

THE EFFECTS OF MOTHER TONGUE AND SOCIOCULTURAL ASPECTS ON  
SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: TURKISH AND ENGLISH L2  
LEARNERS

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE EFFECTS OF MOTHER TONGUE AND SOCIOCULTURAL ASPECTS ON SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: TURKISH AND ENGLISH L2 LEARNERS**

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Second language acquisition is an area of research that attracts attention of many educators and scholars. There are various research conducted in order to reveal the mechanisms of the process. Some studies have investigated particular aspects of the phenomena, such as mother tongue interference, acquisition of vocabulary or grammar structure, acculturation and acquisition. In this research there has been made an attempt to combine all previous experience and examine the effects of mother tongue on second language acquisition process, as well as sociocultural aspects that influence it. Language was examined as a complex system consisting of syntax, morphology, semantics and phonology. Interrelated nature of relationships between mother tongue and second language in each of these parts has been revealed. The researcher investigated the role of culture and social milieu in the acquisition process and their effect on it. Two groups of participants were compared. First group consisted of Turkish natives learning English in non-authentic environment. Second group was presented by English native speakers who acquired language in natural settings. The results of the investigations on both groups were compared in order to find the similarities and differences, and to work out general idea on the process of second language acquisition.

**Key words:** Second Language Acquisition, Mother Tongue, Acculturation, Effects, Culture, Society

## Öz

# İKİNCİ DİL EDİNİMİ ÜZERİNDE ANADİLİN VE SOSYOKÜLTÜREL YÖNLERİN ETKİLERİ: TÜRKÇE VE İNGİLİZCE L2 ÖĞRENCİLERİ

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İkinci dil öğrenimi birçok eğitmen ve araştırmacının dikkatini çeken bir alandır. Sürecin mekanizmalarını ortaya çıkarmak için yapılan çeşitli araştırmalar vardır. Bazı araştırmacılar, anadilin müdahalesi, kelime ya da dilbilgisi öğrenimi, kültürel etkileşim ve edinim gibi olayların, belirli yönlerini araştırmışlardır. Bu araştırmada, tüm önceki deneyimleri birleştirmek ve ikinci dil öğrenim sürecinde anadilin etkilerini, hem de onu etkileyen sosyokültürel yönleri incelemek amaçlanmaktadır. Dil, sözdizimi, morfoloji, fonoloji ve semantiği içeren karmaşık bir sistem olarak incelenmiştir. Anadil ve ikinci dil arasındaki ilişkilerin birbirine girintili doğası adı geçen her bir bölümde ortaya çıkmaktadır. Edinim sürecinde kültür ve sosyal çevrenin rolü ve süreç üzerindeki etkilerini araştırılmıştır. Katılımcılar iki grup şeklinde karşılaştırılmıştır. Birinci grubu doğal olmayan bir ortamda İngilizce öğrenen Türkler oluşturmaktadır. İkinci grupta, doğal ortamlarında dil öğrenen anadili İngilizce olan kişiler sunulmaktadır.

İki gruba ait araştırmaların sonucu, benzerlikler ve farklılıkları bulmak; ikinci dil öğrenme süreci hakkında genel bir fikir oluşturmak için karşılaştırılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: İkinci Dil Öğrenimi, Anadil, Kültürel Etkileşim, Etki, Kültür, Toplum

To my mother

To my beloved one

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|     |                                 |
|-----|---------------------------------|
| SLA | Second Language Acquisition     |
| FLA | First Language Acquisition      |
| L1  | First language of the learners  |
| L2  | Second language of the learners |
| FL  | Foreign Language                |
| TL  | Target Language                 |
| NP  | Noun Phrase                     |
| VP  | Verb Phrase                     |
| S-R | Stimulus-Response               |
| SVO | SubjectVerbObject               |
| SOV | SubjectObjectVerb               |
| SCT | Sociocultural Theory            |
| CA  | Contrastive Analysis            |

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The legend about The Tower of Babel tells that centuries ago humanity spoke one language, but because of the pride in an attempt to reach the heaven, it was punished and alienated. Since that moment, people have been doing their best to get united again. Their efforts were concentrated in the field of languages as it seems the only one way to negotiate and share ideas, progress. Speaking one language means speaking the ‘same language’ in a figurative meaning. Acquisition and language learning, being processes of high mental activity and complicated issues, therefore, gave birth to various theoretical investigations, starting from ancient times. Some of these works seem to be more successful; others lost their value as useless and meaningless. However, all scholars of past and present paid great attention to the role of mother tongue and other factors of sociocultural and psychological nature in the process of second language acquisition.

### **1.1 Overview**

‘Cogito ergo sum’, a disputed statement by French philosopher René Descartes, which means ‘I think, therefore, I am’, opens the essence of human’s being. As long as people can reflect on themselves, doubt and question the existence, hence think, they exist. This cogitative process is necessary to be represented somehow, and thus mind conveys its work into the language and then voice. Speech is a means to deliver ideas, feelings and will while communication as all the words are material and due to this are available to perception. When thinking over speech and language, we should keep in mind that language is not equal speech. Speech is language, which is activated in particular communicative situation; it is an act of communication and its fixed outcome. Language, on the other side, is a stock of words and settled grammar system defined by people, historically selected and national by its character. This language is signified in separate rules, syntactical patterns, and phonological details. Speech, indeed, is a field where spiritual content gets shape. Content expressed in speech is content of consciousness, content of mind, and what is more important it does not come to sum of language units meanings used for its expression.

Unit of communication is proposition or statement; unit of statement is the word. Language can be considered as a system of signs, and each of them has sense or meaning. Signs and meanings form independent and somewhat reserved structure inside language which has particular laws, rules and methods of connection. Sign appears to be a form that contains this or that meaning. Combination of language signs is set by certain language rules. Hence, these rules reflect ways of world entities interaction. The scheme reveals language problem related to the impossibility of defining one sign with only one meaning. Regarding this there's always a difficulty in understanding particular language, text or speaker.

In second language acquisition, this problem obtains particular characteristics. Bearing in mind the fact that language is a system which requires deep analysis and constant development to understand the meanings, it can be suggested that language acquisition is the process of decoding meanings from target language into mother tongue. Being accepted, this leads to the idea that successful second language acquisition may depend on such factor as mother tongue. Mother tongue may affect second language acquisition in both negative and positive ways. Its effect is condition by accumulation of sociocultural and anthropological determinants in human's consciousness reflect in the language. The result of such accumulation is a probable lack of convergence when decoding words or signs. In other words, this would be a mismatch of what learners acquire and what they already know and aware of; both in terms of language and culture. Separation, denial or intentional exclusion from target language culture may impede or even stop second language acquisition. The involvement into target culture may be a key to acquisition as it lets learners acquire new signs which mismatch their system and, thus, decode target language meanings successfully.

At the same time mother tongue language units, being a reflection of historical development, may have an effect on language acquisition, and this effect may be traced when a closer look at second language patterns affected is taken. If step away from semantics, as well as social and cultural factors in acquisition and concentrate on language itself as a set of formulas then it is possible to notice that parts of second language which get the most impact are belong to phonological, syntactical and morphological bodies. Generally speaking, the way learners

pronounce sounds, construct sentences and words, all these gets an influence of mother tongue.

Thousands of teachers and learners struggle these effecting factors, trying to reduce the power of mother tongue and create and get included into target culture to acquire second language. There is no unified hand-book which could guide ones who wish through the process; however, if the effects of mother tongue and sociocultural aspects are investigated and described it may ease the acquisition. The researcher attempts to reveal all the above-mentioned points in this study for the further use of learners and teachers.

## **1.2 Theoretical Framework**

Along the history of education and applied linguistics, there have been developed hundreds of methods, theories and techniques to explain, stimulate, and improve learning outcomes. Some of the theories were focused on specific areas of second language learning, others were trying to give a broader look. This study operates the terms that were developed within several particular theoretical works.

It is essential for the researcher to take into account the development of the learners' interlanguage, as well as to correlate the results of the study with earlier implications of behaviorists. When speaking of second language acquisition, the researcher should bear in mind Krashen's Monitor Model. In terms of this study, it is significant, as it would allow the researcher to trace the order of the learning, to understand the affective factors, to speak about Silent Period with the theoretical backup of Stephen Krashen's research.

Along with linguistic interrogations, there are theories that facilitate this study that have involved various sources of knowledge from diverse disciplines. The researcher finds it is necessary to support the investigation with the Sociocultural Theory by Vygotsky. Lantolf and Thorne (2007) defend that the Sociocultural Theory is applicable to second language acquisition. They argue that, "SCT is grounded in a perspective that does not separate the individual from the social and in fact argues that the individual emerges from social interaction and as such is always fundamentally a social being" (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007, p.213). Schumann (1986) describes acculturation as "the learner's social and psychological integration with the



target language group” ( p.379). According to Schumann (1986), the extent of SLA migrates within two separate but related clusters which are social and psychological distances laying between learners and the target language group.

Due to the fact that the field is complex and interdisciplinary, there’s a chance that one common and fully accepted theory would not be worked out. No matter the fact that there is no one reliable opinion considered most appropriate for explaining second language acquisition in terms of mother tongue effect and the influence of sociocultural aspects, the review of existing models would be provided further in the following chapter to show that these are valuable assets and probable key approaches to the understanding of the second language acquisition process.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Researcher came to Turkey to get an MA degree about two years ago without any knowledge of the language. Researcher's mother tongues are Russian and Tatar. Although Turkish language has similar constructions and words to Tatar, it was difficult to communicate with the outside world. Being an experienced learner, researcher used a dictionary actively to translate words and resorted to different grammatical sources to check on rules. Half a year later she became able to understand some pieces of speech and read. The main problem was oral production. Researcher got through the Silent Period stage, and it took her almost a year to start actively speak Turkish. At the moment, researcher can communicate in target language, read and write. Native speakers sometimes compliment her for pronunciation, which she works on to sound native-like. Thus, the researcher, apparently, have seen all stages of second language acquisition, and she is still acquiring it, as it is an on-going process. Being inside the acquisition, researcher was reflecting on her failures and success, and she wondered if other learners experienced the same problems as she did; in other words, if these scenarios are common for all SLA participants.

Along with language itself, the researcher was exposed to the target culture and social norms. Due to the similarities between Tatar and Turkish cultures in terms of religion, customs and traditions, this part of the process required fewer efforts than learning language forms. However, the question of people with other than Turkish

language background coping with the acculturation bothered the researcher's mind. Communicating with people of different nationalities, the researcher decided to take a deeper scientific look at the problems of their adjusting to new culture and society, at their attitudes towards the target community. The researcher was mostly interested if sociocultural factors affected the acquisition process of English native speakers. Do they have any difficulties when acculturating to unfamiliar conditions? Are there any sociocultural factors which help or vice versa discourage their acquisition of the target language?

On the other hand, being an English language teacher in a private institution in Turkey, the researcher had a chance to observe Turkish learners of English. Following the administration instructions, Turkish is not welcomed in the classroom. Teachers are obliged to communicate in English only; due to this fact, the students are exposed to a second language during their time in the school. They had to acquire language forms from the teachers and the peers. This process is in some sense similar to the natural environment. Nevertheless, the researcher had noticed that the students of hers tended to transfer some mother tongue peculiarities into the target language. Moreover, here it should be mentioned that this problem concern not only the learners of English in Turkey, but the problem of transfer has a world-wide nature. Thus, it seemed logical for the researcher to investigate the mechanisms of the interference of mother tongue in SLA, both in terms of English native speakers and Turkish native speakers. The objective was to reveal the language parts which were most affected in both languages, compare them and workout some pedagogical recommendations in regard to the existing theories.

The students of this private institution have also had some issues with the target language culture. For instance, so famous game as "Secret Santa" was difficult for them to understand at once. It led to the difficulty in understanding some vocabulary. In other words, the cultural aspect had its effect on the learners' perceptions of the language. This meant that sociocultural factors might be affective not only for the English natives living in Turkey and acquiring language in the target environment, but they might impact the learning of English by the Turkish natives.

Thus, the problem in the whole seemed significant and complicated. The

researcher aimed to reveal the mechanisms inside the second language acquisition when looking in depth at the English learners and Turkish learners. The study would focus at the problems of mother tongue influence and sociocultural factors affecting the acquisition process in Turkish context. However, the outcomes of this study might be applied for further research in another national context.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to understand mother tongue aspects, social and cultural factors which affect second language acquisition, leaning on experience of Turkish and English L2 learners. This research is a cycle of analysis and synthesis. To disclose the main purpose, there are several objectives that the researcher finds to be relevant. Firstly, according to the topic, the researcher would analyze language parts basing on appropriate literature review. Secondly, as the study seeks to investigate the effects of the mother tongue on SLA, the researcher observes the participants registering their use of mother tongue forms when speaking target language, Turkish and English. Observation journal reflects the whole period of the study lasted eight months. No audio or video records are available regarding the reasons explained further in the study. Along with that, the researcher could analyze the written texts created by the learners of English as these texts are the school assignments. The analysis targets to mark out the language forms mostly transformed under the influence of the mother tongue.

As this study is a qualitative research, it employs the tools that belong to this method. Survey is designed in order to examine participants' opinions and their problematic issues in SLA. It is a base for further in-depth interview questionnaires which aim to see what factors affect the acquisition process, whether cultural and social differences/similarities can discourage learners or support them in their language acquisition.

The knowledge of the problems that both groups of learners face might help to cope with them. The awareness of the language parts affected by mother tongue might show the learners the area where they should put more effort. An

understanding of social and cultural factors might help the learners to acquire the target culture, hence language, faster and easier.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

There are research questions needed to be answered in regard to the main purpose stated above. Research questions that would be responded include the following:

- 1) Which language patterns of mother tongue of Turkish native speakers exert the most influence upon the process of English language acquisition?
- 2) Which language patterns of mother tongue of English native speakers exert the most influence upon the process of Turkish language acquisition?
- 3) What factors may interfere the exposure of Turkish native speakers to authentic English language culture when acquiring English as a second language?
- 4) What social and cultural barriers can English native speakers face when acquiring Turkish as a second language in an authentic environment?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

As it has been already mentioned, there are many research studies that examine the effect of mother tongue and sociocultural factors in SLA. First of all, the necessity to investigate the mother tongue effect on second language, was mostly dictated by the presence of two opposite opinions on the use of the mother tongue in the classroom. The apologists of the ‘free-from-mother-tongue’ teaching appeal to the fact that the mother tongue transfer causes the transformation of the target language forms, and ‘wrong’ learning. The supporters of the mother tongue involving programs, on the contrary, argue that learners L1 can be a helpful tool. At the same time, there are aspects of the target culture and social structure which might affect the acquisition. Culture and language are interrelated. When an individual attempts to learn a language, it is inevitable that he/she would face some cultural issues. According to Brown (2007), culture is deeply ingrained into people, and that language is the most visible and available way to express it. Social and psychological distances appearing during the acquisition process and depending on their extent might have a crucial influence at the learners’ outcomes.

Turkey, due to the globalization and the expand of economic relations, aims to develop strong language politics inside the country. One of the fundamental requirements for the potential employees is the knowledge of foreign languages, in particular English. One can expect a better position or promotion within the company if he/she shows a good command in English. At the same time, more and more Turkish students aim to enter the higher education institutions abroad, where the knowledge of English is often a must. This means; they would have to acquire new customs, traditions along with the language.

On the other hand, due to the open borders, thousands of foreigners are coming to Turkey. The medium of communication for most of them is English. These people face particular problems when they start a new life. These problems might be affective in terms of language acquisition. As well as their mother tongue can influence the process.

The literature review showed that there are studies that examine particular parts of the language body influenced by the mother tongue. Most parts of the studies investigated such specific issues as the role of semantic notions in the acquisition of English language article system by Turkish learners (Atay, 2010), or morphological and semantic errors of Turkish learners (Karakaş). Some of the studies were conducted in Turkey and examined both Turkish natives and English speakers acquiring English and Turkish languages respectively (Atay, 2010; Karakaş; Bulut, 2011); others took place outside the country with the involvement of Turkish native speakers (Karakaş, 2013; Haznedar, 1997; Varol, 2012).

This study is significant in both scientific and pedagogical reference due to its attempt to provide an in-depth view of the problem of influence of mother tongue and sociocultural aspects in Turkish context. The study accumulates data on the most important issues. This research would be a help for the both groups of learners Turkish and English, as well as it provides an understanding and knowledge for the teachers. The instructors could receive awareness of the language parts being effected, and either reduce the effect or facilitate it. The knowledge of the social and cultural factors would stimulate the learners and the teachers to make steps in order to shorten the distances and, hence, improve the learning process.

## 1.7 Operational Definition of Key Terms

According to Ashworth (1992), “*mother tongue* or *native language* is the language which the person acquires in early years and which commonly becomes natural instrument of thought communication” (p.5). The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines mother tongue as “one’s native language; a parent language”. The researcher would use notions “native language”, “mother tongue”, and “first language” (L1) as synonymous in this study. On the other hand, Ashworth (1992) states that, “the second language is a language acquired by a person in addition to her mother tongue” (p.5).

Some of the authors including the researcher use the terms *second language*, *foreign language* and *target language* interchangeably. The researcher would refer to the definition provided by Jack C. Richards and Richard Schmidt (2002) in Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics:

a language which is not the NATIVE LANGUAGE of large numbers of people in a particular country or region, is not used as a medium of instruction in schools, and is not widely used as a medium of communication in government, media, etc. Foreign languages are typically taught as school subjects for the purpose of communicating with foreigners or for reading printed materials in the language. (p.206)

Speaking of a term ‘*transfer*’, it seems problematic to define it unambiguously. One of the first educators, who referred this term to cross-linguistic affects, was Whitney (Whitney, 1881; as cited in Odlin, 1989). Later theories on transfer were developed. One of them is contributed to Thornfike and Woodworth (Thornfike & Woodworth, 1901; as cited in Odlin, 1989). Their idea was that similar Stimulus-Response (S-R) parts of two actions caused transfer. It is quite usual to relate the term to behavioristic approach. Along with that, there are scholars who argue the need to reject the term, or employ it within defined limits (Corder, 1983; Kellerman & Smith, 1986). Corder (1983) proposed the employment of the term ‘mother tongue influence’ instead of ‘transfer’ due to its behavioristic roots. Another educator Stephen Krashen (1983) provides the idea that transfer appears when the learner does not have enough new knowledge and turns to old. The research employs both notions ‘transfer’ and ‘mother tongue influence’ synonymously.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Overview**

Lev Tolstoy once stated that language was a weapon of mind. It is the ultimate truth since language is what conveys and shapes the thoughts. It is a means to deliver our ideas and transform our perceptions into words so that outside world could understand them. Mother tongue acquired from the first days enables us to communicate with familiar social environment. Learning foreign languages opens new horizons and broadens one's world from a size of the neighborhood to a size of the planet. Since the existence of humanity, there have been endless debates on better ways to acquire second language. Philosophers, linguists, psychologists were offering different approaches to ease and improve the acquisition process. These attempts should be treated respectfully as they could enlighten the nature of learning. SLA is a field that has complex nature and adapts to outside changes all the time. The evidence that supports this claim lays in the essence of notion '*language*' itself. Language is not a constant substance, it something which changes every moment, producing new forms and patterns. As language changes, acquisition adapts to all metamorphoses; therefore learners witness birth of new approaches, methods, and techniques.

To realize what acquisition process is, to understand the nature of relations between mother tongue and second language acquisition, to reveal the effect of sociocultural factors on the process, theories and hypotheses should be reviewed. Author would provide a comprehensible overview of the theoretical framework in order to get a clear idea of the process and to create a base for further investigation.

### **2.2 General Information on Second Language Acquisition Theories**

Due to the complex nature of second language acquisition process, author would prefer to examine widely discussed second language theories as parts of one whole system in respect to the purpose of the study. Each part captures and explains a different aspect of SLA. It has been stated by Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) that, "at least forty 'theories' of SLA have been proposed" (p.227). Some of these

attempts present more or less thorough explanation for the phenomenon. This author would give a brief review of several theories and hypotheses, which are behaviorism, Universal Grammar, Acculturation Model, Krashen's Monitor Model and the five hypotheses of his: Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, The Monitor Hypothesis, Natural Order Hypothesis, Input Hypothesis, Affective Filter Hypothesis, and Sociocultural theory by Vygotsky.

Behaviorism could be considered as an ancestor of some modern hypotheses and basis for some teaching methods; despite its disputable postulates, it still has lots of adherents. In 1950s, behaviorism gained consideration from educational society being applied to language learning in an attempt to explain second language acquisition. According to behavioristic theory, language is a collection of forms, whereas acquisition is a result of habit appearance. Behaviorism does not take into account any internal process, it is concentrated around the linguistic environment which produces particular stimuli. Stimuli-Response relationships being a form of repetition influence the acquisition, making learning an individual's behavior. Thus, acquisition of language is the acquisition of automatic linguistic habits. B. F. Skinner (1961) proposed, "A significant change in behavior is often obvious as the result of a single reinforcement" (p. 146). Spillane (2002) states, "the behaviorist perspective, associated with B. F. Skinner, holds that the mind at work cannot be observed, tested, or understood; thus, behaviorists are concerned with actions (behavior) as the sites of knowing, teaching, and learning" (p. 380).

Behaviorism applied to language learning, have been criticized ever since. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) argued that it provided "little promises as explanations of SLA, except for perhaps pronunciation and the rote-memorization of formula" (p. 266). There are some disadvantages of behaviorism as a theoretical ground. It does not accept gradualism in SL construction with the help of hypothesis formation. Also behaviorism does not understand learner's errors to be natural when acquiring languages. Another issue of the theory is that it does not acknowledge any personal factors, nor importance of cultural or contextual aspects. It is significant that in terms of the behaviorism the mother tongue is considered as a barrier to learn the foreign language. Johnson (2004) also notes, "Behaviorism undermined the role of



mental processes and viewed learning as the ability to inductively discover patterns of rule-governed behavior from the examples provided to the learner by his or her environment” (p. 18).

In the late 1950's, Universal Grammar (UG) was introduced. It is usually credited to Noam Chomsky. The theory referred to first language acquisition, however later it was applied to SLA process. According to UG idea, every human being has a natural ability to acquire the languages, therefore, the acquisition is a creative process, and it is not related to habits formation. Language learners have an active role in these processes as creators of the languages. Chomsky (1976) proposed that there is such an instrument as a Language Acquisition Device, which is located in every human being's brain. This Device supplies the learners with the possibility to reveal the rules of the language. Further inquiries into the role of the brain activity and cognitivity in SLA were developed under the influence of UG investigations (Gersten & Hudelson, 2005; Lightbrow & Spada, 1999; Wesche, 1994). White (2003) says that, “if it turns out that the L2 learner acquires abstract properties that could not have been induced from the input, this is strongly indicative that principles of UG constrain interlanguage grammars, parallel to the situation of L1 acquisition” (p. 22).

Another approach, which is affective on second language acquisition, considers acculturation. Daniels (2000) says in his work that Acculturation theory has roots in Linton's ethnographic studies (Linton, 1960; as cited in Daniels, 2000). Linton investigated the changes of Native American's community so that they could fit American society. As described in Daniels' (2000), Linton revealed and defined the distance between the cultures. He also proposed necessary social and psychological reorganizations in order to enhance intergration (Daniles, 2000). Daniels (2000) further states that for Linton social distances refered to the exact contact between the two cultural groups, whereas psychological segment was related to the wish of one learner to belong to the target or major culture.

Perhaps the earliest model toward centrality to learner factors was Schumann's Acculturation Model (1986). Schumann's Model (1986) was

concentrated around two central ideas that provided an idea of the way learner's strategies in language acquisition differ. According to Schumann (1986), learners have to struggle not only with the linguistic difficulties, but with social and psychological aspects as well.

In 1981 Stephen Krashen developed the Monitor Model on the basis of innatist thought. The Model involved five hypotheses. First hypothesis was The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis. The core idea of it is that there is a clear difference between acquisition and learning. To Krashen's (1981) opinion, acquisition is a process that floats unconsciously, when the learner hear and listens to the language. On the other hand, learning is what happens consciously, when the learners studies the rules of the language. For Krashen (1981), there is supremacy of acquisition over the learning.

Another hypothesis proposed by Stephen Krashen (1981) was The Monitor Hypothesis. Krashen's idea (1981) consists of the proposal that unconsciously acquire language is responsible for fluency. Language learned with the conscious process going on is employed to monitor the production. Thus, the monitor is utilized when the speaker is worried of the correct output. It needs appropriate knowledge and time to recall the grammar rules. The learning which requires consciousness works for writing rather than for speaking (Krashen, 1981).

Next thought that was developed was The Natural Order Hypothesis (Krashen, 1981). It provides the idea that morphological structures are acquired in a particular order. There would be a natural sequence which the learners would follow which is different to the one presented in the classroom. According to Krashen (1981), grammar, that is easier learnt consciously, can be more difficult to acquire.

Next two hypotheses are tightly connected. The Input Hypothesis proposes that the most appropriate way to acquire SL is with the help of an appropriate input (Krashen, 1981). In other words, learners should be exposed to the language as much as possible. The input should have comprehensible character and should be little higher than the learners' level of the proficiency (Krashen, 1985). This is what Krashen calls  $i+1$  (Krashen, 1985). If the learners cannot achieve the higher level set,

their failure is explained with the affective filter. It leads to the next hypothesis of Krashen (1985) called The Affective Filter Hypothesis. The affective filter is a hindrance that does not let the learners to acquire the target language when exposed to that. Krashen (1985) considers the affective filter as “a mental block, caused by affective factors...that prevents input from reaching the language acquisition device” (p. 100). There are variables, such as motivations, attitudes, emotional condition, that can either raise or lower the filter. In other words, when the learners are stressed, or anxious, the filter is getting higher. It blocks the input and keeps the learners from acquiring the language. Warm and friendly environment can make the learners relax, therefore, lower the filter and support the acquisition (Krashen, 1985; Auerbach, 1993).

One of the most influential theories was continued the ideas of Lev Vygotsky. It received the name The Sociocultural Theory (SCT). This theoretical thought is grounded at the idea that sociocultural factors are not less significant in the acquisition than biological factors. SCT considers language having cultural roots to be a mediator between the social milieu and psychological aspects. Motivations of intrinsic and extrinsic nature are crucial in language acquisition. Human beings are always determined by the social system. They are inseparable from the social and cultural reality (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007).

As it could be observed different models have focused on various aspects of SLA and general linguistic research. These theories the have involved different sources of knowledge from diverse disciplines. Each of the theories proposes particular principles of SLA. Given that the field is complex and interdisciplinary, there's a chance that one common and fully accepted theory would not be worked out. No matter the fact that there is no one solid opinion considered most appropriate for explaining second language acquisition, the review of existing models shows that these are valuable assets to second language acquisition theory in general. Author reviews the above theories to present their comprehensibility and explanatory means of the process investigated. It is essential to have a clear idea of what second language acquisition is for research. These theories have been explained as they seem

to be essential and significant when studying the effects of mother tongue and sociocultural aspects.

### **2.3 Theoretical Background of Mother Tongue and Second Language Interrelation**

Nature of interrelations between mother tongue and second language has always been a subject of intense debates among scholars. Some of them are confident that mother tongue and its use when learning a second language is an undisputable 'evil' and learners should avoid mother tongue involvement into acquisition. On the contrary, others argue that mother tongue could be a help for learners as there are some similar processes which learners come through when acquiring a second language.

There are many research studies in the area of the mother tongue influence upon the second language. Ellis (1997) considers influence or interference to be a mother tongue transfer that, according to him, is "the influence that the learner's L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2" (p. 51). In Ellis's opinion (1997), transfer depends on the way how the learners perceive what can be transferred; it also depends on the level of proficiency. If the learners have a belief that the construction of own rules with the help of L1 can assist their acquisition, they actively use this option. Another variant is when they are proficient enough for such an operation (Ellis, 1997). This leads to separation of mistakes and errors (Ellis, 1997). According to him, errors come of the learner's lack of knowledge, whereas mistakes have occasional nature (Ellis, 1997).

The source of the problems that the learners have with L2 is often related to the L1 interference (Beardsmore, 1982). When the learner employs the elements of L1 in L2, it causes errors in L2 due to the fact that the language forms are different. There is an opinion that the more similar are the languages, the higher level of influence of L1 upon L2 (Albert & Obler, 1978). It might have a positive effect as well as a negative one. There is no solid view on this issue that is actually have a good side as the researchers can take a look at the problem from different perspectives. In regard to this McLaughlin (1987) argues that, "Scientific progress is

achieved as we come to illuminate progressively our knowledge in a particular domain by taking different perspectives, each of which must be evaluated in its own right” (p. 6).

