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**AN OUTLOOK OF TURKISH ADULT LEARNERS
TO ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE: IS IT A
CHOICE OR NECESSITY?**

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YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

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ÖZET

Türk Yetişkin Öğrencilerinin İngilizceye İkinci Bir Dil Olarak Bakışı: İngilizce Bir Tercih mi yoksa Gereklilik mi?

Bu çalışmanın amacı Türk yetişkin İngilizce öğrencilerinin ikinci dil ve ikinci dil öğrenimi ile ilgili inançlarını belirlemektir. Bu çalışmanın diğer bir amacı da yetişkinlerin ne amaçla İngilizce öğrendiğini ve sınıf dışında İngilizcelerini geliştirmek için hangi faaliyetlerde bulunduklarını bulmaktır. Aynı zamanda bu çalışma Türk yetişkin İngilizce öğrencilerinin kelime bilgisi, dilbilgisi, telaffuz, konuşma, okuma, yazma ve dinleme gibi dil becerileri hakkındaki tercihlerini ve bu alanlarda karşılaştıkları zorlukları araştırmaktadır.

Bu araştırma yetişkinlerin dil öğrenmeleri konusunda önemli bir rol oynamaktadır; çünkü yetişkinlerin İngilizce öğrenme alanındaki anlayışlarını, tercihlerini ve yaşadıkları zorlukları kapsayan bir dizi soruyu irdelemektedir. Bu sebeple; bu çalışma sayesinde yetişkinlerin İngilizce öğretmenleri, İngilizceyi öğrencilerinin bakış açısından değerlendirebilir. Bu çalışmanın diğer bir faydası da öğrenciyi sadece bir yetişkin olarak değil, aynı zamanda geçmiş öğrenme deneyimlerine sahip bir birey olarak değerlendirmesi ve hem öğrenci hem de öğretmen için yetişkinlerin dil öğrenmeleri hakkında bilgi sağlayabilmesidir.

Bu çalışmada nicel verilere ulaşmak amacıyla dört bölümden oluşan bir anket kullanılmıştır. Sorular *The Inventory of Adult Language Learners* (ALL) ve *The Rossman Adult Learners Inventory* (RALI)'dan derlenmiştir.

Araştırma Konya'daki iki dil kursunda (Prodem&Avrasya) yapılmıştır. Çalışmadaki denekler anadili İngilizce olmayan öğrencilerdir ve hepsi 18 yaş üstündedir. Bu kurslar genel halka açıktır ve sonuç olarak öğrenciler başlangıç seviyesinden ileri seviyeye kadar çeşitli düzeylerde.

İstatistikî analizler Sosyal Bilimler için İstatistik Paket Programı (SPSS) kullanılarak elde edilmiştir. Frekans dağılımları tablolar ile sunulmuştur.



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Tezin İngilizce Adı		An Outlook of Turkish Adult Learners to English as a Second Language: Is it a Choice or Necessity	

SUMMARY

An Outlook of Turkish Adult Learners to English as a Second Language: Is it a Choice or Necessity?

The purpose of the study is to identify Turkish adult EFL learners' beliefs about second language and second language learning. Another aim of this study is to find out why adults want to learn English and in what activities they engage in order to improve their English outside the class. It also explores Turkish adult EFL learners' preferences and difficulties in language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, speaking, reading, writing and listening.

This research plays an important role in adults' language learning because it explores a set of questions about their perceptions, preferences and difficulties about learning English. For this reason, with the help of this study, English teachers of adults may try to view English from students' perspectives. Another benefit of such a study is that it takes the learner not just as an adult but also as an individual learner with previous learning experiences and may provide information both for learners and teachers about adults' language learning.

In this study, four parts of questionnaire was used with the purpose of collecting quantitative data. The questions were collected from *The Inventory of Adult Language Learners* (ALL) and *The Rossman Adult Learners Inventory* (RALI).

The research was conducted in two language centers (Prodem and Avrasya) in Konya, Turkey. The subjects in this study were non-native students of English. They were all over 18. These courses are open to the general public and as a result, students were of various levels from beginners to advanced.

The statistical analyses were conducted by using the Statistical Package for Social Siencies (SPSS).

Key Words: Second Language Acquisition,Adult Language Learners, Advantages and Disadvantages of Adult Language Learners. Frequency distributions were presented through tables.

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CHAPTER I

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

It is an undeniable fact that globalization has made a significant impact on every aspects of human life. With the development of globalization, the power and the dominance of English has rapidly increased. Tsui and Tollefson (2007) maintain that “...to respond the rapid changes brought about by globalization, all countries have been trying to ensure that they are equipped with these two skills, namely technology and English” (Tsui *et al.*, 2007, cited in Kırkgöz, 2008:1). In other words, globalization has strengthened the position of English as global language; English has become the *lingua franca* of international communication both for English-speaking and non-English-speaking countries. The unprecedented spread of English is “the result of the need or desire for information access, technology transfer, and economic development” (Grabe, 1988: 63).

The global influence of English in Turkey was unavoidable. Kırkgöz (2008) explains the considerable effects of English in Turkey as follows:

The strategic and geopolitical status of the country makes the learning of English, the main language for international communication as well as the world’s *lingua franca* of science, technology and business, particularly important for Turkish citizens to enable the nation to pursue its international communication and keep up with the developments in many fields in which English is the most-widely used language. Among the foreign languages offered in education system, currently English is the only language taught as a compulsory subject at all levels of education. (2)

On the basis of the global influence of English, in Turkish context, a lot of Turkish people have become conscious of the importance of English and need to learn English both for internal and external reasons. As it was stated above, English

is a compulsory subject at all levels of education in Turkey; however, it is mostly not satisfactory or sufficient for students' development of competence in English. As a result, plenty of private courses for English education exist in Turkey. In these courses, students vary from primary or high schools, university students, businessman/women, housewives and etc. All these students, no matter child, young or adult, try to learn English for one way or another.

In this research, the perceptions of Turkish adult learners towards English as a second language will be examined. In addition to these, this research proposes to investigate some characteristic of adult learners such as the age factor, motivation, attitude, and learners' beliefs and preferences about the second language.

The purpose of the study is to identify Turkish adult EFL learners' perceptions about English as a second language. Another aim of this study is to find out why adults want to learn English and in what activities they engage in order to improve their English outside the class. It also explores Turkish adult EFL learners' preferences and difficulties in language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, speaking, reading, writing and listening.

1.2. Significance of the Study

This study plays an important role in adults' language learning because it explores a set of questions about their perceptions, preferences and difficulties about learning English. All of the subjects are already language learners; however, this may not be their choice. For this reason, with the help of this study English teachers may try to view English as second language from their perspectives. The benefit of such a study is that it takes the learner not just as an adult but also as an individual with previous learning experiences; so it may help to gather information both for adults and their teachers about language learning process.

In addition to these, with the help of this study, English Language Teachers may distinguish whether or not adults need more support in some language areas than others. While teaching adults, teachers should be aware of the characteristics of adults and how these characteristics are affected on the teaching process. As a result, teachers would have a better understanding of adults' learning abilities and reasonable expectations.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The statements of the problem are listed below as follow;

- Why do Turkish adults want to learn English?
- What are the perceptions of Turkish adult learners towards learning English as a second language?
- In which language area(s) do most Turkish adult learners have difficulties: vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, or the four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking?
- Is being an adult disadvantage when learning a second language?
- Is being an adult advantage when learning a second language?

1.4. The Delimitations

This research only focused on adult second language learning, adults will not be compared with any age groups. It examined second language learning only in classroom settings, not in other settings. The learners were all over 18. The students were all of the same nationality and had the same native language, which is Turkish. No other nations were involved. Although there are many learners of English worldwide, this research only looked at 100 learners of English. It also focused on English as a second language, not any other languages.

1.5. Research Methods

In this study, four parts of questionnaire was used with the purpose of collecting quantitative data. The questions were collected from *The Inventory of Adult Language Learners* (ALL) and *The Rossman Adult Learners Inventory* (RALI). The questionnaires were carried out in two language centres (Prodem and Avrasya) in Konya, Turkey. To make the study reliable, classroom teachers supervised the respondents while they were answering the questionnaire.

Before the application of the questionnaire, the coordinators of the courses gave information to the teachers about the study. Each teacher explained why they were being asked to participate in the study to students and the students were encouraged to seek clarification of any items they did not understand. The teachers did not look at the results and handed the completed questionnaires back to the coordinators of the courses in closed envelopes.

The statistical analyses were conducted by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency distributions were presented through tables.

1.6. The Definitions of the Terms and Abbreviations

In *Longman Active study of English* **adult** is defined as “a fully grown person or animal, especially a person over an age stated by law, usually 18 or 21” (10). In *Merriam Webster Online Dictionary*, the definition of adult is given as follows; “1. fully developed and mature, 2. of, relating to, or befitting adults” (www.merriam-webster.com). Burns also (2002) claims that we become adults when we implement adults’ role and behaviour, such as adults as a parent, spouse and worker.

Language is essentially human, although not limited to humans only. All social beings communicate with each other in some ways but only humans have developed a system of communication by vocal symbols. However; definition of language is far too complicated and complex to be explained in a sentence or two. Pinker defined language in *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language* (1994) as:

Language is a complex, specialized skill, which develops in the child spontaneously, without conscious effort or formal instruction, is deployed without awareness of its underlying logic, is qualitatively the same in the every individual, and is distinct from more general abilities to process information or behave intelligently (18).

Language is also defined in *Longman Active Study Dictionary of English* as “a system of human expression by means of words in speech or writing” (340).

Second language is any language which is learned after the first language or mother tongue. Stephen D. Krashen states that “adults have two distinct and independent ways of developing competence in a second language” (1982: 10). The first one is language acquisition. It is described as a similar way that children develop ability in their first language. In this subconscious process; acquirers are not aware of the fact that they are acquiring a language. They just use the language for communicative purposes. The learners do not have to have a conscious awareness to learn the rules of that language; however, they are able to differentiate the rules of the language out of context. The second is language learning. While language acquisition is a result of subconscious process, learning refers to a conscious one. In this process, the students are conscious about the new language such as knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them.

Critical Period is the term to refer “a limited phase in the development of an organism during which a particular activity or competency must be acquired if it is to be incorporated into the behaviour of that organism” (Singleton, 1989:38). Marinova-Todd and *et.al* define the term for language acquisition as “a period of time when learning a language is relatively easy and typically meets with a high degree of success” (2000:9). In a similar vein, **Critical Period Hypothesis** suggests that there is a biological timetable for language acquisition. Initially it was used for the first language acquisition; but then, second language researchers applied this hypothesis for second language acquisition and argued that “critical point for second language acquisition occurs around puberty, beyond which people seem to be relatively incapable of acquiring a second language” (Brown, 2000:54).

In Merriam Webster **motivation** is defined as “the act or process of motivating” (www.merriam-webster.com). Rogers claims that motivation is “a drive directed towards meeting a need or achieving an intention, those factors that energize and direct behavioural patterns organized around a goal” (2002:95). Brown (2000) offers the following definition derived from different sources: “Motivation is the extent to which you make choices about (a) goals to pursue and (b) the effort you will devote to that pursuit” (72).

L1: First language

L2: Second language

L1A: First Language Acquisition

L2A: Second Language Acquisition

CP: Critical Period

CPH: Critical Period Hypothesis

CHAPTER II

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this study, second language learning, age factor, and critical period hypothesis are important themes; therefore, the theories of second language learning, critical period hypothesis and some of the advantages and disadvantages of learning a second language in adulthood will be investigated. In addition to these, the importance of English in Turkey and the system of English language learning will be examined in this chapter.

2.2. The Status of English in Turkey

In this part, the global influence and importance of English in Turkey and in Turkish educational system will be investigated.

2.2.1. The Importance of English in Turkey

In our modern world, multilingualism are highly encouraged because countries need people who are equipped with at least one foreign language to improve their international relations socially, politically and economically. The teaching and learning English is highly supported as it has become *lingua franca*, in other words the means of communication among people with different native languages. The strategic and geopolitical status of Turkey makes the learning of English important for Turkish citizens to pursue international communication and keep up with the developments in many fields in which English is the basic communicative medium.

In addition to these, as a member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) , and an candidate state of EU, in which the official languages are English,

learning English in Turkey is crucial not only for interpersonal reasons but also for intra-personal reasons, though the two seem closely intertwined (Kachru 1995, cited in Kırkgöz, 2008). The various ways in which Turkey has responded to the global influence of English and the modifications that the nation has made to its language policy reveal the close relationship between the external(global) and internal (national) policy and practice at various levels of education. At the international level, English is needed to maintain communication in economic, social and business relations to accelerate Turkey's modernization and westernization process (Demirel, 1990). As for intra-national level, the enthusiasm for learning English is a tool to acquire it as an effective device for achieving economic competitiveness in the international arena. At the national level, English holds an instrumental function for the individual for gaining access to better education and a more prestigious job with good benefits and prospects for promotion (Kırkgöz, 2005).

