt in class. Therefore, they all perceived improvements in their ability to use the language.

Research Question 3: What advantages/challenges do students observe in using computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities to improve their speaking skills?

In order to respond to research questions 3a and 3b and shed light on whether the advantages or the disadvantages of these out-of-class speaking activities preponderated, the final interview questions 1, 2 and 8 as well as the questionnaire items 1, 2, 8, 9, and 10 from the first section, Q2 and Q3 from the second section were examined in detail.

To start with, the interview Q1, ‘‘What were the advantages of these activities?’’ and Q2, ‘‘What were the disadvantages of these activities?’’ were asked. According to the participants, the benefits of these digitalized out-of-class activities overweighed the disadvantages. Data gathered from these questions were categorized under three headings: psychological, pedagogical and interactional benefits.

Psychological Benefits

When the psychological aspects were taken into consideration, five main advantages stood out, as shown in Figure 13 in the previous chapter. These were:

- increase in the amount of willingness to speak,
- increase in self-confidence,
- overcoming the shyness,
- becoming more fluent and
- improvement in oral skills.

First of all, since none of the participants neglected to do any of the PPT activities from the beginning to the end of the study and all of them showed great enthusiasm as they immediately sent their replies after I sent them the PPTs, it is evident that these students were more willing to speak in the target language. The extracts below illustrates a couple of opinions about the students’ willingness to communicate in English:

> Now I am more eager to do speaking practice because I feel the improvement in my oral skills (I#4).
>
> I would like to do these activities again but, this time, in a long term (I#6).

Second, these out-of-class activities and the immediate feedback they got from the researcher acted as a catalyst for the boost in their self-confidence. The following extracts illustrate their opinions about the increase in self-confidence:

> When you [the researcher] sent us the next PPT with your comments, it became a dialog. Therefore, this resulted in the increase in my confidence (I#2).
>
> I feel more courageous to speak now (I#5).

In addition, since there was no real person staring at her right in front of her while she was speaking, I#4 found this practice more comfortable. She also considered that this computer-mediated out-of-class practice helped her believe in herself.

Third, half of the participants considered this whole study as a different experience that helped them overcome their shyness while speaking. I#5 claimed he was less shy about speaking in English and thought these activities helped him get prepared for the speaking exams as well. Also, the extract below shows the feelings of another participant:

> I cannot talk in class. I am shy. But these activities helped me develop myself (I#4).

Fourth, two participants, I#2 and I#5, affirmed the increase in the fluency in their speeches. They believed recording their voices again and again was the main reason for the development of the fluency. They progressed by correcting their mistakes and by doing a number of recordings. Thus, it became easier to express themselves, and they turned into more fluent speakers. Even multiple recordings let them have more opportunities to speak in English.

Finally, three participants, I#2, I#3 and I#4, declared the improvement in their oral skills as a whole. These activities helped them pinpoint their own mistakes and gave them the

chance to make up for. The extract below was taken from the I#2 and summarizes these three participants' opinion:

> When I listen to myself, I realized my mistakes, my bad speech. This was sometimes demotivating. But I confronted myself and corrected my mistakes (I#2).

Pedagogical (Academic) Benefits

When the participants' responses to the interview questions were addressed pedagogically, the pedagogical advantages were mainly categorized into three groups: self-correction, improvement in language skills and using other sources, as represented in Figure 15 (See Chapter 4).

First of all, all participants stated they enjoyed these activities because this was an opportunity for them to notice their mistakes and correct them afterwards. They believed self-correction helped them progress academically, for they could record themselves numerous times as long as they were satisfied. I#5, for instance, started to speak extemporaneously at the end of the PPTs, which means he did not need to take many notes and repeat the recordings. Besides, according to I#6, forming sentences in English was one of the challenging things, and if one could do that, s/he could learn better. She also added that making mistakes and then having the chance to correct them was the biggest advantage of this study, and allowed her to make headway academically. Noticing mistakes and doing self-correction encourages the learner autonomy as they started to perceive themselves competent, which is one of the key concepts of self-confidence and influences the amount of L2 WTC (Clement, 1980, 1986).

Second, four participants remarked that they improved their language skills via these digitalized activities, primarily their listening abilities, correct pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar use besides speaking skills. Although the aim of the study was to help students

improve their oral skills outside the class, they demonstrated considerable progress in other skills. For instance, I#2 believed they also did listening practice outside the classroom, which was different to her. The reason for that was the tendency to do mostly grammar and vocabulary practice as out-of-class activities. Similar to what I#2 believed, I#1 said he had only heard English in class hours, mostly from his teachers, and from the TV series, as this was one of his hobbies before. However, by means of these activities, he had the chance to listen to the audios on slides. Moreover, he considered listening to his own voice as a development for correct pronunciation because he gained self-awareness about his own pronunciation. Also, I#3 stated she took a step further in language use and vocabulary range because she wanted to do her best in the recordings, therefore, tried to develop her language skills. In a study conducted in an EFL reading class, Kung (2004) used CMC discussions and revealed that students behaved in different ways, which helped them lead to language learning. He also suggested the CMC materials should be utilized cautiously and creatively in order to gain pedagogical benefits, and the guidance to use these technologies may result in promoting language learning as well as practicing skills which are necessary for communication.

Third, beside course book and workbook, two of the participants alleged they used different sources while doing the activities. To illustrate, I#6 claimed she used the Internet and the online sources in order to brainstorm. She did her recordings after she generated ideas and found useful phrases apart from the ones on the slides. Likewise, I#1 stated he always started with preliminary investigation about the topics on slides, and used different sources including websites, online dictionaries, and search engines such as Google. In the study of Chinese learners' English corner activities as an out-of-class learning strategy, Gao (2008) concluded that teachers should also develop their learners' capacity for being autonomous learners by integrating out-o-class activities into pedagogical practices.