**2.3.1 Intertwined parts of mother tongue and second language.** Mother tongue and second language are two areas that have strong connections and influence upon each other. This relation is considered to be a negative/positive factor affecting second language acquisition. The learners’ first language interferes the second language learning in terms of the transfer of some L1 structures into L2 field (Ellis, 1999). There are supportive opinions defending this point of view. Marton (1997) states:

Taking a psychological point of view, we can say there is never peaceful co-existence between two language systems in the learner, but rather constant warfare, and that warfare is not limited to the moment of cognition, but continues during the period of storing newly learnt ideas in memory. (as cited in Ellis, 1999, p.150)

On the other hand, there is view that minimizes or even denies the role of L1:

... Our data on FL acquisition of syntactic structures in a natural environment suggest that the interference does not constitute a major strategy in this area...it seems necessary to me to abandon the notion of interference as a natural and inevitable phenomenon in FL learning. (Felix, 1991; as cited in Ellis, 1999, p.107).

Krashen (1985; as cited in Ellis, 1999, p.112), disclaims the L1 interference role. For him the use of the first language is a performance strategy. The learner falls back on his first language using his first language when he lacks a rule in the FL. He initiates an utterance using his first language (instead of ‘acquired’ FL knowledge) and then substitute FL lexical items, also making small repairs to the resulting string by means of the Monitor (Krashen, 1985; as cited in Ellis, 1999).

Despite these controversial opinions, teaching experience and previous research conducted gives the idea of the interdependent nature of mother tongue and second language co-existence. Some evidence could be found if a closer look at particular language components is taken. Thus, if such language parts as phonology, syntaxes, morphology and semantics are analyzed in terms of them being affected and affecting, mechanisms of influence could be understood.

*2.3.1.1Phonology.* Pronunciation is what allows people to recognize foreigners. The way learners pronounce sounds, put stress, make pauses, and fluency affects their accent. Native-like accent is an ultimate goal of every learner. However, could ideal pronunciation guarantee that the speaker is the same accurate with grammatical structures? As a matter of fact, there are learners whose pronunciation of target language sounds and the whole speech is far from being called native, but their grammar is sophisticated and various. Despite their high level of grammar proficiency, these learners sometimes are not treated seriously and considered to be weak acquirers. Nowadays accent and pronunciation are the tags of success, which, on one hand, facilitates assimilation, and, on the other hand, raises learners to top among the peers.

Linguists and educators have been debating on the factors affecting acquisition of phonology for decades. According to Hammarberg (1988), these factors are the age of the learner when he/she is first exposed to the language, the quality and the quantity of second language input, and the amount of mother tongue and second language use. Age can be affective factor in terms of phonology acquisition. It is supposed that younger learners acquire sounds better than the adults. It is easier for them to achieve native-like pronunciation. There is no one opinion over the issue as the research studies contradict each other.

One of the explanations of how age when people start language learning process may impact acquisition is The Critical Period Hypothesis proposed by Lenneberg in 1967. It was accepted for second language acquisition widely. The Hypothesis states that if the language acquisition begins after the age of puberty, learners may not be able to acquire all language aspects successfully. In 2008 Baker, Trofimovich, Flege, Mack and Halter conducted a study. They investigated The Critical Period Hypothesis in the area of the phonology acquisition. Their results showed that Korean learners of English were better than Korean adult learners in the production of L2 particular sounds. Even though the Korean adults had been learning English for a very long time, children's pronunciation of English specific sounds was better than that of adults (Baker et al., 2008).

Another factor that greatly influences learners' knowledge and capacity of acquiring L2 pronunciation are the interactions between L1 and L2 sound systems. To explain the impact of the first language on L2 acquisition, many theories and hypotheses have been proposed so far. The most influential was the contrastive analysis hypothesis which was based on the systematic study of comparing and contrasting two or more languages in order to predict and explain the source of errors that L2 learners make when they use the target language. The contrastive analysis hypothesis, proposed by Oller and Ziahosseiny (1970), claimed that (1) when the differences between target language and L2 linguistic systems are minimal, confusion occurs, and (2) therefore similarities between two languages may pose a challenge for learners. When interpreted in relation to pronunciation, this implies that learners are more likely to have difficulty acquiring the target sounds that are similar to the ones in their native language sound system.

In a comparing and contrasting Turkish and English, even though their alphabets are both based on the Latin alphabet, their morphology, syntax, and vocabulary differ to a great extent. On the other hand, the consonants of both sound systems are similar except English has consonants that do not exist in Turkish. For example, the Turkish consonant inventory lacks interdental  $[θ]$  as in *'thanks'* and  $[ð]$  as in *'this'*. The lack of these two sounds usually leads Turkish speakers of English to perceive and produce these sounds as  $[t]$  and  $[d]$ . Another consonant that does not occur in Turkish is  $[w]$ . The sound  $[w]$  is usually substituted with the nearest Turkish sound  $[v]$  by Turkish speakers. For example, Turkish speakers are likely to pronounce *'when'* as *'ven'* due to the absence of this sound in Turkish consonant inventory. Although there may not be major differences between these two languages' consonant inventories, it is mainly the differences between Turkish and English vowels that create difficulty for Turkish speakers in English pronunciation (Varol, 2012). Turkish vowels are categorized into three main groups as rounded-unrounded, high-low, and front-back. On the other hand, English has additional classification for its vowels such as tense-lax. Even though Turkish lacks this discrimination in its vowel list, it should be pointed out that because some vowels that are categorized in English as tense also occur in Turkish, they do not pose a difficulty in pronunciation. For example, while the vowel sound  $[a]$  exists in

both sound systems, it is specified as tense in English in addition to low and unrounded. Similarly, it is categorized as low and unrounded in Turkish. On the contrary, some of the lax vowels of English are among the most problematic areas in terms of pronunciation of English by Turkish speakers. The vowel [æ] does not exist in Turkish vowel inventory. As a result of the absence of this sound, most Turkish speakers pronounce this vowel either [e] or [a]. For example, “*pack*” is usually pronounced as “*peck*” by Turkish speakers. Finally, the English sounds that do not occur in Turkish are diphthongs: [ai], [av], and [oi] (Varol, 2012). Among these only [ai] occurs in Turkish although it is not classified as a distinct sound. For example, the diphthong [ai] occurs in the first syllable of the Turkish words ‘*ayna*’ (mirror) and ‘*ayni*’ (identical). Additionally a similar sound to [oi] also occurs in Turkish. For instance, it occurs in the word ‘*koy*’ (put) although its pronunciation differs slightly than that of [oi]. Because there is not any similar sound for the diphthong [au] in Turkish, when Turkish speakers encounter words that contain this sound they usually pronounce [au] as [a]. For example, ‘*how*’ is usually pronounced as ‘*hav*’ by Turkish speakers.

On the contrary, there are sounds of Turkish, which cause problems for English speakers. One of the examples with sound [r] has already been mentioned above. Another sound that seems to be problematic is the consonant sound [ɣ] which corresponds to the letter ‘ğ’ also called as soft g. There has been a debate over it. Some consider it a letter rather than a sound. However, International Phonetics Association treats it as a velar fricative consonant sound. The main function of soft ‘g’ in pronunciation is that it lengthens the preceding vowel sound. For example, in the Turkish word ‘*yoğurt*’, ‘ğ’ lengthens the vowel ‘o’ and pronunciation of the word almost sounds like ‘*yoourt*’. Though the letter ‘ğ’ does not exist in English, the word ‘*yoghurt*’ is presented in the language and, as a result of this simultaneous similarity and difference English speakers tend to pronounce it the same way as in English without consideration of lengthening effect of ‘ğ’. There are some Turkish vowels which are not shown in English, such as ü, ö, ı, and apparently not all of them have corresponding sounds. Their pronunciation can be an obstacle for English native speakers. The most difficult characteristic of Turkish language is that being an orthographic language, words in Turkish are “written the way they are pronounced



and pronounced the way they are written “(Balpınar, 2006, p. 7). This type of relationship between letters and sounds does not exist in English, for example, and, therefore, learners with English background as mother tongue find it hard to get used to such way of pronouncing words. The same as Turkish learners have a tendency to pronounce words in English the way they are written.

Finally, phonology is affected by mother tongue in many ways. Mother tongue influences not only pronunciation of the words, but also stress, intonation, pauses.

Thus, Turkish and English share some similarities in systems, and it causes problems for their learners. However, problematic issues can be reconsidered and solved when the sources of errors are defined. Acquisition of phonological aspects of second language is a disputable area, where theoretical investigation is on, and at the same time scholars are trying to work out the best approaches and techniques to ease the process of acquiring sound systems.

*2.3.1.2 Syntax and morphology.* There are different approaches to defining what syntax is. Chomsky (1965) considered syntax to be the central aspect of language. Chomsky (1965) states that in every human language there is a set of universal principles that are known by all human beings. In addition to universal principles, there are a finite number of parameters that define how to apply the universal principles to construct grammatical sentences. Thus, in generative grammar sentences are generated by a subconscious set of procedures. Tallerman (2005) claims that syntax is a “sentence construction”: how words group together to make phrases and sentences” (Tallerman, 2007, p. 1). In all the mentioned definitions the main focus of syntax is how to construct sentences because sentence structure expresses the most important grammatical relationships in all human languages.

According to Haspelmath’s idea (O’Connor, 2005), morphology considers the structures of the words which are captured inside of them. He states that the morphology is both the oldest and one of the youngest sub-disciplines of grammar (O’Connor, 2005). It is oldest in the sense that the first linguists were primarily

morphologists. Morphology was very much prominent in the writings of the greatest grammarian of antiquity, such as the Indian Panini, and in the Greek and Roman grammatical tradition. However, as a sub-discipline morphology flourished only in the second half of the nineteenth century. In this sense, morphology is a young sub-discipline of grammar. Haspelmath (O'Connor, 2005) in his book *Understanding Morphology* asserts that the morphological analysis typically consists of the identifications of parts of words or more precise constituents of words. The smallest meaningful constituents of words that can be identified are called morphemes. For example, in the word *nuts*, both the suffix *-s* and the stem *nut* represent a morpheme.

Haspelmath (O'Connor, 2005) states that, "Morphology is the study of the combination of morphemes to yield words" (p. 3). In morphological analysis of *nuts*, it may also be seen that the final *-s* of *nuts* expresses plural meaning; the final *-s* expresses the same meaning in general when it occurs at the end of a noun. However, the final *-s* in *lapse* does not have morphological structure (Haspelmath, 2002) So, it is obvious that morphological structure only exists if there are groups of words that show identical partial resemblances in both form and meaning.

When speaking about impact of learners' L1 upon syntax and morphology of L2, researcher would like to review Turkish and English language systems, and concentrate attention on particular parts of language, which seem to be most significant in terms of this study as they allow tracing mother tongue influence.

First thought that comes to one's mind when the word syntax is mentioned is word order (Haznedar, 1997). The underlying word order in English is SubjectVerbObject (SVO):

- a. He comes home late every Monday.
- b. We know that he comes home late every Monday.

This word order is the most common besides cases of inversion. Unlike English, Turkish language has a different word order with a verb-final: SubjectObjectVerb (SOV) (Haznedar, 1997, p. 93). Consider the following examples provided in the research of Haznedar (1997, p.95):

a. *Ersin şiir-i sev-er-Ø.*

*Ersin poetry-Acc like-Pres-Ø.*

*'Ersin likes poetry'*

b. *(Siz) Ersin-in şiiri sev-digi-ni bil-iyor-sunuz.*

*(You) Ersin-Gen poetry like-Gerund-Acc know-PresProg-2SG*

*'You know that Ersin likes poetry'*

The verb of the main clause and the embedded verb are positioned at the end of the sentence (Haznedar, 1997). These examples also show the agglutinative nature of the morphology (Haznedar, 1997). It is obvious when the verb *bil-iyor-sunuz* (know) is analyzed. It has a main root and the added morphemes *-iyor* and *-sunuz*. First morpheme refers to present tense, whereas the second one is related to 2SG form (Haznedar, 1997). These morphemes are organized in a strict sequence. There is another issue in regard to the word order. It has somewhat free sequence of words (Haznedar, 1997). Some examples are given (Haznedar, 1997, p. 97):

a. *Ersin çiçek-ler-i Nilay-a ver-di.*

*'Esin gave the flowers to Nilay'*

b. *Esin Nilay'a çiçekleri verdi.*

c. *Çiçekleri Nilay'a Esin verdi.*

Change of word order is more of colloquial language rather than formal. Word order is what confuses learners when they acquire language. Turkish native speakers tend to put the verb at the end of the sentences.

Conversation about Turkish and English morphology and syntax continues in regard to other grammatical points, which can show the evidence of mother tongue interference. One of them is 'subjects' issue. English language is one which requires subject use. The drop of the subject is rare and follows particular rules of deletion of identical subjects in conjoined sentences or chained clauses (Weir, 2008). At the same time, the subject drop can be traced in informal English. Consider the following examples:

a. We go to the gym every Friday.

- b. Ø Go to the gym every Friday.
- c. I moved into this town, and Ø got introduced to all these people.
- d. -Why didn't you and your flatmates go to the party?  
-Ø Didn't fancy it.

Example (a) is wholly correct and corresponds to English grammar rules. Example (b) shows the exclusion of the subject and this omission makes understanding harder as it is not clear '*who goes to the gym every Friday*'. Example (c) refers to the rule of deletion of identical subjects when it is easy to understand the meaning. Last example (d) presents the drop of subject in informal English. Despite the fact that there are cases when subject can be omitted in English, this language does not show the evidence of the null subject grammar. This is an obstacle for the learners whose mother tongue allows exclusion of the subject.

In Turkish language subject can be omitted and in this case the meaning stays comprehensible. In other words, Turkish is a null language. When the subject is understood through the discourse, it is up to the speaker to either omit it or use it. Here are some examples in regard to this (Haznedar, 1997, p.103):

- a. Ben okul-a gid-iyor-um  
I school-Dat go-PresProg-1 SG  
'I'm going to school'
- b. Ø okul-a gid-iyor-um  
School-Dat go-PresProg-1 SG  
Going to school

In English plurals are constructed through affix *-s*, e.g. apple-apples, book-books. However, there are some exclusions, and when Turkish learners exposed to this rule, they may start to generalize it, and instead of '*oxen*', they use '*ox*'. In regard to this, there is another issue that causes difficulties. Turkish learners at their early stages tend to use the quantity and single number, e.g. *three book, two apple*. It comes from their mother tongue where quantity greater than one is used with a single number without any affix of plurality, e.g. *üç kitap, iki elma*.

On the other side of the scale, there are English native speakers who have problems acquiring plurality in Turkish. Plurals are formed in Turkish with the help of affixes *-lar/-ler*. English native speakers perceive this rule as to be the easiest one for the first time. However, when they are presented the use of the plurality with a numeral greater than one or a word like ‘*çok*’ (many), or ‘*kaç*’ (how many) without any affixes, it happens difficult to realize that it is not correct to use ‘*üç kitaplar*’ or ‘*iki elmalar*’.

These examples are the evidence of generalizations that occur in language acquisition and cause by mother tongue interference. In terms of this study, researcher provided the above-mentioned cases as they seem to be the most reflecting of the effect that learners’ first language has on their second language learning and production.

*2.3.1.3 Semantics.* Speaking of semantics, the educators usually assume the creation of the meaning when the words are connected to each other to form phrases, and phrases form sentences. It is a usual to evaluate semantics by measuring the amount of vocabulary learnt. Semantics knowledge consists of the knowledge of synonyms, how words could be combined, and the limits of the meanings. The learner should keep in mind that some words have different meanings. Such meanings could be clearly realized only through the context, for example, the word *bank* that means both the river edge and the financial institution. The learner who meets this word understands the meaning when realizing the whole context.

Some languages divide the color spectrum into 8 base colors whereas others have 12. According to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis:

we dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. We cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significance as we do largely because we are party to an agreement to organize it in this way—an agreement that holds through our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language. ( Whorf, 1956, p. 212)

In other words, language helps people to realize the world; it also affects their view over the things. There are studies that proposes the acquisition of words

through guessing their meaning from the context, however, there are studies that reject such an idea. Mondrina and Wit-Deboer (1991) conducted the research to reveal how the context influences the ability to guess and memorize the words. Their results showed that the contextual factors that created positive environment for guessing, did not have the same effect for memorization. According to Mondrina and Wit-Deboer (1991), if the meaning can be revealed clearly from the context, the retention is getting lower as the association between the context and the meaning become stronger. Jenkins, Stein and Wysocki (1984) underlined that, “learning from context is still a default explanation” (p.769). In 1996 Ames conducted the study to research how successfully words meanings are guessed through the context. In his work students obtaining PhD guessed the meanings of 60% of new words (Ames, 1996).

According to another research of Van Hell and Candia Mahn (1997), the learners with the higher level of proficiency in L1 tend to connect new words with the L1 words to get better learning results. Coady et al. (1993) offered that when learning English vocabulary the learners tag English words to the schema in the mother tongue instead of creating new algorithm. For MacWhinney (2005), L2 is dependent on L1 due to the great amount of transfer from L1 to L2. He agrees that at the early stages of learning, the participants of the process prefer to rely on L1 experience. Thus, previous research shows a great role of native language with its influence upon second language vocabulary acquisition.

Speaking of figurative or metaphorical expressions, there should be considered an idea that these language means are strongly rooted into the culture, and their acquisition requires a closer look. Figurative expressions in any mother tongue are so abundant in human’ daily life; however, when it comes to learning them in second language, many learners attempt to avoid either using them or learning at all. Apparently, figurative and metaphorical expressions make language shine and sound natural. Azuma (2009) conducted a small survey of ‘anger’ expressions examining the knowledge of figurative expressions by English learners in Japan, that is, whether or not L2 students knew figurative ‘anger’ expressions and how many English ‘*anger*’ expressions they knew. The survey (twenty-nine non-English

majors at university freshman and sophomore levels) showed that the average number of '*anger*' expressions in the mother tongue versus English was about three responses per student in the mother tongue versus. In English, the responses could be broken down into the following proportions: swear words occupied 41%, ordinary expressions (such as 'I'm angry') 28.2%, expressions using body parts (blood boiling, blood pressure up, heat, explode) 15.4%, mood expressions (terrible, disgusting, I don't believe) 10.3%, and don't know 5.1%. This was a very small survey, but it showed some aspects of the L2 students' knowledge of figurative expressions. An amazing discovery in this small survey indicated responses using body parts and moods accounted for 25.7%. Another discovery was the 5.1% response that indicated no knowledge of figurative expressions. These results may lead to speculation regarding whether or not figurative or metaphorical teaching is necessary for L2 education (Azuma, 2009).

Another issue of semantics and vocabulary acquisition which need to be mentioned concern the avoidance of figurative, phrasal expressions, and metaphors. In 1985, Dagut and Laufer conducted a study that showed Hebrew learners avoiding the phrasal verbs of the English language. They preferred to use the simplest synonyms of the phrasal forms, for instance, they employed '*disappoint*' instead of '*let down*' (Dagut & Laufer; 1985 as cited in Hulstjin & Marchena, 1989). The reason for such a strategy was a desire to keep their production from the potential mistakes (Dagut & Laufer, 1985 as cited in Hulstjin & Marchena, 1989). The Hebrew ESL learners used "semantic play-it-safe strategy and it may have also played a causal role in their avoidance behavior" (Dagut & Laufer, as cited in Hulstjin & Marchena, 1989, p. 241). In regard to this Jan H. Hulstjin and Elaine Marchena (1989) assumed that the Dutch learners of English would not show the tendency to omit English phrasal verbs in their language as these language forms are presented in Dutch, unlike Hebrew. They proposed a hypothesis that the avoidance would be explained with semantic reasons but not structural ones.

The research conducted by Dagut and Laufer (1985 as cited in Hulstjin & Marchena, 1989) with Hebrew learners of English showed another perspective of the avoidance behavior which was explained with the absence of phrasal verbs in

Hebrew language. Another conclusion proposed by researchers consisted of the idea that due to the fact that phrasal verbs are specific for the Germanic languages, avoidance phenomenon would be common for learners who belonged to non-Germanic languages natively. Hulstijn and Marchena (1987) derived another corollary from Dagut and Laufer's (1985) hypothesis. According to them, "native speakers of Germanic languages (e.g., Dutch learners of English) would not avoid English phrasal verbs since both the English and the Dutch language systems comprise phrasal verbs (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1987, p. 242). They assumed that avoidance of phrasal verbs by Dutch ESL learners would be caused by the fact that some of these verbs had idiomatic meaning. On the other hand, the synonyms of the phrasal forms had common meaning. Researchers proposed that, "if Dutch ESL learners would avoid phrasal verbs on the basis of perceived semantic difficulties, Hebrew ESL learners' avoidance of phrasal verbs might as well be caused by semantic considerations in addition to or even instead of structural considerations (the absence of phrasal verbs in their LI)" (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1987, p. 243).

Apparently, learners find it is to be a complicated process to learn the meanings of all variants for just one thing. Such words are usually culture rooted and require a deep understanding of cultural and social nuances of target community. Thus, there is a transfer of mechanisms from mother tongue to memorize the words, and sometimes guess their meanings.

Thus, acquisition of semantics and vocabulary goes, on one account, under the influence of mother tongue and first language learning strategies, but on another account, the process itself could be affected by the order and structure of the second language.

## **2.4 Vygotsky's Theory**

Sociocultural Theory (SCT), created with respect to Vygotskian thought, investigates the human beings' cognitive abilities and higher mental capacity. The hypothesis contends that the progress of these functions comes from social cooperation and investment into social exercises obliging cognitive and open



abilities. People are drawn into the utilization of these capacities in ways that support and framework them.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory was created as a reply to the challenges of the twentieth century in regards to the confrontation of two main groups of therapists. First group consisted of those who supported a naturalistic point of view (the behaviorists). Their opponents were the supporters of a humanistic approach and accentuated the depiction and understanding of mental exercises. The supporters of a naturalistic approach centered their ideas around the naturalistic blessings, the biological acts that were the same for the people and the primates (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). Vygotsky (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007) proposed that human beings have two distinctive levels of biological bases. One was a lower-level activities and the more developed level that incorporated cognizance. He proposed that by utilizing more elevated amount social and cultural apparatuses, such as dialect, writing proficiency, numeracy, rationale, people would be capable to have deliberate control over his/her cognizance (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007). These devices would act as a barrier between the individual and the environment and intercede between the individual and his/her social/physical world (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007).

Learners are considered to be dynamic importance creators and issue solvers in their learning process (Turuk, 2008). The hypothesis stresses the dynamic nature of interconnections among educators, learners and assignments and supports the idea of learning that originates from communications among people. Ellis (2000) contends that the sociocultural hypothesis is focused around the supposition that learning develops not through communication yet through collaboration. At the point when learners get included in preparing particular assignments with the assistance of an alternate learner or an instructor, they disguise the route to complete the same errand by themselves. Consequently, social collaboration is considered to encourage or mediate the learning procedure.

Vygotsky's ideas help to uncover the importance of mediation process. Learning is explained as a socially intervened process as it is not just interceded through the creating utilize and control of psychological apparatuses (e.g. dialect, assets, innovations) however additionally depends on the connection and

imparted forms (e.g. dialog) (Mitchell & Myles, 2004). It is necessary to understand that these kinds of processes include individual and social perspectives that could be implemented in SLA. Vygotsky's sociocultural hypothesis gives the social-constructivist points of view that provide an idea of the SLA in terms of social interactions and reveal the necessity to examine language learning from the social perspective.

## **2.5 Sociocultural Factors and Acculturation Model in SLA**

A British-born philosopher, writer and speaker Alan Wilson Watts (1996) once proposed, "We seldom realize, for example that our most private thoughts and emotions are not actually our own. For we think in terms of languages and images which we did not invent, but which were given to us by our society" (1966, pp.84-85).

Indeed, people are social human beings; their lives inseparably attached to a social milieu. Everything what people absorb from the society finds reflection in their language. Language is a mirror of all changes and evolutions. Therefore, when somebody begins learning another language, inevitably he/she acquires social aspects of the target language. Society is what forms culture, and culture, on the other hand, shapes society. This connection between society and culture is significant, and their partnership is what impacts people. Thus, not only social environment but also cultural nuances affect language and, finally, learners who attempt to obtain this language.

Conversation about second language acquisition is not complete if researcher does not investigate sociocultural factors that influence the process. These factors have external nature and sometimes do not depend on the learners' will. Apparently, it is hard to control opinions and stereotypes, as well as it is hard to change someone's attitude. These factors are less controlled, but they could be manipulated and overcome.

### **2.5.1 From stereotypes to generalizations through attitudes design.**

Learners when acquiring a second language have great exposure not only to its grammatical structures, but, which is probably more significant, to its culture.

According to Fantini (1997) "...language reflects and affects culture" (p.5). Both are human constructs and a dynamic relation exists between the two. To Berger (1997) the use of stereotypes "...is a part of our everyday illogical and uncritical way of thinking" (p. 54). Talburt and Stewart (1999) show that the mere contact a learner has with the second language culture through the medium of instruction does not automatically guarantee either that the second language will be learned or that an effective interaction with and in target culture will ensue. Coleman (1998) asserts that the old adage "to know them is to love them" is not necessarily true (p. 48). Frequently, students simply resort to stereotypes as a strategy for comprehending the strange, and it makes their stereotypes stronger than ever.

In fact, the term '*stereotype*' is explained in the literature as 'an oversimplified idea towards a person, or group of people'. People develop stereotypes when they either distance from the target community and their member or when they are unwilling to obtain all the information about the subject. Stereotypes are based on prejudice and attitudes about particular thing. Stereotypes can be positive and negative. Last variant happens much more often than the first one.

Stereotypes are rarely created by one person. More likely they are based on attitudes and prejudice of one group which either assimilated in the target society or belongs to it historically but for some reason distance itself from the environment. The simple schema of the process involving stereotypes, attitudes and generalizations include attitudes and prejudice as starting point that gives life to stereotype, and this leads to generalizations that, in fact, do not take individual differences into account. However, this is not a linear process. Attitudes, stereotypes and generalizations multiply and one stereotype can produce particular attitudes whereas the last ones will form the other stereotypes.

According to Gadamer (1960/2000), the unfamiliar is necessary for there to be understanding. As long as there is something unexplored, there is always a chance that learning process would never stop. Stereotypes are issues which have an obvious dualism. On one hand, stereotypes are ideas which help learners rationalize unfamiliar things and events which they face when learning a language. On the other

hand, stereotypes affect members of target culture and society, and make them think in a typical and narrow way.

For instance, contemporary public perceptions of Asian students in the United States provide the comparison of the tests results done by these students with those received by the students of other ethnical background, for example African or Hispanic (Li, 2003). Due to the high achievements of the Asian learners, they are often perceived stereotypically as over-achievers who do not face any obstacle when adapting to new Western life (Li, 2004). The research by Palmer, Chen, Chang, and Leclere (2006) provides the idea that all Chinese students are mistakenly considered to have great learning abilities and skills. Li (2003, 2004), and Lee (1996) contradict them saying that this sort of stereotyping could be problematic as it hides the real social situation of the students who belong to other backgrounds and life contexts. Another lining stereotype concern Middle Eastern students. In 2004 Linda Fuller launched the work named “Taking Terrorism into the Classroom”. She investigated the connections between the terroristic movements, media and language (Fuller, 2004). The emphasis of her work was the fact that after 9/11 terrorism became the main topic of the media all over the world. Using role plays during her classes, Fuller (2004) examined the stereotypes of Middle Eastern people, and the problems that the students of such a background may have in schools of the USA. These experiments resulted in students awareness of them being under the influence of mass media, as well as they became much more friendly towards their peer from the Middle East. Jackson argues that Arab Americans who include people from more than 20 countries in the Middle East and North Africa have to struggle:

additional challenges as a result of negative stereotyping; racism and discrimination; widespread misinformation about their history and culture; and, for the majority who are Muslim, the need to find ways to practice their religion in a predominantly Judeo-Christian country. (Jackson,1995, p. 65).

Thus, negative stereotyping influence students’ achievements and self-esteem.