Bamgose (2003) pinpoints the role of English as follows:

..., English lacks any strong population base, it is not likely to have any official status, nor is the push for nationalistic considerations. Yet, it has enormous prestige mainly on account of its instrumental value. Although the role of English varies from use in certain domains (such as tourism) in institutionalized entrenchment in the educational system, what all these countries have in common is the learning and using of English as a foreign language. What has accelerated the use of English ... is the impact of globalization (cited in Kırkgöz, 2008: 5).

On the basis of the global influence of English, in Turkey, a lot of Turkish people have become conscious of the importance of English and needed to learn English both for internal and external reasons. The increase in the use of English leads naturally to a demand for people with the knowledge of that language and as a result, learning English has become a subject of basic education in Turkey. It has become a key to get ahead in life both in terms of educational and professional fields. Kilickaya (2006) points out that English has always been a concern of the educational field in Turkey and it is widely used and recognized in Turkish education and in the private sector. It has become essential for Turkish citizens to have

knowledge of English. It is not just a compulsory school subject for students, but also a ‘must’ for most professions and academic studies and promotion in Turkey, as in most of the other countries in the world. Kilickaya (2006) also points out that English medium education is expanding in Turkey, especially in the institution of higher education. It is a feature which differentiates one university from others. This reveals how English medium institutions are becoming more and more popular every day. Many students go abroad for undergraduate degrees in English for instrumental reasons as well as integrative reasons. In other words; English has turn out to be an obligation for cultural and commercial importance in Turkey.

As a response to global influence of English, Turkish government has planned English Language Policy Adjustments in educational fields. Tsui and Tollefson (2007) evaluate the adaptation of a language as a medium of instruction as the strongest form of language intervention (cited in Kırkgöz, 2008: 5). In Turkey, the impact of global influence of English and as a result the awareness of the importance of English can be clearly observed on the adaptation of English as a medium of instruction at secondary levels and high level education and its inclusion in the school curriculum as a compulsory school subject.

2.2.2. English Language Teaching in Turkey

The introduction of English into Turkish Education System dates back to *The Tanzimat Period*, the second half of the eighteen century, which marks the westernization movements in the educational fields (Kırkgöz, 2005). Robert College, an Anglo-American private secondary school which was founded in 1863, was the first institution teaching through the medium of English. In 1923, with the establishment of Turkish Republic, modernization and westernization movements gave way to the spread of English. English gained priority over other foreign languages, particularly French, which was previously preferred both in diplomacy and education.

The first phase of the spread of English was a long term which began in the 1950s, and lasted until the late 1970s. The first Anatolian high school was opened in 1955. Students graduating from private and Anatolian high schools achieve a higher degree of English language proficiency since they are exposed to English for a longer period when compared to other state schools (Kırkgöz, 2007). The mid 1980s was the second phase in the spread of English. In this period, Turkey has increasingly been influenced by globalization through the English language. In his study of Turkey's socio-political development in 1980s, Ahmad notes that 'English has become the *sine qua non* for a successful career in virtually any field and parents struggled to have their children acquire working knowledge of the language' (Ahmad, 1993: 210, cited in Kırkgöz, 2007: 218). As English became very popular and prominent, the number of schools, both private and Anatolian high schools, afterwards Super English Language High Schools, which offered intense English education, increased gradually.

At the higher education level, the first state-owned English-medium University, that is Middle Eastern Technical University, was established in 1956. Afterwards, private universities offering English-medium education were opened as the demand increased. Universities that provide English-medium instruction also offer one-year intensive English education, which is called as preparation classes of English. In addition to private universities, in state universities, the English language was incorporated into the curriculum as a compulsory subject with the aim of promoting students' knowledge of general English and helping them to read and understand English publications in their subject area (Kırkgöz, 2007).

In terms of the role of the English in Turkish Academia, one major requirement for research is to publish in international journals in order to gain academic promotion. This fact increased the demand of faculty members' needs to learn English. In addition to these, Turkish academics are required to take English tests such as 'The Language Proficiency Examination' (KPSS), which was introduced in 1990, and 'Language Proficiency Examination for Academic Personnel' (UDS), which was introduced in 2000.

The most important innovation of English education in Turkish education system was in 1997.

In 1997, The Turkish Ministry of National Education (MNE), in cooperation with the Turkish Higher Education Council, decided to make drastic changes in the nation's English language policy in its effort to reform Turkey's ELT practice. The establishment of a plan called 'The Ministry of Education Development Project' ---a major curriculum innovation project in ELT--- was initiated, which aimed to promote the teaching of English in Turkish educational institutions (Kırkgöz, 2007: 207).

This reform integrated primary and secondary education and extended the duration of primary education from 5 to 8 years. Another consequence of the reform was the introduction of English for Grade 4 and Grade 5 students. In other words, due to the 1997 reform of English education in Turkish Education System, the introduction of EFL shifted from secondary to primary schools with the aim of providing a longer exposure to English.

Kırkgöz (2005) states that 1997 curriculum stands as a landmark in Turkish history because, for the first time, it introduced the concept of communicative approach to ELT. The ultimate goal of that policy is to develop learners' communicative capacity in the target language and to promote student-centred learning, instead of previous teacher-centred one. At the level of Higher Education, the 1997 ELT curriculum reform has resulted in many changes. After that reform, "the curriculum of education faculties were upgraded to enhance the quality of teacher education....and teacher education departments were redesigned, both to increase the number of methodology courses and to extend the teaching practice time in primary and secondary schools..." (Kırkgöz, 2007: 221).

The Turkish educational system can be summarized as follows; after the eight years of basic education, there is an optional secondary education program. There are two main categories of secondary schools: general high schools and vocational-technical high schools. There are five types of general secondary schools: *Genel Lise* (General High School), *Yabancı Dil Ağırililki Lise* (Foreign Language High School), *Anadolu lisesi* (Anatolian High School), *Fen Lisesi* (Science High School), *Anadolu*

Güzel Sanatlar Lisesi (Anatolian Fine Arts High School), and *Anadolu Öğretmen Lisesi* (Anatolian Teacher Preparatory High Schools).

The *Genel Lise* (General High School) is a four-year program that prepares students for higher education. Foreign Language High Schools (Yabancı Dil Ağırlıklı Lise) were also established by the Turkish Government with the aim of preparing students for higher education programmes which suit their interests, abilities and level of achievement. This provided more effective foreign language teaching and raised the level of general secondary education and also provided more extensive foreign language instruction. The first 28 Foreign Language High Schools were established in the 1992-1993 academic year. By the 1998-1999 academic years, there were 673 Foreign Language High Schools, which indicates the increasing interest and awareness of Turkish government in English education (www.education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1564/Turkey-SECONDARY-EDUCATION.html)

Anadolu lisesi (Anatolian High School) were first founded in 1955 in several major cities as Ministry of Education Colleges. In 1975 they were renamed Anatolian High Schools. These selective four-year schools use a foreign language, often English, as the language of instruction in certain subjects.

The first *Fen Lisesi* (Science High School) was established in 1982 to provide education to the exceptionally gifted mathematics and science students. In 1998-1999, there were thirty-nine Science High Schools. All are boarding schools. The language of instruction is Turkish. Class size is limited to twenty-four. These four-year schools emphasize research and laboratory activities.

The first *Güzel Sanatlar Lisesi* (Anatolian Fine Arts High School) was founded in 1989 for gifted students. In 1999, there were nineteen Anatolian Fine Arts High Schools. The first year of the four-year program is an intense foreign language preparatory program.

Anadoulul Öğretmen Lisesi (Anatolian Teacher Preparatory High Schools) are four year schools designed to prepare students to attend university. In addition to the

core curriculum courses, students take courses in general education theory and methodology as well as the history of education.

Higher education is defined as all post-secondary programmes with duration of at least two years. The system consists of universities (state and private) and non-university institutions of higher education (police and military academies and colleges).

Nevertheless; it is undeniable that there is no standard of equal opportunities for students to attend schools in Turkey considering English courses. (Kırkgöz, 2005)

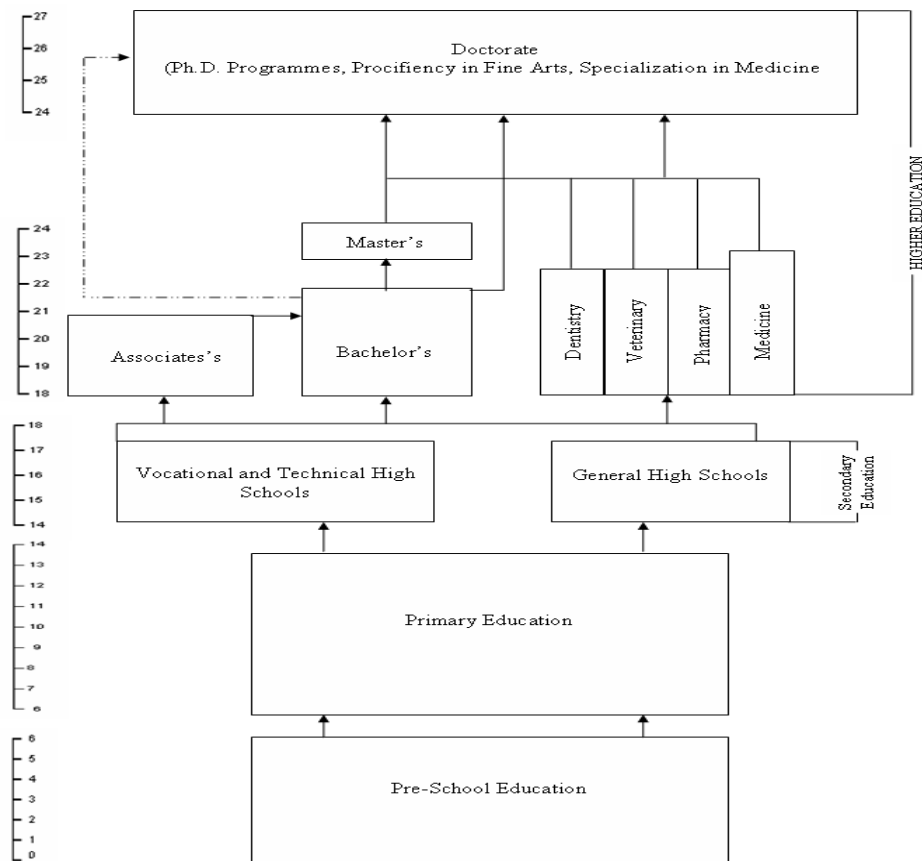


Figure 1

General Structure of the Turkish Educational System

(http://www.meb.gov.tr/Stats/ist2001/s10_4.jpg)

Concerning the figure above, the target group of this research will be mainly the students of higher education. However; there may be some students with careers and who are working full/part part time and attending to English courses with different objectives, or housewives, or unemployed learners.

2.3. Age and Second Language Acquisition

The age of students is a key factor in L2A about how and what to teach. As people of different ages need to learn a second language for different reasons, their preferences, difficulties, hesitations in the target language and also their cognitive skills are various. Harmer (2007) explains these differences with an example; children of primary age enjoy learning language through a play whereas adults are able to abstract thought during that learning process.

It has been believed that age is a forecaster of second language acquisition and younger learners are better than older ones in the acquisition process. However; Krashen argues that “age is not itself a predictor of second language rate or attainment, and that here too everything reduces down to quantity of comprehensible input and of the affective filter” (Krashen, 1982: 43). In a similar vein, Harmer explains the idea of ‘the younger is the better’ in terms of language acquisition as “the story of child language facility may be something of a myth” (2007: 81). Nikolov and Djigunovic (2006) explains ‘deficiency of adults in L2A’ as a result of “a gradual decline across the life span rather than a sharp drop in L2A” (Nikolov *et al.* 2006: 235); in other words, they assume that learning potentials and increasing age are in an inverse ratio.

On the basis of pronunciation, there are many reported studies showing that younger learners are more successful in attaining native-like proficiency in a second language than older ones (Long 1990, cited in Bialystok, 1997). Patkowski (1994) asserts that “ There is a period ...during which it is possible, but not inevitable, for

learners to acquire...full native-like fluency in the phonological system of a second language, and after which such a possibility does not exist anymore” (Patkowski 1994, cited in Bialystok, 1997: 125). Such data are important, yet not decisive in understanding the reasons behind the advantages of younger learners in L2A pronunciation. There exist both anecdotal and empirical evidences that older learners are able to achieve native-like competence in L2A. White and Genesee (1996) studied on the subjects who are completely fluent in the second language (English) and found that the age which learning began was not a key factor both for grammatical and phonological proficiency in L2A. Birdsong (1992) found that 15 out of 20 Anglophone adult subjects who began acquiring French as adults in France fell within the range of native speakers performance on a grammatically judgement task (cited in Singleton, 2001: 78). Similarly, Bongaerts *et al.* (1995) studied Dutch learners of English and found that late learners and adults could achieve pronunciation levels in an indistinguishable way from those of native speakers. Juffs and Harrington (1995) found that Chinese ESL learners who began learning English as adults were just as accurate as native speakers in making judgements about a structural rule which does not exist in Chinese, although their responses times were significantly slower than those of native speakers (Juffs and Harrington 1995, cited in Bialystok, 1997: 126). Finally, it can be suggested that these results contradict with Patkowski’s (1994) assumption of the second language learning initiated after puberty leads to deficiency in L2A due to the end of this period.