Interactional Benefits

All of the participants, without exception, asserted that it was much easier to talk to the screen because they were aware that when they made a mistake, they could correct it by changing their recording. Also, the interaction with the researcher through the PPTs was more comfortable to all participants when compared to the face-to-face communication. As Egan (1999) suggested ‘‘Technology gives learners a chance to engage in self-directed actions, opportunities for self-paced interactions, privacy, and a safe environment in which errors get corrected and specific feedback is given’’ (p. 281). The following extracts exemplify their opinions about talking to the screen rather than face-to-face talk:

> If I made a mistake, I could get back what I said (I#6).
>
> When I talk to someone face-to-face, I feel I may bore the person with my repetitions. But here, you have the chance to fix them (I#2).
>
> This was more comfortable; especially if I did not know the person I was talking because I felt shy then. ‘But at least I know there is just a screen in front of me (I#3).

Beside Q1 and Q2, which asked the advantages and the disadvantages of this practice, Q8 aimed to elicit whether there faced any problems, and whether these problems were considered as a downside of the study. As the delivery of the PPT necessitated technology, the participants were both satisfied and dissatisfied with this situation. However, the satisfaction surpassed. First of all, since this kind of speaking practice was new for them, they were excited because they not only did speaking practice but also used the current technologies, which was using PPTs with audio and videos in this case. Also, the delivery of the PPTs was administered through a program named Edmodo. Thus, they became more capable of using online programs as well as the computer programs. According to I#6, the biggest advantage of this study was to record their voices on slides and she believed she

learnt a lot. She also stated that there were no technological programs or materials integrated into their school curriculum, and this was a great opportunity to use these technologies for the improvement of language skills.

On the other hand, half of them experienced some technical problems such as low quality of voice, the color of the fonts on slides. However, none of the participants evaluated these handicaps as a disadvantage of this study.

In addition to the final interview questions, the relevant questionnaire items were analyzed. For the first section of the questionnaire, although one participant was unsure and one participant agreed with Q1 and Q2 from the first section of the questionnaire, the majority of the participants disagree with the first statement. That is, they did not encounter serious problems about how to do these activities at the outset. Q2, ‘‘It was easier to do the following activities after the first one’’, asked about participants’ perceptions about the implementation of the activities at the beginning. The results revealed that all of the participants agreed with the statement, of which half of them strongly agreed that they did the activities easily after the first one. As a response to Q8, without exception, the entire group believed the advantages outweighed the disadvantages. In other words, each participant thought they took advantage of these activities in general. Q9 and Q10 were examined in order to draw out the participants’ perceptions about their own recordings. To be specific, Q9 sought to discover whether students’ deleted and recorded any recordings more than once with its reasons, and Q10 asked about whether the latter recordings were superior or not and the reasons why it was better. All participants agreed with the item in Q9, which means, all of them deleted one or more of their own recordings because they either evaluated their recordings as insufficient and wanted to make better recordings or realized their mistakes and wished to correct them. For Q10, all participants agreed that the latter recording was superior to the previous ones because they were aware of their mistakes as they were more

experienced and corrected their mistakes after hearing themselves, and perceived rerecording as the advantage of this study.

For the second section of the questionnaire, Q2 and Q3 were examined. The second question asked the advantages of these out-of-class activities if there were any, and the answers, represented in Figure 11, were categorized under the headings: motivation/encouragement for studying outside the class, improvement of language skills, and stress-related advantages.

Half of the participants, participants evaluated these activities very encouraging for out-of-class study as it was a chance to practice in a planned and systematic way outside the class. Now they had concrete activities to do, all of which were in parallel with the lessons they had learnt in class. Another reason why they found these activities quite motivating was that they found in-class activities insufficient to develop their speaking skills.

As is shown in Figure 11, half of the participants claimed these activities improve their language skills. To illustrate, according to P#2, she learnt how to use a word accurately and meaningfully in a context as the examples on the slides were quite guiding and instructive. In a similar vein, P#5 expressed this improvement as ‘‘getting high score from the speaking test’’, and P#6 considered as ‘‘promoter for grammar learning’’.

In addition to the increase in motivation and the improvement of language skills, two participants reported they overcame their stress while speaking and started to speak more comfortably and confidently. For instance, P#5 stated he started to relax and feel more comfortable while speaking English. In addition, P#1 explained his stress-free situation as ‘‘being more active in class’’.

Q3 asked about the disadvantages of these activities if there were any. As shown in

Figure 12 in the previous chapter, half of the participants replied there were no disadvantages whereas the other half thought the activities were sometimes time consuming. The extract below illustrates the opinion of P#2:

> I spent a lot of time to do some of the activities on PPTs. Maybe this can be a disadvantage (P#2).

In a nutshell, the responses to the final interview questions and the questionnaire indicated that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages of this computer-mediated out-of-class speaking practice for the development of oral skills. According to the final interview data analysis, the basic advantages were categorized as psychological, pedagogical and interactional benefits. The increase in the amount of willingness to speak, increase in self-confidence, overcoming the shyness, becoming more fluent and improvement in oral skills were the leading benefits of these computer-mediated out-of-class activities. Likewise, the questionnaire items revealed that these activities helped the learners become more motivated for studying outside the class. That is, they were encouraging for the participants to spend more time on language learning outside the school borders. As P#4 said, one of the benefits of this study was that it acted as ‘‘a facilitator to study systematically outside the class’’.