These problems revealed have much to do with other minor groups of learners all over the world. This or that way, the dualistic nature of stereotypes

affects learning process, when learners being distanced from a target culture, stereotype some issues, and when target community labels minor groups learners according to existing stereotypes.

Stereotypes inevitably lead to generalizations. Facing people who belong to a different culture, generalization mechanism is triggered. When an Australian person comes to Japan, he/she is labeled as a Western person. It is a generalization as Westerners are considered to be a solid group that is in fact not correct. Generalizations and overgeneralizations happen while the learner acquires the language. They likewise lead to the errors, as with the plurals in English. Very often the learners tend to use the same algorithm of *-s* addition with all the words. The learners do not take into account exclusions, such as '*geese*', '*oxen*'. Therefore, generalization turns into over-generalization; finally, it is a way for errors.

Despite the nature of attitudes, stereotypes and generalizations, despite their position inside the learner or outside in the environment, one thing is obvious, they are effecting in terms of second language acquisition. Their effect can be positive, when they create some myth which everyone wants to belong to, including learners. For example, learners who acquire English may have positive stereotypes about English speaking countries as places of great opportunities. Such a stereotype may form a positive attitude towards English language learning, and learners would have better results. Positive effects are, nevertheless, rare. Most of the time these phenomena affect the learning process negatively either increasing the anxiety level or isolating learners from a target society and culture.

**2.5.2 Role of culture in second language acquisition.** According to Brown (2007), culture is deeply engrained into people, and that language is the most visible and available way to express it. Hence, some cultural differences or unknown elements may disturb the acquisition process and lower learners' motivation and affect their attitudes towards the learning language. Thus, there is a significant question to be discussed on the role of culture in SLA.

Firstly, it is necessary to define what culture is. There are lots of explanations, for example, Brown (2007) describes culture as "the ideas, customs, arts, and tools

that characterize a given group of people" (p. 380). To researcher's mind, one of the complete definitions is provided by Díaz-Rico and Weed (2006). They argue that the culture is

the explicit and implicit patterns for living, the dynamic system of commonly agreed-upon symbols and meanings, knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs, behaviors, traditions, and/or habits that are shared and make up the total way of life of a people, as negotiated by individuals in the process of constructing a personal identity. (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2006, pp. 232-233)

Indeed, according to this definition, culture is an active, permanently changing system; it reflects the evolution of humanity, and, thus, the evolution of language. Learning a second language an individual inevitably learns some cultural perspectives through authentic materials in the classroom, exposure to target language communication via electronic tools, such as emails, forums, chats. Second language acquisition, therefore, is a second culture acquisition. And here lays the central idea of the culture part in the process. Apparently, culture plays not a role, it's the play itself.

Someone may argue that the culture acquisition is relevant only when the learner is located inside the target language culture system. Even learning a foreign language in the social environment different to the target one, learners still need to obtain some basic information about the culture. For instance, learners who acquire English in Turkey require some understanding of customs and traditions. Every course book provides some amount of material on this topic. Therefore, learners are aware of such notions as the Christmas, the Easter, The Independence day.

There is another fact that needs to be mentioned. Culturally colored words usually do not have any corresponding variants in target language, for example, Russian '*borsch*' or legendary '*matreshka*'. They are stereotypical symbols of Russian culture along with Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, ballet and hockey. These words do not have equivalents in English; thus, the best way is to transcribe them and give explanations on the notions, e.g. '*borsch*' – '*red-beet soup*'.

Cultural differences are the challenges for the teachers as they have to deal with the culturally rooted words. Some educators tend to avoid such words; others do their best to explain their meanings to the students. Avoidance, however, may lead to

misunderstanding, though teachers excuse such an approach with the learners' possible cultural shock if they face some culturally oriented language elements. There are techniques that allow learners acquire vocabulary and culture related to it. Teachers should understand that second language learning would not be complete without learning the target culture. So, their duty is to invite the culture into the classroom, rather than attempt to avoid it.

When a learner finds him/herself inside the target community, language learning involves the issue of acculturation as the learners' culture and the target one come into contact.

### **2.5.3 Acculturation and social distance effects in language learning.**

Living in a country different to your motherland very often means learning a new language. This process can be compared with a jump into the ocean, where you either sink or learn how to swim. Learning to swim is a metaphorical description of the acculturation. In general form, acculturation is an action of adjusting to new cultural and social circumstances. Díaz-Rico and Weed (2007) provide more narrow definition that states the following: “to acculturate is to adapt to a second culture without necessarily giving up one's first culture” (p. 246). It differs from assimilation which means that one is fully involved into the target culture when the native traditions and customs are fully left out (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2007). It also has nothing in common with accommodation when the target culture and the native one are interrelated and adapt each other (Díaz-Rico & Weed, 2007). Schumann (1986) provided the definition of acculturation stating that it was “the social and psychological integration of the learner with the target language (TL) group” (p. 379). He proposed that “the learner will acquire the language only to the extent that he acculturates” and that “the degree to which a learner acculturates to the TL group will control the degree to which he acquires the second language” (pp. 379-385).

According to Schumann (1986), the extent of SLA migrates within two separate but related clusters. These clusters are represented by the social and psychological distances between learners and the TL group. The psychological distance concern the reaction of the participants of the process towards the situations they get involved into when they acquire the language (Ushioda, 1993).

Social distance is a term that has been discussed by many scholars. Schumann (1986) describes this phenomenon as a position of the process participant in regard to the target group, and the level of the involvement into the TL group. Social distance can be a measure to evaluate the level of acculturation, and, therefore, the learner's effectiveness in acquiring a second language. Social distance is not a static system; it is lying between the points of extreme, from a maximum of distance to the closest position to the target group. This range can change though if other variables change. Thus, learners' success is defined by the level of the acculturation, in other words, the degree to which they managed to reduce social and psychological variables distances.

In terms of this research, it is significant to investigate all the variables to understand how acculturation affects SLA. Schumann (1986) offered particular variables as a ground for social distance to stem from. First variable is social dominance. Social dominance is explained as superiority of one group over another one in political, cultural, technical, or economic issues. In such a case, if L2 group is dominating over the learners of L2, then this minor group of learners may feel uncomfortable and stressed; thus, the level of acquisition would be low. On the other hand, if both groups are equal, the learning process would be enhanced. Social dominance as an effecting factor could be easily traced in learning outcomes of Spanish emigrants in the US. Being a minor social community, Spanish learners of English develop the level of proficiency enough to get a low-paid job, but they do not tend to improve their English as they feel suppressed and distant from a target English speaking society. Such examples could be found in every country with any language group. Speaking of English natives in Turkey, this variable can hardly be decisive in terms of their acculturation and language acquisition. Researcher could suggest that the situation is exactly opposite. Turkish people are carried away with foreigners from English speaking countries, and even though they may not accept some cultural points, they do their best to comfort newcomers in their society. This facilitates language acquisition by English native speakers, and at the same time, Turkish learners of English, who have a close contact with English natives, receive a good chance and exposure to authentic language. So, it is a mutually beneficial process.



Another variable which Schumann (1986) talked about is related to assimilation, preservation, and adaptation. Assimilation is a common process which many minor groups come through. It means that learners' group should abandon their traditions, forget their customs and cultural habits, and accept fully those offered by the new life. On the other hand, preservation cares maintenance of the native way of living, values, and rejection of those that belong to the target group. Adaptation mediates these two extremes. Learner shows the tendency to acquire the new habits, yet practices the native ones for intragroup use.

Most of the groups which migrate to the target community rarely fully assimilate into the target society. It is likely the adaptation and preservation what characterizes the relationships between the learners' group and the target group. English native speakers, having moved to Turkey, adopt some cultural and social features due to the high exposure to culture and social life. For example, for newcomers, it might be a shock to sacrifice animals as in ancient times, though with time they accept it and no longer consider it barbarism. This happens because of the involvement into the culture and life, and the fact that learners get necessary information to understand the processes.

Speaking of preservation it is necessary to highlight that this process spins up nowadays. Some decades ago world's society was anxious about globalization and protested actively, now there is another tendency which is localization. These processes were greatly described by Zygmunt Bauman (1998) in his work *Globalization: The Human Consequences*. Indeed, more and more minor groups living in target society tend to protect their identity, trying to eliminate external influence. This obviously results in enlargement of the gap between the two groups, and thus, the language learning suffers a lot.

Enclosure as a variable may also affect the distance. If the learners' group shares the social objects actively, the level of enclosure would be low, and the target language would be acquired successfully. The situation of high level of enclosure is rare for Turkey. English native speakers in Istanbul show a low enclosure and high involvement of English natives into Turkish culture and social life. However, there is an example of another language group that is located in Antalya region. Members of

Russian-speaking community come from the Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and other countries which share the same language. The general level of enclosure is very high. Russian speakers tend to settle down together, they have schools that follow Russian education system, they read newspapers published in Russian, in other words, all their life is concentrated inside the community. Not surprising that the level of their Turkish is extremely low and limited with some expressions enough to visit a supermarket. This situation is somewhat typical for the US, where people of one nationality form the whole neighborhoods.

In regard to the above-mentioned examples, cohesiveness and size come out as effective parts of social distance. Apparently, the smaller learners' group and the less cohesive it is, the more likely there would be a close relationship with the target language group and the more favorable conditions for language learning would come up. The example of English natives living permanently in Turkey would be a proof for this variable as they are usually isolated from each other and rarely show tendency for grouping. It might be explained with some features of their mentality presented with a high level of individualism. Also, researchers' self-observations could witness in favor of these variables. Having come to the country alone, being away from the mother country and its culture, and which is also important showing no will to get in touch with fellow countrymen, she had nothing to do, but acquire the language to be able to communicate with the outside world.

Speaking of cultures, there is such a factor as congruence which determines the link between the target group and the learners' group. The more similar two cultures are, the more likely is social contact and the higher achievements in language learning. For example, the similarities between Tatar culture and Turkish culture are obvious. They share the same religion, the same life notions, the same traditions and customs. Thus, Tatar learners' of Turkish are more likely to acquire the language with a less number of difficulties. Azeri and Turkish relations can also serve as an example of congruency. One of the key factors here is a similar language structures, though as researcher have already described in previous chapters, it is not always a positive element in learning as it may cause negative transfer from the mother tongue.

Attitudes are the variables that are also referred to be significant in social distancing. The presence of positive attitude between two groups might guarantee the facilitation of the learning process. Author has explained the importance of attitudes in language acquisition previously. Attitudes may become a base for stereotypes, and stereotypes may block the learning.

Finally, the social variable which needs to be taken into account is the intended length of residence. If the period that the learner plans to stay in the country is obviously long, then the probability of his/her best attempts to acquire the language is high. This might be effective if other factors as enclosure, cohesiveness, group's size are not presented. One of the participants of this study has been living in Turkey for more than five years, but her language level is still low. Author has also witnessed another example when a man had lived in the US for more than 15 years, and was able to produce only couple of words, such as '*trousers*' and '*scissors*'.

The presence or absence of some of the above-mentioned variables may enlarge the social distance or reduce it, and, hence, either promote the acculturation or slow it down.

Social variables cannot be examined separately from psychological ones. According to Schumann (1986), there are constituents, such as language shock, cultural shock, motivation and ego permeability. Many learners say that their first exposure to real language situation was a great stress for them. They were not able to understand a thing even though their level of language had been high by that moment. With time, this language shock was overcome, and learners managed to create a relationship with the target community. For English native speakers coming to Turkey language, shock is a familiar issue. Apparently, their knowledge of the language was limited with a number of regular expressions obtained from the Internet. However, this is not the main problem. The most important point is that Turkish differs from English in all the aspects, from pronunciation to word order. Despite these differences, as soon as learners get over the shock they start acquiring the language. Cultural shock should be taken into account. For the researcher, it was shocking to receive a bouquet with even number of flowers. In the country of the researcher's origin, this number of flowers is usually presented at funerals. Of course,

this detail could not spoil the whole acquisition process, but it produced some negative thoughts. Indeed, culture shock is the extent to which the learner feels disoriented with the extended residence in a new culture. Actually, culture shock, in researcher's opinion, is a question of a learner's intelligence. The less this learner is aware of target culture, the more shocking and uncomfortable things he/she would face. If the informational gap is overcome, then culture shock may be reduced.

Psychological factors would not be such without the presence of the learner's inner world. Ego permeability means the learner's ability to accept a new identity associated with the belonging to a new culture. This variable directly depends on learner's psychological typology and characteristics. The more the learner is flexible in his/her character, the higher probability of a successful identification is, and hence, the more progress would be in language learning. The last mental factor is motivation that is a learners' desire to acquire the language.

According to Schumann (1986) there are particular types of the motivation: integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation means that a learner who follows it is eager to acquire the language so that to be able to communicate with the target society members. Instrumental motivation comes from a learners' wish to acquire language for personal, such as career, business. The presence of such motivations requires minimal psychological distance and, as a result, the acquisition process is facilitated.

Social distance is what separates learners and decreases their chances to obtain the language successfully. However, not only acculturation and social distance affect the acquisition, there are other factors as gender, age, mother tongue, traumatic experiences, educational background, which should be taken into account. This acculturation model does not take into consideration other psychological characteristics of the learners. It is also obvious that it is hard to trace all the social and psychological factors which may affect the learning process. As far as it is hard to determine which one is the most significant. So finally, this model reflects the ideal situation, when the society is presented with two groups, the target group and the learners' group. If following the Model, one of the participants of this study does not fit it as the social distance between her and target language group is quite little.

However, the language level is still very low. A description of the findings on possible reasons for such an outcome would be presented in further chapters.

The Acculturation Model (Schumann, 1986) has been criticized a lot. One of the main problems stated is that there are many gaps in formal approach. For instance, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) criticized Schumann for the absence of explanations on how the social and psychological factors are combined in order to assume the result. In other words, in their minds (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991) Schumann did not specify how these or those variables were selected. It seems difficult to mark out which factor is the most important or it is the same difficult to count the level of these factors contribution to the process. Macintyre, MacMaster and Baker (2001) underlined that Schumann (1986) did not take into consideration the changes of the distances both as social and psychological with time. Apparently, it could be assumed that the distances vary with time as the learner reaches the higher level of the proficiency. This factor lacks in Schumann's study.

Living in a culturally diverse world, requires encountering cultural barriers in learning languages of different races, religions, and nationalities, effectively. Being aware of these traditions, which may become hurdles in teaching/learning process, will help to achieve better results and to solve learners' problems in classrooms.

Eventually, despite all the attempts, character of the effect that mother tongue and some social and cultural aspects have on second language acquisition cannot be evaluated in an unambiguous way. These events have a dualistic nature with positive and negative constituents, and thus their effect could result in positive or negative language learning outcome. All the participants of the learning process should bear this fact in minds, and if possible, either enhance the positive aspects or enfeeble the negative aspects.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

The whole methodological approach is described in this chapter. The author provides explanations on choices over the design, data collection tools and instruments, participants of the study, and the techniques for the analysis of data collected. Also, the choices are justified with the theoretical background.

### **3.1 Philosophical paradigm**

Philosophical paradigm is what determines the whole research construction. It is so instrumental in shaping the choices when the researcher sets the research strategy, as well as it may affect the conclusions based on the findings. Therefore, it is important to think over research paradigm prior conducting the study. Generally speaking, research paradigms are ways of explaining basic sets of belief that the researcher have, and how these sets influence the way the research is conducted (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

The paradigm which constructs the basis for this study follows the interpretivist tradition. The origins of the interpretivist views could be found in various branches of the science. There are several names usually related to the interpretivist paradigm as the founders of it: Schultz (1932; 1972; 1962-1966), Garfinkel (1967), Cicourel (1974) who belong to phenomenology and sociology. The “Chicago School of Sociology” (Cavan, 1983) is known to be a contributor into to the development of the interpretive approach. In terms of anthropology there are two major figures that are famous as those who developed the interpretivist theory: Boas (1932) and Malinowski (1967). This theoretical course followed the criticism on the positivists’ ideas. Relativist ontology lies in the core of the paradigm. It argues that the surrounding reality is created “intersubjectively” (Berger & Luckman, 1967) by the meanings and symbols. The realization of the last comes through the social interactions and human beings’ experiences (Berger & Luckman, 1967). It needs to be mentioned that the interpretivists’ paradigm works with subjectivists’ epistemology and transactional epistemology (Berger & Luckman, 1967). The significant issue is that the researcher is inseparable from the knowledge. The

investigator and the object are connected so that the researcher's inner world and the way he/she understand the environment is a major factor in his understanding, other participants of the social milieu and the environment as a whole. Stating that the reality and the researcher are tightly connected, and that the researcher is a part of the investigated field with own social views and values, the paradigm proposes that these values are affective at every stage of the research. In other words, it is inevitable that the researcher's inner world would influence the research reality (Angen, 2000; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Interpretivists employ the naturalistic methodology for the research (observations, interviews, analysis of the texts) (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The instruments mentioned help to negotiate the researcher and the participants of the research in order to create a reasonable reality. The research provides the investigators with the meanings that come out during the study.

As long as the paradigm had been chosen the author had a chance to move forward in the research and work on the research design.

### **3.2 Research design**

As the author had defined philosophical paradigm as one which follows interpretivists' tradition, it became clear that the research would have qualitative nature. Interpretivist paradigm operates with intersubjectivity and explains the meaning, and describes particular beliefs, attitudes developed lifelong and within a social milieu. Since the research was defined a qualitative one, there was a necessity to decide on the research design.

The author examined the phenomenon through a closer look at people words, opinions, experiences, feelings and beliefs. This study was concentrated at participants while they were in their natural environment, inside their learning context. Theories and concepts studied prior the investigation was related to the social life. The author collected data utilizing interview, observations, and survey as data collection tools. Finally, the researcher studied small groups of people during a long time period in their natural conditions to reveal common mechanisms and interpret the results within the context of the research questions.

Thus, bearing in mind the character of the study and all the research questions, the author chose the case study as the research design format. According to Stake (1994), “case study is defined by individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used” (p. 236). The selection of this design also correlates with Cavaye (1996) ideas who argued that, “study of a single case enables the researcher to investigate the phenomenon in depth...enabling a rich description and revealing its deep structure” (p. 236). In other words, case studies give a unique opportunity to have a close look at the phenomenon and conclude on general event.

This research falls into the definition of case studies given by Creswell, Hanson, Plano and Morales (2007):

qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection, involving multiple sources of information (e.g. observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports) and reports a case description and case-based themes. (p. 245)

Thus, the research correlates with the above description and includes all the peculiarities. There was a defined phenomenon which the researcher aimed to investigate within the cases. The investigator explored the phenomenon over time utilizing various data collection tools like those mentioned in the definition: observations, interviews. Finally, this work might be considered as a full case report with the description of all stages and interpretation of the results.

There are different classifications of case studies in the literature. Merriam (2009) divides them into three categories: particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic. Since the researcher concentrates all the attention at particular context and event, this case study is of particularistic nature.

Stake (1994) offers another categorization for case studies. He separates them into intrinsic case studies which are focused at a case itself, and the researcher is motivated intrinsically. Another type according to Stake (1994) is instrumental case studies. They use case to generalize about the findings and the results of the study. Thus, case facilitates to conclude on the outcome. Last type offered by Stake (1994) is a collective case study. Collective case studies (or multiple-case study by Stake



(1994)) provide an opportunity to take a look at several cases simultaneously so that to get a better idea on the issue.

Having investigated theoretical background of the case studies it became clear that this particular research fits two of the above categories: intrinsic and instrumental ones. Since the researcher was a part of the acquisition having moved abroad, and at the same time an instructor in the private institution, it was personal curiosity to investigate the effects of mother tongue and sociocultural aspects of second language acquisition. Intrinsic motivation pushed the author to examine other learners in order to reveal if there were any similarities between the processes, as well as if all the participants had to deal with mother tongue interference both positive and negative. Exploration of sociocultural factors also was triggered by the personal curiosity as the researcher was interested how the second language learners perceive second language culture and if it was of that necessity to acquire it. On the other hand, this case study could be defined as an instrumental one due to the fact that the findings could be a help for both educators and learners. Either the first or the second could get awareness of the possible problems and avoid them, as well as facilitate those aspects which support the acquisition process.

Finally, the author concluded that qualitative case study with intrinsic and instrumental nature was the most appropriate format for the research to be conducted.

Due to the character of the qualitative research methods, when there is a big threat of bias and the influence of the researcher's own belief about the phenomenon, the researcher used triangulation to raise the credibility of the research findings. Brown (2001) explains credibility as "showing that a qualitative study was conducted in a way that maximizes the accuracy of identifying and describing the object(s) of study" (p.242). In other words, the researcher should minimize the risk of incorrect findings and/or affected interpretations. In order to avoid this problem the author triangulated data utilizing several data collection tools within the research procedures: survey, interviews, and observations.

### **3.3 Research participants**

Considering the purpose of the study, there are two major groups of the participants. First group consists of ten Turkish native speakers learning English in non-authentic environment. Due to the problem stated for the investigation, such factors as participants' gender, race/ethnicity are not relevant. The average age of the participants is 15 years old. Second group of participants consists of three English native speakers, ages 16, 45 and 48. The factors of gender, race/ethnicity are not taken into account just like with the first cluster of participants.

**3.3.1 The first group.** The first group of participant was chosen purposively. The author would provide the reasons for such sampling method further. As it has been mentioned, the first group consisted of 10 learners with Turkish background as mother tongue. They attended a private institution every Saturday and had language sessions for 3.5 hours with 5 minutes break every 40 minutes. Their language level was evaluated prior placement and was defined as pre-intermediate. Due to the school regulations, teachers are not allowed to use L1 during language sessions. This rule is followed by students.

Students attended school mostly on their own will and major number of them had studied in an institution for several ages, raising their level of English every year. This was an advantage as the learners were aware of the school requirements. Seven out of ten students knew the researcher from the previous studying year. The rest three joined the class at the beginning of the year.

As the school is a private institution and is not obligatory one, presumably families' income is high and students are targeted at achieving higher goal as though enrollment into prestigious universities. Several of the learners plan to go studying abroad to English speaking countries. These factors could mean that they had high motivation. At the same time, due to their age and background they were probably free from prejudice and stereotypes about the target culture. Moreover, being conscious and determined to acquire the language, they were considered to be more attentive in their use of L1. Considering all these probabilities, the researcher included the group into research to investigate the way they acquire the language, to

what extent they were aware of their mother tongue influence whether mother tongue had its effect upon acquisition or not. As the learners were considered to welcome the target culture, the researcher also was interested in analyzing the way target culture was acquired, if there were any obstacles in this process. In other words, whether target culture was welcomed or denied.

The researcher did not take into account such factor as gender as it seemed irrelevant in terms of the study. The aim was to get a general picture rather than narrow it to specific points. The interest was to investigate the effect of mother tongue and sociocultural aspects regardless the gender.

This group is coded in the study as G1 (group one). Each participant is coded as G1P1, G1P2, G1P3...G1P10. All members were informed about the on-going research and were assured that their confidential data would be kept anonymously.

**3.3.2 The second group.** Second group of participants was chosen just as the first group purposively. It consisted of 3 members. The group is coded as G2 (group 2). Each participant is coded as G2P1, G2P2, G2P3. The mother tongue of all the participants is English.

The participants were of different ages 16, 45 and 48, and two of them were relatives. G2P1 and G2P2 had lived in Turkey for more than 7 years permanently. G2P3 had lived in Turkey for 5 years. The members of the second group acquired language mostly in the natural environment. It should be mentioned that G2P1 arrived in Turkey for permanent residence at the age of 8. This participant attends a private school in the country and partially acquired the language through formal instruction. G2P2 had attended short courses after moving to the country for permanent staying. Both members had been visiting the country every year. Another fact needed to be enlightened was that these members had a native speaker at their disposal at any time when being out Turkey. G2P1 has to use Turkish most of the time when being out of the home as this participant is a school student. G2P2 has to use Turkish from time to time due to the job circumstances. However, the total amount of hours when this member speaks Turkish does not exceed 2-2.5 hours per day.

G2P3 arrived in Turkey 5 years ago to stay permanently. This participant just like the other members of the group had a native speaker to practice language at any moment. G2P3 never attended any courses to get formal instruction and all the acquisition process was held in the natural environment. Since the arrival, this participant did not have much of an opportunity to practice the language as there was no obvious necessity besides the common with native speakers' social places. Nevertheless, recently due to the changes of working circumstances, the participant admitted the need for better Turkish to communicate with different groups of people at the level much higher than just common social facilities.

At every stage of the research, participants were warned that all the information would be used confidentially and they did not need to out their names on the survey sheets, the questionnaires.

**3.3.3 Settings.** The settings were different for two groups. First group attended private institution in one of the most inhabited and developed areas of the city. The institution has a good reputation and presented at the market for more than 10 years. It has two branches in the city. The age of the students varies from 6 to 17. Students are placed according to their language level and age. Thus, there are classes with six-year-old students at the beginners' level and also classes of 17-year-old learners at the advanced level.

Students visit the school on weekends. Each class attends lessons either on Saturday or Sunday depending on the schedule organized by the administration. They are supplied with the materials according to their level. Teaching materials are presented with "Get smart", "Headway", and "Face to face". Each class has additional one hour of Spanish which is obligatory. Teachers are allowed to use extra materials and sources to support the studying. G1 was introduced to digital storytelling through Storybird website, at the same time Microsoft Power point presentation tool was used actively during the learning process with the whole year. Students also got used to preparing short presentations every week on topics they were interested in.

All students at all levels had to do examination works every month. Also, they had the Mid-term and Final exams. As partial fulfillment for the Final exam G1 members had to create a digital story on Storybird and prepare a presentation on the topic offered by the teacher.

It is necessary to mention that at the end of the year every class prepares a show to be presented in front of the peers from other classes and parents. The theme for the show is chosen collaboratively by the learners. Each class chooses something unique. This year there were dramas and poetry presented. Thus, no matter that the institution is quite small, the administration and the instructors do their best to provide high-quality language education and follow the standards.

The settings for the G2 were quite different. As the members of the group were separated from each other and did not appear at the same place, their acquisition process was investigated during private meetings in social areas and home environment. As it has been mentioned, each participant of this group had the opportunity to learn the language prior arrival to Turkey. However, the lack of motivation was crucial and most of the acquisition happened after the participants settled in the country. Thus, the settings were of social character that, on the other hand, was an advantage for the researcher as the participants could be observed in real-life language situations. In other words, the acquisition was free from any formal interference.

### **3.4. Research Procedures**

Speaking of the research procedures it is necessary to reveal the process in all the details in order to avoid speculations about validity and credibility of the research.

**3.4.1 Sampling.** When it comes for sampling there are two choices existing that probability and non-probability sampling. Cluster sampling, stratified random sampling, simple random sampling, and systematic sampling are the constituents of the probability sampling.

Given the nature of the research purpose, non-probability sampling approach was chosen for the study. The non-probability sampling was considered due to the research idea. The researcher followed the classification of the non-probability sampling proposed by Powell (1997). According to Powell (1997) non-probability sampling consists of the purposive sampling, the accidental sampling, the self-selected sampling, the quota sampling, and the incomplete sampling.

In order to reflect the essence of the research and to achieve the purpose stated, the researcher selected the purposive sampling. Such a choice correlates with the thoughts provided by Miles and Huberman (1994). They argued that, “qualitative samples “tend to be purposive rather than random” at least in part because the “universe is more limited” and that “much qualitative research examines a single ‘case’, some phenomenon embedded in a single social setting” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.27). Also the purposive sampling is used in the situations when subjects of the research are selected in order to achieve some research goals, when the judgment is provided by the researcher (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Following such a description the study was focused on particular people and groups of people.

**3.4.2 Data collection tools.** This study employs various analytical and data collection tools to reveal the effects of mother tongue and sociocultural aspects on second language acquisition: contrastive analysis, content analysis, observations, survey and interviews.

*3.4.2.1 Observations.* As it has already been mentioned, there were observations conducted along with the survey and the interviews. Observations of the participants lasted 8 months and were fixated in an observation diary (Appendix D) after each observation session. The researcher took notes while observing the participants in the field notes sheet (Appendix C).

As it has already been mentioned, there were observations conducted along with the survey and the interviews. Observations of the participants lasted 8 months and were fixated in an observation diary (Appendix D) after each observation session. The researcher took notes while observing the participants in the field notes sheet (Appendix C).