Krashen, Long, and Scarcella (1979), studying the researches on the effect of age and second language acquisition, conclude that:

1. Adults proceeded through the early stages of second language development faster than children do (where time and exposure are held constant).
2. Older children acquire faster than younger children, time and exposure held constant.
3. Acquirers who begin natural exposure to second language during childhood generally achieve higher second language proficiency than

those beginning as adults. (Krashen *et al.* 1979, cited in Krashen, 1982: 43).

Adult learners have more conversational competence than the younger ones do, they can produce language earlier. The accessibility of conscious grammar allows them to produce acceptable utterances. As a result, they are able to take part in conversation in the target language. On the other hand; children's superiority can be explained due to the strengthening of affective filter at about puberty. In other words, child-adult differences are not the result of biological changes, but due to the filter- which is defined as "an impediment to learning or acquisition caused by negative emotional 'affective' responses to one's environment" (www.wikipedia.com). In a similar vein, adults can be categorized as acquirer, which means they have the natural language acquisition ability that children do. In other words, what prevent the adults from being an acquirer of a foreign language is not the biological deficiencies, but the emotional ones. (Krashen, 1982)

As it can be concluded the researches and the findings are contradictory and misleading on the basis of the relationship between age and L2A and it is nearly impossible to be explained in such simple terms. Singleton (2001) suggests that it should be evaluated in terms of a range of factors and concludes that "the various age related phenomena ...probably result from the interaction of a multiplicity of causes" (Singleton, 1989: 266 cited in Singleton, 2001: 86).

2.3.1. Disadvantages of Learning a Second Language in Adulthood

This section reviews the disadvantages of learning a second language in adulthood. It will be discussed in two parts as psychological and biological disadvantages.

2.3.1.1 Psychological Disadvantages

As it was mentioned earlier it is generally believed that a person who started to learn a language as an adult will never be able to use it properly. On the other hand; children are popularly believed to be better at learning second language than adults. It is suggested that who learnt language as a child cannot be distinguished from a native. However; some scholars such as Singleton (2001) evaluates this claim as a “folk wisdom” (77) and mistrusts its scientific validity. In this part, psychological disadvantages of adult learners in L2A will be investigated.

Lack of confidence is one of the disadvantages for an adult second language learner. Some adults who begin to learn a second language often think that they will look foolish in the class, especially among young learners. (Rogers J., 2001) The lack of confidence can cause anxiety in the adult learner, which may in turn hinder their learning abilities. As Daines J., Daines C. and Graham B.(1993) point out, adults are likely to underrate their powers through this lack of confidence.

Rogers J. (2001) in *Adults Learning* explained the lack of confidence in adult learners. She gives an example of a woman who had attended Beginners’ Italian classes for three years. When she was asked why she did not progress to the second year she said that she was afraid of looking silly. She likes the familiarity of Beginners’ Italian classes and wanted to have the same teacher all over again. This example supports the lack of confidence and worrying about being older among younger learners as a characteristic of some adult learners.

Another characteristic of adult learners in L2A is that they may be critical of the various teaching methods. They may be hostile to certain teaching and learning activities which replicate the teaching they received earlier in their education careers. (Lightbown and Spada, 2003) They tend to be self-directed and want to control over their own learning. In addition to these, some adults may at first expect to be taught in old-fashioned ways. Namely, they can be resistant to new ideas or approaches, in a way they may be less open-minded than younger learners. They may resist against participating actively in the group and just because of this, they can be resistant to

group work. (Daines *et al.*, 1993) This can cause problems for teacher when the students refuse to participate in certain classroom activities. According to Daines *et al.*, “having such prejudices can also de-motivate the other students and cause them to switch off” (1993:21). As a result, teacher may be unable to do activities in the classroom which are necessary for learning process.

Besides, adult learners can not only be critical of teaching methods, but also anxious and under-confident because of previous failure. They may be worried about diminishing learning power with age and have self-imposed cognitive barriers due to years of academic failure (Harmer, 2007). It seems that adults who set out to learn a second language may be affected negatively by their prejudices of being old and underestimating their abilities to learn. Perhaps if teachers are aware of such characteristics of adult learners, they can try to restore the confidence of older learner.

In addition to this, adult learners can also be very demanding; their expectations can be higher than the younger students and they expect value for their money and time. It is also argued that adult learners do not study as well as younger learners because they have other responsibilities such as, rearing a family, being in full time employment, or attending a full time university. They may not be able to spend much additional time on their studies beyond the boundaries of the class activities, however interested or motivated they are (Daines *et al.*, 1993). Therefore; they are very concerned about the effective use of their time.

Rogers’ research produced physical proof that the adult learner also suffers more from anxiety than younger learner. In his experiment when blood tests were taken from adults before, during and after engaging in a learning process, a rise in the level of free fatty acid was found to be more noticeable and to persist longer in the older learners (Rogers J., 2001). This physical proof is evidence that the adult learner suffers much more from anxiety than younger learner, which could hinder the learning process; this anxiety could not only affect the learner emotionally, but also physically. For instance, high levels of stress and anxiety can cause fatigue, which in return would affect the student’s performance. This finding can be interpreted in

terms of the students in private language courses. These language courses have variety of adult learners, including businessmen and women. The fact that these man and women may be very successful in their careers causes them to become anxious if they do not excel to the same levels when learning a language. Their emotional stress may prevent the adult learners from learning efficiently.

Each adult learner is an individual with different hopes and expectations. Their strengths, anxieties and hopes are also different. Teachers of adults should take all these factors into account. They should try to recognize each student's uniqueness and work in ways that will best help the individual to achieve his/her learning objective.

2.3.1.2 Biological Disadvantages

It is inevitable not to mention about Critical Period Hypothesis when discussing L2A of adults because most scholars debate this hypothesis and see it as a biological disadvantage for adult learners. The term 'critical period' is used in biology to refer to "a restricted period in the development of an individual during which a certain activity or ability is acquired and integrated into the behaviour of that individual" (Singleton, 1989: 29). Eric Lenneberg, who was a psychologist, made some research about existence of a critical period for language development. Lenneberg proposed that "certain biological events related to language development can only occur in an early critical period, beginning at around two and ending at puberty" (cited in Celik, 2007: 392).

In this respect, almost all literature refers to the case of Genie who was abused by her American parents by being locked up in a room with no contact outside world. She endured 11 years of enforced isolation, and as a result; she did not know how to communicate with people. In 1970, she was discovered and taken to the hospital. At Children's Hospital in Los Angeles, Genie's mental, physical, and linguistic development began almost immediately. However; intensive efforts for her language education were not enough for her language acquisition. She achieved just basic level

of linguistic communication. In other words, her talking was very limited and it was really hard to understand her. Genie's vocabulary grew gradually, but she was still unable to string words together into meaningful sentences. Although she was not mentally retarded, she was still unable to master a language. (Fromkin *et al.*, 2003)

Lenneberg was influenced by Penfield, a Canadian neurosurgeon, who was first to propose the hypothesis and to link 'the earlier the better' view of foreign language learning to the plasticity of a child's developing brain. Unfortunately, there was not much knowledge about developmental neurology in that time, and as a result; Penfield's approach 'the earlier the better' was not taken so seriously. However, it did impress Lenneberg and encouraged him to do more research on this subject. (Scovel, 1988)

Lenneberg believes that the development of language is the result of brain maturation. Although both hemispheres of the brain are equal at birth, the function of language gradually settles in the dominant left hemisphere of the brain after biological maturation or the critical period. That is, the critical period for language learning has been considered to agree with the period of lateralization of the brain. He believes if primary, basic skills are not acquired by then, they will always be deficient because the brain develops fixed ways of behaviour after puberty. That is to say, different functions develop gradually in different parts of the brain as children grow older. (Brown, 2000)

Lenneberg also makes a claim about second language acquisition. He claims that most individuals of average intelligence are able to learn a second language after the beginning of their second decade, although the incidence of "language-learning-blocks rapidly increases after puberty" (Singleton, 2007:50). Automatic acquisition from mere exposure to a given language seems to disappear after this age, and foreign languages have to be taught and learned through a conscious and laboured effort. Foreign accents cannot be overcome easily after puberty. However, a person can learn to communicate in a foreign language at the age of forty. This does not trouble basic hypothesis on age limitations because it may be assumed that the cerebral organization for language learning has taken place during childhood, and

natural languages tend to resemble one another in many fundamental aspects due to the matrix of language skills still exists in the individual. (Singleton, 2007)

In addition to these, the plasticity of the brain has become of great importance to the researchers of language acquisition. According to Scovel (1988), the loss of brain plasticity at about the age of puberty blocks the emergence of foreign accents. In other words, the critical period for language learning is considered to be the biologically determined period in which the brain keeps its plasticity for acquisition of any language.

According to Lightbown and Spada (2003), most studies about the relationship between age and second language acquisition have focused on learners' phonological (pronunciation) achievement. Generally speaking, these researches have supposed that older learners cannot be able to have native-like accent. However, these studies ignored their capacity of learning other linguistic features such as syntax (word order, sentence structure etc.) or morphology (grammatical morphemes etc.).

In 1980, Mark Patrowski made a research and attempted to answer these questions. He studied the effect of the age on the acquisition of features of a second language other than accent. The main question in Patrowski's research was: "Will there be a difference between learners who begun to learn English before puberty and those who begun learning English later?" (cited in Lightbown *et al.*, 2003: 62) He examined the spoken English of 67 highly educated immigrants to the United States. All of them had lived in the United States more than five years and they had started to learn English at various ages. He also included the spoken English of 15 native-born American English speakers from a similarly high level of education. They served as sort of baseline and provided evidence for the validity of research procedures.

He made a lengthy interview with each of the subjects and recorded them. He transcribed five-minute samples from the interviews as he wanted to remove the possibility that the results would be affected by accent. These samples were rated by trained native-speaker judges. The judges placed each speaker on a rating scale from

0, representing no knowledge of the language; to 5, representing a level of English of an educated native speaker.

The findings were striking. Thirty-two out of 33 subjects who had begun learning English before the age of 15 scored at the 4+ or the level 5. For this group, it can be said that they are very successful in second language learning. However; the majority of post-puberty learners centred around 3+ level. As it can be seen in the figure there was a wide distribution of levels achieved.

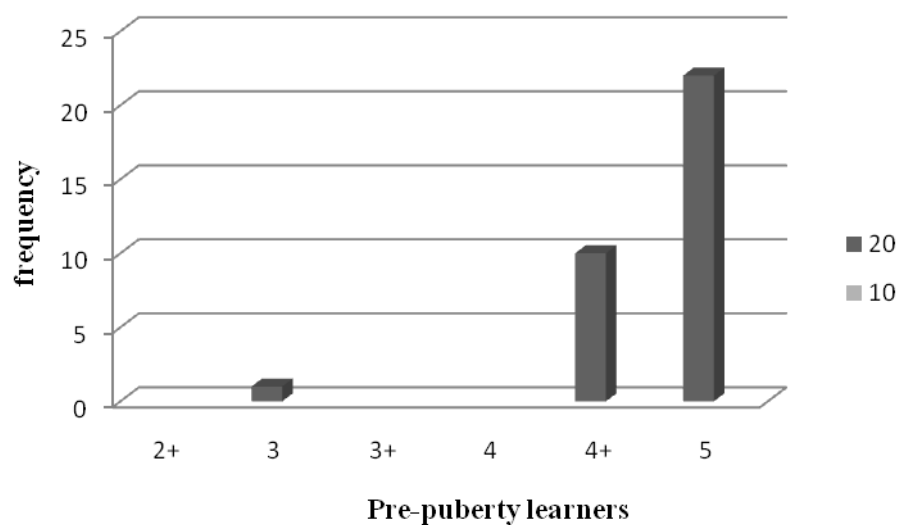


Figure 2

Chart showing the language level of pre-puberty learners of English
(Patkowski, 1980 cited in Lightbown&Spada, 2003: 63)

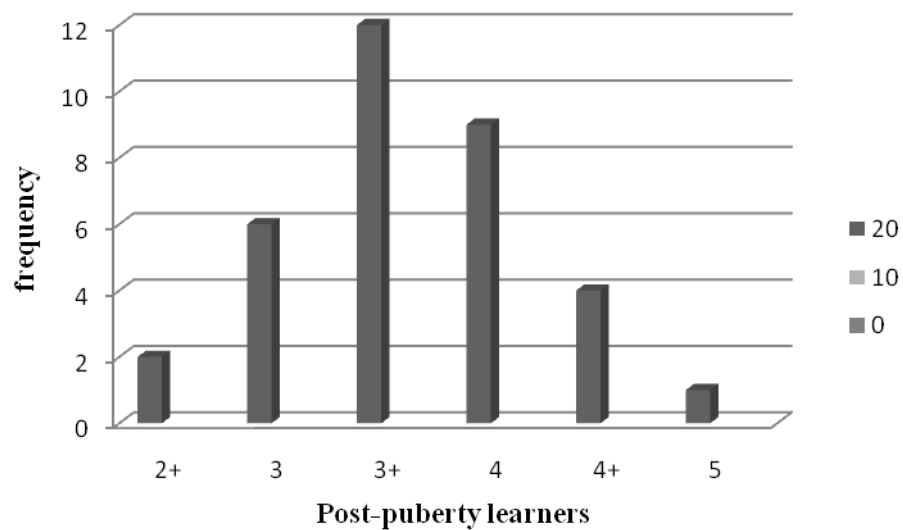


Figure 3

Chart showing the language level of post-puberty learners of English (Patkowski, 1980 cited in Lightbown&Spada, 2003: 63)

As a result, it can be concluded that there is a great difference between learners who began to learn English before puberty and those who began later. He found out that age of acquisition is a very important factor on the development of native-like mastery of second language and that this limitation does not apply only to accent. These results supported the Critical Period Hypothesis for second language acquisition.