In addition to this, this practice facilitated the improvement of language skills. Although the primary focus of this study was on oral communication skills, it might help the learners develop the other skills including listening, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. Finally, the questionnaire items showed that the participants were less stressed while talking to the screen as they had the chance to make up. In other words, they could identify their mistakes and correct them before sending their recordings. The results of a Kung’s study (2004) revealed similar findings in terms of the main interactional features of CMC activities including self-correcting one’s errors.

Pedagogical Implications

The purpose of this study was to explore students' perception about what extent the interactive digitalized didactic activities outside the classroom can contribute to improving EFL learners' speaking skills. In addition, this study examined the extent the use of computer-mediated communicative out-of-class activities' positively impact on students' WTC. Finally, the participants' perceptions towards out-of-class digital speaking activities have been investigated through questionnaires. The results of this exploratory study have pedagogical implications for language learners, teachers, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, school administrations, material designers, and course book writers.

First of all, the participants' perceptions gathered via the interviews and the questionnaire revealed that the digitalized out-of-class speaking activities positively impacted students' oral skill performances. Each and every participant was content with the activities in the study as they believed these activities helped them improve their language skills, particularly speaking skills. To be more specific, the participants portrayed a very positive attitude towards these out-of-class activities in terms of implementation and improvement in language skills. Some of them found using computer for speaking practice difficult at the outset. Yet they got accustomed to it in time, and they stated in the interviews that they found the implementation different, enjoyable and educational. As Kukulska-Hulme (2009) stated, this kind of mobile learning has positive attributes to learners and increase the potential of personalized, situated, authentic and informal learning. Moreover, all participants stated these activities helped them develop lexical use as well as oral skills. Also owing to the fact that they evaluated their recordings insufficient or realized their mistakes and wanted make better recordings, each participant deleted one or more of their own.

As a second implication, the study presented the increase in WTC in the second

language. The performances of each participant were evaluated via the criteria specifically developed for this aim. The results revealed that they started to use both simple and complex sentences towards the end of the PPTs with minor structural problems. In addition, the learners started to record and send longer tracts of talk when they got accustomed to the process, which can be seen by the number of the AS-units each participant used. These attempts were also evidence to the increase in motivation, self-confidence and the desire to communicate.

Another major pedagogical implication of the study derives from the final interviews in order to elicit participants' overall considerations about these digital out-of-class speaking activities. Five categorizations were attained: psychological, pedagogical, interactional, technical and administrative considerations. When the psychological aspects were considered, five main considerations stood out. These were: increase in the amount of willingness to speak, increase in self-confidence, overcoming the shyness, becoming more fluent and improvement in oral skills. When the participants' responses to the interview questions were addressed pedagogically, self-correction, improvement in language skills and using different sources were conspicuous. For interactional considerations, all of the participants stated that it was much easier to talk to the screen as they had the opportunity to correct their mistakes by changing their recording. Also, when compared to the face-to-face communication, the interaction with the researcher through the PPTs was more comfortable to all participants. For the technical considerations, since the delivery of the PPT necessitated technology, the participants were both satisfied and dissatisfied with this situation. First of all, since this kind of speaking practice was new for them, they were excited because they not only did speaking practice but also used the current technologies, which was using PPTs with audio and videos in this case. However, the most reported drawback of the implementation of this study was the technical problems such as low quality of voice and the color of the fonts

on slides. Finally, the PPTs were sent to the participants through Edmodo, a structured platform devised for educational purposes, and the administration was trouble-free for three reasons: students' being accustomed to Edmodo, easy downloading and uploading, and easy interaction among the participants and the researcher.

Finally, the current study provided important implications for teacher trainers and technology units at schools. The results of the student interviews showed that using technology as a part of language learning and teaching is a crucial step to promote language learning not only in class but also outside the class. The students had the chance to do the activities on their own pace, and were flexible in time and place. Therefore, language instructors play a crucial role in using technological platforms in their classes, and in supporting their students to make use of it outside the school borders. As a result, students will enhance their language abilities, especially the speaking abilities, if they are given the chance. This will also help them boost their confidence in L2 acquisition and accelerates the increase in WTC.

Limitations of the Study

There are however limitations to the present study that require some cautiousness when considering the findings. The first limitation is related to the instruments used for collecting data in this study, which are mainly structured six- point questionnaire, the rubric, and semi-structured interviews. The data collected through these techniques, particularly through questionnaire and the interviews, are based on self-reports of the participants, so findings should be treated with caution rather than as clear-cut evidence. The participants' willingness and ability to reveal their true internal opinions and feelings play a key role in the reliability and validity of the findings. In addition, although the rubric was used by two different teachers to ensure inter-rater reliability, it would be better to test the rubric itself by a number of teachers before using it.

Another limitation is related to the number of the participants in the study, which involves only six students. Therefore, it may not be possible to make generalizations beyond this group. At the initial stage, 15 students volunteered to participate in the study. However, nine of them dropped out. The reason might be the activities' being done outside the school, and the perception as an extra workload for them as it was not included in the curriculum and not assessed by the in-class teachers. Also the students in other universities in Turkey and in other EFL contexts in the world may have different opinions about the use of technology outside the class as a tool to promote their oral skills and make them willing to communicate in L2.

Finally, the study had to be conducted in a limited time period, so the implementation lasted only five weeks. Notwithstanding the time limitation, a noticeable increase in WTC has been observed in the participants' overall foreign language skills and oral skills. Judging from students' positive responses, this study provided an opportunity to positively reinforce the importance of independent learning beyond the classroom.

Suggestions for Further Research

As a result of the findings and limitations of the present study, there may be several suggestions for further research. To start with, a follow-up study can be conducted on the students who participated in this study to explore possible long-term effects of the implementation on their academic lives. The main purpose of the study was to understand the impact of the use of digitalized out-of-class activities on their speaking skills and the participants' perceptions about whether the use of these out-of-class speaking activities' promotes their WTC. The effects of such implementation on language skills, such as listening and pronunciation can be investigated in future research studies, as well.