For a long time observations have been typical for anthropologists and sociologists in their inquiries. Recently, observations have become popular among the scholars conducting research in the area of educational sciences. Marshall and Rossman (1989) define observation as “the systematic description of events, behaviors, and artifacts in the social setting chosen for study” (p.79). Relying on own perceptions, the researcher gets an opportunity to describe the settings and the participants in a detailed way (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, Allen, 1993). The advantage of any observation is the possibility to examine the situation and the participants involved into the study in the natural format, while the participants are engaged in the actions. According to DeWalt and DeWalt (2002), it creates a context following which the researcher can develop sampling strategy and interview forms. Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte (1999) argues that the observation is “the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting” (p.91). Bernard (1994) also states that observations need to have some ability to impress and deceive from the part of the researcher. He characterizes the procedure as the creation of concord inside the group. The researcher should be able to behave the way which lets him/her get involved into the life of the group. It is necessary so that the members of the group could feel free and be natural. Then the researcher should know how to get out from the observation process and turn to data collected to analyze it and describe it (Bernard, 1994). For Bernard (1994), observations include various activities such as observation itself, interviews, conversations and other methods that allow to avoid disturbance of the participants.

There are various reasons why researcher should chose observations as the source of data. Schumck (1997) considers observations as an opportunity for the researcher to control the nonverbal communications, to define the way communications go on, to understand the participants’ feelings towards each other, and, finally, to evaluate time spent on communication. As Marshall and Rossman (1995) say observations can be helpful in order to obtain supportive information to check the data provided in interviews. They also argue that this method allows see the cases that the participants do not want to show.

DeWalt and DeWalt(2002) believe that “the goal for the design of research using participant observation as a method is to develop a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study that is as objective and accurate as possible given the limitations of the method” (p.92). In their opinion, there is a great significance of observations due to the fact that they can be a ground when developing a theory, or checking the hypothesis, as well as they can supply the researcher with precious data to give answers upon the questions requiring some description (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002).

However, there are limitations that come out when employing observations. DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) underline that gender has its affect upon the research as he researchers of different genders can observe not similar groups of people, environment, or sets of information. The researcher should have a strong understanding of the bias that occurs due to the researcher’s gender, ethnicity, educational background.

- G1 observations

It has been mentioned above that the first group consisted of ten Turkish natives learning English at a private institution. They attended the lessons every Saturday and the language sessions lasted 3.5 hours with 5 minutes breaks every 40 minutes. They were not recommended to use their mother tongue while there staying at the school. Teachers were forbidden to employ Turkish with the students.

This particular group of students was taught by the researcher, so there was a great chance to observe them all the time. Students had been warned about the observation process going. However, they did not have exact information about the research questions in order to minimize their attempts to affect the results purposively. As the researcher was included into the process of observation the question of bias arose. Being a participant of the observation, the researcher had some power. To reduce the bias and to raise the validity of the observations, the researcher took notes over the learners and invited a colleague to check the observations and interpretations. At the same time, observation data was triangulated with the survey and content analysis. It became obvious that the more the researcher



could separate from the known reality, the better. Therefore, a colleague was invited every 2 weeks to control the observations and compare the findings. The colleague was instructed prior the first observation check-up and was handed in the observation diary form for the exact day. Thus, twice a month during the research time period there was a control of the researcher's work and results. Some of the results did not correlate with those obtained by the researcher as what was commonplace for her was strange for the colleague. The data was analyzed and combined finally.

The members of the group were observed not only within a classroom environment. According to the school regulations, teachers had a chance to take the students out to the nearby park for extra activities. Students were not allowed to speak Turkish while these hours. It was an additional opportunity to observe them outside the class in much more natural environment.

Another observation possibility was provided during the breaks. As the learners were willing to acquire the language, they attempted to employ the target language as much possible; therefore, the researcher could take additional notes on their language behavior.

As it could be seen, all notes were of paper format as the researcher could not get permission for any recordings.

- G2 observations

Unlike G1 observations, G2 observations were non-participant. The researcher could not affect the process of observations in terms of the participants' language production. However, it also carried some difficulty as the members of the group being informed of the observations felt discomfort, and they were somewhat anxious about the speech in the target language. What was a matter of fact in this case, was the choice between 'going native' and maintaining distance. The researcher preferred to keep a distance to let the participants act on their own. However, understanding the probability of still being biased, the researcher invited the same colleague participated in observations of the G1 for control check-up.

The observations of the G2 members were taken once a month for each of the member. Thus, in total there were 3 observation sessions for the G2. The invited colleague attended observations once a month and was instructed and handed in field notes sheet and observation diary list for the exact date prior the observation process.

Observation sessions lasted 1.5-2 hours and took place in public areas: cafés, restaurants, cinemas. Such format of meetings was organized to watch the way the participants act in natural language environment.

During the observations the researcher took field notes, as well as an expert colleague, and filled in the observation diary after each observation at the same day. It was done in order not to omit any detail. The same concerned the G1. The recordings were not taken due to the much interference of the outside noises.

*3.4.2.2 Survey.* The simple definition of surveys as an approach states that they are questions collected together targeted at revealing some data (Fowler, 2002). According to Fowler (2002) surveys are frequent events in modern society. People are exposed to them when they use Internet, read magazines. Nowadays, more often people encounter surveys conducted by phone or email (Fowler, 2002). The majority of the population knows how surveys work, and due to this fact they are easy to be used (Baxter & Babbie, 2004; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). The benefits of the survey come from the questions created and the way they are delivered to respondents (Esposito & Rothgeb, 1997; Oksenberg, Cannell & Kalton, 1991). The main goal of the survey is to evaluate and describe the whole body of the population. (Baxter & Babbie, 2004; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). As Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) state there are two types of surveys: cross-sectional and longitudinal surveys. Cross-sectional surveys are targeted at revealing particular information from the chosen group that has been sampled and are conducted at an exact time (Dillman, 2000; Groves, Cialdini, & Couper, 1992). This type of surveys works best for the projects and the description of the opinions upon some issue. Longitudinal surveys are designed in order to obtain data at different time points so that the researcher could see the changes with time (Billiet & Loosveldt, 1988; Groves, Cialdini, & Couper, 1992).

For the purpose of the study, the researcher created the survey presented in Appendix A. The main goal of the survey was to examine participants' opinions on

second language acquisition process. It was a base for further in-depth interviews. The survey consisted of two sections. First section was designed to reveal biographical information and the participants' use of target language in their daily life. It had eleven questions. Second section was aimed at revealing the opinions of the participants by letting them check the boxes that better describe their agreement or disagreement with the statements. Questions included into the survey reflected the main issues of the study such as whether language could be learnt through the acquisition only or there should be some formal instruction in order to obtain the necessary knowledge. Another thing what was at the center of interest whether social and cultural factors were affective in terms of language learning or there were psychological barriers that interfered the acquisition. Finally, the participants were asked to provide their opinion on the source of mistakes in the second language if it was their mother tongue. The researcher also was interested in the participants' opinion about the appropriate age for learning. The examples of questions are given below:

Question 12. Languages can be learned through conversation alone.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Slightly agree
- Slightly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Question 14. Language can be learnt properly only if started at early ages.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Slightly agree
- Slightly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Question 15. Mistakes in a foreign language come from the learner's native language.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Slightly agree

- Slightly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Question 16. In order to learn a second language well, learners need a desire to connect with its culture and people.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Slightly agree
- Slightly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

The survey consisted of the controlled question in order to avoid false or incorrect results. For instance, all of the issues included into the research was checked through the control questions. For instance, when asking about the learning the language through conversation only as given in Question 12 above, the researcher further in the survey provides another similar question:

Question 17. In order to acquire a foreign language, the learner needs to do nothing more than hear and see the language a lot.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Slightly agree
- Slightly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

The control question for the issue about the source of the students' errors was presented in such a way:

Question 27. The most common language errors originate from a student's first language.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Slightly agree
- Slightly disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Totally there were 51 questions in the survey. Survey was the first step of the research procedure along with the observations. Prior conducting the survey the researcher provided explanations on main terms and notions for the participants in order to exclude misunderstandings.

*3.4.2.3 Interviews.* The decision to use interviews as a data gathering method was influenced by Ely et al (1991), who maintain that “qualitative researchers want those who are studied to speak for themselves, to provide their perspectives in words and other actions” (p.4). Wellman et al. (2006) argues that interview being a data collecting tool involves personal communications with the participants at home or at work. Interviews help to obtain particular information, they shed light on details and do not require long time. There are various methods to conduct interviews. They can have unstandardised (informal), standardised (structured), and the semi-standardised (semi-structured) format (Berg, 1998).

For the purposes of this study, the semi-structured interview method is chosen. Stone (1984) defines this method as:

...an interview method in which some questions are structured (closed) and some are open-ended. Unstructured questions allow respondents to reply freely without having to select one of several provided responses. (p. 12)

Open-ended questions may cause problems for the researcher, as they inevitably require more time and effort to analyze the. In regard to this, Busha and Harter (1980) underline that such a technique demands greater preparation from the researcher prior the interview. The person conducting the interview should be aware of the content, as well as the order of the questions and the way the responds are recorded.

This study involves interviews (Appendix B) to elicit specific information basing on the results after survey conducted. Thus, interviews are researchers’ in-depth look into a problem of subjects’ experiences, opinions, and attitudes.

The interview questionnaires were filled out by the members of the second group consisted of English natives. The reason for such a decision was that the researcher was interested in the experiences that were naturally received during

acquisition. The members of the second group were unlike the members of the first group acquiring language rather than learning it. Therefore, the interviews were conducted only with the second group members.

The questionnaire consisted of 33 questions to elicit particular details of the participants' acquisition experience. The participants were asked about their attitude to Turkish culture, about the way they learnt the language. Also, the researcher was interested in factors which affected their acquisition according to the participants' own opinion. Apart from that, there were few questions targeted to find out the participants' feelings about their role in the local society whether they belonged to it. The interview questionnaires also included control questions in order to purify the results. For instance, there were questions to elicit information about motivating and demotivating factors in SLA of the participants:

Question 25. What are motivating factors to acquire a language for you?

- a. Job requirements
- b. Family needs
- c. Psychological reasons (self-esteem)
- d. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Question 26. What can demotivate you in language learning?

- a. Slow progress
- b. Family and friends pressure
- c. Failures and lack of encouragement
- d. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

To check the trustworthiness of the responses, there was a question given below:

Question 32. Please, in few sentences describe factors that affect your acquisition of Turkish language.

Also, this question was a help in terms of collecting additional information about the acquisition process and the views of the participants upon it.

Finally, to triangulate data collected about the G2, the researcher added last question where the participants were asked to write a paragraph in Turkish to see their written language and possible transfer which they might not control in writing. The participants could choose any topic they wanted. The final texts were about

“Yesterday’s football match”, “Tomorrow working plans”, and “Summer holidays”. Texts were analyzed according to content analysis rules. In order to avoid misunderstandings, the researcher asked for expertise help from the Turkish colleague. The content of the texts as a respond to the question 33 of the interview are provided in Appendix F.

**3.4.3 Data collection procedures.** Data was collected according to the plan organized prior the research. There were several stages, and at which the researcher set some goals and objectives. Every stage was carefully noted in order not to miss any step.

First stage was Pre-Research. The author collected related literature and investigated it thoroughly. The first goal was to understand what range of issues and how would be studied. The literature review and analysis helped in this process. In order to formulate the main purpose, the researcher consulted the advisor. Then, the research questions were designed, and the researcher got the feedback from the advisor. Next step was to receive permission to conduct the research. The researcher received approval from the university board. Permission was also received from the administration of the school where G1 members studied. It took some time to negotiate and discuss confidentiality issues. Also, in order to have peer control, the researcher contacted one of the colleagues asking to attend the observation sessions. The colleague agreed to help the researcher. Finally, all organizational moments were set.

As this study is a longitude one as it lasted 8 months, the next stage was Research stage. Having received the permission to conduct the research, survey was created and distributed to the participants of both groups. At the same time, observation sessions were scheduled and reflected in the weekly diary of the researcher. By the time of the first observation, the researcher created an observation diary and field notes sheet. As soon as the survey was filled in, the data was collected and analyzed. Basing on the results of the survey, there were interview questionnaires formed and distributed to the member of G2. While G2 members were working on their interview questionnaires, first texts for content analysis were received from the members of G1. Prior conducting content analysis, the researcher

organized special forms for it in order to fixate the data. Further, texts were received on a monthly basis. Interview questionnaires were collected and data was analyzed and put on paper. Observations lasted 8 months, and the field notes and observation diaries data were analyzed systematically several days after the sessions. It was necessary in order not to miss any important detail, and not to get lost in a load of papers.

Final stage was Post-Research. At this stage, the researcher revised all data collected and analyzed previously. The mid-results of observations was combined and the participants received their code names such as G1P1 (Group 1 Participant 1), or G2P3 (Group 2 Participant 3). This last stage was mostly of ethnographical nature when the researcher described the results and interpreted them according to the questions settled at the beginning of the process.

**3.4.4 Data analysis procedures.** All data collected was analyzed gradually. The data analysis tools included interpretations, member checks, control readings of the data, content analysis of the results, and contrastive analysis. The survey was designed basing on the preliminary data analysis.

The whole study was supported with the literature review. Common issues of mother tongue in SLA, as well as of the social and cultural aspects were provided by previous theoretical and experimental research.

The statements included into the survey were carefully analyzed in regard to the main purpose of the study. After analysis, some of the statements were dropped off. The same procedure took place with the interview questionnaires. Every question was evaluated in terms of its correspondence to the research questions.

During the observations, the researcher took notes at the field notes sheet. After each observation, the researcher filled in the observation diary. After that, each observation date was analyzed in terms of the particular categories. The final matrix was created and contrasted in order to see the similarities and differences between the groups.



The interviews of the second group were analyzed in the same way. The answers were collected, grouped, and then compared between the interviewees. The final description of the results was based on this comparison. The results were also compared and contrasted to the results of the observations and a survey in both of the groups.

The researcher would like to mention that the content analysis was utilized both to analyze the texts produced by the participants (Group 1: monthly collected texts, and Group 2: respond to the Question 33 of the interview) and to analyze the whole data set in order to reveal possible lacks. The checks and comparison between the data blocks were constant.

*3.4.4.1 Contrastive analysis.* According to Professor Volker Gast (n.d.), “contrastive analysis investigates the differences between pairs (or small sets) of languages against the background of similarities and with the purpose of providing input to applied disciplines such as foreign language teaching and translation studies” (1.2).

Fisiak (1981) proposed theoretical contrastive analysis and applied contrastive analysis as two types of the whole body of Contrastive Analysis (CA). According to him, theoretical CA basing at some theoretical assumptions works with the similarities and differences of two languages. On the contrary, applied CA is used to confer language parts of two or more languages on a systematical basis. The researcher employed applied CA in order to compare English and Turkish languages. A number of linguistic features was chosen, such as phonology, syntax and morphology, semantics for the comparison. In other words, the researcher discovered the most distinctive issues of every language area in each language and compared them. Thus, the sounds of Turkish language and the sounds of English language were compared according to the most problematic issues they involve, for instance, diphthongs, sounds that are not presented in one language, but presented in the other one. In terms of syntax, for example, word order was chosen as the most representative. Speaking of morphology, differences in word forming were analyzed. As for semantics, the researcher investigated figurative expressions and vocabulary enlargement process in both languages and compared the results.

Such comparison would bring light to problematic areas faced by learners in the teaching-learning of English. As Hammer and Rice posit (1965):

a systematic comparison of selected linguistic features of two or more languages, the intent of which is ... to provide teachers and textbook writers with a body of information which can be of service in the preparation of instructional materials, the planning of courses and the development of classroom techniques. (Hammer & Rice, 1965; as cited in Jackson, 1981, p.185)

There are also two versions of CA namely the strong version of CA and the weak version of CA. The strong version of CA or also known as CA a priori compares native language and the target language. The two languages are compared to identify the similarities and differences of linguistics structures. According to Choi (1996), “CA a priori, that is the strong version enables us to foresee the difficulties the students may encounter” (p. 87). In other words, CA a priori helps to predict the difficulties faced by students who are learning a foreign language. The strong version of CA is seen as a preventive measure whereas the weak version of CA is a curative measure. This study employs a strong version of CA as the researcher attempts to reveal the problematic areas within an acquisition process.

*3.4.4.2 Content analysis.* Another analytical instrument utilized in this study is content analysis. The researcher chose content analysis as one of the research method for the study because it can be applied to the communication process, and as language is a part of communication, content analysis is included in methodological base. Weber (1990) indicates that “Content analysis is a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text” (p. 9). Content-analysis can be applied to different areas and serve various purposes. There is an opinion that content-analysis is a tool of more quantitative nature. However, there supporters of content-analysis being a qualitative instrument as it can be applied inductively to conclude on the issues and provide recommendations. George (2009) insists:

Researchers have long debated the respective merits of “quantitative” and “qualitative” approaches to content analysis...Most writers on content analysis have made quantification a component of their definition of content analysis. In effect, therefore, they exclude the qualitative approach as being something other than content analysis. (p. 144)

The most known apologists of these approach (Weber, 1990; Neuendorf, 2002; Krippendorff, 1980) broadened their definitions of content-analysis following Berelson's (1952) definition of content analysis as "...a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (p.18). Krippendorff (1980) also emphasized the significance of "...making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (p.18). He argues that the analysis of the texts content is valuable. One of the most important issues in content-analysis is the process of coding that should be carried out attentively and with high exactness. In regard to this, Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) point out that this method is related "...to data analysis that involves the identification of categories prior to coding" (pp. 260-261).

Content-analysis cannot be narrowed up to the simple word-frequency count (Weber, 1990). There are some points to consider when conducting content-analysis. Though the words that occur most often tend to reflect the attitudes and concerns, synonyms used in the texts may result in underestimation of the issue (Weber, 1990). Another thing to be aware about is the fact that each word cannot represent the chosen category in a full way. Last moment to remember is the multiple meanings of some words, for example, the word '*argue*' can mean '*to debate*' or '*to state*' depending on the content. Finally, content-analysis is a method that overcomes the simple words counting process.

The fact that this approach employs categories and coding makes it unique. Weber (1990) provides such a definition of the term '*category*': "A category is a group of words with similar meaning or connotations" (p. 37).

When conducting content-analysis, the researcher defines the texts for the purpose of the study. Those can be books, book chapters, interviews, newspaper articles or headings, or any form of language. In terms of content-analysis texts are coded into categories. The levels of categorization can be different: words, phrases, sentences, themes.

According to Berelson (1952) the following list offers more possibilities for the uses of content analysis:

- reveal international differences in communication content;
- detect the existence of propaganda;
- identify the intentions, focus or communication trends of an individual, group or institution;
- describe attitudinal and behavioral responses to communications;
- determine psychological or emotional state of persons or groups.

For the purpose of the study, it was also significant to define the type of content analysis.

Cook and Farmer (2002) provide the following types of content-analysis: conceptual analysis and relational analysis. In conceptual analysis the establishment of concepts presence and their frequency are considered. On the other hand, the relationships between concepts are examined in relational analysis.

As the main goal of content analysis in relation to the overall purpose of the study was to determine the effects of mother tongue and sociocultural aspects in SLA, the first type of content analysis seemed to be the most appropriate to achieve the goal. In order to reduce the level of subjectivity when defining the concepts, the researcher used specialized dictionaries.

The first step of conceptual analysis is the choice of the research questions and the samples. Then the text is coded into particular categories of the content. The researcher analyses the features of the texts and interprets them. The investigation of the text in order to analyze the presence of the chosen words can be an example of this type of analysis (Cook and Farmer, 2002).

According to Budd et al. (1967), another point to be underlined when speaking about content analysis is the issues of reliability and validity. In terms of the content analysis the term '*reliability*' is related to the possibility to repeat the coding process in the same format with time, as well as it is tightly connected with the reproducibility that means the same way of classification of the categories by the

coders, and, finally, it is related to the accuracy, the correspondence to the standards and norms of statistics (Budd et al., 1967).

Speaking of this study, the use of content analysis as a data collection tool was proved by the necessity to reveal the communication trends of individuals, as well as describe their attitudes and intentions towards the target culture and language as a core of the research. At the same time, the researcher included content analysis into the research methodology to understand the extent of the mother tongue transfer and sociocultural blocks interference into the learners' consciousness. Content analysis helps to avoid the potential wish of the participants to affect the outcome. Hence, the analysis of the texts written by the participants as well as their replies in interview questionnaires could show the frequency of the transfer and cultural aspects, and help to evaluate the effects of both. In order to systemize the data collected with the help of the content analysis there was created a particular form. Prior creating it the researcher reviewed literature. Content-analytical form to examine the texts is provided in Appendix E. The texts of G1 were analyzed every month when learners were assigned to write an essay or do a test with writing a passage. The full data was presented in general view. Additionally, after some considerations and in order to get a better understanding of the process, the members of G2 were asked to create a small text in Turkish so that the research could have full information from the both groups. The question about the text was added into the interview forms for those participants of G2.

**3.4.5 Trustworthiness.** There are several criteria to evaluate the research according to its trustworthiness. Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggested four of those. These criteria according to them include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Each of the criteria consists of particular strategies (Anfara, Brown & Mangione, 2002).

To raise credibility of the study the researcher used systematical checks. Observations were checked by the invited expert in order to control the probable incorrect interpretations. It also needs to be mentioned that the participants were given feedback about their data and that was a member checking strategy. It was necessary to be employed in order to avoid misunderstandings and confusion (Guba

& Lincoln, 1989). A prolonged engagement as one of the credibility strategies was also employed as a researcher was a participant and was able to create transparent relations with members of the groups.

Another criterion met in this study was transferability that involved thick description and purposive sampling. This thesis is a thick description of the research providing full information about the instruments, participants, settings and procedures, and the results with their interpretation. As it has been already explained the researcher used purposive sampling as the most suitable in terms of the qualitative case study context.

Dependability as a criterion was met through triangulation. Triangulation used to raise the trustworthiness of the study helps to avoid bias referred to the researcher. As Darke et al. (1998) argues the bias can be considered in regard to the effect that the researcher has on the behavioral models of the participants, as well as it can be viewed as the influence of the researcher upon the process of the research as a whole. Triangulation can be a help for the researchers when they attempt to eliminate the bias if even it is not reduced to the zero, but at least minimized (Darke et al., 1988). In terms of the first group the survey, observations and content analysis were included in the triangulation process. The survey, the interview questionnaires with partial content analysis and observations were parts of triangulation for the results of the second group. Confirmability was also met through one of the strategies already described – triangulation.

This study follows the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretivist views follow the idea of the reality being based on social ground and having a shifting nature. As Angen (2000) explains that everything is considered in relation to the culture, social environment, relationships between people. Keeping this in mind, the validity of the research cannot be leant in objectivity. Truth can be discussed, and, therefore, it can produce various and valid proposals to the data. Angen (2000) offers some criteria for evaluating research from an interpretivist perspective:

- careful consideration and articulation of the research question;
- carrying out inquiry in a respectful manner;

- awareness and articulation of the choices and interpretations the researcher makes during the inquiry process and evidence of taking responsibility for those choices;
- a written account that develops persuasive arguments;
- evaluation of how widely results are disseminated;
- validity is a moral question and must be located in the ‘discourse of the research community’. (pp.384-385)

In terms of the interpretivist paradigm and the qualitative research, there is an ethical validity to be taken into account. It means that the decisions of the researcher during the study have political nature and ethical issues. In other words, the researcher should reflect on the helpfulness of the research for the others; search for additional and different interpretations; ask if the researcher and others really learned something from the work. Another thing is a substantive validity that is an evaluation of the substance or content of the interpretive work. Therefore, the researcher should see evidence of the interpretive choices made; evaluate the influence upon the research or the bias; think over own changes during the research. Bearing all these points in mind, the researcher has worked over the research.

### **3.5 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study**

This study as any qualitative research has a number of limitations. First limitation is integration of the researcher into the field of the research. Though the researcher is the main means of data collection and analytical work, the possible bias may harm the study. To avoid this, the above-mentioned strategies to raise trustworthiness of the study were actively employed. Also as the researcher was partially the participant of the research in terms of G1 (being a teacher of the members of the group) there was a potential threat that the respondents could provide biased data in order to please the teacher. Again a helpful tool was the implementation of the trustworthiness strategies. However, both the readers of the case study and the author should be aware of such possible influence that can affect the final product. Another limitation of this particular research is a small sample

group of English native speakers. The greater number of participants at this point could provide additional data.

Speaking of other delimitations of the study, the researcher did not consider gender, race/ethnicity as primary in the research. The purpose was to investigate the effects of mother tongue and sociocultural aspects irrelevantly to particular racial and gender groups. The interest was in general mechanisms on a vast number of learners.

It has been outlined that the researcher was not able to record the observations. For the first group, the researcher could not get the permission from the parents. For the second group there was no possibility to record the observations as they were mostly conducted in public places (e.g. café, restaurant, streets).

Finally, the interviews were conducted only among the native speakers of English, to get better understanding of the effects of sociocultural aspects they experienced. The reason for providing interview questionnaires for the second group only was explained with the fact that second group acquired language in an authentic environment, and, hence, a deeper look into their cases would give more detailed information about sociocultural aspect in SLA.



## Chapter 4: Results

This chapter presents the results received after the analysis of the data collected. There were two groups of participants involved in this study. The first group (G1) consisted of ten Turkish natives who learn English in a private institution. The second group (G2) consisted of three English natives who acquire Turkish in the natural environment. Both groups' members completed the survey to reveal their opinions on SLA, also, both groups were observed during 8 months, participants of G2 were interviewed in order to elicit more information on their specific acquisition experience. Finally, the researcher utilized content analysis to reveal the data free from possible bias of the participants. The texts that were regularly written by the G1 as part of their course routine were analyzed. The interview responds of the G2 members were investigated as well with the help of the content analytical instrument. Below the results of the overall analysis of each research step would be provided for G1 and G2 respectively.

### 4.1 G1 Results

The overall purpose of the study was to understand the effects of mother tongue and sociocultural aspects on SLA. To achieve this goal, there were several steps taken. The results after data analysis would be provided below.

**4.1.1 G1 survey results.** The survey consisted of 51 questions and was designed to reveal the participants opinions on SLA and its mechanics. Prior completing the survey, all the participants were instructed. The survey was conducted in English. The language level of G1 members was evaluated as pre-intermediate at the time of enrollment. As part of trustworthiness raise procedure, the participants were introduced to the survey questions and the feedback on their understanding of them was received. Some notions and terms were explained in order to avoid misunderstanding.

The average age of the participants was 15 years old. The youngest member was 14 years old; the oldest one was 17.4 years old. The first part of the survey was devoted to biographical data collection and, which was more important, the use of

target language in daily life. The participants were coded as G1P1, G1P2...G1P10. It is necessary to point out that all of the participants underlined Turkish as their native language in Question 5 'What is your mother tongue?' Figure 1 presents the results on the Question 11 'When do you use the target language (Turkish/English) in your daily life?'

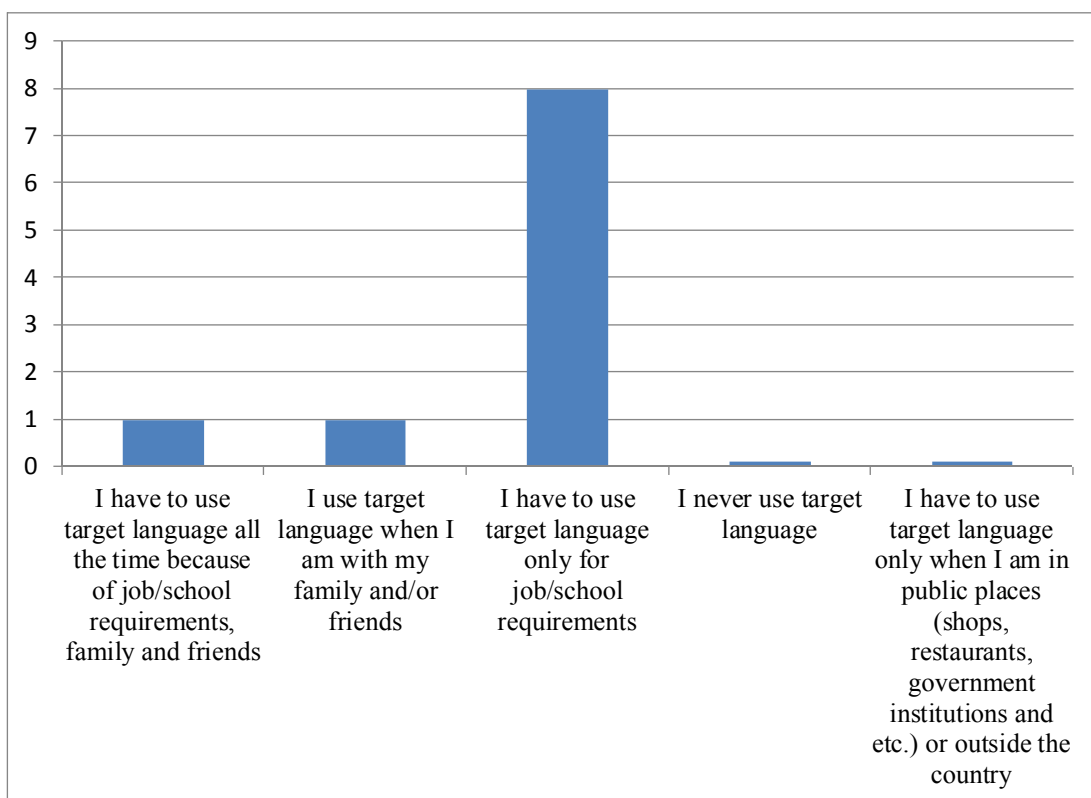


Figure 1. The use of target language in the participants' daily life.