Another research of the effects of age on attainment in second language acquisition was made by Jacqueline Johnson and Elissa Newport. Johnson and Newport (1989) conducted a study on 46 Chinese and Korean speakers who had begun to learn English at different ages and acquired English as a second language. All citizens had been in the United States for at least five years. The study also included 23 native speakers of English. The subjects were tested on their knowledge of specific aspects of English morphology and syntax. They were asked to judge the grammaticality of sentence such as:

- The little boy is speak to a policeman.

- The farmer bought two pig.
- A bat flew into our attic last night.(cited in: Fromkin *et al.*, 2003:383)

The test results depended heavily on the age at which the person had arrived in the United States. The people who arrived between the age of three and eight did as well as the native speakers. Those who arrived between the ages eight and fifteen did not perform like native speakers. The group that arrived between the age of seventeen and thirty-one had the lowest scores. That is to say, every year seemed to make difference for this group. The study concluded that while the learners who arrived after the age of 15 did not have native-like language ability in the target language, the ones that learned a second language before the age of 15 had learned native-like mastery of the second language (Fromkin *et al.*, 2003). Although age is an important factor in achieving native-like L2 competence, it is no suitable to conclude that it is impossible to acquire the grammar of a new language after a certain age. It is more appropriate to say that there may be a gradual decline in L2 acquisition ability with age.

Those who are against the Critical Period Hypothesis or the idea that diminishment in second language acquisition ability around puberty are due to physical factors fall into three main groups. The first accepts that children are faster and better learners in languages areas, but not for physical reasons; the second affirms better performance by children only in pronunciation; and the third denies any inevitable language-learning inferiority on the part of adults, including pronunciation. All three groups do concede that young-language learners outstrip older ones over the long term. However; they hold the social and attitudinal rather than physical reasons account for this. (Bailey, 1997)

H.D. Brown is a major representative of the first group. For Brown, second-language acquisition is strongly related to the acculturation process that everyone goes through in a new community. He makes four groups for this process: "... the excitement ... and then a culture shock and then... gradual vacillating recovery... and

lastly... assimilation or adaptation in the acculturation process” (cited in Bailey, 1997: 152). Brown argues that children traverse these stages much more quickly than adults because they are less culture-bound. They have few or no prejudices about the new society to impede their joining it. Once they have done so, their social inclusion naturally leads to greater linguistic opportunity than their elders are likely to encounter.

Rod Ellis, Fred Genesee, and Barry McLaughlin are representative of second group of anti-CHP authors. They suggest that pre-adolescents demonstrate superior second language learning ability to elder ones only in pronunciation. Even in this area, Ellis finds that young children improve more slowly than teenagers, who in turn outstrip adults. In fact, he believes the data show that the adolescent years helps rather than hinders overall success in learning second language, placing him in direct disagreement with the Critical Period Hypothesis. He claims that meta-awareness (simultaneous awareness of both the meaning and the rules of language) assist rather than impedes second language acquisition and adds “only where pronunciation is concerned an early start is an advantage ... the Critical Period Hypothesis affects pronunciation but not other levels of language” (Ellis, 1985 cited in Bailey, 1997: 153-154).

Next, the assumption that complete lateralization of language functions in the left hemisphere is complete at puberty has been challenged. Doubts about the precise course of brain development as it relates to language-learning functions have led to a weak version of the Critical Period Hypothesis, which supports “*sensitive periods*” rather than “*critical period*” (Bailey, 1997: 153). Patkowski (1980) states he prefers to use the terms ‘critical’ and ‘sensitive’ interchangeably. In *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (2004), for ‘sensitive’ the definition is “very open to or acutely affected by external stimuli” (1033) and for ‘critical’ the definition is “decisive and crucial” (275). Although the terms vary in their connotations, Bialystok (1997) assumes that these two terms could be used for the same period in the individual’s learning process and suggests that no matter it is critical or sensitive period, the certain language skills do not cease to exist immediately.

In addition to these, Fred Genesee (1988) formulates an anti-CPH case through a number of studies. According to him, the older learners were superior in short-term second-language learning ability, even sometimes when the younger ones had more previous second- language instruction and social exposure. For example, in one of his studies, he found that English students in Montreal attending two year late immersion programs in grades 7 and 8 achieved the same level of proficiency as students who had attended total immersion programs beginning in kindergarten, afterwards continuing with classes in English as second language. That is, approximately 5, 000 hours and 1, 500 hours of English were seen to result in the same level of proficiency. (cited in Bailey, 1997)

One of the anti-CPH of evidence in the literature is the findings of Neufeld and Schneiderman. They tested the acquisition of phonology through providing 18 hours of intensive instruction in Japanese, Chinese, or Eskimo phonology of 20 adult English speakers. Evaluation was performed by native speakers of these languages. They found that fully 50% of the learners achieved native-like accents (Neufeld and Schneiderman, 1980). This research attacks the notion of childhood superiority in pronunciation.

Thomas Scovel (1988) makes a direct challenge to the idea of CPH as follows:

...the idea that...human language has biological foundations is strongly affirmed. But in contrast, I find no evidence for a critical period for vocabulary or syntax, and consequently, I do not see the existence of a critical period for accentless speech providing any proof either for or against the efficacy of early foreign language teaching in schools (1988: 66).

The third position taken by CPH opponents is that native-like pronunciation is impossible for adults. For example; Dunkel & Pillet (1957) suggest that adult L2 beginners outperformed elementary school pupils in comprehension tests, but that young beginners' pronunciation was 'superior to that achieved by older beginners' concluding that pronunciation is the 'most rewarding aspect' of early L2 learning

(cited in Singleton, 2007). Berta Chela-Flores (1994) referring the study by Neufeld (who demonstrated the impressive adult phonology capacity) writes as follows:

It is often suggested that after acquiring the sound pattern of the native language, the nerves of the tongue and mouth region and even some neural functions in the central nervous system become as atrophied, so far as to prohibit accurate pronunciation of a second language. This suggestion, however, would have to be refuted in light studies of such as by Neufeld (1987) ... [which] demonstrated that... adult learners could imitate utterances up to sixteen syllables in length so well that they were judged as native speakers by native speakers (Chela-Flores, 1994: 233-34 cited in Bailey, 1997: 160-161).

The basic assumption in Neufeld's study is that adults do retain the potential for acquiring native-like proficiency in a new language. However; Bailey (1997) argues that if this is so, and the organs of speech do not become atrophied with age, then the poor achievements of adult foreign language learners in pronunciation might be partly due to the insufficient and perhaps inadequate training of muscles of the mouth and tongue region. The muscles and the nerves of tongue and mouth have been practicing the same set of sounds from the native language for years, and it seems to follow that a great amount of muscular training would be need to accustom the organs of speech to new words.

To sum up, according to these scholars, there is no biologically determined constraint on language learning capacity that emerges at a particular age, nor any maturational process which implies that older language learners function differently from younger language learners. Just as in any subject for instance, playing a musical instrument or a sport, there are a number of reasons why adults or younger learners may or may not do well. Sometimes there are advantages for the older and other times for the younger learner as a result of many variables that vary with age. These variables include how much one already knows about the language and how strategic one's learning can be, how embarrassed one is about making errors, his/ her motivation and attitude and etc.; thus, the characteristics of learners in L2A are not only biologically determined. On the contrary, especially in the areas of vocabulary

and language structure, adults are actually better language learners than children. Older learners have more highly developed cognitive systems and they are able to make higher order associations and generalizations, and naturally they can integrate new language input with their already substantial learning experience. They also rely on long term memory that the short term memory function used by children and younger learners. (Larsen-Freeman, 1991)

Asher and Price (1967) add that adolescents and adults perform better than young children under controlled conditions. Even when the method of teaching appears to favour learning in children, they perform less well than adolescents and adults. Research was conducted by Asher and Price on 96 pupils from the second, fourth and eighth grades, and 37 undergraduate students. None of the subjects had had any prior experience of the experimental target language, which was Russian. The results were that the adults, on average and at every level of linguistic complexity, consistently and dramatically outperformed the children and adolescents. It is evidence that adult learners are capable of not only competing with younger learners, but also outperforming them.

A similar experiment was conducted in the 1960s by Politzer and Weiss on students from first, third and fifth grades of an elementary school and from the seventh and ninth grades of junior high school. The results show a general improvement of scores with increasing age in all the tests (cited in Singleton, 1989: 50). This study also supports evidence that the older learner is quite capable of achieving as much as the younger learner, and in some cases even better.

The previous two studies show that there are substantial grounds for opposing of the critical period hypothesis and uncertainty of whether or not learning a language before or after puberty is relevant.

Singleton (1989) claims that it is not possible to accept either that younger second language learners are superior to older learners or that the older learner is superior to the younger in all respects and at every stage. He also claims that there are supporters of the Critical Period Hypothesis who do not necessarily argue for

early L2 instruction, and there are sceptics who support the early introduction of L2. He refers to Genesee (1978), who argues for L2 instruction not because of any maturational restrictions, but because they believe the longer one is exposed to the second language the better (cited in Singleton, 2005).

To sum up, age has often been considered a major, sometimes the primary, factor determining success in learning a second language. Marinova-Todd *et al.* (2000) claim that “The misconception that adults cannot master foreign languages is as widespread as it erroneous” (27). They argue that the misunderstanding rests on fallacies associated with the critical period for second language acquisition. Most important than age, the length of exposure to target language may influence L2A in a favourable way, though longer exposure does not guarantee better outcomes automatically. In addition to these, in a globalized world, it is an undeniable fact that early introduction to second language may contribute to the understanding and appreciating different cultures, values and speakers of the other languages, and ability to use two or more languages may enhance cognitive development, and as a result; it may encourage further language learning which are much more important just than the proficiency in the second language. (Nikolov & Djigunovic, 2006). The last but not the least, learners need to have positive attitudes towards the L2, its speakers and the language learning and the teachers must apply age-appropriate content and methodology successfully in their classes.

2.3.2. Advantages of Learning a Second Language in Adulthood

In this section advantages of adult learners will be analyzed. It deals with how the different characteristics of the adult learner contribute to learning, and how they are of advantage to the learning process. It also reviews the advantage of the adult having life experiences when learning a second language.

Adult education is defined as “participation in systematic learning activities for the purpose of acquiring new knowledge or skills or changing attitudes or values, by people who have assumed adult social roles” (McGivney, 2004: 34). Adults, without

doubt, bring established perceptions, patterns of thought and set ways of doing things to their learning, which can help them cope with new situations and ideas. They bring life experience into the classroom which young learners do not necessarily have. They are most probably aware of the importance of learning which make them remain faithful to a course of study. (Harmer, 2000)

According to Knowles (1973), the research on adult learning clearly shows that the fundamental ability to learn does not change throughout the life span. He claims that we must look for some other causes if adults do not do well in a learning situation. He suggests that adults benefit from the experiences they have throughout their lives for instance, having to make their own living and having responsibilities. Adults obtain their self-identity from their experiences. They define who they are in terms of accumulation of their unique sets of experience. He adds that the ‘reservoir of experience’ that adults gain during their lives becomes a rich resource for learning and it is not only themselves that benefit, but also others (Knowles, 1988: 44). He also points out that these past experiences can be beneficial to the learning process in discussion and problem solving techniques.