Second, the results may be extended to other similar cases. That is to say, a similar

study can be conducted at different universities preparatory schools or with the students who take EAP classes. Third, the study can be conducted as an experimental study with a control and an experimental group. Therefore, the researcher will have the chance to compare the effects of these out-of-class activities on two different groups, and discuss the results more quantitatively. Finally, a study, which includes the participants' oral test performances, may reveal some other significant information about students' WTC in L2 use.

Conclusion

This study was aimed to reveal students' perceptions about the use of digital out-of-class speaking activities on their oral performances and whether it has promoted their WTC in the target language. The study was conducted with the participation of six students who were studying at Anadolu University School of Foreign Languages. The data were gathered through a student questionnaire, student interviews and rubric scores for the participants' oral products in PPTs. The data collected through the study illustrated that each participants believed the positive effects of the study on their foreign language skills, particularly speaking skills. In the light of this study's findings, teachers, curriculum and material developers can prepare digitalized out-of-class materials so as to help their students improve their oral skills and assist them boost their confidence. As a result of these activities, students will have the chance to use technology for their education, learn not only in class but also outside the school borders and, more importantly, will become more willing to communicate in L2.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

Name of the study: Speaking From A Distance: Promoting Oral Skills Out-Of-Class
Researcher's name: Meriç Akkaya
Address: Anadolu University SFL İki Eylül Campus Eskişehir
E-mail address: merica@anadolu.edu.tr

Dear student/ participant,

I am a student at Bilkent University MA TEFL program. I invite you to join in this study and help me for my thesis. The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of interactive out-of-class activities on students' oral performance and their attitudes toward these out-of-class activities.

It is on voluntary basis to participate in this study and the data will be used only for scientific studies. The participant's profile will be kept confidential. If you need more information about the study, contact me from merica@anadolu.edu.tr.

If you accept to be a participant for this study, please sign this form.

I participate in this study voluntarily. I accept that the information I give will be used for scientific studies. (Give the form back to the implementer after signing it).

Participant's name and surname: Signature:

E-mail:

Phone:

Date: .../.../2014

Appendix B

Bilgilendirilmiş Onam Formu

Araştırmanın adı: Uzaktan konuşma: Sınıf dışı çalışmaları teşvik etmek
Araştırmacının adı: Meriç Akkaya
Adresi: Anadolu Üniversitesi YDYO İki Eylül Kampüsü Eskişehir
E-mail adresi: merica@anadolu.edu.tr

Sayın öğrenci,

Bilkent Üniversitesi'nde "Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizcenin Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans Programı" öğrencisiyim. Tez çalışmamda sizlerin bana yardımcı olmanızı umuyorum. Bunun için sınıf dışında yapılacak interaktif eğlenceli alıştırmaları yaparak bu çalışmaya katkı sağlayabilirsiniz. Çalışmamın amacı sınıf dışı interaktif aktivitelerin öğrencilerin konuşma becerilerine etkisini ve öğrencilerin bu çalışmalara olan tutumlarını incelemektir.

Çalışmaya katılım tamimiyle gönüllülük esasındadır ve sadece bilimsel çalışmalarda kullanılacaktır. Katılımcı bilgileriniz kesinlikle gizli tutulacaktır. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz merica@anadolu.edu.tr adresinden bana ulaşabilirsiniz.

Eğer bu çalışmaya katılmayı kabul ediyorsanız, lütfen bu formu imzalayınız.

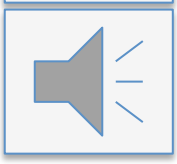
Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayımlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum. (Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya veriniz).
Katılımcının Adı-Soyadı: İmzası:
E-posta:
Telefon:
Tarih: .../.../2014

Appendix C

Katılımcı Yönergesi

Kaydı dinleyiniz.

Videoyu izleyiniz.



Kendi kaydınızı yapınız.

PowerPoint'lerin üzerine ses kaydımı nasıl yapacağım?

1. ESC → PowerPoint'ten çıkıp slayt üstüne yazı yazmanızı sağlar.

2. Ekle menüsü → Kayıt yapmak için ekle, ses, ses kaydı yap butonlarına sırayla basınız. 'Record' tuşuna bastığınızda sesiniz kaydetmeye başlar. 'Save' ya da 'Kaydet' dediğinizde kendi kaydınız o anki slaydın ortasında belirir.

Lütfen,

- yaptığınız ses kaydından memnun kalmayıp silmek istiyorsanız, mikrofon ikonunu seçip sil tuşuna basınız. Bu işlemi istediğiniz kadar tekrarlayabilirsiniz.

- yaptığınız her bir değişikliği kaydediniz.

3. Kaydet → Aktiviteleri tamamladıktan sonra lütfen kaydetmeyi unutmayınız.

Edmodo'yu nasıl kullanacağım?

Edmodo tamamen öğrenme/öğretme amaçlı olarak geliştirilmiş bir site olup Facebook'a çok benzer bir yapısı vardır. Sizlerin e-mailleri alındıktan sonra aktivasyon için bir link gönderilecek. Bu linke tıklayıp üye olduktan sonra interaktif alıştırmalar adınıza her hafta düzenli olarak gelecektir.

Benimle beraber bu hem eğlenceli hem de öğretici yolda yürüdüğünüz için sonsuz teşekkürler.