As it can be seen from the figure 8 of the participants responded that they had to use target language which was English in terms of G1 only for school requirements. One participant employed English all the time. It might be explained with the fact that this learner attends a private school and have English speaking relatives. One participant also presented the use of the language with the friends. The feedback showed that this member played online games and employed English to communicate with other gamers. To present graphically that none of the participants had to use target language only when being in public places or outside the country, as well as to show that none chose the full absence of target language in their daily life,

the researcher indicated the rows as 0.1. It correlates with the answers to Question 8 ‘What languages do you use in your daily life?’ presented in Figure 2.

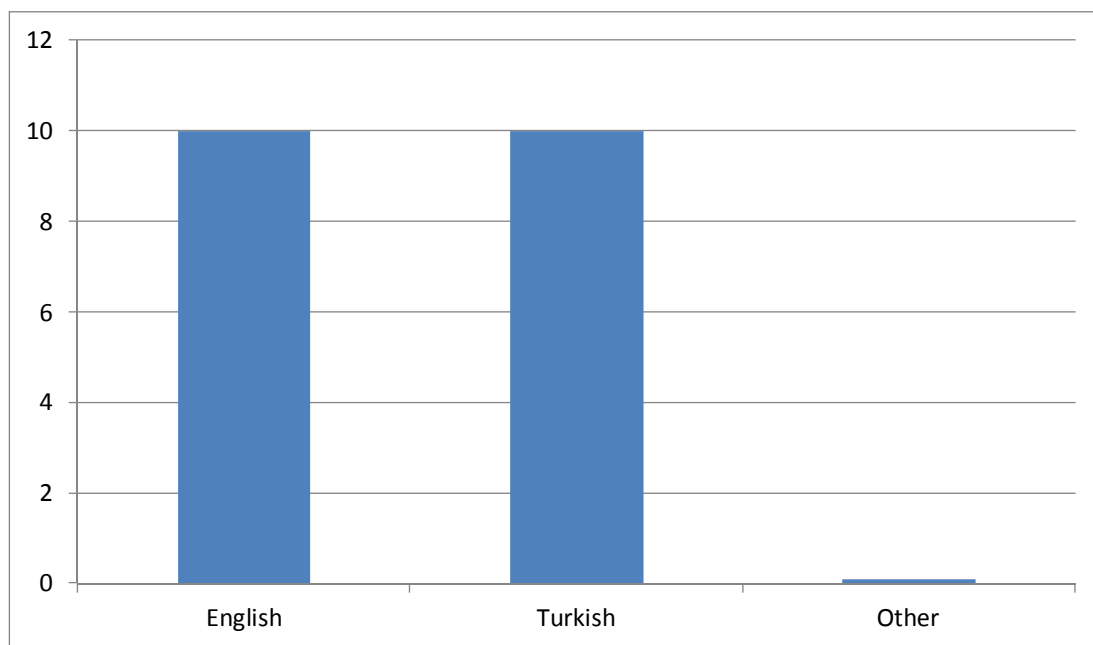


Figure 2. Language used in daily life.

All of the participants indicated English and Turkish as languages they used in their daily life. Such results are proved by the observation experience. The researcher had a chance to observe the participants of G1 not only during the classes, but during the breaks. The students shared pictures and news on social networks that were in English. They also listened to music in English, as well as they were eager to watch films in the target language.

Second part of the survey consisted of questions that were targeted at revealing the participants’ opinions on SLA. They had to check the boxes that better describe their agreement or disagreement with the statements. The questions were mainly concentrated around several topics: acquisition and learning, social and cultural factors and psychological barriers, mother tongue influence on TL and vice versa, the best age for language acquisition/learning, SLA is similar to FLA and the role of general intelligence in SLA. In order to present the analyzed data graphically

questions were grouped into above mentioned theme categories. Theme distribution of the survey questions is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

*Theme Categories of the Survey Questions*

| Theme  | Question number inside the survey                          |
|--|--|
| Acquisition and learning                           | 12, 17, 20, 24, 29, 32, 36, 45                             |
| SLA and FLA  | 13, 28, 40   |
| Social factors, culture and psychological barriers | 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 25, 33, 35, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50 |
| Mother tongue influence in TL and vice versa       | 15, 27, 31, 37, 39   |
| The best age for language acquisition/learning     | 14, 30, 34, 38, 42, 51                                     |
| General intelligence and SLA                       | 41, 26   |

The results were analyzed in terms of this distribution. In other words, the participants' responds were also described within the above themes. These could be seen from the figures below.

Figure 3 refers to the first theme category '*Acquisition and learning*'. Questions included into this category relate to the priority of either acquisition or learning, and if languages could be acquired through natural input from the environment only or there was still a need in some formal instructions.

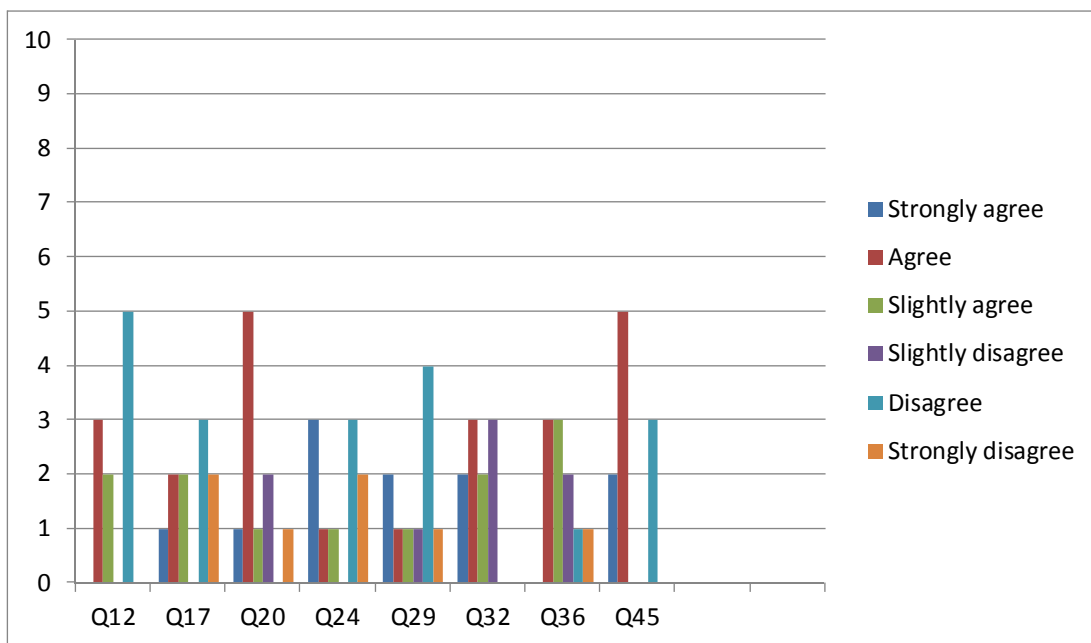


Figure 3. Acquisition and learning.

As it can be seen from the figure to Q12 five of the participants disagreed that the languages could be learnt through conversation only. However three participants agreed with the statement and two participants slightly agreed with the statement. These results correlate to the Q17 where three participants disagreed that to acquire a foreign language it was only necessary to listen and to hear the language a lot. Two of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement. One participant disagreed with the statement whereas four participants agreed and slightly agreed with the statement, one participant strongly agreed with the statement. For Q20 half of the participants responded as strongly agree. In other words, five participants think that in order to improve learners should know some grammar. One participant strongly agreed with the statement. One participant slightly agreed with the statement. Two participants slightly disagreed and only one participant strongly disagreed with the statement.

Question 24 sounded like *‘Second language acquisition in the natural environment is more sufficient and effective’*. The analysis showed that three of the participants strongly agreed with the statement. Three group members disagreed and two members strongly disagreed. One participant slightly agreed with the statement. Another one agreed with the statement. Generally, these results correlate to those

received from Q12 and Q17. Four of the participants disagreed with the statement in Q29 that language accuracy was not a must as long as people understand the speaker. On the other hand, two of the participants strongly agreed with the statement. The rest of the statements were chosen by one of the participants each. Q32 was targeted at revealing the participants' opinions about the interaction in SL whether it could help the learners to improve more than any traditional classroom instructions. According to the participants' responds, three of the participants agreed with the statement, and three of them slightly disagreed. Two of the participants showed strong agreement with the statement and two of them slight agreement.

For the next Q36 three of the participants agreed with the statement that one could be called a native-speaker when he/she comes to understanding of proverbs and sayings. Another three participants slightly agreed. Two slightly disagreed; one disagreed and one strongly disagreed. Q45 was presented with the following statement '*Awareness of target language grammar and pronunciation is necessary for second language acquisition*'. Five of the participants agreed with the statement; two participants strongly agreed with the statement, whereas three disagreed with the statement.

In general, the results showed that most of the participants think that formal instruction was necessary and acquisition should go along with some grammar learning. Thus, there is no room to consider the supremacy of the acquisition over learning. Such results do not correspond with the proposal of Stephen Krashen, who promoted the idea that the acquisition should prevail over the learning in order to achieve higher level of language, fluency (Krashen, 1986).

Figure 4 presents the results from the second theme category '*SLA and FLA*'. The questions included into this category related to the problem if second language acquisition was similar to first language acquisition.

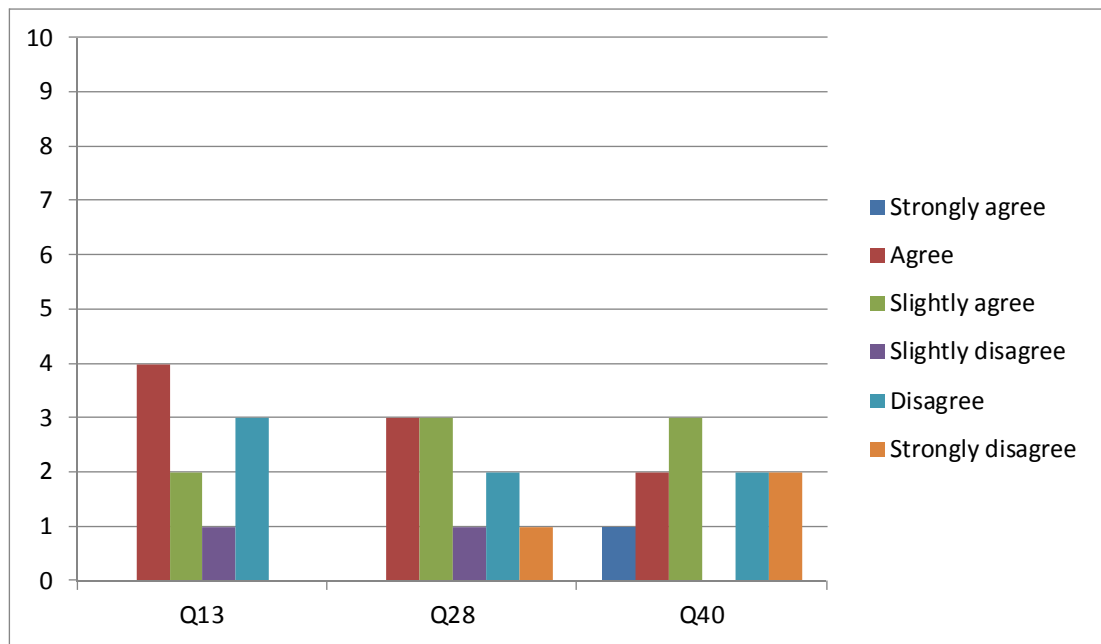


Figure 4. SLA and FLA.

Question 13 sounded like *‘Learning a foreign language is like learning your first language’*. Four participants agreed with the statement. Two participants slightly agreed. One participant slightly disagreed with the statement, whereas three participants disagreed with the statement. For Q28 *‘Learning to read in a second language as an adult is similar to learning to read in the first language as a child’* three participants provided agreement with the statement; three participants showed slight agreement with the statement. Two participants disagreed. One participant slightly disagreed and one participant strongly disagreed with the statement.

Question 40 was *‘Understanding of first language structures and first language awareness make second language acquisition an easier process’*. Three respondents slightly agreed with the statement. Two participants agreed with it, and one showed strong agreement. However, two participants disagreed and two strongly disagreed with the statement. Thus, although most of the participants admitted the presence of some similarities between first language acquisition and second language acquisition, they also provided some disagreement. It generally correlates with the ideas of supporters of Universal Grammar (Chomsky, 1981, 1982; Felix, 1991) who proposed that there are some similarities between the acquisition of the first language and the second language as the principles of Universal Grammar may influence both

processes. In SLA these principles may have their effect through the influence of the mother tongue.

Next theme category was detected as ‘*Social factors, culture and psychological barriers*’. This category included questions targeted at revealing the participants’ opinions on the role of culture and society in SLA, motivating and demotivating factors. The results are presented below in Figure 5.

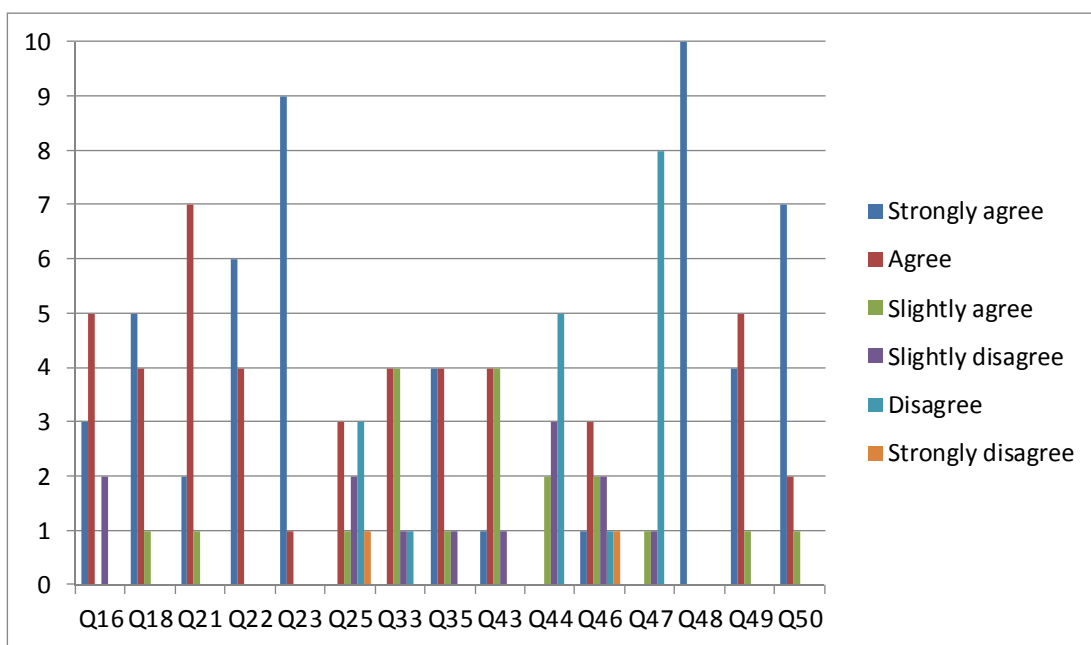


Figure 5. Social factors, culture and psychological barriers.

The figure shows the distribution of the opinions. For Q16 three of the participants strongly agreed with the statement that learners needed a desire to connect with the target culture and people in order to learn the target language. Five participants showed agreement, and only two participants slightly disagreed with the statement. For Q18 five G1 members strongly agreed that for successful language acquisition, it was important to become socially involved with the second language group. Four participants showed their agreement, whereas one member presented slight agreement. Null disagreement was underlined. Question 21 was about social discomfort and/or social isolation interfering into the process of second language acquisition. Two participants strongly agreed with the statement. Seven participants agreed with it, and one participant slightly agreed. In terms of Q22, six participants strongly agreed that anxiety could prevent successful language acquisition. Four



participants agreed with the statement. Question 23 consisted of the statement *'The most important predictor of success in second language acquisition is motivation'*. Nine of ten participants strongly agreed with the statement. One participant agreed. The next Question 25 was about language curiosity as an affecting factor in SLA. Three participants agreed, one slightly agreed with the statement. Two members of G1 slightly disagreed with the statement. Three members disagreed whilst one participant showed strong disagreement with the statement. For Q33, the participants responded in the following way. Four participants agreed that family and/or friends' pressure could demotivate learners. Four participants slightly agreed with the statement. One member slightly disagreed, and one disagreed.

Question 35 was the following statement *'It is difficult to learn a second language without integrating oneself into the culture of the second language group'*. In terms of this statement four out of ten participants strongly agreed with it; four agreed; one slightly agreed, and one slightly disagreed. For Q43 *'Second language acquisition is impossible unless learners are involved into target culture and society'* the following replies were collected. One member of G1 showed strong agreement with the statement. Four participants showed agreement, and four showed slight agreement with the statement. One participant was slightly disagreed with the statement. Question 44 sounded like *'Anxiety can be a motivating factor for adult learners to improve their language'*. Most of the respondents showed disagreement with the statement: three were slightly disagreed with the statement; five were disagreed with the statement. Only two participants were slightly agreed with the statement. For Q46 *'Psychological factors are the most affecting second language acquisition in a negative way'* one participant presented strong agreement with the statement. Three participants were agreed and two were slightly agreed with the statement. Two participants slightly disagreed with it; one disagreed and one strongly disagreed with the statement. Although, for previous questions about anxiety there was full agreement on its role in the language success, here some of the participants disagreed that psychological factors were the most affecting in a negative way. The feedback, conversations with the participants, revealed that for this question they understood that the effect of psychological was compared to social and cultural aspects. Question 47 was *'Being involved in mother tongue community helps second*

*language acquisition*'. This question was a control one, in order to check the way participants respond the survey. Fortunately, only participant slightly agreed with the statement, as it was revealed later the member of G1 misunderstood the question. One participant slightly disagreed and eight participants disagreed with the statement. The responses proved that participants paid attention to question and their meaning when filling out the survey.

For Q48 about the motivation as of what makes a learner successful, there were collected the following results: all participants strongly agreed with the statement. It correlates to the results of the Q23. Question 49 sounded like '*Full isolation from mother tongue group can assist in second language acquisition*'. Four out of ten participants strongly agreed with the statement. Five members of G1 agreed whereas one participant slightly agreed with the statement. These responses generally correlate with the previous from Q35, Q21, Q18 and Q16. Final question in this category was Q50 '*Rejection of traditions and customs of a target culture as well as social norms and rules can make second language acquisition process harder*'. Seven participants showed strong agreement with the statement; two participants agreed with it, and one slightly agreed with the statement. Again, this result correlates with those collected from Q16, Q18, Q21, Q35 and Q49.

In general, most participants admitted the priority of motivation in SLA. They showed agreement on its role in the success when learning languages. Motivation was noted as a psychological factor in the research conducted by Schumann (1986) and, according to him, it played a great role in the outcome. However, motivation was a central idea of other educators' inquiries (Krashen 1986, 1987; Ellis, 1997). Anxiety was indicated as a demotivating factor that could ruin the whole process. At the same time, there was a general agreement on the necessity to get involved into target culture. This outcome corresponds with the findings of the previous research conducted by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982), as well as it proves the statements of Krashen (1985) on the Affective Filter that includes anxiety as a primary source of the failures. The rejection of target society and its norms and rules could have a negative effect on SLA. It proves the study conducted by Schumann (1986) who was arguing that the level of enclosure can be crucial in terms of SLA. Also, full isolation

from mother tongue was considered to be effective although not strongly. This result is also related to the work of Díaz-Rico and Weed (2007) who defined such a process as assimilation that means a full rejection of the native culture and full immersion into the target one.

The fourth category was ‘*Mother tongue influence in TL and vice versa*’ was presented with Q15, Q27, Q31, Q37 and Q39. Questions were designed to reveal the opinions on the source of the mistakes in TL, as well as whether TL had any influence at mother tongue. Figure 6 presents the results in this category.

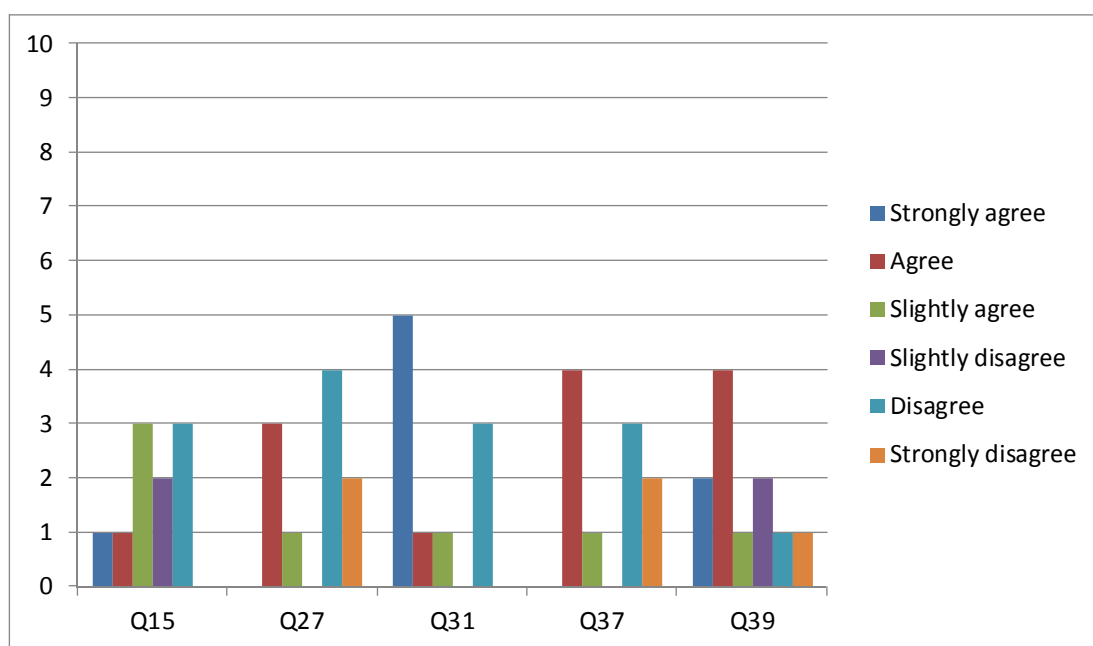


Figure 6. Mother tongue influence in TL and vice versa.

Question 15 included into the third category sounded like ‘*Mistakes in a foreign language come from the learner's native language*’. One out of ten participants strongly agreed with the statement; one showed agreement with it. Three participants presented slight agreement with the statement; two showed slight disagreement, and finally three members of G1 were disagreed with the statement. Next Question 27 in the category had close meaning ‘*The most common language errors originate from a student's first language*’. For this question, the responses were the following as presented in Figure 6. Three participants agreed with the statement; one participant slightly agreed with it. Four out of ten participants disagreed with it whereas two members were strong in their disagreement. This result correlate generally with those

collected from Q15. In other words, most participants do not consider mother tongue to be the main source of the errors and mistakes in TL. Question 31 was a control one to check if the responses were true. It sounded like *'Language learners' mistakes rarely come from their first language*. Five participants provided strong agreement with the statement; one participant was agreed with it. One member of the group slightly disagreed, and three members disagreed with the statement. The responses to control questions showed thoughtfulness of the participants when doing the survey.

Question 37 was designed to reveal opinions on the backward effect of TL upon mother tongue: *'Full immersion into target language and culture can affect mother tongue in a negative way*'. Four out of ten participants claimed agreement with the statement; one showed slight agreement. Three members were disagreed with the statement, whilst two participants were strongly disagreed. Thus, generally opinions divided into two parts. Half of the participants think that TL affects their mother tongue in a negative way; others deny such possibility. Last question of the category was Q39: *'To be accurate in second language learner should be accurate in mother tongue*'. Two participants strongly agreed with the statement; four participants agreed with it; one slightly agreed with it; one slightly disagreed; one strongly disagreed. Although this question might refer to general intelligence of the learners it was included into this particular category due to the fact of influence of mother tongue upon TL in terms of accuracy.

Indeed, the opinions upon the influence of the mother tongue in SLA process were in both ways: agreement and disagreement. This is the situation similar to the one taking place in the scientific society. Some of the theoreticians (Ellis, 1997; Albert & Obler, 1978; Marton; as cited in Ellis, 1999) consider the factor of mother tongue interference into the second language system in terms of the transfer. However there are supporters of another point of view. Krashen (1985; as cited in Ellis, 1999) argues that there is no such a thing as a transfer, and such behavior should be considered as a performance strategy, when a learner lack new knowledge, he/she tends to turn to already existing one. The conclusion is made by Van Hell and Mahn (1997) states that the learners show tendency to connect the meanings of L2 words to ones of L1 in order to get better results.

Next Figure 7 presents the results in the category ‘*The best age for language acquisition/learning*’. This category included six questions: Q14, Q30, Q34, Q38, Q42 and Q51.

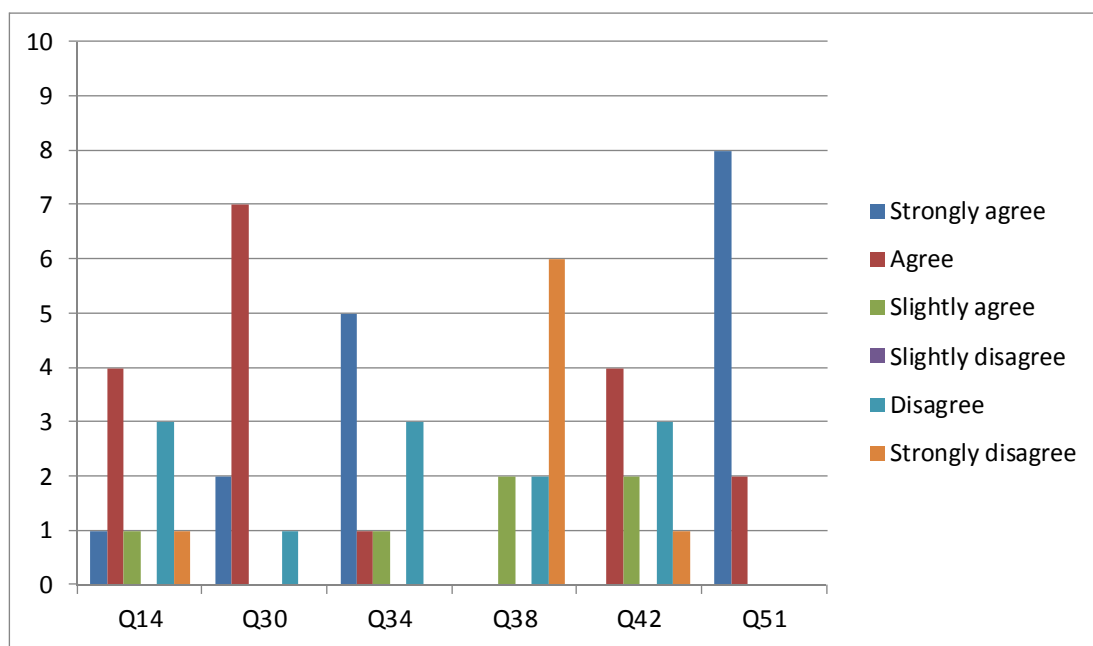


Figure 7. The best age for language acquisition/learning.