Harmer (2000) also points out that adult learners have the advantage of being able to engage with abstract thinking and have experiences from their past; therefore, they know exactly what they want from the learning process. They have also adopted their own fixed patterns of learning and are more disciplined compared to children. He argues that;

The attention span that cooperative adults can offer is almost certainly greater than that of children and adolescents. ...teachers of adults are much less likely to have to deal with ongoing daily discipline problems than secondary school teachers are (Harmer, 2000: 11).

Harmer (2007) sets the notable characteristics of adult language learners as follows:

- They can engage with abstract thought. This suggests that we do not have to rely exclusively on activities such as games and songs-though these may be appropriate for some students.
- They have a whole range of life experiences to draw on.
- They have expectations about the learning process, and they already have their own set patterns of learning
- Adults tend, on the whole, to be more disciplined than other age groups, and, crucially, they are often prepared to struggle on despite boredom.
- They come into classrooms with a rich range of experiences which allow teachers to use a wide range of activities with them.
- Unlike young children and teenagers, they often have a clear understanding of why they are learning and what they want to get out of it. Motivation is a critical factor in successful learning, and knowing what you want to achieve is an important part of this. Many adults are able to sustain a level of motivation by holding on to a distant goal in a way that teenagers find more difficult (Harmer, 2007: 84).

In addition to these, according to Knowles (1973) adults are self-directed learners. In other words, they take the responsibility of their learning process. Adult learners are described as goal-oriented. They usually know their purpose and reason to learn something. For adults learning has to be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be value of them.

Brown (2001) summarizes the characteristics of adult learners as follows:

- Adults are more able to handle abstract rules and concepts.
- Adults have longer attention spans for material that may not be intrinsically interesting to them.

- Adults often bring modicum of general self-confidence (global self-esteem) into classroom; the fragility of egos may not be quite as critical as those of children.

- Adults, with their more developed abstract thinking ability, are better able to understand a context reduced segment of language. Authenticity and meaningfulness are of course still highly important, but in adult language teaching, a teacher can take temporary digressions to dissect and examine isolated linguistic properties, as long as students are returned to the original context (90-91).

In addition to these, the effect of L1 is a significant issue in adults' second language acquisition. Brown (2000) argues that adults approach the second language systematically and they try to formulate linguistic rules on the basis of their L1 knowledge. However; the inference from L1 to L2 is not always the basic factor in adult second language acquisition and naturally this inference is not again the crucial factor of the errors that adults make in the target language. As the errors of adults in second language are found in the process of children's first language acquisition. On the contrary, according to Brown (2000) the knowledge of first language in may be advantage for adults: "The first language ... may be more readily used to bridge gaps that the adult learners cannot fill by generalization within the second language. In this case, we do well to remember that the first language can be a facilitating factor, and not just an interfering factor" (Brown, 2000: 68).

Smith (1994) also notes some of the characteristics of the adult L2 learners already have:

- A mature (L1) semantic, pragmatic and syntactic system available.
- A great deal of word knowledge and hence much to talk about.
- The option of using some or all of their L1 system as a starting point for building L2 grammar (46).

He adds that having the knowledge of syntactic and semantic terms from their first language also makes it much easier for adult to begin with difficult vocabulary. It also helps them with their controversial skills, which, in principle, they can use or adapt to gain maximum benefit of a small linguistic repertoire. Even if they do not build up new grammatical knowledge on the basis of old L1 knowledge, L2 adult learners can still, when actually trying to communicate in the L2, form utterances using the few L2 words they know and ‘cunningly recruiting’ the L1 grammar as a skeleton for L2A. (Smith, 1994)

2.4. Motivation and the Adult Learner

Motivation is defined as “the psychological feature that arouses an organism to action toward a desired goal; the reason for the action; that which gives purpose and direction to behaviour” (www.wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn). In other words, the goal-oriented behaviour drives people to do something. It is one of the basic factors that affect success or failure. The studies and experiment have shown that in human learning motivation is a key to learning (Dörnyei *et al.*, 1998). This section reviews motivation in terms of adult learning.

There are various types and definitions of motivation. Motivation is clearly related to a number of factors: the inner needs and drives of the learner, the interaction between the individual and their experience, and/or the goals they set for themselves (Rogers A., 2002).

Researchers have put a lot of effort to find how people’s conscious attitudes, thoughts, beliefs, and the understanding of events affect their behaviour; in terms of cognitive approach. Among scholars today, there is a lot of diversity regarding the sub-theories of the cognitive view of motivation that affect the human behaviour. In cognitive terms, motivation puts emphasis on the individual’s decisions, “the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect”(Keller 1983:389, cited in Brown 2000:160).

From behaviouristic perspective, motivation is the hope for reward. People want to acquire positive reinforcement and their previous experiences make them to act accordingly to achieve further reinforcement. A constructivist view of motivation puts emphasis on both social context and individual choices. In terms of this approach, individual's decisions and acts are carried out within a cultural and social context and cannot be separated from them. (Brown, 2000)

Language learning cannot be handled without motivation. It requires all three levels of motivation (Brown, 2000). In addition to this; language learning is a deeply social event that requires the combination of a wide variety of elements of the L2. Hence most studies on L2 motivation between the 1960s and 1990s focused on how the students' perceptions of the L2, the speakers and the L2 culture affect their wish to learn the language (Dornyei *et al.*, 1998).

Robert Gardner (1985), one of most influential researcher on motivation, also agrees that teaching a foreign language in schools is not just a 'curriculum topic', but also an insight into the 'cultural heritage' of the native speakers. Even if the learner of the second language never actually goes to the foreign country where the target language is spoken, they need to know something about the culture of that country if they planning to communicate with people who speak or write that language. (Gardner, 1991)

Dornyei *et al.* (1998) emphasizes the fact that motivation is affected by how much the learner is interested in the culture of the target language countries. He sees language learning not just as a school subject, but also a social event which includes a variety of elements.

The effect of motivation in second language acquisition is related to the orientations the motivation of the learner. Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert (1972) carried out significant studies of motivation in second language learning. They identified two basic types of motivation as **instrumental** and **integrative**. Instrumental motivation is defined as "acquiring a language as a means for attaining instrumental goals: furthering a career, reading technical material, translation, and so

forth” and the integrative side affects learners “to integrate them into the culture of second language group and involved in social interchange in that group” (Brown, 2000: 162).

Gardner and Lambert (1972) in Canada, using 75 eleventh grade high school students in Montreal, found that integrative motivation was a stronger predictor of French accomplishment than instrumental motivation. They then expanded these results with 83 tenth grade students of French. The results of the study concluded that the integrative motivation was especially important for the development of communicate skills. (Gardner, 1991)

However; several years later, Gardner and MacIntyre (1989) referred instrumental and integrative motivation as a case of orientation. That is to say, learner’s needs might be different in learning a foreign language such as academic or career-related ‘instrumental’, or socially or culturally oriented ‘integrative’. As Brown mentions (2000), it is important to distinguish orientation from motivation. For example, one learner may be mildly motivated to learn within an academic context while another learner with the same orientation may be highly driven to succeed.

Cook (2001) suggests that with instrumental orientation, language acquisition may end as soon as enough is acquired to get the job done. He points out that instrumentally oriented learners may acquire just those aspects of the target language that are necessary, such as simple routines and patterns and at a more advanced level, aspects of morphology and accent. He also claims that the presence of integrative motivation, which is the desire to be like the speakers of the language, should encourage the acquirer to interact with speakers of the second language, and thereby gain intake. Therefore; integrative motivation is important for the development of communicative skills.

Another dimension of motivation construct is intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Edward Deci (1975:23) defined intrinsic motivation as:

Intrinsically motivated activities are ones for which there is no apparent reward except the activity itself. People seem to engage in the activities for their own sake not because they lead to an extrinsic reward. ... Intrinsically motivated behaviours are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences, namely, feeling of *competence* and *self-determination* (cited in Brown, 2001: 76).

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is the result of expectation of a reward from outside such as money, prizes, grades, threat of punishment and etc.

For the adult learners who most probably have to work and look after a family, motivation must be a key factor which contributes to their learning. The internal drive to learn, regardless of all their other duties, make adults more motivated than children.

Many lecturers and tutors find that mature students tend to be more motivated than younger students for a number of reasons: because the course or the programme is something that they have long wanted to do; because they have made sacrifices in order to participate; because they want to prove to themselves (and others) that they are capable of learning and gaining a qualification; or because they need or are required to study for career or employment reasons (McGivney, 2004: 42).

From the related literature above, it can be concluded that whether a learner's orientation is integrative or instrumental, or s/he is intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, motivation is essential for all learners. If the learner has not got the drive to reach his or her goal for whatever purpose, teachers and tutors will have a difficult task in guiding their learning process. Therefore, teachers should try hard to make the materials and course as interesting as possible for the learner. It is for sure that learning a second language consists of a variety of elements which can motivate the students, including an interest in the culture and heritage of the countries where the language is spoken or the necessity to learn English in order to further their studies or to promote themselves in their careers.

CHAPTER III

III. DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify Turkish adult EFL learners' beliefs about second language and second language learning. Another aim of this study is to find out why adults want to learn English and in what activities they engage in order to improve their English outside the class. It also explores Turkish adult EFL learners' preferences and difficulties in language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, speaking, reading, writing and listening.

3.2. Research Questions

This research attempts to answer following questions:

1. What are the Turkish adult learners' beliefs about learning English in general/ second language learning in general?
2. What are the most important reasons for them to learn English?
3. Is being an adult an advantage or disadvantage for them?
4. What activities do they engage in a regular basis to improve their English?
5. Which language areas do they prefer?
6. In which language areas do they have difficulties?

3.3. Methodology

This chapter first focuses on the overall design of the study. Then, it presents the research questions and some information about the participants. Afterwards, data collection instruments along with data collection procedures are explained. Finally, information with respect to the analysis of data is provided.

3.3.1. Design of the Study

This is a descriptive study based on a survey research conducted for the purpose of making descriptive assertions about some population. This study aims to identify Turkish adult learners' perceptions towards learning English as a second language. The method of gathering the primary data was quantitative and it was gathered via a four-part questionnaire. The first nine questions on the questionnaire were to gather personal information. The next section contained sixteen statements on a five-point Likert scale. This was followed by two multiple-choice questions. The last section contained two questions on a scale of three. The fact that no answers was either right or wrong and the students should choose the best answers that suits them was explained at the beginning of the questionnaire.

3.3.2. Subjects

The study was conducted in two language centers (Prodem and Avrasya) in Konya, Turkey. The data sources in this study were non-native students of English. They were all over 18. These courses were open to the general public and as a result, the students were of various levels from beginners to advanced. The students had the option to attend morning or evening classes during the week or at the weekend. They generally took eight hours of English classes in a week.

3.3.3. Data Collection and Instruments

In this study, four parts of questionnaire was used with the purpose of collecting quantitative data. The questions were collected from *The Inventory of Adult Language Learners* (ALL) and *The Rossman Adult Learners Inventory* (RALI). The questionnaire was administered in two language centres (Prodem and Avrasya) in Konya, Turkey.

Before the administration of the questionnaire, the coordinators of the courses gave information to the teachers about the study. Each teacher explained to the students why they were being asked to participate in the study and they were encouraged to seek clarification of any items they did not understand. The teachers did not look at the results and handed the completed questionnaires back to the coordinators of the courses in closed envelopes.

The statistical analyses were conducted by using the Statistical Package for Social Siencies (SPSS). Frequency distributions were presented through tables.

CHAPTER IV

IV. FINDINGS and DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Profile of the Subjects

The subjects were all non-native English learners. Forty-seven female participants and fifty-three males took part in the study, making a total of one hundred participants.

The study explored a range of questions about adults' foreign language learning. All of the subjects were over the eighteen years old. Table1. represents the age groups of the subjects who participated in the study. The number of males and females are given for each percentage.

Age Groups	Number of students	Percentage
18-21	41	41%
21-25	32	32%
25-30	12	12%
30-35	9	9%
Over 35	6	6%

Table.1 Age groups and Number of Students

The most frequent age group who participated in the study ranged from eighteen to twenty-one which accounted for 41% of the subjects. The least frequent age groups were between thirty and thirty-five, and over thirty-five which accounted just 15% total of the subjects.

Almost half (39%) of the participants had been learning English for one year. The most obvious percentages were 13% for two years, 7% for four years, 9% for eight years and 10% for ten years.

For 65% of the participants English was compulsory as a part of their school studies and for 35% it was not compulsory.