Okt. Meriç Akkaya
merica@anadolu.edu.tr
akkayameric@gmail.com
0533 --- -- --

Appendix D

Interview Questions

1st Interview

1. How did you feel about speaking to the researcher through the computer screen?
   a. Easy? / Difficult?
   b. Excited? / Worried?
   c. Comfortable? / Uncomfortable?
2. How did this activity affect your speaking skills?
   a. Do you think these activities help you express yourself better?
   b. Do these activities help you lower your anxiety level?
3. To what extent did this activity allow you to revise and practice the target vocabulary items and grammar structures and integrate them into your speaking?
4. What do you think about the number of the slides?
5. Did you listen to your own recordings before sending them?
6. Did you ever delete any of your recordings? If so, why?

2nd Interview

1. How did you feel about speaking to the researcher through the computer screen this time?
   a. Easy? / Difficult?
   b. Excited? / Worried?
   c. Comfortable? / Uncomfortable?
2. How did this activity affect your speaking skills?
   a. Do you think these activities help you express yourself better?
   b. Do these activities help you lower your anxiety level?
3. To what extent did this activity allow you to revise and practice the target vocabulary items and grammar structures and integrate them into your speaking?
4. What do you think about the number of the slides?
5. Did you listen to your own recordings before sending them?
6. Did you ever delete any of your recordings? If so, why?

3rd Interview

1. How did you feel about speaking to the researcher through the computer screen this time?
   a. Easy? / Difficult?
   b. Excited? / Worried?
   c. Comfortable? / Uncomfortable?
2. How did this activity affect your speaking skills?
   a. Do you think these activities help you express yourself better?

b. Do these activities help you lower your anxiety level?

3. To what extent did this activity allow you to revise and practice the target vocabulary items and grammar structures and integrate them into your speaking?

4. What do you think about the number of the slides?
5. Did you listen to your own recordings before sending them?
6. Did you ever delete any of your recordings? If so, why?

4th Interview

1. How did you feel about speaking to the researcher through the computer screen this time?
   a. Easy? / Difficult?
   b. Excited? / Worried?
   c. Comfortable? / Uncomfortable?
2. How did this activity affect your speaking skills?
   a. Do you think these activities help you express yourself better?
   b. Do these activities help you lower your anxiety level?

3. To what extent did this activity allow you to revise and practice the target vocabulary items and grammar structures and integrate them into your speaking?

4. What do you think about the number of the slides?
5. Did you listen to your own recordings before sending them?
6. Did you ever delete any of your recordings? If so, why?

7. Now that you have done these activities, do you think you will feel more comfortable in in-class speaking tasks?
8. Do you think there is any increase in your self-confidence?

Appendix E

Görüşme Soruları

Görüşme 1

1. Bu alıştırmaları yaparken ekrandan/ bilgisayar kullanarak benle konuşmak sence nasıldı? Neler hissettin?
    a. Zor? / Kolay?
    b. Heyecanlı? / Endişeli?
    c. Rahat? / Rahatsız?
2. Sence bu aktiviteler senin konuşma becerilerini ne yönde/ nasıl etkiler?
    a. Kendini ifade etmende yardımcı olur mu?
    b. Endişe seviyeni azaltır mı?

3. Derste geçen dilbilgisi yapılarını ve kelimeleri tekrar edip bunları konuşmanda kullanman için bir fırsat olduğunu düşünüyor musun?

4. Slayt sayısı hakkında ne düşünüyorsun?
5. Ses kayıtlarını yaptıktan sonra göndermeden önce dinledin mi?
6. Hiç ses kayıtlarından birini ya da daha fazlasını yapıp sildiğin oldu mu? Olduysa neden sildin?

Görüşme 2

1. Bu sefer ki yaptığın sınıf dışı çalışmayı nasıl değerlendirirsin?
   Daha kolay? Daha zor?
   Daha uzun? Daha kısa?
   Daha eğlenceli?
   Daha rahat?
2. Sence bu aktiviteler senin konuşma becerilerini ne yönde/ nasıl etkiler?
    a. Kendini ifade etmende yardımcı olur mu?
    b. Endişe seviyeni azaltır mı?

3. Derste geçen dilbilgisi yapılarını ve kelimeleri tekrar edip bunları konuşmanda kullanman için bir fırsat olduğunu düşünüyor musun?

4. Slayt sayısı hakkında ne düşünüyorsun?
5. Kayıtları göndermeden önce dinledin mi?
6. Kayıtlardan silip tekrardan yaptığın oldu mu? Neden sildin?

Görüşme 3

1. Bu sefer ki yaptığın sınıf dışı çalışmayı nasıl değerlendirirsin?
   Daha kolay? Daha zor?
   Daha uzun? Daha kısa?
   Daha eğlenceli?
   Daha rahat?
2. Sence bu aktiviteler senin konuşma becerilerini ne yönde/ nasıl etkiler?

   c. Kendini ifade etmende yardımcı olur mu?
   d. Endişe seviyeni azaltır mı?

3. Derste geçen dilbilgisi yapılarını ve kelimeleri tekrar edip bunları konuşmanda kullanman için bir fırsat olduğunu düşünüyor musun?

4. Slayt sayısı hakkında ne düşünüyorsun?
5. Kayıtları göndermeden önce dinledin mi?
6. Kayıtlardan silip tekrardan yaptığın oldu mu? Neden sildin?

Görüşme 4

1. Bu sefer ki yaptığın sınıf dışı çalışmayı nasıl değerlendirirsin?
   Daha kolay? Daha zor?
   Daha uzun? Daha kısa?
   Daha eğlenceli?
   Daha rahat?
2. Sence bu aktiviteler senin konuşma becerilerini ne yönde/ nasıl etkiler?
   a. Kendini ifade etmende yardımcı olur mu?
   b. Endişe seviyeni azaltır mı?

3. Derste geçen dilbilgisi yapılarını ve kelimeleri tekrar edip bunları konuşmanda kullanman için bir fırsat olduğunu düşünüyor musun?