Question 14 of the survey sounded the following way: ‘*Language can be learnt properly only if started at early ages*’. One participant strongly agreed with the statement, whereas four members just agreed, and one participant slightly agreed with the statement. At the same time, three participants disagreed with the statement, and one strongly disagreed with it. For Q30, that was ‘*It is much easier to achieve a native-like/ native pronunciation for young-learners rather than adults*’ two participants showed strong agreement; seven agreed, and one participant strongly disagreed with the statement. Indeed, this result correlates to the results of the next question 34. Q34 was designed to find out the opinion whether it was hard for adult language learners to sound like native speakers. Five participants strongly agreed with the statement; one agreed with it, and one slightly agreed with it. Three out of ten participants disagreed with the statement. Next question 38 was included to reveal the opinions upon the following statement: ‘*Adult learners can acquire language faster and become native/native-like speakers as they have developed analytical and critical thinking skills*’. The responses for this question confirm the

results from Q30 and Q34. Two participants slightly agreed with the statement; two of them disagreed, and finally six participants strongly disagreed with the statement. The responses for this question prove the general opinion of the participants that young learners are usually more successful rather than adults. It also meets the results of Q42 '*The involvement into target society comes more difficult for older participants*'. Four members of G1 agreed with this statement; two of them slightly agreed; three members disagreed whilst one showed strong disagreement. The final of the category is Question 51: '*It takes years to acquire second language to native/native-like level*'. Here all participants showed general agreement with the statement. Eight of them strongly agreed with it, and two participants agreed.

Thus, the overall opinion on such topic as age is rather clear. The majority of the participants consider that the earlier language is started to be acquired/learnt, the better results could be achieved by the learners in terms of native-like pronunciation and general knowledge. The opinion of the participants correlates with that proposed by Hammarberg (1988), who stated age as one of the affective factors when the learner attempted to acquire the language. In fact, this result reflects the Critical Period Hypothesis (Lenneberg, 1967). The Hypothesis proposed the puberty as a critical period for the acquisition in terms of the success. Apparently, when the puberty period starts, it is more difficult for the learners to acquire the language successfully. The inquiry that proves this statement was conducted by Baker et al. (2008). The findings of that research are related to the results elicited from the survey in the current study. As Baker et al. (2008) showed Korean young learners were more successful in terms of acquiring phonology than the Korean adults. The members of G1 share the conclusion provided by the educators.

The final category '*General intelligence and SLA*' consists only of two questions: Q26 and Q41. The results are reflected in Figure 8.

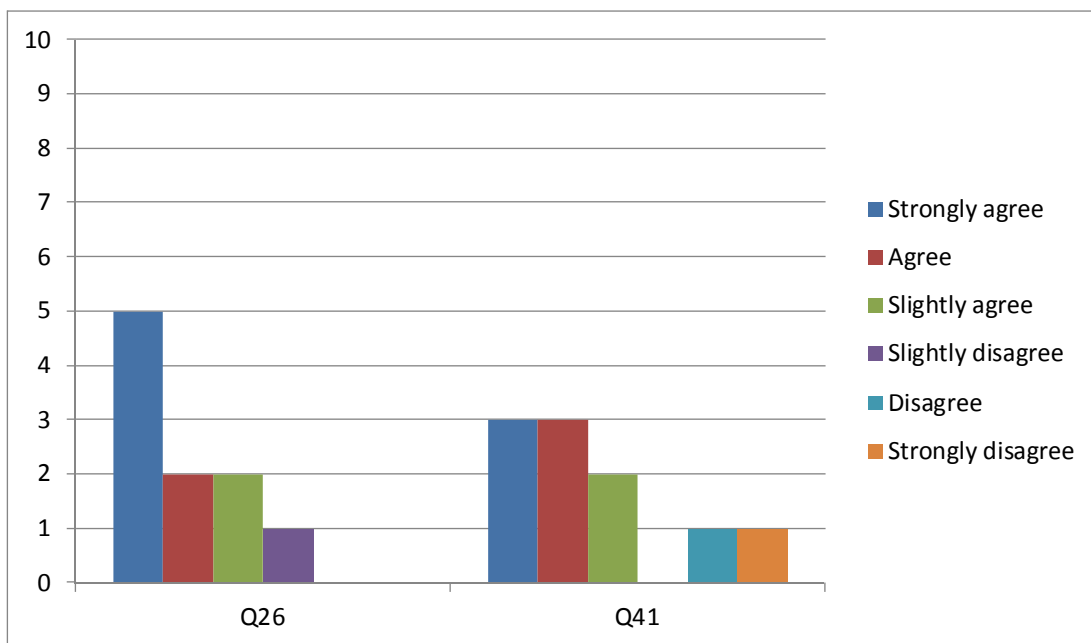


Figure 8. General intelligence and SLA.

For Q26 sounded like *'General intelligence and mother tongue literacy reflect in successful second language acquisition'* the following results were gathered. Five participants strongly agreed with the statement; two participants agreed, and two of them slightly agreed. One participants presented slight disagreement. For Q41 *'The higher one's intellectual level is the easier second language acquisition process is'* there were collected three responses with strong agreement, three responses with agreement, and one response with slight agreement. Also, there was one participant who was disagreed with the statement, and one participant showed strong disagreement with it. The responses for these questions 26 and 41 show the general opinion that language learning also depends on the overall intelligence of the individuals. Thus, this factor should be taken into account along with social, cultural and psychological. The researcher did not review the issue of general intelligence as a factor of success in SLA. Such a result was somewhat surprising and, to the researcher's mind, this issue could become an area for the further research.

**4.1.2 Observations of G1.** As it has been mentioned above the observations lasted eight months. They took place every Saturday. The overall duration of the classes was 3.5 hours with 5 minutes for break every 40 minutes.

Being the students of the researcher, the participants were observed all the time. However, the most productive observation sessions lasted from 25 to 40 minutes when the class was discussing different topics. Also, there was an opportunity to observe the participants outside the classroom when the learners went to the local park as part of the learning procedure. The participants were aware of them being a part of the ongoing research, but in order to minimize the bias they did not get exact information about the research questions. A colleague of the researcher visited the classes in order to raise reliability of the researcher's conclusions and interpretations. The colleague attended classes for 40 minutes every two weeks. Thus, the researcher had a possibility to check the results. Both the researcher and the expert colleague took filed notes in special sheets. After each observation session, the researcher filled out observation diary.

As the observation diary was kept during all the period of the study, it was necessary to combine data collected in order not to miss anything and not to get lost in the notes. Hence, the researcher classified the data collected according to the following categories: *'Phonology'*, *'Syntax and morphology'*, *'Semantics'*, *'Stereotypes, attitudes, generalizations'*, and *'Psychological aspects'*.

*4.1.2.1 Phonology.* The way one can tell that the person in front of him is a foreigner is related to the pronunciation of that person. Even the citizens of one country can understand that their partners in communication process belong to a different area according to their accent or dialect. The way learners pronounce sounds, put stress, make pauses and fluency affects their accent. Native-like accent is an ultimate goal of every learner. However, could ideal pronunciation guarantee that the speaker is the same accurate with grammatical structures? As a matter of fact, there are learners whose pronunciation of target language sounds and the whole speech is far from being called native, but their grammar is sophisticated and various. Despite their high level of grammar proficiency, these learners sometimes are not treated seriously and considered to be weak acquirers. Nowadays accent and pronunciation are the tags of success, which, on one hand, facilitates assimilation, and, on the other hand, raises learners to top among the peers.



In previous chapters, there were presented differences between sound systems of Turkish and English languages. Basing on these theoretical statements, the researcher conducted the observations. As it has been revealed from the survey, the majority of the participants considered the age to be critical in terms of native-like pronunciation. Bearing this in mind, the researcher observed the way the learners pronounce the words, how much they were fluent, whether they were trying to imitate the accent.

The fact that age factor was significant when speaking about phonological aspects could be proved with the following situation. As it has been mentioned the oldest student was 17.4 years old (G1P4). This participant was a freshman at school and started the pre-intermediate course with the class for the first time. Prior this learner attended other private institution. Most of the learners were familiar to the researcher from the previous year and the researcher gave them lessons before. Thus, in terms of pronunciation they had strong training and were accurate. However, G1P4 had a problem with some of the sounds in English, particularly with sound [dʒ] which the learner tended to pronounce as [tʃ] in such words like *job, jump, John*. After a conversation with the G1P4, the researcher found that this participant started learning the language practically later than others. It took some effort to correct the pronunciation.

Although, this example is just a short scene, it nevertheless shows the tendency of a transfer from mother tongue. Table 2 provides the full list of sounds, with the problematic word-examples, that was observed and noticed during the research period.

Table 2

*Sounds That Show the Effect of Mother Tongue Transfer*

| English sound           | Transferred sound from mother tongue |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| [dʒ]: job, jump         | [tʃ]                                 |
| [tʃ]: Thursday, through | [t]/[f]                              |

|                 |             |
|-----------------|-------------|
| [ð]: then, that | [t]/[z]/[d] |
| [æ]: cat, fat   | [e]         |
| [w]: wild, why  | [v]         |
| [au]: how       | [av]        |

Previously, in literature review the researcher has underlined that Turkish was an orthographic language, thus words were pronounced the way they were written and vice versa. This characteristic affects the pronunciation of the words in English. Inevitably learners tend to pronounce words the way they are. Below described the situation happened during of the observations.

Table 3

*G1P7 Reading a Conversation Aloud*

|  |  |
|--|--|
| G1P7   | [reading aloud]<br><br>-And then after a minute in silence, he said, 'Pete [G1P7 pronounces like [pete], will you help me?'... |
| Researcher after G1P7 finished reading the line. | G1P7, have you noticed anything unusual in this line?  |
| G1P7   | Well, teacher, what is Pete [again pronouncing like [pete]?  |
| Researcher                                       | Are you sure it is what and not who?   |
| G1P7 after a while                               | Oh, I understood teacher, it is name.  |
| Researcher                                       | Yes, it is name and how do we read it?   |
| G1P7   | [hesitating] Pete [Pi:t]   |

---

Researcher

Good! You got it!

G1P7

Yes, teacher, now I see.

---

It has been noticed that learners more often tend to pronounce the suffixes the way they are written. According to observations, the most suffering from mother tongue transfer English suffixes is Past Simple *-ed* (*worked* – [wɔ: ked] instead of [wɔ: kt]).

The fact that English words usually have different pronunciation rather than the way they are written confuses the learners. It causes more obstacles for fresh learners as with experience learners get used to check the transcription of the words.

Observations showed that mother tongue influences not only pronunciation of the words, but also stress, intonation, pauses. Turkish speakers tend to stress the end of the sentences as they do that in their mother tongue. Verbs are also more stressed when Turkish learners speak English, and again this is a transfer from mother tongue.

*4.1.2.2 Syntax and morphology.* In terms of syntax and morphology observations revealed that in majority of the cases the learners face the same problem which is word order. The researcher has described the word order scheme previously. English is known to be SVO language, whereas Turkish is SOV language. Change of the word order in English is regulated with specific grammar rules. In other cases, the existent word order is a must, unlike Turkish, where words can take different places in the sentence depending on the meaning. Thus, word order is what confuses learners when they acquire language. Turkish native speakers tend to put the verb at the end of the sentences. The researcher observed the participants when they had been given the task to put words into the correct order in a sentence. Here's the following example of the production (1a, 2a):

- a. Did/much/jacket/leather/how/cost/your/black
  - 1a. How much leather black jacket did your cost?
  - 2a. How much black leather jacket your did cost?
- b. April/they/21<sup>st</sup>/on/Mexico/for/of/the/leaving/are

- 1b. They for Mexico the 21<sup>st</sup> on April of are leaving.
- 2b. They are 21<sup>st</sup> April on Mexico of the for leaving.

These examples show that despite other errors that learners produce those which could be characterized as ones transferred from their mother are related to the verb-final position.

Another characteristic which was indicated during observations also meets the theoretical review. The researcher observed the ‘subject’ drop off. Although, some situations show that subject drop can present in informal English, the drop of the subject is rare and follows particular rules of deletion of identical subjects in conjoined sentences or chained clauses. In other words, the deletion of subject is possible, but without a loss in meaning.

The researcher’s observations showed that in the majority of the cases the participants abused the possibility to delete the subject. However, the researcher should notice that the drop-off mainly occurred with 1SG pronouns but both in speech and written language.

Table 4

*The Part of G1P5’s Speech When the Drop-Off Occurs*

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Researcher | How are you today?  |
| G1P5       | Fine, teacher. You?                                       |
| Researcher | I am ok, thank you. So why were you absent last Saturday? |
| G1P5       | Was ill.  |
| Researcher | Who was ill? Your brother? Mom?                           |
| G1P5       | No, teacher. I was ill.                                   |
| Researcher | Oh, now I see. Hope you are well?                         |

In English plurals are constructed through affix *-s*, e.g. apple-apples, book-books. The researcher observed the participants abusing this rule and generalizing the cases. Instead of checking the dictionary, sometimes the participants automatically produced '*mouses*' not '*mice*'.

Generally the observations of syntax and morphology in use did not reveal any surprising data. All of the cases were described in literature review and were proved by the observations of the participants.

*4.1.2.3 Semantics.* When observing the participants, the researcher paid attention to their vocabulary. Being at the pre-intermediate level, the participants owned rather rich vocabulary. However, the observations showed a tendency to employ the same words even though the participants knew synonyms.

Mother tongue transfer of meanings from Turkish is presented with such example as the word '*guzel*' (beautiful). Turkish natives when speaking their first language use this word very often, it may also receive other meanings rather than '*beautiful*', for instance, '*good*', '*wonderful*', and even '*good*' meaning approval. Thus, when the participants spoke English their lexicon was sometimes limited with just one word '*beautiful*' which they used in a similar context. Therefore, despite their potential knowledge of vocabulary, language production seems to be poor.

Acquisition of single words being a difficult process still leaves some room for learners, whereas acquisition of culturally rooted expressions, such as proverbs, cultural metaphors, and even phrasal verbs seem to be a much more difficult task. Due to this the participants tended to avoid using these expressions in their language. Though they might be aware of the meanings, they found it hard to implement the knowledge as they fear to sound unnatural, or incorrect.

There was a situation happened when the class was introduced the cuisines of different countries. The majority of the words in this topic is culturally rooted. And it was hard for the participants to understand what kind of drink the '*Root Beer*' was. The direct translation did not give any positive result. Finally, the participants used the Internet to learn more about this beverage.

*4.1.2.4 Stereotypes, attitudes and generalizations.* During eight months of observations, the researcher took notes about the stereotypes of the participants which might affect the acquisition in this or that way. There were noticed several stereotypes.

#### *Stereotype 1*

The Christmas is a religious feast. Some of the participants considered this holiday to be all about religion. They did not take into account its civil part, especially the one that is related to gifts, decorations. The participants were offered to play 'Secret Santa' and they did not know what it was, and at first refused to do this considering it was something to do with the religion. After some explanations, they happily agreed, and a week later they brought gifts for their peers. This stereotype might affect the participants attitude towards the culture and finally language. But the best way to ruin a stereotype is to search for the information.

#### *Stereotype 2*

One of the assignments given to the participants was to prepare a PowerPoint Presentation about the country they were provided. G1P2 had China to present. However, the researcher was surprised when this participant refused to do the assignment saying that the Chinese ate dogs. G1P2 was a pet-friendly person. The situation was comical indeed. The stereotype interfered the learning process. Finally, when G1P2 and the researcher googled some information together, the participant agreed to take China to present.

Stereotypes form attitudes. The examples above show that the stereotypes could form negative attitudes, and therefore the learners rejected some language peculiarities.

The research on literature showed that stereotypes and attitudes eventually lead to generalizations. For instance, the negative attitude towards The Christmas if not treated in time might lead to general attitude that all festivals in English speaking countries are about religion.

Despite some confusing situations, the members of G1 did not show presence of big amount of stereotypes. Their attitude towards the target culture was indicated as positive.

*4.1.2.5 Psychological aspect.* The participants when doing the survey marked motivation to be the most significant factor for the successful learning. During the observations, the researcher being also an instructor of the participants had to implement new techniques to raise the enthusiasm of the learners. The observations showed that if the participants were assigned a task that involved the use of the technologies or creative thinking, they coped with it faster and the outcome was better than when they had to do the traditional exercises. The researcher also announced competitions among the participants from time to time where the reward was a choice of the home assignments for the peers. The participants showed better results in their learning when they had such a motivating factor as an opportunity to feel the teacher. These observations let the researcher conclude that the higher motivation was, the better learning process was, and the easier the participants acquired the language. Generally it correlates with the opinions obtained from the survey, as well as with theoretical views by Ellis (1997), Schumann (1986).

It also needs to be mentioned that participation in the research made the students to be more accurate and willing to take part in the activities. Apparently, they did not want to look worse than their peers.

**4.1.3 Content analysis of the texts.** In order to see if the written texts presented the same problems as the oral production, and test assignments, the researcher conducted the content analysis over the texts which were created by the participants of G1. The results of this analysis over the period are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

*Summarized data after texts content-analysis*

| Type of the error    | Total number over the period |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Incorrect word order | 230                          |

---

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Overuse of Progressive forms             | 345 |
| Incorrect choice of plural form          | 79  |
| Overuse of Past Simple form              | 160 |
| Incorrect use of prepositions            | 214 |
| Incorrect word choice                    | 698 |
| Avoidance of complex vocabulary          | 480 |
| Absence of pronouns                      | 527 |
| Incorrect use of regular/irregular verbs | 103 |

---

As it can be seen from the table, one of the most frequent errors was *'Incorrect word order'* with the total number 230. This result correlates to the observations, when the most problematic area was word order of English sentences. Another point revealed after the content analysis was the abuse of Progressive forms with the total number 345. This could be the result of mother tongue transfer as the form with *-your* is common for informal speech in Turkish. *'Incorrect choice of plural form'* occurred 79 times. This error is a characteristic of lower language levels, although it occurs at higher ones sometimes. *'Overuse of Past Simple form'* as the error occurred 160 times. The participants avoided using Perfect Tense and preferred Past Simple as being easier for them. Next type of the error was *'Incorrect use of prepositions'* with total number 214. The observations also showed that the learners tended to use prepositions the way they were used in their mother tongue, or the way that better expressed their idea. *'Incorrect word choice'* was the most frequent error occurring with the total number 698. The explanation for such situation could be also found in the observations. The researcher has already mentioned above the overuse of the word *'beautiful'* in the speech of the participants. Another example of the ambiguous words refers to the employment of the word *'good'*. Apparently it comes from the learners' mother tongue where the corresponding word *'iyi'* is used constantly. However, the problem was that the sentences with such ambiguous words looked weak and poor. Instead of describing



the event or situation in more various terms, the participants showed the tendency to overuse simple and ‘grey’ vocabulary.

The learners tried to avoid sophisticated words and grammar structures and replaced it with easier forms, sometimes incorrectly. This correlates to the results of the next error type ‘*Avoidance of complex vocabulary*’. This error occurred 480 times. ‘*Absence of pronouns*’ was the second most frequent error with the total number 527. Again it correlates to the observations results when the participants were noticed to have a tendency in dropping the subject. The researcher started each language session with a short discussion or warm-up. The majority of the students, when answering the questions about their week and activities they were involved (e.g. “*What places did you visit this week?*”), did not use the pro-noun, giving the answers in a short form (e.g. “Went to Taksim” or “Flew to Ankara”). Though these answers did not show the full loss of the meaning, the researcher had to ask additional questions in order to find out who the student went to Taksim with or flew to Ankara.

Last common error detected with the total number 103 was ‘*Incorrect use of regular/irregular verbs*’. This error type could be explained with the gaps in the learners’ knowledge.

The content analysis proved the results collected from the observations and previous literature review. At the same time, it also showed new areas which could be affected by the mother tongue.

More examples collected during the research period are presented in Appendix G.

## **4.2 G2 Results**

The second group of the research participants consisted of three English native speakers who acquire Turkish in natural environment. The youngest of the participants was 16 years old. The oldest one was 48. All participants lived in Turkey for more than 5 years permanently. Being the part of the research, the participants had to fill out the survey; they were observed and interviewed, as well as they

provided some written material for content analysis. The participants were coded as G2P1, G2P2, and G2P3.

**4.2.1 G2 survey results.** The members of G2 filled out the same survey as the members of G1. The main goal was to reveal their opinions about the SLA process, the role of culture, society and the learners' psychology in it. Similarly to the G1 the responses of the members were analyzed and presented below. The first part of the survey was devoted to biographical data and the use of the target language in daily life.

Two of the participants owned MA degrees, one participant was a student. All three members of the G2 checked English as their native language for the Question 5 '*What is your mother tongue?*' For the Question 9 the participants also evaluated their levels of the target language as follows: G2P1 – Elementary, G2P2 – Intermediate, and G2P3 – Elementary. For the Question 7 '*What language do you use in your daily life?*' all three participants indicated English and Turkish. According to the responses for the Question 8, only one participant (G2P2) received formal instruction in the TL. G2P1 and G2P3 never attended any courses. The results on the Question 11 '*When do you use the target language (Turkish/English) in your daily life?*' showed that all three participants had to use the target language only when they were in public places.

The researcher has provided the theme categories of the questions from the survey for the G1 in Table 1. The same categories were used for the G2 to analyze and interpret their responses for the questions of the second part of the survey.

The first category was '*Acquisition and learning*'. The results for the question of this category are presented in Figure 9.

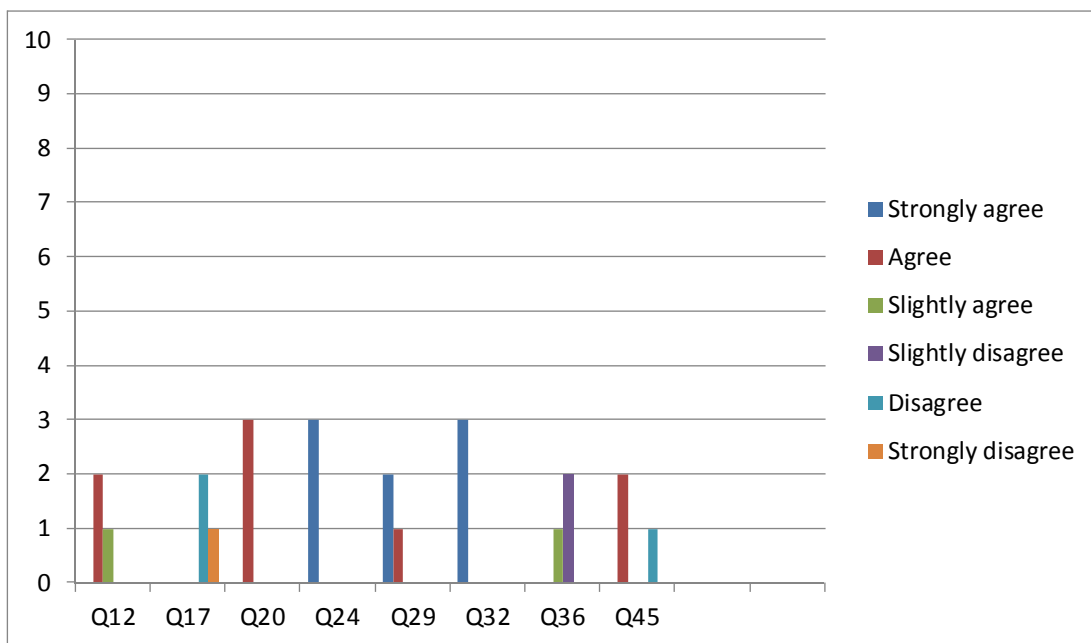


Figure 9. Acquisition and learning.

As it can be seen from the figure two participants agreed with the statement that the languages could be learnt through conversation only in Q12. One participant slightly agreed with the statement. In general this outcome is opposite the one received for the G1 in the same question. The majority of the G1 members disagreed with the statement. This might be explained with the fact that the G1 members received formal instruction in English and considered it to be the only one way. However, the results from Q17 contradict those from the Q12. For the Q17, two of the participants disagreed with the statement, and one strongly disagreed with it. Thus, in the participants' opinion, the language learner should do more than to hear and listen to the TL. The responses of G2 members for the Q20 correspond with the results for the same question from G1. In other words, all participants agreed that in order to improve learners should know some grammar. Question 24 was the following '*Second language acquisition in natural environment is more sufficient and effective*'. All participants strongly agreed with the statement. This result correlates with the opinions provided by the G1 members for the same question. Two participant strongly agreed with the statement in Q29 that language accuracy was not a must as long as people understand the speaker. The results from Q32 targeted at revealing the participants' opinions about the interaction in SL whether it could help the learners to improve more than any traditional classroom instructions correlate to

those from the G1. The majority of G1 members agreed with the statement. The participants from G2 strongly agreed with it. For the next Q36 one participant slightly agreed with the statement that one could be called a native-speaker when he/she comes to understanding of proverbs and sayings; two participants slightly disagreed with it. Again this outcome corresponds with the one from the G1 from the same question. Q45 was presented with the following statement '*Awareness of target language grammar and pronunciation is necessary in second language acquisition*'. Two participants strongly agreed with the statement; one participant disagreed. The same result was obtained from the G1.

Generally, the results show that the language could be acquired without formal instruction, but it was also necessary to be aware of some grammar. Thus, acquisition should be completed with some learning process. As the central meaning was related to the acquisition as a the most proper way to learn the language, the opinions of the participants correspond with the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis proposed by Stephen Krashen (1981) that stated the priority of the acquisition. However, the participants also showed the need for some knowledge of grammar that opposes the Krashen's idea.

The second category was '*SLA and FLA*'. Figure 10 presents the results from this category.

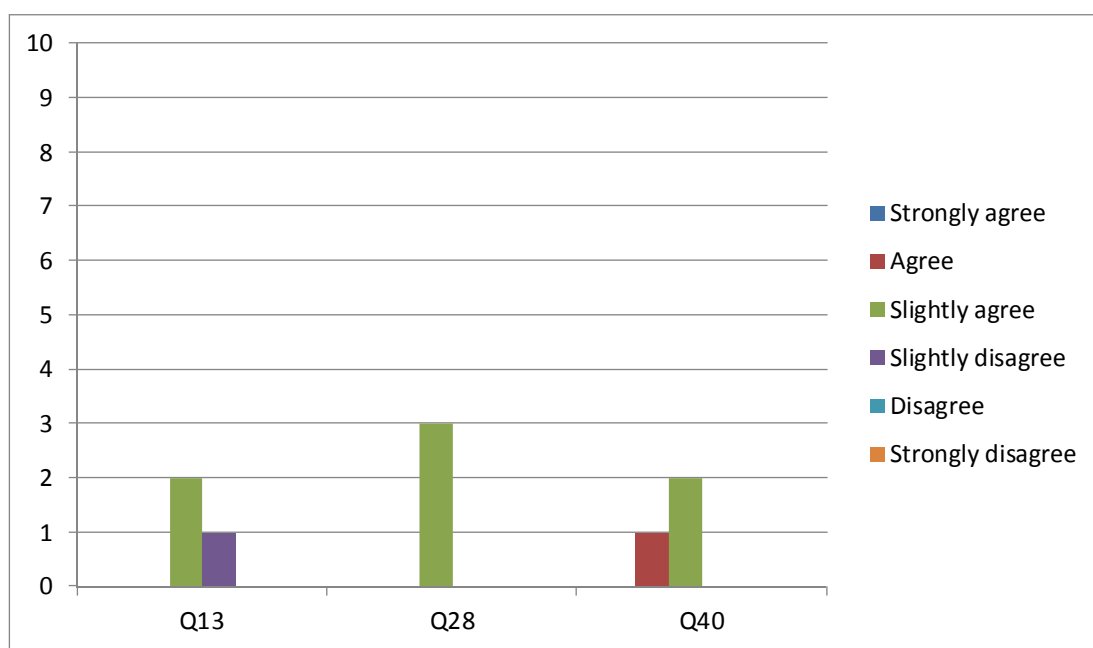


Figure 10. SLA and FLA.

Question 13 was presented with the following statement *‘Learning a foreign language is like learning your first language’*. Two participants slightly agreed with the statement. One participant slightly disagreed with the statement. The members of G1 provided the same opinions on this issue. For Q28 *‘Learning to read in a second language as, an adult is similar to learning to read in a first language as a child’* three participants provided slight agreement with the statement. This result also corresponds with the one from the G1. Question 40 was *‘Understanding of first language structures and first language awareness make second language acquisition an easier process’*. One participant agreed with the statement; two participants slightly agreed with it. Again, this result is in general similar to the one from G1. In other words, the members of G2 considered that there were some similarities between the acquisition of the second language and the first one. It stays in the same line with Universal Grammar principles defended by the supporters of the last one (Chomsky, 1976, 2004; Gersten & Hudelson 2005; Lightbrow & Spada, 1999; Wesche, 1994; Felix, 1991).