64% of the participants said that they had never learned a second language except English. English was their first attempt to learn a foreign language. However; 36% of the participants said that they had learned other languages before. 29 had studied German, 1 had studied French, and 6 had studied Russian.

Almost four fifths of the students (78%) liked learning a language. Just 22% of the students said no for this question. 65 participants liked learning English, 3 German, 1 Arabic, 3 Russian, 2 French, and 4 Spanish.

The most frequent group in language classes per week was 18% of eight hours, then 16% of ten hours, 15% of six hours and finally 14% of four hours.

24% of the participants spent one hour on learning English outside the class each week. 20% spent three- five hours, 14% spent two and finally 12% spent four hours each week.

	Percentages
I am a foundation student in a university	15%
I am university student and English lessons are a compulsory part of my course	30%
I am a full time university student taking English as an optional class.	11%
I am working full time and attending a language centre	13%
I am working part time and attending a language centre	4%
Other (Please specify).....	27%

Table. 2 Type of Schools Students were Attending

Of the 27% of participants who specified “other”, 17 of them were attending university, but English was not one of their subjects, 6 of them were housewives and 4 of them were unemployed and needed to learn English to have a better chance of getting a job.

4.2. Data Analysis

In this section, the result of the questionnaire will be analyzed. The result of each question is given through a table. The most frequent percentages are given in bold. The results reveal students’ beliefs, difficulties and perceptions about English and learning English.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.Learning English is important for me	81%	15%	3%	1%	0%
2.My knowledge of Turkish help me to learn English	21%	44%	21%	11%	3%
3.My knowledge of Turkish grammar helps me with English grammar	18%	39%	21%	17%	5%
4.Learning vocabulary is easy because a lot of English words are used in Turkish	1%	8%	28%	47%	16%
5.I find the spelling of English words easy	4%	29%	37%	22%	8%

6.I find it easy to pronounce words in English	5%	22%	38%	31%	4%
7.I want to keep my own accent when speaking English	7%	20%	28%	30%	15%
8.I would like to have a native-like accent when speaking English	59%	20%	8%	7%	6%
9.I do not worry about making grammar mistakes when I speak English	10%	22%	39%	21%	8%
10.I do not worry about my pronunciation when I speak English	7%	21%	36%	30%	6%
11. I feel uncomfortable when speaking English	6%	33%	28%	26%	7%
12.I feel uncomfortable about reading aloud in class	9%	32%	24%	27%	8%
13.The older you are the more difficult it is to learn English	36%	39%	19%	12%	4%
14.I have other responsibilities, so I have limited time to study English	28%	44%	13%	9%	6%
15.I enjoy learning English	37%	35%	17%	7%	4%
16.I am a good language learner	13%	29%	37%	15%	6%

Table. 3 Adults' Perceptions About English

For the first question almost all (81%-16%) of the subject strongly agreed and agreed, just 2% of the students disagree and strongly disagree. Almost half (44%-21% and 39%-18%) of the students agreed that their knowledge of Turkish and Turkish grammar helped them to learn English and English grammar. For the fourth question 44% of the students did not agree that learning vocabulary was easy because a lot of English words were used in Turkish. 37% of the students neither agreed nor disagreed that the spelling of English words was easy. However; while 29% of students found it easy, 22% of students found it difficult. 38% of students neither agreed nor disagreed that pronunciation of English words was easy but 31% of students disagreed with this statement. The percentages of the seventh question were very close to each other. 28% of students agree, 28% of the students neither agreed nor disagreed, and 26% of the students disagreed with this statement. Almost all (59%-30%) of the students would like to have a native-like accent when speaking English, just 2% of students disagreed and strongly disagreed with this statement. For the ninth question, 10%-22% of the students did not worry about making grammar mistakes when speaking English. 21%-8% of the students disagreed with this statement and 39% of them neither agreed nor disagreed. In the same way, 7%-21% of the students did not worry about pronunciation when speaking English while 30%-6% worried about their pronunciation. 36% of students neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. 6 %-33% of students felt uncomfortable when speaking English and 25%-7% of them did not feel uncomfortable. 28% of the students neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. The answers of the twelfth question were balanced with the previous one. 9%-32% of the students strongly agreed and agreed that they felt uncomfortable about reading in the class. 24% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement while 27%-8% of them disagreed and strongly disagreed with this statement. 36 %-39% of the students strongly agreed and agreed that the older you were the more difficult to learn English, 10% of them neither agreed nor disagreed and 12%-4% of them disagreed and strongly disagreed with this statement. Over the half (28%-44%) of the students strongly agreed and agreed that they had other responsibilities, so they had limited time to study English, 13% of the students neither agreed nor disagreed and 19%-6% of them disagreed and strongly disagreed with this statement. Nearly four fifths

(37%-35%) of the students enjoyed learning English while 7%-4% did not enjoy learning English. 17% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. 13%-29% of the students strongly agreed and agreed that they were good learner, 37% of them neither agreed nor disagreed, 15%-6% disagreed and strongly disagreed with this statement.

What are the most important reason(s) for you to learn English? <i>Please tick maximum three boxes.</i>		Percentages
a.	Because I like the language	42%
b.	Because English is an international language	70%
c.	Because I like the culture(s) of one or more English speaking countries	14%
d.	I have a job but I find to find a better one	12%
e.	I am unemployed and need to find a job	18%
f.	English is necessary for my future	92%
g.	To travel abroad e.g. Holiday	21%
h.	To work abroad	18%
i.	English is a compulsory part of my studies	29%
j.	To pass an exam	20%
k.	To learn about English speaking countries	12%
l.	Other(s) (Please specify).....	2%

Table.4 Motivation Factors of Students for Learning English

In this part of the questionnaire, students were asked to tick maximum three boxes as the most important reasons for them to learn English. The most frequent percentages are given in bold. Nearly half (42%) of them liked the language. One of the most spectacular percentages was for the second option; 76% of the students wanted to learn English because it was an international language. The percentages of c and k were balanced. 14% of the students marked c and %12 of them marked k. That is, they wanted to learn English because they liked the culture(s) of one or more English speaking countries and they wanted to learn about English speaking countries. 12% of the students had a job but they wanted to find a better job; therefore, they wanted to learn English. 18% of the students wanted to learn English because they were unemployed and they needed to find a job. The highest percentage

was for f. Almost all (92%) of the students thought that English was necessary for their future. 21% of the students learnt English because they considered it was necessary for travelling abroad and 18% of them wanted to learn English to work abroad. For 29% Of the students English was compulsory of their studies and 20% of the students learnt English because they needed to pass an exam. Just 2% marked the “other” option. These students wanted to learn English just out of curiosity or they thought they had an inborn language learning ability.

In addition to your class activities, which of the following activities do you engage in on a regular basis to improve your English? Please tick the box (es).		Percentages
a.	Watch films in English	42%
b.	Watch T.V. Programmes in English	22%
c.	Read books in English	36%
d.	Listen to music in English	69%
e.	Speak to native speakers of English	8%
f.	Read newspapers/magazines in English	9%
g.	Write e-mails/letters in English	12%
h.	Browse through the internet in English web pages	78%
i.	Attend an English speaking club	8%
j.	None	6%
k.	Other(s) (Please specify).....	3%

Table.5 Activities in Which Adults Engage to Improve Their English

In this part of the questionnaire, students were asked to tick the activities they engaged in to improve their English (apart from their class activities). The most frequent percentages are given in bold. 42% of the students watched films while 22% of them watched T.V. programmes in English. 36% of the students preferred reading books. One of the highest percentages was for d, 69% of the students listened to music in English. The lowest percentage was for e and i. Just 8% of the students spoke to native speakers and attended an English speaking club. 9% of the students read newspapers and magazines while 12% of them wrote e-mails and letters in

English. Nearly four fifth (78%) of the students browsed through the internet in English web pages. 6% of the students marked “none” option and 3% of them marked “other”. These students made use of pronunciation CDs and watched matches in English Premier League.

Which language area(S) do you prefer? Please tick your choice(s)			
	Most Preferred	No Strong Preference	Least Preferred
Vocabulary	89%	9%	2%
Grammar	26%	39%	35%
Pronunciation	72%	16%	12%
Speaking	84%	8%	6%
Reading	30%	28%	42%
Writing	34%	40%	26%
Listening	22%	34%	44%

Table.6 The Preferences of Adult Learners for Language Skills

In this part of the questionnaire, students were asked to mark which language skills they preferred. They could choose more than one option. Students' preferences were mainly of vocabulary, pronunciation, and speaking. Nearly all (89%) of the students had strong preference of vocabulary when 9% of them had no strong preference. Just 2% of the students marked vocabulary as 'least preferred'. The second skill, grammar, is chosen by 26% of the students as 'most preferred'. The options of 'no strong preference' and 'least preferred' were in balance; the first one was 39% and the second one was 35%. 72% of the students mostly preferred pronunciation when 12% of them least preferred it. The perception of 'no strong preference' was 16%. Over four fifth (84%) of the students marked 'speaking' as 'most preferred' when 8% of them had no strong preference and 6% of them least preferred it. 30% of the students had strong preference of reading and 28% of them had no strong preference of this skill. Nearly half (42%) of the students marked reading as 'least preferred'. 34% of the students had strong preference of writing

while 40% of them had no strong preference. 26% of the students marked this skill as 'least preferred'. Lastly, 22% of the students had strong preference of listening and 34% of them had no strong preference. Nearly half (44%) of the students marked listening as 'least preferred'.

Please tick the area(s) in which you have the most difficulties while learning English			
	Easy	Neither Easy nor Difficult	Difficult
Vocabulary	10%	24%	66%
Grammar	39%	41%	20%
Pronunciation	32%	37%	31%
Speaking	12%	15%	73%
Reading	55%	33%	12%
Writing	37%	46%	17%
Listening	19%	12%	69%

Table.7 Difficulties of Adult Learners in Language Skills

In the last question, the students were asked to tick the language skills they had most difficulty when learning English. Over three fifth (66%) of the students had difficulty in vocabulary when 10% of them found it easy and 24% of them marked it as 'neither easy nor difficult'. The first two percentages of grammar skill were close to each other; 39% of the students found it easy while 41% of them found it neither easy nor difficult. Just one fifth of the students (20%) marked grammar as difficult. 31% of the students had difficulty in pronunciation. 32% and 37% of them found it

easy or neither easy nor difficult. The first two percentages of speaking skill were in balance. 12% and 15% of the students found it easy or neither easy nor difficult while 73% of them had difficulty in speaking. For over half (55%) of the students, reading was easy. 33% of them found it neither easy nor difficult while 12% of them had difficulty in reading. 37% of the students marked writing skill as easy and 46% of them marked it as neither easy nor difficult. For 17%, writing was difficult. The first two percentages of listening skill were close to each other. 19% and 12% of the students marked listening as easy or neither easy nor difficult while 69% of them have difficulty in listening.

CHAPTER V

V. DISCUSSION

The aim of the study is to identify Turkish adult EFL learners' beliefs about second language and second language learning. Another aim of this study is to find out why adults want to learn English and in what activities they engage in order to improve their English outside the class. It also explores Turkish adult EFL learners' preferences and difficulties in language skills such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, speaking, reading, writing and listening.

In this study, four parts questionnaire was used with the purpose of collecting quantitative data. The questions were collected from *The Inventory of Adult Language Learners* (ALL) and *The Rossman Adult Learner Inventory* (RALI). The first nine questions on the questionnaire were to gather personal information. The next section contained sixteen statements on a five-point Likert scale. This was followed by two multiple-choice questions. The statistical analyses were conducted by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

The first part of the questionnaire contained sixteen statements on a five-point Likert scale. For the first statement, 97% of the students agreed that English is important for them. Just 3% and 1% of them neither agreed nor disagreed, or disagreed with this statement. It clearly reveals the importance of English in Turkey. Nearly all of the students were aware of the advantages of learning English. In the same way, in Turkish educational institutions and in private courses teaching/learning English became a very significant subject. As Kilickaya (2006) points out that English has always been a concern of educational field in Turkey and it is widely used and recognized in Turkish educational and private sector. It has become a 'must' for Turkish students to have the knowledge of English. As it can be easily understood from the percentage of first statement, Turkish adult students are aware of this fact.

The second and the third statements are about students' knowledge of L1 and L1 grammar. 62% of the students strongly agreed/agreed that their knowledge of Turkish help them to learn English. It seems to indicate that older learners are able to make order associations and generalizations in the target language and have developed cognitive systems thanks to their L1 knowledge. They can also integrate new language input with their already substantial learning experiences. 57% of the students strongly agreed/agreed that having the knowledge of L1 grammar helped them with English grammar. For these students, it seems that having the concepts of L1 grammar rules was an advantage when constructing the grammar system of L2. As Smith(1994) claims even if they do not build up new knowledge of grammar based on the knowledge of L1, learners of second language can still form utterances when they are actually trying to communicate, using the L2 words they know and recruiting the L1 grammar as a skeleton for those L2 words. However; 14% for the second and 22% for the third statement of the students disagreed/strongly disagreed with this statement. For these students, having the knowledge of L1 and L1 grammar was not an advantage. The new language was a totally new area for them.