4. Slayt sayısı hakkında ne düşünüyorsun?
5. Kayıtları göndermeden önce dinledin mi?
6. Kayıtlardan silip tekrardan yaptığın oldu mu? Neden sildin?

7. Şimdi bu alıştırmaları yaptığına göre, sınıf içinde konuşurken kendini daha rahat hissedeceğini düşünüyor musun?
8. Kendine güveninde artış var mı?

Appendix F

Final Interview Questions

1. What were the advantages of these activities?
2. What were the disadvantages of these activities?

3. Did you feel stronger/ better in the last one?
4. Did you feel more confident in the last one?
5. Did you feel more confident talking to me through screen?
6. Did you feel more willing to talk to me in the last one more?
7. Will you want to do it again? / Do you want to do this again in the next module?

8. What were the technical problems? (Old versions of Microsoft ppt?)

Appendix G

Sample Interview Transcripts

(Interview with Participant 1 after the 1st Ppt)

Researcher : How did you feel about speaking to the researcher through the computer screen?

Participant 1: At first I was anxious. Speaking English in a technological environment is more challenging, especially using a mobile phone. But it was good for me. Using my computer was easier. I was anxious when I was doing the first one [intro ppt], but I was more comfortable during the second one [ppt 1]. I think it was good. I did them [the activities on the slides]. I didn't like them. I deleted them and did them again.

Researcher : I was going to ask a question about this. But before that, while you were doing these activities, at the same time you recorded your voice. How was it? Was it easy or difficult?

Participant 1: I don't think that it was difficult. The structure of the program itself was easy to follow. It was good to record my voice on the slides. I didn't encounter problems. I managed to watch the videos and listen to the recordings on the slides without any problem. I think it was really easy. Everything was clear and illustrative.

Researcher : Well, you said I felt anxious. Was it a kind of positive or negative feeling? Excitement or anxiety?

Participant 1: I generally feel anxious when I speak in English, so it was a kind of anxiety.

Researcher : OK. You know, you spoke through the screen, how did you feel then? Did you feel comfortable or uncomfortable?

Participant 1: At first, when I spoke to myself, I felt uncomfortable. It was weird, but good. I think it was useful. I had different experience.

(Interview with Participant 6 – Final interview)

Researcher : What were the advantages of these activities?

Participant 6 : First of all, we could record our own voice and talking to the computer screen was experience for us because we don't do any kind of activity like this at school. Also I can learn better because speaking is different than writing. And forming my own sentences and then talking was more effective for me.

Researcher : Well, what were the disadvantages of these activities?

Participant 6 : The disadvantages… I don't know. I think there is no disadvantage.

Researcher : OK. Did you feel stronger/ better in the last ones after doing the previous ones, especially in speaking English?

Participant 6 : Yes. For example, at first I had concerns about how to do these activities. But the activities are different here on the slides. You can take one thing from a box and combine them to make your sentences and record your voice then. It was much better for me.

Appendix H

The Questionnaire

Dear Friends,

The questionnaire below is prepared to determine your beliefs and attitudes towards the out-of-class activities you have been doing for a while, and is consisted of two parts. In the first part, there are personal and educational questions about yourselves. In the second part, there are questions about the out-of-class activities.

Please be sincere while answering the questions and choose the one that describes you best.

Thank you.

Instructor Meriç Akkaya

PART I

Please read the statements below carefully and put (X) to the grid that best describes you.

6 Strongly Agree 5 Agree 4 Agree to some extent 3 Not sure 2 Disagree 1 Strongly Disagree

	6	5	4	3	2	1
1. It was difficult to understand how to do these activities at the outset.						
2. It was easier to do activities after the first one.						
3. I find it effective to do activities by using computer.						
4. I find these out-of-class activities useful in terms of speaking practice.						
5. I find these out-of-class activities useful in terms of oral communication.						
6. I find these out-of-class activities useful in terms of vocabulary use.						
7. I find these out-of-class activities useful in terms of using grammar structures.						
8. The advantages of these activities outweigh the disadvantages.						
9. I recorded my work again while doing these activities because _____						
10. The second recording was better because _____						

PART II

Please answer these questions briefly.

1. What is your opinion about doing speaking activities by using computers?

   .....

   .....

2. What are the advantages of these out-of-class activities if there is any?

   .....

   .....

3. What are the disadvantages of these out-of-class activities if there is any?

   .....

   .....

4. If you deleted a recording and then rerecorded, how would/ do you evaluate the next one?

   .....

   .....

5. Would you like to join in a similar study if you were given the opportunity?

   .....

   .....

PART III

Age: a) 16-20 b) 21-25 c) 26-30 d) 31 and above

Gender: a) Female b) Male

Department: _____

Years in prep. school: a) First year b) Second year c) Other: _____

Your previous level(s):

2012-2013 I. Module _____ **2013-2014** I. Module _____

II. Module _____ II. Module _____

III. Module _____

IV. Module _____

Have you even been in an English speaking country?

Yes __ a) 1-3 week(s) b) 1-6 month(s) c) 7-11 month(s) d) 1-3 year(s) e) Other: ___

No __

Your previous language experience: (You can select more than one choice.)

a) I studied at another university's prep school before.
b) I studied at a private/ foreign language intensive high school.
c) I took language courses.
d) I took private lessons.
e) I have foreign friends.
f) Other: _____

Appendix I

Öğrenci Anketi

Değerli arkadaşlar,

Aşağıda yer alan anket, yapmakta olduğunuz sınıf dışı aktiviteler hakkındaki görüş ve tutumunuzu belirlemek için hazırlanmıştır, ve üç bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk iki bölümde sınıf dışı çalışmalara yönelik sorular, üçüncü bölümdeyse çalışmalara yönelik kişisel ve eğitim bilgilerinizle ilgili sorular bulunmaktadır.
Lütfen anket sorularını yanıtlarken sizin için en doğru olan seçeneği işaretleyiniz. Soruları yanıtlarken ki samimiyetiniz büyük önem arz etmektedir.