The third category was *‘Social factors, culture and psychological barriers’*. Figure 11 refers to the results in this category.

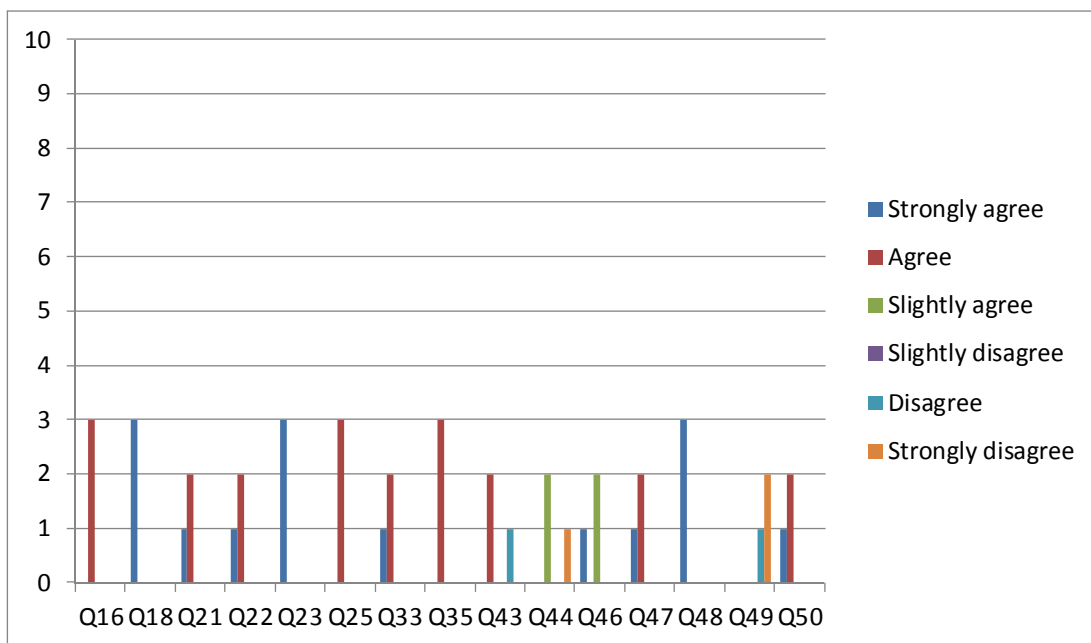


Figure 11. Social factors, culture and psychological barriers.

The figure shows the distribution of the opinions. For Q16, all participants agreed with the statement that learners needed a desire to connect with the target culture and people in order to learn the target language. This result fully corresponds with the one from G1 survey. For Q18 all G2 members strongly agreed that for successful language acquisition, it was important to become socially involved with the second language group. Again this result is similar to the one obtained from the G1 survey. Question 21 was about social discomfort and/or social isolation interfering into the process of second language acquisition. One participant strongly agreed with the statement; two participants agreed with it. The same result was in the G1. In terms of Q22, one participant strongly agreed that anxiety could prevent successful language acquisition. Two participants agreed with the statement. It is similar to the responses of G1 members. Question 23 sounded like *'The most important predictor of success in second language acquisition is motivation'*. All participants strongly agreed with the statement. The next Question 25 was about language curiosity as an affecting factor in SLA. All participants agreed with the statement. For Q33 two participants agreed that family and/or friends' pressure could demotivate learners. One participant showed strong agreement with the statement. Question 35 was the following statement *'It is difficult to learn a second language without integrating oneself into the culture of the second language group'*. All three

participants agreed with the statement. This is fully similar result to the one from the G1 survey. For Q43 '*Second language acquisition is impossible unless learners are involved into target culture and society*' the following responses were collected. One member of G2 showed strong disagreement with the statement. Two participants showed agreement.

Question 44 sounded like '*Anxiety can be a motivating factor for adult learners to improve their language*'. Two participants slightly agreed with the statement; one participant strongly disagreed with it. For Q46 '*Psychological factors are the most affecting second language acquisition in a negative way*' there were collected the following results: one participant strongly agreed with the statement; two participants slightly agreed with it. It correlates with the previous answers about the anxiety. Question 47 was the following '*Being involved in mother tongue community helps second language acquisition*'. One participant strongly agreed with the statement; two participants agreed with it. This result contradicts to that one collected from the G1 survey. This was a control question. The feedback showed that the participants were not careful when responding the question. For Q48 about the motivation as of what makes a learner successful, there were collected the following results: all participants strongly agreed with the statement. It correlates to the results of the G1 survey. Question 49 sounded like '*Full isolation from mother tongue group can assist in second language acquisition*'. The opinions of G2 members contradict those of the G1 members. One participant disagreed with the statement. Two participants strongly disagreed with it. It might be explained with the fact that the members of this group have little contact with their compatriots. Final question in this category was Q50 '*Rejection of traditions and customs of a target culture as well as social norms and rules can make second language acquisition process harder*'. One participant strongly agreed with the statement; two participants agreed with it. It correlates to the opinions provided by the members of G1 for the same statement.

Thus, generally the opinions of G2 members correspond with those expressed by the members of the G1. All research participants consider motivation to be the most significant factor in language acquisition/learning, whereas anxiety, pressure, social discomfort could demotivate the learners. At the same time, all the participants

agreed with the necessity of being involved into target culture. This is one of the key factors in successful language learning. The answers for the questions in this category were among the most desired. They proved the implications made after the literature review and correspond with the important postulates of the Acculturation Model (Schumann, 1986), as well as with the ideas provided by Ellis (1997) who claimed motivation to be the moving factor of the learning; and with the Sociocultural Theory by Vygotsky (Lantolf & Thorne, 2007), and, of course with the proposal of Krashen that motivation can either raise or lower the affective filter (Krashen, 1985), in other words anxiety.

The fourth category was *'Mother tongue influence in TL and vice versa'*. Figure 12 presents the results collected in this category.

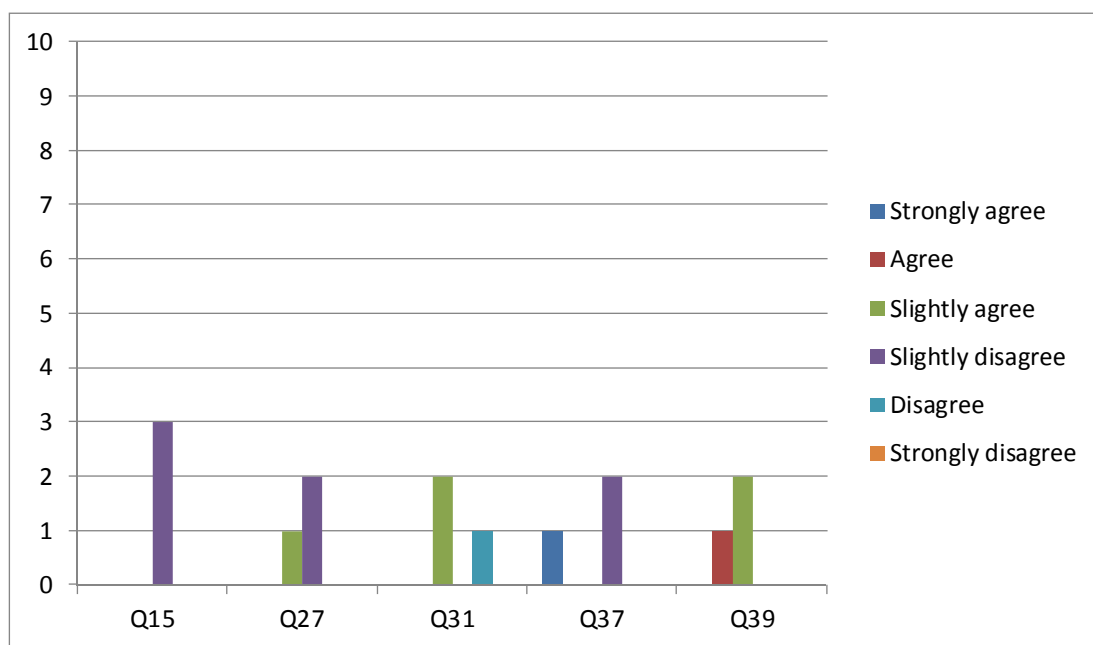


Figure 12. Mother tongue influence in TL and vice versa.

Question 15 sounded like *'Mistakes in a foreign language come from the learner's native language'*. All participants slightly disagreed with the statement. This result partially corresponds with the opinions of G1 members. Next Question 27 in the category was the following *'The most common language errors originate from a student's first language'*. One participant slightly agreed with the statement; two participants slightly disagreed with it. This result correlates generally with those collected from Q15 in G1 survey. In other words, the majority of the participants do



not consider mother tongue to be the main source of the errors and mistakes in TL. Question 31 was a control one to check if the responses were true. It sounded like *'Language learners' mistakes rarely come from their first language*'. Two participants slightly agreed with the statement. One participant strongly disagreed with it. Question 37 was *'Full immersion into target language and culture can affect mother tongue in a negative way*'. One participant strongly agreed with the statement; two participants slightly disagreed with it. Again as with the G1 members the opinions divided into two parts. Last question of the category was Q39: *'To be accurate in second language learner should be accurate in mother tongue*'. One participant agreed with the statement; two participants slightly agreed with it.

Indeed, the members of G2 do not deny the role of mother tongue in SLA, as well as they do not overestimate its influence. It corresponds with the opinion provided by Felix (as cited in Ellis, 1999) that the mother tongue was not involved into the major learning strategy.

The fifth category sounded like *'The best age for language acquisition/learning*'. The results are presented in Figure 13.

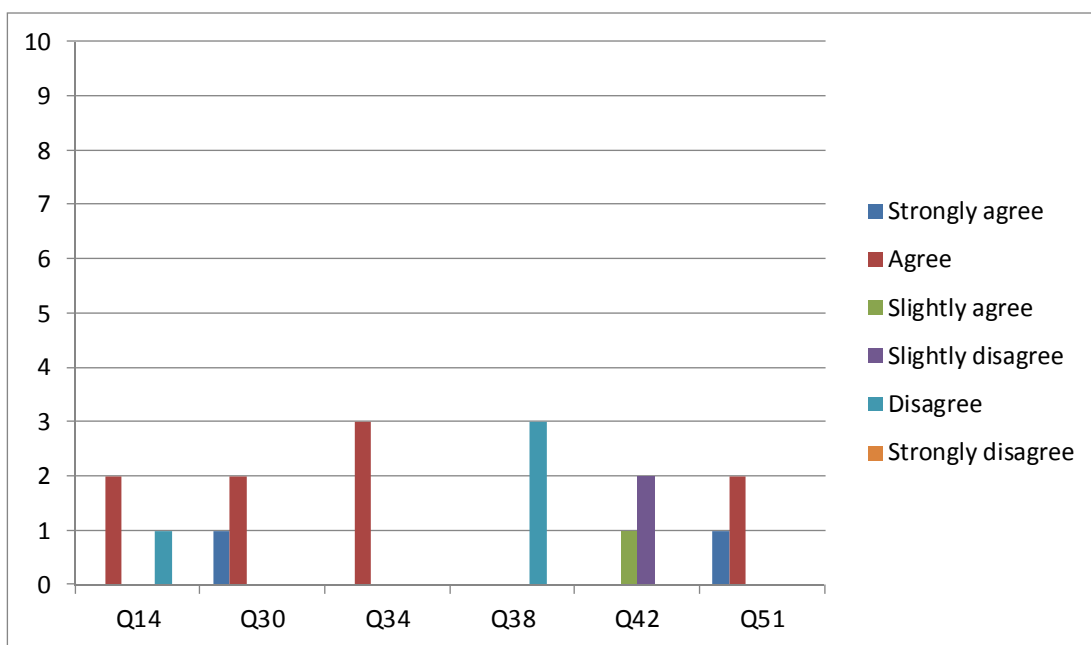


Figure 13. The best age for language acquisition/learning.

Question 14 of the survey sounded like *'Language can be learnt properly only if started at early ages'*. One participant disagreed with the statement whereas two participants agreed with it. For Q30, that was *'It is much easier to achieve a native-like/ native pronunciation for young-learners rather than adults'* two participants showed agreement; and one strong agreement with the statement. Q34 was designed to find out the opinion whether it was hard for adult language learners to sound like native speakers. All participants agreed with the statement. This result correlates with the one received from the G1 members. Next question 38 was included to reveal the opinions upon the following statement: *'Adult learners can acquire language faster and become native/native-like speakers as they have developed analytical and critical thinking skills'*. All participants disagreed with the statement, and this corresponds with the opinions of G1 members. Q42 was *'The involvement into target society comes more difficult for older participants'*. One participant slightly agreed with the statement; two participants slightly disagreed with it. Question 51 sounded like *'It takes years to acquire second language to native/native-like level'*. One participant showed strong agreement with the statement; two participants agreed with it.

Generally the common opinion of the participants from the both groups about the age of learning seems to be clear. The participants consider young learners to be more successful comparing to the adults. It corresponds with the opinions provided by the members of G1 and the previous research (Hammarberg, 1988; Lenneberg, 1967; Baker et al., 2008).

The sixth category was *'General intelligence and SLA'*. The results are reflected in Figure 14.

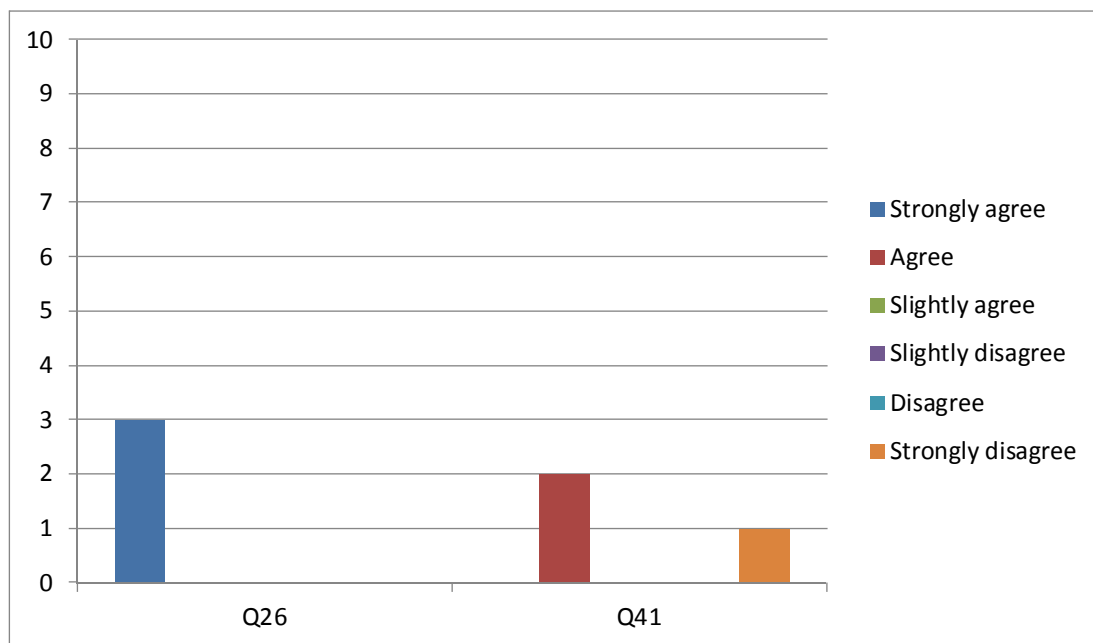


Figure 14. General intelligence and SLA.

For Q26 sounded like ‘*General intelligence and mother tongue literacy reflect in successful second language acquisition*’ all participants showed strong agreement with the statement. For Q41 ‘*The higher one’s intellectual level is, the easier second language acquisition process is*’ there were collected quite surprising responses. Two participants agreed with the statement whereas one participant strongly disagreed with it. The feedback from this participant showed that the opinion was based on the fact that some learners acquire the language instinctively.

The results of this category generally correspond with those collected from the G1 survey. In other words, all research participants consider general intelligence and the knowledge of the mother tongue to be important factors in SLA. Again, the results emerged from the answers to the questions in this category surprised the researcher and provided the idea for further investigation.

**4.2.2 Observations of G2.** The observations of G2 were non-participant. The researcher could not influence the language production of the members. The researcher stayed distant and let the participants act on their own. During the observations, the researcher used the field notes sheet, and after the observations the observations diary was filled out at the same day. There was also an expert colleague invited for the periodical control. The colleague also used the field notes sheet and

the observation diary list for the particular date. The observation notes were transcribed, and the results are presented below.

*4.2.2.1 Phonology.* In terms of phonology, the researcher noticed the same tendencies to transfer sounds from the mother tongue into the target language. The brightest example was with the sound [r]. G2P3 found herself in a confusing situation in a café. The participant tried to ask the waiter to bring vinegar. The waiter was embarrassed as he misunderstood the participants due to the specific pronunciation. Turkish equivalent for English ‘vinegar’ is ‘sirke’. Due to the fact that sound [r] when positioned before a consonant is silent in English, whilst in Turkish it is clearly pronounced, and also due to the way the word is written, English native speaker mispronounces the word very often. G2P3 realized that she pronounced the word in a typical English manner as [si: ‘ke]. Unfortunately for the participant, the word with such pronunciation is considered to be rude in Turkish.

Another issue was the stress in the sentences. The participants of G2 had the same intonation when speaking Turkish as they had when they spoke their mother tongues. Even the youngest participant showed some slight tendencies to stress the words in English manner. Such an observation supplied the researcher with the idea that the fluency and intonation being acquire unconsciously (Krashen, 1986) could be reflect in the second language as a partial transfer from the mother tongue due to the unconscious nature of the acquisition.

*4.2.2.2 Syntax and morphology.* In terms of syntax and morphology the observations of G2 corresponded in general with those of the G1. When speaking Turkish, G2P2 and G2P3 tended to copy the word order from their mother tongue. They used SubjectVerbObject structures to construct sentences. Thus, when G2P2 answered a phone call during the observations, the researcher was a witness of such reply to a question in Turkish ‘*When are you going home?*’ as ‘*Ben gidiyorum eve birazdan*’. This is a direct translation of the English ‘*I am going home soon*’. This word order was more familiar for the participants. According to their opinion, as long as people understood them, it was fine. G2P1 did not show such tendency. Apparently due to the fact that this participant received formal instruction in Turkish.

Another tendency noticed by the researcher was the use of quantity of more than one with the plurals. According to Turkish grammar, this is not correct. However, the participants G2P2 and G2P3 when speaking Turkish produced such expressions as '*iki bardaklar*', or '*yedi kilolar*'. This is a transfer from the mother tongue, as in English it is necessary to use plurals with the quantity of more than one object. Again G2P1 used these forms in a correct way.

Thus, the same situations as with the members of G1 were observed. However, the observations of G2 also showed that it was all true only for the participants with the lower level of proficiency. It is related to the ideas of Krashen (1986), who stated that the learners tended to lean on their old knowledge (of the first language) when they lacked the new one. Such outcome also corresponds with the results of the research conducted by Van Hell and Mahn (1997), MacWhinney (2005) who agreed that at the lower levels of proficiency prefer to rely on their L1.

*4.2.2.3 Semantics.* What surprised the researcher was the fact that G2P2 and G2P3 took paper dictionaries everywhere. G2P1 had an application on the mobile. Indeed all three participants used dictionaries to translate new words when they first came across them.

If the participants G2P2 and G2P3 could not find the appropriate translation, they tended to explain what they wanted. They used body language, gestures, and mimics. That was on one hand quite funny, but, on the other hand, the researcher respected such attempts.

The issue that comes to surface when speaking about semantics concerns guessing the meaning from the context. Researcher's observations also showed that the participants guess the meanings of the words. Also, they had learnt many words through streets advertisements, bill-boards, shop names and, etc. This way of acquisition has little to do with the mother tongue transfer, however, it tells a lot in terms of second language acquisition in general. It is necessary to underline that acquisition of words through the environment objects give a help in acquisition of some grammatical structures, e.g. professions and the way professions are formed in Turkish (with the help of affixes *-ci/-çi*, *-ci/-çi*: *çiçekçi* (flower-seller)).

*4.2.2.4 Cultural and social involvement.* Historically Turkish society is considered to be a closed system, and Turkish culture, on the contrary, seems to be welcoming for foreigners. The participants showed no anxiety when being in public places in terms of social interactions. The observations proved their responses in the survey. The members of G2 did their best to fit the environment. They were interested in customs and traditions. G2P1 was always trying to find out the recipe the traditional meal if she liked it. All participants did not show the existence of any strong stereotypes about the Turkish society. However, the participant G2P3 mentioned some prejudice existed prior coming to the country that consisted of an opinion about the people as of barbarians. It actually correlates with the respond of G2P3 to the same question in the interview part.

*4.2.2.5 Psychological aspects.* As the participants were informed about the research, they felt a bit anxious and tried to produce better results. As they felt some additional attention to their speech they sometimes were not sure about the forms chosen and tried to self-correct. Thus, the biggest issue for the participants was anxiety. It proves the Affective Filter Hypothesis developed by Krashen (1986).

**4.2.3 Interviews.** The interview questionnaires consisted of 33 questions. They were designed after the participants took the survey. The main goal was to collect more detailed information about the acquisition experiences of the participants in G2. The same as in the survey all participants stated that they employ English more often in their life comparing to Turkish (Question 4).

For the Question 5 *‘What was your first impression on Turkey when you first visited the country?’* the participants G2P1 and G2P2 said that it was hard for them to define. On one hand, everything seemed welcoming, on the other hand, as G2P1 stated *“It was all so bizarre”*. G2P3 said that she had positive impression on the country and especially food.

For the Question 6 *‘Please describe your ideas or stereotypes about Turkey and its people prior arrival’* G2P2 claimed the following *“I didn’t have any. Turkey was so far away from Michigan that I barely had some idea about it”*. G2P1 said that

he was too young to have any stereotypes. G2P3 described her stereotypes as “*I thought Turks to be wilder*”.

Question 7 was about the differences in cultures. All participants provided the examples of the same kind. G2P3 said the following:

No planning and full of last minute decisions. Extreme frustration at labour laws and the view that employers ‘own’ you once signed up and therefore feel they can change the job/work whenever they want and you have to just accept it. There is a culture of the more hours you work the harder you work. There is no concept of home-life balance and that you are on call all the time (personal communication, December 8, 2013).

G2P2 also provided additional example of the differences:

When I first visited, I lived with a family who spoke Luz – another language other than Turkish. They used a lot of slang and also hugged and kissed me a lot which made me uncomfortable (personal communication, December 15, 2013).

These examples show the gap between the cultural and social organization. However, the participants adapted to the conditions. And this corresponds with the responds to the next Question 8. All participants do not find odd anything around them.

For the Question 9 ‘*Do you feel a part of the Turkish community?*’ all participants gave a positive answer. Although they meet their compatriots, they associate themselves with Turkey and would like to spend the life in the country. This was proved by the answers to the Question 15. G2P1 and G2P2 stated that they liked everything about the country: traditions, customs, norms. However, G2P3 provided another argument about her feelings towards the country:

Patience is one of my personal strength so whilst I would say slightly negative I can ‘go with the flow’ and manage those things that can drive people crazy (personal communication, December 8, 2013).

Question 13 was the following: ‘*What was the most difficult for you when you moved to Turkey?*’ G2P1 and G2P2 said that for them the most difficult part was ‘*Integration into society*’. G2P3 said that ‘*All of the above for two years*’. In other words, the participant struggled with the adaptation to culture, the acquisition of the language, and the integration into society.

In the Question 17, the participants were offered to describe their knowledge of Turkish. G2P1 as the one who had the highest level of the language among the members of the G2 stated that the level was '*enough to deal with the assignments*' meaning school assignments.

G2P2 described the knowledge in the following way:

I have lived in Turkey for more than 7 years now and find that I can understand all language around me. I watch Turkish TV and enjoy talking to Native Turks. I also find that I have to speak Turkish often in the workplace which I have accepted (personal communication, December 15, 2013).

G2P3 provided another description:

Advanced beginner able to communicate within a known context. Fluent more than accurate in these situations (personal communication, December 8, 2013).

G2P1 and G2P2 stated for the Question 18 that their mother tongue was a help in acquisition of Turkish. G2P3 vice versa said:

My mother tongue linguistic peculiarities influenced Turkish in the worst way (personal communication, December 8, 2013).

The Question 20 was designed in order to understand which area of language was the most difficult for participants to acquire, and which one was the least difficult. G2P1 and G2P2 chose *Semantics* to be the most difficult area. Second was *Morphology* for G2P1 and *Syntax* for G2P2. For G2P1 *Syntax* was third difficult area and for G2P2 it was *Morphology*. The least difficult area was *Phonology* for G2P1 and G2P2. For G2P3, the most difficult area was *Phonology*. Number 2 was *Morphology*, the third difficult area was *Semantics*, and finally, the least difficult area was *Syntax*. This answers correspond with the results of observations described above in this chapter.

For the Question 22, the participants gave the following answers. G2P1 and G2P2 found the best way to learn vocabulary through conversation and peers explanations. G2P3 stated that the best way was through the media and dictionary. However, the observations showed that often the participants guessed the meaning from the context.



In the Question 23 about the acquirement of the grammatical structures, all participants gave the same answer. They acquire grammar through conversations and peers explanations. Indeed, during the observations they did not show any attempt to check the structure in some grammar source.

The Question 24 was about the source of the errors. G2P1 and G2P2 stated that the source of their error was related to psychological reasons. G2P1 explained them as '*carelessness*'. G2P3 found the source of the error in the lack of knowledge of Turkish language. Generally it corresponds with the answers the participants gave in the survey. They did not consider mother tongue being the only one responsible for the errors in the TL.

For all participants, the only one motivating factor in learning the TL was '*Job requirements*'. They also indicated demotivating factors in the Question 26. G2P2 stated that family and friends' pressure could demotivate him. G2P1 showed that failures and lack of encouragement could be demotivating. G2P3 chose all of the variants: slow progress, family and friends' pressure, and failures and lack of encouragement.

For the Question 27 G2P1 and G2P2 said that they did not feel embarrassed or anxious when acting in Turkish in public. However, G2P3 answered this question positively. The reasons of the anxiety were offered in the Question 28. For G2P1, the only possible reason for anxiety was the lack of self-confidence. G2P2 indicated the same variant as the reason. G2P3 chose lack of self-confidence, lack of knowledge on Turkish, fear to be ridiculous as the source of the anxiety.

All participants declared they would like to have a higher level of proficiency, however lack of time, money and laziness stops them.

In the Question 32, the participants were offered to describe factors that affect their acquisition of Turkish. G2P2 did not provide answer to this question. G2P2 described the factors in the following way:

I find that over exposure to using Turkish hurts causes me headaches. I can usually go about 1-2 hours in Turkish before my brain “shuts off” and it becomes difficult (personal communication, December 15, 2013).

In other words, the affective factor was mostly about the participant's psychology rather than any other environmental one. The answer of G2P3 was:

I have learnt more Turkish this year than the previous 6 because I have to attend meetings and talk with parents. This has improved my confidence and need to communicate. I still have a long way to go, but I have definitely moved out of my 'silent period' a-out of necessity not want (personal communication, December 8, 2013).

Again the researcher concluded that the most affective factors were inside the participant.

In general, the results of the interviews conducted stand in line with the findings from the observations and the survey. In other words, all of the participants have a positive attitude towards the society and culture. They feel a part of it and would like to continue living in the country. It means they acculturated successfully despite the problems and differences, and, according to Schumann's Model (1986) they should not have any problems in the language acquisition. However, only one participant (G2P1) has a high level of proficiency. Other two members of G2 do not show excessive results in the language learning. They explained it with the demotivating factors (family pressure, anxiety, laziness), and lack of motivation. Thus, again the researcher comes up to the idea that was supported by many of the educators (Krashen, 1985; Ellis, 1997; Schumann, 1986) that the motivation is the most significant factor in learning languages.