When the Turkish adult subjects were asked if learning vocabulary was easy because of a lot of English words were similar in Turkish, just 9% strongly agreed/agreed. 47% and 16% of them disagreed/ strongly disagreed with this statement. It can be interpreted that English words may not have equivalent words in Turkish or abstract nouns may not be easy for students to figure out. In addition to these, for the last two questions (19 and 20), most of the students (89%) preferred vocabulary and half of the students (66%) mostly had difficulty in learning vocabulary. That is to say, vocabulary is the most preferred language skill by Turkish adult students; however, they have most difficulty again in this skill. It can be said that they may not know vocabulary learning strategies or they may not able to adopt the most appropriate strategy for them to learn vocabulary.

The results of the fifth statement were balanced. 33% of the students strongly agreed/agreed and 30% of them disagreed/strongly disagreed that they found the spelling of English words easy. Adults are accustomed to writing when compared to

children. Through their learning process, adults are exposed to writing more than children both in their first and second language

The sixth statement was about pronouncing words in English. The percentages of those who strongly agreed/agreed (27%) and disagreed/strongly disagreed (35%) were not much different. The highest percentage was those who neither agreed nor disagreed (38%). These results were surprising because Turkish is a phonetic language that is, each letter retains its own sound. However; in English the sounds of letters can change as the latter *a* in *fat*, *fate* and *fare* etc. The difference between the sound patterns of two languages may not affect the students in the study.

The following two statements were about accent. When Turkish adult students were asked if they wanted to keep their accent while speaking English, 45% of them declared that they did not want to keep Turkish accent. 28% of them neither agreed nor disagreed and 27% of them agreed. When they are asked about having native-like accent in English, 79% of the students said that they wanted to have native-like accent when speaking English. Just 13% of them did not want to have native-like accent. This also confirmed the results of previous item. The researches about adults' having native-like accent in L2 suggest that adults were disadvantage of having native like accent and foreign accents could not be overcome easily after puberty. According to Lightbown and Spada (2003) most studies about the relationship between age and second language acquisition have focused on learners' phonological (pronunciation) achievement. Generally speaking, these researches have supposed that older learners cannot be able to have native-like accent. Nevertheless adults seem to be eager to have native-like accent in L2.

The students' answers to the ninth statement fairly balanced. When speaking in mother tongue, people do not worry about their grammar, especially in colloquial language. However; in learning L2 students are mainly anxious about their grammar. It prevents them to speak fluently in target language. As they try to do a lot of things at the same time, for example; finding the right word, the pronunciation of it, the word order, accordance of subject and object, time of the clause and etc. All these

make it more difficult to speak in L2. 29% of the students thought in that way, and worried about making grammar mistakes while 32% of them did not.

When they were asked about pronunciation mistakes, 28% of them said that they did not worry about making pronunciation mistakes. The percentages of 'neither agree/nor disagree' and 'disagree/totally disagree' were exactly the same. Pronunciation in L2 cannot be acquired at once. Students who agreed this statement may evaluate language just for the sake of communication. The others may get accustomed to learn language in a written way since Turkish education System mostly depends on memorization and grammar.

The following two statements were about difficulties for adult learners in speaking and reading aloud in the classroom. 39% of the students felt uncomfortable when speaking in the class. This may be because of the fact that they may be stressed and embarrassed in front of other students or the teacher. In addition to this, they may have stage-fright or they may feel humiliated if they make a mistake. Adults have other identities apart from being a student and this may be a disadvantage for them to behave as they are asked in a group work. The highest percentage for the next statement is 41%. Nearly half of the students felt uncomfortable when reading aloud in class. This result confirmed the previous one. When speaking or reading in the class, adults do not feel comfortable. There may be several reasons for it, for example, they may be afraid of making mistakes and being ridiculous because of these mistakes. There may be other students of higher levels in the class and these students may be the reason for them to refrain from doing group activities.

The following two statements were one of the most important parts of the questionnaire. The first one is 'the older you are, the more difficult to learn English' 75% of the students strongly agreed/ agreed, 10% of them neither agreed nor disagreed and just 15% of them disagreed/totally disagreed with this statement. According to Lenneberg's Critical Period Hypothesis certain biological events about language development can only occur in an early critical period, which is, beginning at around two and ending at puberty. There may be gradual decline in L2 acquisition with age. The supporters of this hypothesis believe that the earlier is the better in

language learning in L2. As it can be interpreted easily from the results Turkish adult learners believe in the same way. However, they do not see biological disadvantages as a result of this deficiency. %72 of the students said that they had other responsibilities, so they had limited time to study English. %13 of them neither agreed nor disagreed and 15% of them disagreed/strongly disagreed with this statement. In the first part of the questionnaire, the professions of the subjects were analyzed and just 4% of them were unemployed. That is, the subjects in the study were mainly university students, or working full or part time, or housewives. In other words, they had other responsibilities in their lives. As a result, it can be assumed that learning a language as an adult may be a disadvantage not because of biological but because of external factors.

In the fifteenth statement, the students were asked if they enjoyed learning English. The results were positive with nearly three quarters (72%) of the students strongly agreed/agreed that they enjoyed learning English. 17% of them neither agreed nor disagreed and 15% of them disagreed/strongly disagreed with this statement. These results confirmed the results of the sixth question in the first part of the questionnaire. In this question students were asked if they liked learning languages. 78% of them said 'yes' for this question. Although they had limited time to study as mentioned above, most of the students liked learning English. McGivney (2004) suggests that adult learners regardless of all their other responsibilities have an inner drive to learn and this makes adults more motivated when compared to children. In addition to these, this research was conducted in two private language courses, that is, the students spent time and money in order to learn English. As they were aware of the value of time and money, they were eager to learn English and they wanted to reach their ultimate goal.

The last question aimed to discover the students' perception of themselves as language learners. Nearly two fifth (42%) of the students had self-confidence towards their learning abilities. %21 of them did not see themselves as good language learners and 37% of them neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. It can be interpreted that adults are able to comprehend what characteristics a good

learner must have and they can evaluate their learning abilities easily. As a result, they can be realistic about the facts of their learning capacity. In the light of this, it can be assumed that adult learners know their abilities and deficiencies in this process.

In the third part of the questionnaire, students were asked to tick maximum three boxes as the most important reasons for them to learn English. In other words, they were required to mark what motivated them to learn English. The highest three answers for these questions were as in follows: 'English is necessary for my future' (92%), then 'Because English is an international language (70%) and finally 'Because I like the language' (42%). It can be interpreted as almost all of the students were aware of the fact that English was vital for their career. The students in the study were mainly university students. English lessons might be compulsory or not as a part of their classes, that is to say, they might choose English as an optional class. Nevertheless; they noticed the vitality of at least one foreign language both for their personal and academic development. They might want to postgraduate study or have doctoral degree in future. In addition to this, especially in the private sector more and more companies demand people with the knowledge of English. The percentage of this statement confirms the idea that Turkish adult learners are conscious of the importance of English in future. In the same way, 70% of the students wanted to learn English because it is an international language. It is an undeniable fact that English is the main language of international communication. As in most of the other countries in the world, knowing English is always an advantage in Turkey. The students in the study may want to work or travel abroad. Besides, they may want to go on their postgraduate studies abroad. The third most popular statement was 'they liked English'. 42% of the students wanted to learn English because they liked the language itself. This result may suggest that Turkish adult learners have positive perception towards English as a second language. They may like the cultures of English speaking countries and wanted to learn about these countries. Adults may be accustomed the idea that world is becoming a smaller place, therefore; cultures of different countries are the parts of a big macrocosm. They may not be prejudiced against the other.

The eighteenth question was about the activities that students engage in to improve their English. The results indicate that the most popular activities were browsing through the internet in English web pages (78%), listening to English music (69%) and watching films in English (42%). These results may indicate that Turkish adult learners are familiar with English, however; these activities may be classified as free time activities. In other words, instead of writing letters to a pen-friend or speaking to a native they preferred listening or watching something in English. They took part in activities in a passive way. This may be because of the fact that they had other responsibilities and as a result had limited time to study English.

In the last part of the questionnaire, students' preferences and difficulties in language skills were investigated. Students mostly preferred vocabulary, speaking, and pronunciation. Grammar, reading, writing and listening had little or no preference. It can be interpreted as the students may want to use L2 in oral communication. Grammar teaching in L2 had priority in Turkish Education system (Kırkgöz, 2005). In the light of these results, it can be suggested that adults may be conscious of the fact that; even if they had enough knowledge of grammar in L2, it was nearly impossible to express themselves with limited vocabulary. As language is consisted of vocabulary, the basic instrument in communicating via a language system is the vocabulary knowledge. In the same way, speaking and pronunciation may be ignored in their previous learning process. These skills can be improved only by practicing. They cannot be taught through memorization. In other words, the more students speak in second language, the more fluent they are. The students in the study had a previous experience in L2 education and they may be aware of these deficiencies. As a result, their preferences were mainly of these language skills.

The most difficult skills for the students in the study are as follows; vocabulary, speaking, and listening. These results can be interpreted in many ways. One of them is that; students may think that their vocabulary knowledge in L1 may be useful in second language learning, as there are a lot of English words which are used in Turkish. In the same way, the language of the internet is English and this

may be beneficial for them. In addition to these, as they were accustomed to memorization in Turkish Education system, they may assume that they may acquire new vocabulary in the same way. However; as it can be easily understood from the results, they were of no avail for the students. Speaking was also a problematic issue for the students. Even if they knew the some rules about the target language, they were not able to speak fluently. Second language education is mainly based on grammar translation method in Turkey (Kırkgöz, 2005). Consequently, students were devoid of practice in speaking. Even if they had chance to practice, it would not be authentic. As they had limited knowledge in vocabulary, and all of them had the same native language, when they were unable to express themselves in L2, they could turn to L1. Students may not conscious of these facts when they were in primary or high schools. However; when they became adults, and realized that knowing a language means to have the ability of speaking and expressing yourself in that language, they understood the importance of this skill. In addition to this, the students in the study were asked in what activities they engage to improve their English. Extra activities were mostly passive skills, such as watching films or listening music in English. In other words, they did not choose to try to speak a native, or attend a speaking club. As a result, they had difficulty in speaking. In the light of these ideas, students had difficulty in listening. Although they chose 'listening to music in English' as an extra activity to improve their English, they had difficulty in this skill. With limited vocabulary and practice, students may have problems in listening. Additionally, listening with a specific purpose such as filling the gaps, making true-false etc. may get them stressed and cause anxiety.

CHAPTER VI

VI. CONCLUSION

Teaching second language to adults is unique in terms of its advantages and disadvantages both for the students and the teachers. With the help of this study, teacher can be aware of the characteristics and advantages of adult learners and how these reflect on the teaching process. In addition to these, they can try to eliminate disadvantages or prevent them being obstacles in adults' learning process.

Initially, adults have some intentions about their education. In other words, they have some expectations about their learning process. As it can be understood from the results in the study, they are conscious of the fact that they need to learn English. They are motivated to learn English no matter this motivation is integrative, instrumental, extrinsic or instrumental. Some students may want to integrate themselves into the culture of English speaking countries or they may see English as a key that can bring them a better job or position in the future. Undoubtedly, it is easier for a teacher to be with motivated students as long as s/he is aware of this motivation factor. Therefore; teachers of adults should consider motivation factor in reaching process and try to make her/his students conscious about the vitality of English in our modern world.

Secondly, adult students can transfer study skills and learning strategies that they have acquired in their previous experiences to L2A. They have finished their studies or at least some degree in their education. As a result, they already have well-established patterns for learning and gained some basic skills such as reading, writing, summarizing, identifying and etc. Besides, adults have critical thinking ability such as analyzing, synthesizing, speculating and etc. which are very important in second language education. Additionally, adults are able to handle abstract rules and concepts with their developed abstract thinking ability. This is a significant advantage when compared to children. Accordingly, English teachers of adults should create conditions for their students to reactivate the previous study skills and

learning strategies of the learner and apply them appropriately to their learning process.

One more advantage is that, adult learners can make use of the knowledge they have accumulated in their own language. Firstly, they have a great deal of knowledge in their mother tongue and needless to say, a mature L1 semantic, pragmatic and syntactic system is available. When they start to learn a new language, they can remember the new language system by making use of what they know about their native language. They can compare and contrast their first language with the second language they are learning to find out areas in which two languages are different or similar. Naturally, they have an option to use some of their L1 system as a starting point for building L2 grammar. Secondly, adult students' world knowledge and specialist knowledge can contribute much to their learning process. It can help them when they read about or discuss complex issues in English. In the light of these, teachers should make use of the knowledge of students in positive ways and help them to integrate their knowledge into the system of second language.