Teşekkür ederim.

Okt. Meriç Akkaya

BÖLÜM I
Aşağıdaki soruları cevaplarken lütfen size en uygun olan kareye (X) koyunuz.

6 Kesinlikle katılıyorum. 5 Katılıyorum. 4 Kısmen katılıyorum. 3 Emin değilim. 2 Katılmıyorum. 1 Kesinlikle katılmıyorum.

	6	5	4	3	2	1
1. Bu sınıf dışı aktiviteleri nasıl yapacağımı anlamak başta zor oldu.						
2. İlk ödevi yaptıktan sonra diğerleri daha kolay oldu.						
3. Bilgisayar kullanarak konuşma becerileri ile ilgili alıştırma yapmayı etkili buluyorum.						
4. Bu alıştırmaları İngilizce konuşma pratiği yapmamda faydalı olduğunu düşünüyorum.						
5. Bu alıştırmaları sözlü iletişim kurmamda faydalı olduğunu düşünüyorum.						
6. Bu alıştırmaları kelime kullanımımda faydalı olduğunu düşünüyorum.						
7. Bu alıştırmaları dilbilgisi yapılarını kullanımımda faydalı olduğunu düşünüyorum.						
8. Bu alıştırmaların avantajları dezavantajlarından daha fazladır.						
9. Bu çalışmaları yaparken beğenmediğim kayıtları silip tekrardan kayıt yaptım. Çünkü _____						
10. İkinci kez yaptığım kayıt daha iyi oldu. Çünkü _____						

BÖLÜM II

Lütfen aşağıdaki soruları kısa cevaplarla açıklayınız.

1. Konuşma becerileri ile ilgili bilgisayar kullanarak alıştırma yapmayla ilgili düşünceleriniz nelerdir?

   .....

   .....

2. Sizce bu sınıf dışı çalışmaların avantajları varsa nelerdir?

   .....

   .....

3. Sizce bu sınıf dışı çalışmaların dezavantajları varsa nelerdir?

   .....

   .....

4. Eğer bir kaydı silip tekrardan yaptıysanız, sonradan yaptığınız kayıtları nasıl değerlendirirsiniz?

   .....

   .....

5. Bu sınıf dışı çalışmaları tekrar yapma fırsatı size sunulsa yine katılmak ister misiniz?

   .....

   .....

BÖLÜM III

Adınız:

Yaşınız: a) 16-20 b) 21-25 c) 26-30 d) 31 ve üstü

Cinsiyetiniz: a) Kadın b) Erkek

Bölümünüz: _____

Hazırlıktaki yılınız: a) İlk yılım b) İkinci yılım c) Diğer _____

Daha önceki seviyeleriniz:

2012-2013 I. Modül _____ **2013-2014** I. Modül _____

II. Modül _____ II. Modül _____

III. Modül _____

IV. Modül _____

Daha önce ana dili İngilizce olan bir ülkede bulundunuz mu?

Evet _____ Ülke: _____

a) 1-3 hafta b) 1-6 ay c) 7-11 ay d) 1-3 yıl e) Diğer _____

Hayır _____

Önceki dil deneyimleriniz: (Birden fazla seçeneği işaretleyebilirsiniz.)

a) Daha önce başka bir üniversitede hazırlık okudum.

b) Özel / Yabancı dil ağırlıklı bir okulda okudum.

c) Dil kursuna gittim.

d) Özel ders aldım.

e) Yabancı arkadaşlarım var.

f) Diğer _____

Appendix J

WTC Rubric

	Controlled exercises				Freer (Less controlled) exercises			
Task Completion	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
	The learner **has fulfilled all the requirements** and his/her performance is satisfactory.	The learner **has fulfilled the requirements** of the tasks **although not entirely.**	The learner **has fulfilled some of the requirements** of the tasks satisfactorily.	Overall, the learner **has not fulfilled the requirements** of the tasks to a satisfactory level.	The learner **has fulfilled all the requirements** and his/her performance is satisfactory.	The learner **has fulfilled the requirements** of the tasks **although not entirely.**	The learner **has fulfilled some of the requirements** of the tasks satisfactorily.	Overall, the learner **has not fulfilled the requirements** of the tasks to a satisfactory level.
Language complexity		**3**	**2**	**1**		**3**	**2**	**1**
		The learner has used complex structures where necesssary as well as simple sentences **appropriately**.	The learner has attempted to use both complex and simple sentences although with **some structural problems**.	The learner has used only single-clause structure and **does not attempt** to use complex structures.		The learner has **always** used complex structures as well as simple sentences **appropriately**.	The learner has attempted to use both complex and simple sentences although with **some structural problems**.	The learner has used only single-clause structure and **does not attempt** to use complex structures.
Variety of vocabulary					**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
					The learner has used **more than** the required number of **target** vocabulary items appropriately and **integrated** the targeted items **from previous exercises**.	The learner has used **more than** the required number of the **target** vocabulary items from the exercise appropriately.	The learner has used **required** number of the **target** vocabulary items.	The learner has used **less than** the required number of the **target** vocabulary items.
Variety of structure					**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
					The learner has used **a variety** of structures targeted in this lesson appropriately (at least two different structures).	The learner has used **at least one targeted** structure in this lesson appropriately.	The learner has attempted to use **at least one targeted** structure although the structure was not appropriate for that context.	The learner has **not** used **any** of the structure targeted in this lesson.
Communication						Overall, the listener has had **no** real **problems** understanding the learner's message.	The listener has **mostly understood** what the learner wishes to express.	The listener has **trouble understanding** what the learner wishes to express.