*4.2.3.1 Content-analysis of the written texts.* As it has been mentioned in Chapter 3, after some considerations there was the Question 33 added into the interview questionnaire. The participants were asked to produce short abstracts in Turkish. They could choose any topic they preferred. The final texts were about "Yesterday's football match", "Tomorrow working plans", and "Summer holidays". G2P1 wrote the text about the football match describing how they watched it and who won. G2P2 talked about the working plans. G2P3 described the summer holidays. The results of content analysis showed that the biggest problem was with grammar. The participants inevitably used structures that better suit English. For instance, the G2P2 tended to use SubjectVerbObject word order. The G2P3 overused pronouns and also constructed sentences in an English language manner. G2P1

generally provided an accurate text, however, according to the invited Turkish native speaker some words were used inappropriately, in other words, there was presented 'Incorrect word choice' category with the expressions that could be considered colloquial, and ambiguous. The texts are presented in Appendix F.

The common conclusion derived from the findings on G2 correlates with the main ideas provided in the literature review. Indeed, motivation and anxiety (Krashen, 1985; Ellis, 1997, 1999; Schumann, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978) are the most influential factors in terms of SLA. Despite the idea of Schumann (1986), social distance did not play its significant role in terms of the participants of G2 in this study. It can probably be explained with the participants' lack of the stereotypes. The participants did not show the evidence of the negative attitude towards the society and its norms. They stated that there were some frustrating moments but they coped with them relying on own personality.

More examples collected from G2 are presented in Appendix H.

## Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusions

The results of the research were presented in the previous Chapter 4. The purpose of the study was to examine the effects of mother tongue and sociocultural aspects on second language acquisition. Prior the research thorough literature review was conducted. Then there were set research questions. The discussion of the results would continue in terms of these research questions.

### 5.1 Discussion of Findings for the Research Questions

The set of the research questions was the following

- 1) Which language patterns of mother tongue of Turkish native speakers exert the most influence upon the process of English language acquisition?
- 2) Which language patterns of mother tongue of English native speakers exert the most influence upon the process of Turkish language acquisition?
- 3) What factors may interfere the exposure of Turkish native speakers to authentic English language culture when acquiring English as a second language?
- 4) What social and cultural barriers can English native speakers face when acquiring Turkish as a second language in an authentic environment?

In order to answer the first question, the researcher utilized the particular data collection tools: the survey, the observations and the content analysis of the written texts. The survey showed that generally the participants considered the knowledge of grammar to be important for a successful language learning. The observations of the members of G1 supplied the researcher with specific examples. According to the results of the observations, the researcher concluded that *Syntax* and *Semantics* were mostly affected by the mother tongue. Content analysis of the texts showed corresponding results.

For the second research question, there were utilized the survey, the interview questionnaires and content analysis, and the observations. The same as the participants from the G1 the members of G2 admitted the necessity in a formal

instruction when learning a language. The observations showed that the most problematic areas, hence the most affected ones, for the participants were *Syntax* and *Semantics*. However, the results of the observations did not quite correspond with the interview answers. One of the participants stated *Phonology* to be the most difficult area, whereas *Syntax* was the least difficult area.

To answer the third research question, the results of the survey and the observations were used. Generally, some peculiarities of the culture might reduce the participants willingness to acquire the language. Also, the lack of opportunities to communicate in English in real life situations affect the participants exposure. The members of G1 would like to be involved into the target culture more.

For the last research question, the survey and the interviews were analyzed. The differences between the cultures took place in the participants experience, however it did not turn them off learning the language. The key reasons that stop them from acquiring the language and raising their proficiency level were of the psychological nature rather than cultural or social.

Speaking of the psychological variables, motivation was considered to be the most effective in second language acquisition. On the contrary, anxiety was the barrier that affected the acquisition in a negative way.

It also needs to be mentioned when discussing the findings that the mother tongue transfer which takes place usually carries negative character. The participants of both groups did not choose mother tongue as the source of their error in the TL. However, the observations and the content analysis proved the opposite thing. Apparently, some of the errors are transferred from the mother tongue language system. Others occur due to psychological reasons (carelessness), or lack of particular knowledge. Such results in general sense stand in line with the opinions provided by Marton (1997; as cited in Ellis, 1999) who stated that the first language and the second language were in constant war. It also, in the part of the knowledge lack, correlates with the Krashen's (1985; as cited in Ellis, 1999) of a transfer as an inappropriate term. He provides another explanation stating that it is a fall back to the knowledge from the mother tongue when the new knowledge is not developed

yet, thus, its performance strategy not an interference or transfer (Krashen , 1985; as cited in Ellis, 1999). The idea of a transfer as a negative factor leads to the statement of Ellis (1997) of a transfer as a source of errors that occur when the learner does not have enough competence.

## **5.2 Theoretical and Pedagogical Implications**

The researcher reviewed the literature prior conducting the research. There were investigated theories of SLA. When the results of the researcher were analyzed it became possible to relate the findings to the previous theoretical knowledge. The observations showed that some postulates of behaviourism could be claimed working. Behaviouristic view of reinforcement could be traced in the attempts of the participants to employ new structures again and again. This process reminds repetition, and thus the formation of the habit. In terms of the habits, the use of the dictionaries by the members of G2 also could be considered as part of behavior as a result of constant reinforcement.

Noam Chomsky (1978) argued about the presence in every human being of a Language Acquisition Device. This Device provides the learners with a special ability to discover the underlying rules of the language. Indeed, the observations of the participants, as well as their responses to the survey and the interview questions showed that every learner finds own way to acquire the language. All the learners have this ability and each of them utilizes it in a unique way.

The findings also revealed a common opinion that there were similarities between the acquisition of the first language and the second language. In terms of this, Universal Grammar principles work. As Felix (1991) claimed they can be applied to L1 and L2 acquisitions, however, when it comes to L2 the principles can be applied partially due to the different circumstances.

The researcher was interested in the effects of social and cultural aspects in SLA. The research showed that indeed the less the social distance is, the better results are achieved in terms of acculturation. This was proved through the observations, as well as the opinions of the participants. The idea of Schumann (1986) consisted of the proposal that the level of acculturation can be measured with

the help of the social distance. According to him, the larger the index of the social distance the level of the acculturation. In other words, it means that the learners abstragate themselves from the target society and do not get involved into common activities with the target group memebbers. However, the high level of the acculturation does not guarantee the high level of the second language. The participants of the second group stated that for them the most affective were psychological factors rather than social.

Probably, the most significant implication was produced in terms of the acquisition versus learning dispute. The research showed that there was no such thing as pure acquisition. Despite all arguments of Krashen (1985) and other educators in favor of the most exposure to natural language situations, the participants of the research underlined the necessity of formal instruction in order to obtain accuracy. Although Krashen assigned primary importance to the acquisition, which was responsible for fluency, the research did not prove the supreme role of the acquisition over the learning. Apparently, the idea of pure acquisition is a utopia, and the research finding show that for learners it is necessary to combine both ways: acquisition and learning. On the other hand, Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis was proved by the research results. All participants claimed anxiety to be the most affective in terms of their learning success. On the contrary, the higher level of motivation was marked out as a key factor to the success.

Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory met the results of the research. The participants used the language as means to mediate the culture, the social and psychological acts. In terms of sociocultural integration the results also correspond with the Acculturation Model (Schumann, 1986). Members of the groups utilized the language as a tool to understand the process that occurred inside the sociocultural environment.

Theoretical review also revealed the issue of the mother tongue transfer. The research mostly provided the evidence of the negative role of the mother tongue transfer. It corresponded with the theoretical assumptions that the transfer was responsible for the errors ( Ellis, 1997; Beardsmore, 1982; Albert & Obler,1978). Ellis (1997) stated that the errors come from the lack of knowldge and they differ

from the mistakes as the last ones occur occasionally. For Albert and Olber (1978) the higher level of similarities between the L1 and the L2 cause, the higher the level of influence of L1 upon L2. Beardsmore (1982) says that the differences between the language forms of the L1 and the L2 are responsible for the errors in L2 production.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The general conclusion that could be proposed should be considered in two parts. The first part is the one that concerns the effect of the mother tongue. The overall attitude of the participants towards the mother tongue is neutral. However, the research revealed the negative transfer from the mother tongue that could not be denied. The participants being sure that the mother tongue did not affect the second language acquisition, nevertheless tended to implement some structures, meanings, strategies from their first language. The second part of the conclusion could be considered in terms of the culture and society. The participants argued that the involvement into target culture was a base for the success in SLA; on the other hand, the rejection of the target culture traditions, customs could be critical in SLA.

Along with that the participants showed that there was a need to keep the balance between the acquisition and the learning. In other words, the learning requires the involvement into the authenticity, and the acquisition should include some knowledge of grammar. Pure acquisition seems to be a utopia.

### **5.4. Recommendations for Future Research**

The study included two groups of the participants. The researcher was limited with the number of the members in G2. There were only three participants. The further research could involve a greater number of the participants in G2.

Another recommendation concerns the G1. A number of the participants was ten. They were pre-intermediate level students. Further research could investigate the same problems among the different levels of the proficiency: the lower levels would be interesting in terms of the mother tongue transfer, whereas the higher levels would be more attractive in terms of the sociocultural aspects.



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## **APPENDICES**

*Appendix A: The survey*

## Survey

Dear Participant,

thank you for participation in this survey. Through your participation, you are contributing to a research project for Masters' thesis program, which investigates learners' opinions about second language acquisition.

All you need to do is answer a few biographical questions about yourself then complete the survey by checking the boxes that best describe your agreement/disagreement with the statements. Please note that your contribution will be kept confidential and none of the information is to be used outside the research.

Please complete the biographical information section by typing in your entry or by selecting the appropriate answer/s.

### Section 1

1. Your age \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your gender
  - male*
  - female*
3. What is your profession/job/occupation?  
\_\_\_\_\_ (*please specify*)
4. What training/qualifications do you have? (check all that apply)
  - None*
  - BA*
  - MA*
  - PhD*
  - Other* \_\_\_\_\_ (*please specify*)
5. What language/s do you speak?
  - Native language* \_\_\_\_\_
  - Second language* \_\_\_\_\_
  - Third language* \_\_\_\_\_
  - Other language* \_\_\_\_\_
6. How long do you live in Turkey permanently?
  - More than 1 year*
  - More than 5 years*
  - More than 10 years*
  - Other (please specify)* \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is your mother tongue? Please, indicate:
  - English*
  - Turkish*
  - Other language*



8. What language do you use in your daily life? Please, indicate:
- English*
  - Turkish*
  - Other language*
9. Have you ever received academic instructions in target language (Turkish/English)? Please, choose one which describes best your experience
- Yes, I have. I have studied language in classroom environment.*
  - No, I haven't. I have never taken any courses.*
  - I have taken a short-term course to learn common rules of the language.*
  - Yes, I have, but I am also acquiring language in natural environment.*
  - No, I haven't. But I am planning to do this.*
10. How would you evaluate your current target language (Turkish/English) proficiency level?
- Elementary.*
  - Pre-intermediate.*
  - Intermediate.*
  - Upper-intermediate.*
  - Advanced.*
11. When do you use target language (Turkish/English) in your daily life?
- I have to use target language all the time because of the job/school requirements, family and friends.*
  - I use target language when I am with my family and/or friends.*
  - I have to use target language only when I am in public places (shops, restaurants, government institutions and etc.) or outside the country.*
  - I have to use target language only for job/school requirements.*
  - I never use target language.*

## Section 2

*Please check the boxes that best describe your agreement or disagreement with the statements. Please be aware that some items will sound similar.*

12. Languages can be learned through conversation alone.
- Strongly agree*
  - Agree*
  - Slightly agree*
  - Slightly disagree*
  - Disagree*
  - Strongly disagree*

13. Learning a foreign language is like learning your first language.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

14. Language can be learnt properly only if started at early ages.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

15. Mistakes in a foreign language come from the learner's native language.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

16. In order to learn a second language well, learners need a desire to connect with its culture and people.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

17. In order to acquire a foreign language, a learner needs to do nothing more than hear and see the language a lot.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

18. For successful language acquisition, it is important to become socially involved with the second language group.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

19. Languages can be learned through conversation alone.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

20. In order for learners to improve, they need to know some grammar.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

21. Social discomfort and/or social isolation interferes the process of second language acquisition.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

22. Anxiety can prevent successful language acquisition.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

23. The most important predictor of success in second language acquisition is motivation.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

24. Second language acquisition in natural environment is more sufficient and effective.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

25. Language curiosity is an affecting factor in second language acquisition.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

26. General intelligence and mother tongue literacy reflect in successful second language acquisition.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

27. The most common language errors originate from a student's first language.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

28. Learning to read in a second language as an adult is similar to learning to read in a first language as a child.
- Strongly agree*
  - Agree*
  - Slightly agree*
  - Slightly disagree*
  - Disagree*
  - Strongly disagree*
29. Language accuracy is not a must as long as people in target environment can understand a speaker.
- Strongly agree*
  - Agree*
  - Slightly agree*
  - Slightly disagree*
  - Disagree*
  - Strongly disagree*
30. It is much easier to achieve a native-like/ native pronunciation for young-learners rather than adults.
- Strongly agree*
  - Agree*
  - Slightly agree*
  - Slightly disagree*
  - Disagree*
  - Strongly disagree*
31. Language learners' mistakes rarely come from their first language.
- Strongly agree*
  - Agree*
  - Slightly agree*
  - Slightly disagree*
  - Disagree*
  - Strongly disagree*
32. Interaction in the second language helps learners improve more than any traditional classroom instructions.
- Strongly agree*
  - Agree*
  - Slightly agree*
  - Slightly disagree*
  - Disagree*
  - Strongly disagree*

33. Family and/or friends pressure can demotivate learners.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

34. It is hard for adult language learners to sound like native speakers.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

35. It is difficult to learn a second language without integrating oneself into the culture of the second language group.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

36. One can be called a native-speaker when he/she comes to understanding of proverbs and sayings.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

37. Full immersion in target language and culture can affect mother tongue in a negative way.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

38. Adult learners can acquire language faster and become native/native-like speakers as they have developed analytical and critical thinking skills.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

39. To be accurate in second language learner should be accurate in mother tongue.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

40. Understanding of first language structures and first language awareness make second language acquisition an easier process.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

41. The higher one's intellectual level is the easier second language acquisition process is.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

42. The involvement into target society comes more difficult for older participants.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*

- Disagree*
  - Strongly disagree*
43. Second language acquisition is impossible unless learners are involved into target culture and society.
- Strongly agree*
  - Agree*
  - Slightly agree*
  - Slightly disagree*
  - Disagree*
  - Strongly disagree*
44. Anxiety can be a motivating factor for adult learners to improve their language.
- Strongly agree*
  - Agree*
  - Slightly agree*
  - Slightly disagree*
  - Disagree*
  - Strongly disagree*
45. Awareness of target language grammar and pronunciation is necessary in second language acquisition.
- Strongly agree*
  - Agree*
  - Slightly agree*
  - Slightly disagree*
  - Disagree*
  - Strongly disagree*
46. Psychological factors are the most affecting second language acquisition in a negative way.
- Strongly agree*
  - Agree*
  - Slightly agree*
  - Slightly disagree*
  - Disagree*
  - Strongly disagree*
47. Being involved in mother tongue community helps second language acquisition.
- Strongly agree*



- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

48. Motivation is what makes a learner successful.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

49. Full isolation from mother tongue group can assist in second language acquisition.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

50. Rejection of traditions and customs of a target culture as well as social norms and rules can make second language acquisition process harder.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

51. It takes years to acquire second language to native/native-like level.

- Strongly agree*
- Agree*
- Slightly agree*
- Slightly disagree*
- Disagree*
- Strongly disagree*

Thank you for your participation in this survey and contribution to the process of improvement the language learning.

*Appendix B: The Interview Questionnaire*

## Interview Questionnaire

Dear participant,

thank you for your participation in this research project. Through your participation, you are contributing to research for Masters' thesis program, which investigates the effects of mother tongue and sociocultural aspects on second language acquisition.

Please, take your time to answer the following question in regard to the research area. All you need to do is to choose the most appropriate variant or specify your option. Some of the questions will require your full responses. Please note that your contribution will be kept confidential and none of the information is to be used outside the research.

1. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. Gender:
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
  
3. How long do you leave in Turkey permanently?
  - a. More than 1 year
  - b. More than 5 years
  - c. More than 10 years
  - d. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. What language do you employ more often in your life?
  - a. Turkish
  - b. English
  - c. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. What was your impression on Turkey when you first visited the country?
  - a. Positive
  - b. Negative
  - c. Hard to define
  - d. Your variant (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. Please describe your ideas or stereotypes about Turkey and its people prior arrival?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Please, provide any example when you experienced the effect of differences between your culture and Turkish one.

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8. What cultural aspects do you still find odd?

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9. Do you feel a part of Turkish community?

- a. Yes
- b. No

10. How often do you meet compatriots?

- a. Every day
- b. Once or twice a week
- c. Once or twice a month
- d. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

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11. Do you attend local public places (theatres, café, hospitals, malls etc.)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

12. Do you attend any centers of compatriots or special events for compatriots?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Very rare

13. What was the most difficult for you when you moved to Turkey?

- a. Adaptation to culture
- b. Integration into society
- c. Language Acquisition
- d. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

---

14. Do you feel cut off from your mother tongue and native culture?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Sometimes when I feel home sick.

15. Do you see yourself living in Turkey for the rest of your life?
- Yes
  - No
  - Other (please specify)
16. Have you taken any courses to learn Turkish?
- Yes
  - No
  - No, but I plan to.
17. Please, in few sentences describe your knowledge of Turkish language. What are your limits? What topics can you talk about? How big is your word stock?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
18. Was your mother tongue a help in acquisition of Turkish?
- Yes
  - No
  - Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
19. How did your mother tongue linguistic peculiarities influence your acquisition of Turkish?-
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
20. Please, evaluate language areas from 1 to 4 according to the level of their difficulty for you in learning Turkish language. One (1) is the most difficult area, four (4) is the least difficult area.
- \_Semantics (vocabulary, idioms, proverbs etc.)
- \_Syntax
- \_Morphology
- \_Phonology
21. Please, provide an example of errors in Turkish cause by some language structures of your mother tongue.

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22. What is the best way for you to learn vocabulary? Choose the best option or provide your variant.

- a. Through conversation and peers explanations
- b. Through the media and dictionary
- c. Guessing the meaning from a context
- d. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

—

23. How do you acquire grammatical structures? Choose the best option or provide your variant.

- a. Through conversation and peers explanations
- b. Through texts and language books
- c. Guessing and consulting with peers
- d. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

—

24. Where do your errors in Turkish language structures come from?

- a. Lack of knowledge on Turkish language
- b. Psychological reasons (carelessness)
- c. Mother tongue
- d. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

—

25. What are motivating factors to acquire a language for you?

- a. Job requirements
- b. Family needs
- c. Psychological reasons (self-esteem)
- d. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

—

26. What can demotivate you in language learning?

- a. Slow progress

- b. Family and friends pressure
- c. Failures and lack of encouragement
- d. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

27. Do you feel anxious or embarrassed when you have to speak Turkish in public places?

- a. Yes
- b. No

28. What are the reasons of your anxiety?

- a. Lack of self-confidence
- b. Lack of confidence in own language abilities
- c. Lack of knowledge on Turkish language
- d. Fear to be ridiculous
- e. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

—

29. Have you ever experienced misunderstanding as a result of language barrier?

If yes, please, provide an example.

- a. Yes
- b. No

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

30. What stops you from improving your language in the classroom environment?

- a. Lack of time
- b. Lack of money
- c. Lack of motivation
- d. Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

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31. Would you like to have a higher level of language proficiency?

- a. Yes
- b. No

32. Please, in few sentences describe factors that affect your acquisition of Turkish language.

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33. Please, write a short paragraph in Turkish. You can choose any topic you like.

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Thank you for your participation in this survey and contribution to the process of improvement the language learning.



*Appendix C: The Field Notes Sheet*



*Appendix D: The Observation Diary*

## The observation diary

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Number of the participants: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

3. General attitude of the audience: \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Level of motivation: \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Level of cooperation: \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Grammar examples: \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Vocabulary examples \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Cultural examples \_\_\_\_\_

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9. Social

Examples: \_\_\_\_\_

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10. Other \_\_\_\_\_

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*Appendix E: The Form for Content-analysis*

### The form for content-analysis

| Type of the error                        | Number presented in text |
|--|--------------------------|
| Incorrect word order                     |                          |
| Overuse of Progressive forms             |                          |
| Incorrect choice of plural form          |                          |
| Overuse of Past Simple form              |                          |
| Incorrect use of prepositions            |                          |
| Incorrect word choice                    |                          |
| Avoidance of complex vocabulary          |                          |
| Incorrect use of pronouns                |                          |
| Absence of pronouns                      |                          |
| Incorrect use of regular/irregular verbs |                          |

*Appendix F: Written Samples of G2 Members*



## Written Samples

### G2P1 “Yesterday’s football match”

Dün gece arkadaşlar ve ben futbol maçı izlemek için dışarı çıktık. Aslında, bir süredir görmediğim arkadaşlarımla görüşeceğim için çok mutluydum. Onlar benim eski mahallemden arkadaşlarımdı. Biz çok yakındık fakat ben daha sonra taşındım ve biz birbirimizi göreceğ zaman bulamıyoruz. Her neyse, Real-Madrid ve Galatasaray oynuyordu. Benim takımım Reali fakat ben aynı zamanda Galatasaray’ı destekliyorum. Maçı futbol fanatiklerinin olduğu bir atmosferde izleyebileceğimiz yakındaki bir kafeye gittik. Maç bittikten sonra da biraz kalmaya karar verdiğimiz için orada 3 saat geçirdik, Real kazandı. Çok mutluydum ve takımıyla gurur duyuyordum, tabiki Galatasaray’ın kazanmasını da isterdim ama bu mümkün olmadı. Bazı arkadaşlarım hayal kırıklığına uğradı ama espiri yaparak ve birleriyle şakalaşarak neşelenmeye çalıştılar. Gecenin geri kalanı gülerek ve eğlenerek geçti. Umarım arkadaşlarımı daha sık görürüm.

### G2P2 “Tomorrow’s working plans”

Yarın ben gidiyorum Ankara’ya. Ben 6’da kalkmak, oğullarım için kahvaltı hazırlamak ve hava alanı için ayrılmak. Ben istiyorum daha fazla zaman ailemle ama benim işim çok seyyahet soruyor. Uçağım 9.30 da ve Ankara’ya geldiğimde, ben ofisa gideceğim ilk önce. Benimde toplantım var müdürle. Ben umarım, toplantı uzun sürmeyecek. Benim iş yemeğimiz var akşam 6 da ve ondan sonra eve dönüş var. Benim programım zor.

### G2P3 “Summer holidays”

Biz gittik Amerika’ya, çünkü bizim arkadaşlarımız orda yaşıyorlar. Biz plan yaptık önceden ama bazı problemler çıkmış. Bizim uçağımız geç geldi ve biz gittik çabuk trene Newyork’ta. Daha sonra benim kızım kaybetti çanta. Biz geldik Buffolo’ya, sabah oldu zaten ve biz yorgunduk çok. Biz ayrıca Niagara’ya gittik hep birlikte. O yer gerçekten güzel. Ben büyülenmeyi bırakmıycam onunla. Fakat bizim tail bitti ve biz eve gittik. Gelecek yaz biz gitcaz avusturalya.

*Appendix G: Examples of  $G1$*

## Examples of G1

### *Phonology*

G1P4 tended to mispronounce the words with the sound [ə]. For example, the words that contain this sound ‘second’, ‘corner’ this participant pronounced the way they were written. Thus, the output was the following [‘sek□nd], [‘k□ne] respectively.

Another participant G1P9 had a problem in pronouncing the words that contain sound [r]. Instead of omitting it, the participant pronounced it clearly in all of the words, for example, in words like ‘board’, ‘fortnight’, ‘mother’. As a result, the produced words sounded the following way: [‘bord], [‘fortnait], [‘m□ter] respectively.

G1P7 had a problem with the sound [s] produced by the letter ‘c’. The participant persistently pronounced it like [tz] as in a word ‘tzar’. Therefore, words with this sound transformed into something different, for example, the word ‘decide’ in his production sounded like [di’tzaid].

### *Syntax and Morphology*

Some of the participants (G1P8, G1P2, G1P5) tended to use Present Progressive for all the actions in present tense. For example, once when trying to describe his feelings on the film watched before, G1P8 used such formula *‘I am wanting’*. Some other participants (G1P3, G1P6, G1P4, G1P7) vice versa ignored the Progressive form and used only Simple Tense. For example, G1P4 produced following sentence in the essay: *‘While I watched ‘The Sherlock Holmes’, I thought about his super abilities’*.

### *Semantics*

The participants have the common problem. They use jargon and colloquial language in their writings. For example, instead of ‘drink’, some of them (G1P1, G1P8, G1P10, G1P2) used ‘pop’ or ‘coke’ (no matter what drink was that).

All of the participants overused such words as ‘cute’, ‘sweet’, ‘good’, ‘bad’ (the words are presented in respect to the frequency of their occurrence in the participants’ written works).

Another example is the use of ‘oneself’ form with the verb ‘feel’. Some of the participants (G1P10, G1P6) tried to say *‘I feel myself’*.

A generalization that the researcher came across was related to Semantics as well. The participants tend to use the word 'America' when speaking about the USA, though it is not fully correct.

*Stereotypes, attitudes, generalizations*

The example of common stereotype that exists among the participants is that the USA is the country of only Hollywood and Florida. When the researcher discussed the countries, it was a big surprise to learn how little the students know about the USA.

There are also negative attitudes towards the Asian people exist among the participants.

Another stereotype concerns the free position of women in the English speaking countries.

There is a generalization about people who live in Africa to be all black.

Linguistic generalizations are also presented with such examples as the Past form of the irregular verbs. One of the participants (G1P7) when being exposed to the V2 of the verb 'take' ('took') assumed that the V2 for the verb 'make' would be 'mook'.

*Appendix H: Examples of G2*

## *Examples of G2*

### *Phonology*

The participant G2P2 tended to pronounce sound [l] in a harder way than it should be in such expressions as *'alabilir miyim'*, *'gidebilirim'*.

The participants G2P2 found it odd and difficult to pronounce the words where additional sound appeared like in the following examples: *'spor'*, *'psikoloji'*.

G2P3 struggled with the sounds [ɫ] and [i], therefore, sometimes she produced such forms as *'kirmizi'*, *'kapattım'* instead of their correct variants [kırız], [kapattım].

When it comes to the sound [r] positioned at the end of the word like in the word *'teşekkürler'* G2P3 tended to omit last [r] sound and the output was the following [teşekürle].

### *Syntax and morphology*

All of the participants admit that the hardest part for them is the length of some words and sentences.

As G2P3 stated: *"By the time I come up to the end of the sentence, I forget the beginning"*.

### *Semantics*

G2P2 once when being caught by the heading on the billboard during the observation read the slogan and was confused. The sentence was *'Hem asker, hem adam'*. She asked the researcher why the slogan has an English word *'asker'*. Then immediately she realized the meaning and laughed a lot.

Another example of confused semantics was provided by the participant G2P1. He explained that when he started learning Turkish, he had a situation that was quite funny. He explained that once one of his friends said the following thing: *'Mısır'a gittik'*. The G2P1 could not understand the meaning of the sentence as he knew only one meaning of the word *'mısır'* that was *'corn'*. That day he learnt that it was also the name of the country *'Egypt'*.

G2P2 and G2P3 complained that they confuse the words that sound and written the same, for example, *'gül'* can mean *'rose'* and also *'laugh'*.

*Appendix I: Curriculum Vitae*

## CURRICULUM VITAE

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Kildyusheva, Venera

Nationality: Russian (RF)

Date and Place of Birth: 13 March 1984, Naberezhnye Chelny, Tatarstan, Russia

Phone: +90 539 839 91 11

email: venerakildyusheva@gmail.com

### EDUCATION

| Degree  | Institution             | Year of Graduation |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Diploma of Public Relations specialist in the field of «public relations»   | Udmurt State University | 2006               |
| Diploma of additional (to higher) education of English language interpreter in the sphere of professional communication | Udmurt State University | 2006               |
| A.S. Pushkin Lyceum #78   | Naberezhnye Chelny      | 2001               |

### WORK EXPERIENCE

| Year         | Place                          | Enrollment      |
|--------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2013-present | Dilkent English Private Course | English Teacher |

### FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English (nativelike), Russian (native), Tatar (native), Turkish (pre-intermediate), Spanish (basic)

### HOBBIES

Art, Travelling, Cooking