Another advantage is that, adult learners can take the responsibility of their learning process. They are usually described as goal-oriented, in other words; they know their purpose and their reason to learn. It is a conscious process for them, they are willing to learn a language whether or not it is a choice or necessity. They want to achieve their goal, as a result, they are not probably bored of studying. They are disciplined and often prepared to struggle to learn a language. However; teachers of adult learners should not pin the responsibility on students for learning and make them believe they will guide their students when they are in need of help.

In the other hand, there are some disadvantages of teaching English as a second language to adults. Initially, learning a second language makes a strong demand on adult learners in terms of time. As a matter of fact, adults have other responsibilities in their lives. Therefore; they have limited time to study. The students in the research mainly complained about this issue. Although they liked English and knew the importance of it in their future, they could not do extra activities to improve their English.

Secondly, it is generally believed that a person who started to learn a language as an adult will never be able to use it properly. As it can be understood from the percentages in the third chapter, most of the students in the study had this belief. These students may have

unsuccessful experiences in their second language education or may not be able to apply the proper learning strategy to this process. No matter what the reason is, this idea may cause the lack of confidence in second language learning and prevent progress. In addition to these, they may have the fear of failure and frustration with lack of progress. Some adults are very successful in their jobs or have a very high status at their works. However; they are just normal students coping with tasks and homework, or trying to understand issues in the target language. That is to say, as they are successful in their career, they may not want to fail to achieve their desired goal of learning English. Consequently, adult learners suffer from anxiety which could hinder the students' performance and learning process. Teachers of adult learners should give their students confidence and inoculate the idea that 'as a teacher I believe in you, and you have to believe in yourself'. Teachers should not be critical about their mistakes and should attempt to encourage them.

Another disadvantage of adult learners is that; they may be critical of certain teaching methods. They may be hostile to particular methodological styles which they received earlier in their education. This may be resulted from their previous failure or criticism at school, or prejudices of being old and underestimating their learning ability. They may tend to be self-directed and want to take control over their learning. Additionally, they may be resistant to new ideas and want to be taught in the ways they choose. They may be resistant to participate in group works or role plays just because of the fear of being foolish in front of other students.

As it can be perceived easily, it seems an oversimplification to name the adults as 'good' or 'bad' language learners. At this juncture, teachers of adult students should know how to revert disadvantages into advantages. They should not be prejudiced and try to make their students believe in their abilities to learn a language. Teachers of adults should be conscious of the fact that their students are already motivated and wanted to learn English for their future. They should involve them not only in indirect learning through reading, listening and speaking but also in skills in which they can use their intellects to learn consciously. They should encourage them to make use of their previous knowledge in their learning process and show the ways of improving their English outside the class.

Teachers of adults should help the students to minimise the negative effects of previous learning experiences. They should try to diminish the fear of failure by offering a broader sense of success. They should pay special attention to the level of challenge of the activities and prefer more achievable ones. Teachers of adults should bear in mind that; each

adult learner is an individual with different hopes and expectations. Their anxieties, hopes and preferences are also different. The ultimate purpose is to recognize each student's uniqueness and work in ways that will help the individual to achieve his/her learning objective in a second language.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please tick (✓) the appropriate box

Gender:

Male	
------	--

Female	
--------	--

Age Group:

18-21	
-------	--

21-25	
-------	--

25-30	
-------	--

30-35	
-------	--

over 35	
---------	--

How many years/months have you been learning English?

Is English a compulsory part of your studies?

Yes	
-----	--

No	
----	--

Have you learnt any other language(s) before?

Yes	
-----	--

No	
----	--

(If yes, please specify which ones)

Do you like learning languages? If yes which ones?

Yes	
-----	--

No	
----	--

.....

How many hours of English lessons do you have per week?

How many hours do you spend on learning English outside class each week?

Please tick which type of school you are attending.

a.	I am a foundation student in the university	
b.	I am a university student and English lessons are compulsory part of my course	
c.	I am a full time university student taking English as an optional class	
d.	I am working full time and attending a language center	
e.	I am working part time and attending a language center	
f.	Other (<i>Please specify</i>)	

Please tick the appropriate box. There are no right or wrong answers. The best answers are the ones that suit you.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.Learning English is important for me					
2.My knowledge of Turkish help me to learn English					
3.My knowledge of Turkish grammar helps me with English grammar					
4.Learning vocabulary is easy because a lot of English words are used in Turkish					
5.I find the spelling of English words easy					
6.I find it easy to pronounce words in English					
7.I want to keep my own accent when speaking English					
8.I would like to have a native-like accent when speaking English					
9.I do not worry about making grammar mistakes when I speak English					
10.I do not worry about my pronunciation when I speak English					
11. I feel uncomfortable when speaking English					
12.I feel uncomfortable about reading aloud in class					
13.The older you are the more difficult it is to learn English					
14.I have other responsibilities, so I have limited time to study English					
15.I enjoy learning English					
16.I am a good language learner					

17. What are the most important reason(s) for you to learn English?

Please tick maximum three boxes.

a.	Because I like the language	
b.	Because English is an international language	
c.	Because I like the culture(s) of one or more English speaking countries	
d.	I have a job but I find to find a better one	
e.	I am unemployed and need to find a job	
f.	English is necessary for my future	
g.	To travel abroad e.g. Holiday	
h.	To work abroad	
i.	English is a compulsory part of my studies	
j.	To pass an exam	
k.	To learn about English speaking countries	
l.	Other(s) (Please specify).....	

18. In addition to your class activities, which of the following activities do you engage

in on a regular basis to improve your English? Please tick the box(es)

a.	Watch films in English	
b.	Watch T.V. Programmes in English	
c.	Read books in English	
d.	Listen to music in English	
e.	Speak to native speakers of English	
f.	Read newspapers/magazines in English	
g.	Write emails/letters in English	
h.	Browse through the internet in English web pages	
i.	Attend an English speaking club	
j.	None	
k.	Other(s) (Please specify).....	

19. Which language area(S) do you prefer? Please tick your choice(s)

	Most Preferred	No Strong Preference	Least Preferred
Vocabulary			
Grammar			
Pronunciation			
Speaking			
Reading			
Writing			
Listening			

20. Please tick the area(s) in which you have the most difficulties while learning English.

	Easy	Neither Easy nor Difficult	Difficult
Vocabulary			
Grammar			
Pronunciation			
Speaking			
Reading			
Writing			
Listening			

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Appendix B

ANKET

Lütfen uygun kutuyu işaretleyiniz

Cinsiyet

Bay		Bayan	
-----	--	-------	--

Yaş Grubu

18-21		21-25		25-30		30-35		over 35	
-------	--	-------	--	-------	--	-------	--	---------	--

Kaç aydır/yıldır İngilizce eğitimi almaktasınız?

.....

İngilizce eğitiminizde zorunlu ders mi?

Evet		Hayır	
------	--	-------	--

Daha önce başka yabancı dil eğitimi aldınız mı?
(Cevabınız evet ise lütfen hangi dil(ler) olduğunu belirtiniz).....

Evet		Hayır	
------	--	-------	--

Yabancı dil öğrenmeyi seviyor musunuz?
(Cevabınız evet ise lütfen hangi diller olduğunu belirtiniz).....

Evet		Hayır	
------	--	-------	--

Haftada kaç saat İngilizce dersi görüyorsunuz?

Ders saatleriniz dışında haftada kaç saat İngilizce çalışıyorsunuz?

Lütfen aşağıdaki bölümde size uygun olanı işaretleyiniz

a.	Üniversitede hazırlık sınıfı öğrencisiyim	
b.	Üniversite öğrencisiyim, İngilizce diğer zorunlu derslerim arasında	
c.	Üniversite öğrencisiyim, İngilizceyi seçmeli ders olarak alıyorum	
d.	Tam zamanlı çalışmaktayım, İngilizce dil okuluna kayıtlıyım	
e.	Yarım zamanlı çalışmaktayım, İngilizce dil okuluna kayıtlıyım	
f.	Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz)	

**Lütfen size en uygun olan kutuyu işaretleyiniz. Doğru veya yanlış cevap yoktur
En geçerli cevap size uygun olan cevap olacaktır.**

	Kesinlikle Katılıyorum	Katılıyorum	Hem Katılıyorum Hem Katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kesinlikle Katılmıyorum
1.İngilizce öğrenmek benim için önemli					
2.Türkçe bilgilerim İngilizce öğrenmemde bana yardımcı oluyor					
3.Türkçe dilbilgisi bilgilerim İngilizce öğrenmemde bana yardımcı oluyor					
4.İngilizce kelime öğrenmeyi kolay buluyorum çünkü Türkçeye kelimelere yakınlar					
5.İngilizce kelimelerin yazımını kolay buluyorum					
6.İngilizce kelimelerin telafuzunu kolay buluyorum					
7.İngilizce konuşurken kendi aksanımı korumak istiyorum					
8.İngilizce konuşurken anadilim kadar iyi bir aksana sahip olmak istiyorum					
9.İngilizce konuşurken dilbilgisi hataları yapmaktan endişelenmiyorum					
10.İngilizce konuşurken telafuzda hata yapmaktan endişelenmiyorum					
11.İngilizce konuşurken kendimi rahat hissetmiyorum					
12.Sınıfta sesli okuma yaparken kendimi rahat hissetmiyorum					

13.Yaş ilerledikçe dil öğrenimi giderek zorlaşır					
14.Diğer sorumluluklarımdan dolayı İngilizceye yeterince zaman ayıramıyorum					
15.İngilizce öğrenmekten keyif alıyorum					
16.İyi bir yabancı dil öğrencisiyim					

17.Sizin için İngilizce öğrenmenin en önemli sebepleri nelerdir?

Lütfen en fazla üç kutu işaretleyiniz

a.	Çünkü İngilizceyi seviyorum	
b.	Çünkü İngilizce uluslar arası bir dil	
c.	Çünkü İngilizce konuşulan kültürleri seviyorum	
d.	Şu an çalışmaktayım fakat daha iyi bir iş arıyorum	
e.	Şu an çalışmıyorum ve iş arıyorum	
f.	Geleceğim için gerekli buluyorum	
g.	Yurtdışı seyahatlerim için gerekli buluyorum	
h.	Yurtdışında çalışmak istiyorum	
i.	İngilizce zorunlu dersim	
j.	Sınavlarımı geçmek için	
k.	İngilizce konuşulan ülkelerin kültürleri hakkında bilgi edinmek için	
l.	Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz).....	

18.İngilizcenizi geliřtirmek için sınıf içi çalışmalar haricinde ařağıdakilerden hangisini

veya hangilerini düzenli olarak yapıyorsunuz? Lütfen uygun yeri işaretleyiniz.

a.	İngilizce film izlemek	
b.	İngilizce televizyon programları izlemek	
c.	İngilizce kitap okumak	
d.	İngilizce müzik dinlemek	
e.	Anadili İngilizce olan yabancılarla konuşmak	
f.	İngilizce dergi/gazete okumak	
g.	İngilizce email/mektup yazmak	
h.	İnternette İngilizce sitelerde dolařmak	
i.	İngilizce konuşma kulüplerine katılmak	
j.	Hiçbiri	
k.	Diğer (Lütfen belirtiniz).....	

19.İngilize öğrenirken ařağıdaki dil alanlarını ne derece tercih ediyorsunuz?

	Öncelikli Tercihim	Emin Değilim	Tercih Etmiyorum
Kelime Bilgisi			
Dilbilgisi			
Telafuz			
Konuşma Becerileri			
Okuma Becerileri			
Yazma Becerileri			
Dinleme Becerileri			

20. Lütfen İngilizce öğrenirken karşılaştığınız zorlukları derecelendiriniz.

	Kolay	Ne Kolay Ne Zor	Zor
Kelime Bilgisi			
Dilbilgisi			
Telafuz			
Konuşma Becerileri			
Okuma Becerileri			
Yazma Becerileri			
Dinleme Becerileri			

YARDIMINIZ İÇİN TEŞEKKÜRLER



T.C.
SELÇUK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Müdürlüğü



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Adı Soyadı:	Firdevs Öten			
Doğum Yeri:	Erzincan			
Doğum Tarihi:	27.05.1980			
Medeni Durumu:	Evli			
Öğrenim Durumu				
Derece	Okulun Adı	Program	Yer	Yıl
İlköğretim	Ziya Gökalp İlköğretim		Erzincan	1987–1992
Ortaöğretim	Meram Orta Okulu		Konya	1992–1994
Lise	Muhittin Güzelkılınç Süper Lisesi		Konya	1994–1997
Lisans	Hacettepe Üniversitesi	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı	Ankara	1997-2001
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Becerileri:	Tiyatro, Güzel Sanatlar			
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