Appendix K

WTC Checklist

Controlled exercises

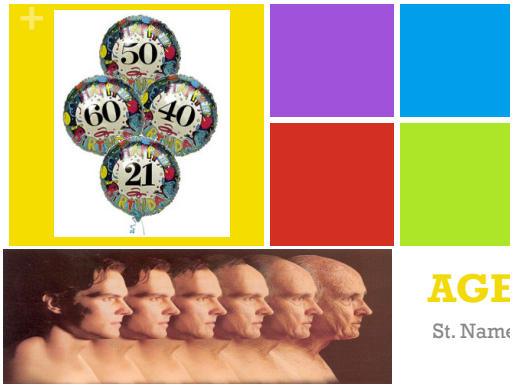
	4	3	2	1
Task Completion	above satisfactory	satisfactory	below satisfactory	unsatisfactory
Language Complexity		**complex and simple strc. use and appropriate**	**complex and simple strc. use but some prob.**	**only single-clause structure and no attempt for complex structures**

Freer exercises

	4	3	2	1
Task Completion	above satisfactory	satisfactory	below satisfactory	unsatisfactory
Language Complexity		**complex and simple strc. use and appropriate**	**complex and simple strc. use but some prob.**	**only single-clause structure and no attempt for complex structures**
Variety of vocabulary	**appropriately use of more than the required number and integration from previous exercises.**	**appropriately use of more than the required number**	**required number of the target vocabulary items**	**less** than the required number of the **target** vocabulary items
Variety of structure	**use of various structures appropriately**	**use of at least one targeted structure appropriately**	**at least one targeted structure but inappropriately**	**No use of targeted structure**
Communication		**No prob. for the listener**	**Mostly understood by the listener**	**Troublesome for the listener**

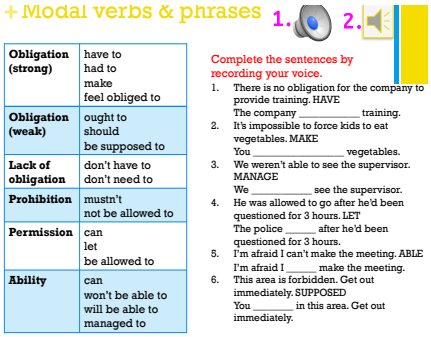
Appendix L

Sample PPT

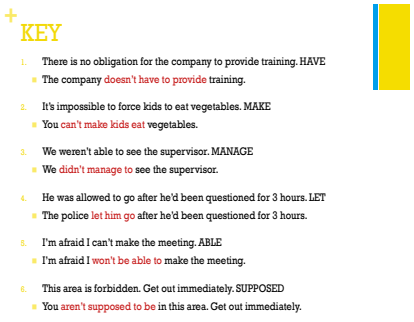


Slide 1

Slide 2



Slide 3



Slide 4

Slide 5

Slide 6

Appendix M

Sample Unit from the Course Book

Slide 2 and 3

3 **Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first. Use between two and five words including the word given.**

1 There's no obligation for the company to provide training.
HAVE
The company _____ training.

2 It's impossible to force kids to eat vegetables.
MAKE
You _____ vegetables.

3 We weren't able to see the supervisor.
MANAGE
We _____ see the supervisor.

4 He was allowed to go after he'd been questioned for three hours.
LET
The police _____ after he'd been questioned for three hours.

5 I'm afraid I can't make the meeting.
ABLE
I'm afraid I _____ make the meeting.

6 This area is forbidden. Get out immediately.
SUPPOSED
You _____ in this area. Get out immediately.

Slide 4

LISTENING

4A How would you answer questions 1–8?

What's the best age ...

1 to choose a career?
2 to get married?
3 to have a baby?
4 to start a sport?
5 to learn a musical instrument?
6 to learn a new language?
7 to become president or prime minister?
8 to retire?

Slide 5

C 6.4 **Listen to the second part of the programme and answer the questions.**

1 How does Laura see her sixteen-year-old self now?

2 Is she happy with the way her life has turned out?

GRAMMAR future perfect and continuous

4A Look at sentences a) and b) from Laura's letter. Which one talks about:

1 things that will be completed before she opens the letter?

2 things that will be in progress around the time that she opens the letter?

a) I'll have changed so much.

b) I bet when I get this, it'll be raining.

B Complete the rules.

Rules:

1 To talk about something that will finish before a specific time in the future, use *will* + ____ + ____.

2 To talk about something that will be in progress at or around a specific time in the future, use *will* + ____ + ____.

C Underline the correct alternative in the sentence and explain your reason.

In ten years' time, I expect *I'll be owning/ I'll own* a flat.

PRACTICE

6A Complete the questions with the correct form of the future perfect, future continuous or future simple.

1 By the end of the day, do you think _____ (you/receive) more than fifty emails?

2 At 9p.m. tonight, _____ (you/watch) TV? If so, what?

3 Do you reckon _____ (you/fall) asleep by midnight tonight?

4 Do you think _____ (you/drink) twenty cups of coffee or tea by the end of the week?

5 This time next year, _____ (you/still/study) English?

6 Do you think _____ (you/pass) any English exams by then?

7 Do you reckon _____ (you/still/like) the same kind of music a few years from now?

8 In twenty years' time, _____ (you/live) in the same town, do you think?

B Work in pairs and discuss the questions in Exercise 6A. Use words/phrases from the box in your answers.

Possibly That's pretty unlikely Yes, definitely That's quite likely I doubt it No, definitely not Perhaps I expect so I don't suppose so