

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING BELIEFS: WITHIN THE FRAME
OF IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION**

Yabancı Dil Öğretiminde İnançlar: Kimlik Oluşma Süreci

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Abstract

Human learning is a complicated and dynamic process, and it gets cultivated through students' own mental lives since their perceptions as regards learning makes this process more meaningful. As Jarvis (2006) posits, so as to get into adults' minds it is of necessity for them to depict their own mental functioning. There seems no other way to comprehend it. Therefore, eliciting learners' mental images sheds light into their personal identities, which give shape to their learning because each educational context has its own variables and each student possess individual features. Student placed in the centre in new educational trends can take more sound and autonomous steps in their learning process through their clearly-constructed identities. Thus, this study dwells upon the EFL students' beliefs regarding language learning and their identity construction. The study investigated student beliefs in terms of analytic and experiential learning, and self-efficacy/confidence. 104 EFL students from different departments participated in the study. They were administered a beliefs questionnaire, and then 10 randomly selected students were interviewed in terms of their language identity. The study results indicated that students have inclination to learn the target language through practice, and they depict themselves as a language learner who does not exert so much effort to learn English. The study suggests that students need to know themselves better as a language learner, and develop clearer and sounder identities as regards the foreign language.

Key Words: Language learning, learner beliefs, identity.

Özet

İnsan öğrenmesi karmaşık ve dinamik bir süreçtir, ve öğrencilerin öğrenmeye yönelik algıları bu süreci daha anlamlı yaptığı için onların zihinsel yaşantıları ile beslenir. Jarvis'in de belirttiği gibi, yetişkinlerin zihinlerini incelemek için kendi zihinsel fonksiyonlarını betimlemeleri gereklidir (2006). Bu nedenle, öğrencilerin zihinsel imajları kişisel kimliklerine de ışık tutar, ki bu da öğrenmelerine şekil verir çünkü her bir eğitim ortamının kendine ait değişkenleri vardır ve her bir öğrenci bireysel farklılıklar taşır. Yeni eğitim akımlarında merkeze yerleştirilen öğrenci, net bir şekilde oluşturulmuş kimlikleri ile, öğrenme sürecinde daha sağlıklı ve özerk adımlar atabilirler. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen öğrencilerin dil öğrenme inançlarına ve kimlik oluşturmalarına odaklanmaktadır. Çalışmada, öğrenci inançları analitik ve deneysel öğrenme ile öz-yeterlilik/güven açısından incelenmiştir. Farklı bölümlerden 104 öğrenci bu çalışmaya katılmıştır. İnanç anketi uygulanmış, ardından da 10 öğrenci ile dil kimlikleri açısından sözlü görüşme yapılmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda, öğrencilerin yabancı dili, uygulama yolu ile öğrenmeye eğilimleri olduğu, ve kendilerini İngilizce öğrenmek için çok çaba harcamayan dil öğrencisi olarak betimledikleri bulunmuştur. Çalışmaya göre, öğrenciler dil öğrencisi olarak kendilerini daha iyi tanımalı ve yabancı dile dair daha net ve sağlıklı kimlikler oluşturmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dil Öğrenimi, öğrenci inançları, kimlik.

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1.1 Introduction

Learning is a dual process, and it cannot be thought as a flow of information from teachers' mouth into students' head. Students, with their own cognition and affect, take their place in educational context, and their beliefs influence the learning process since these beliefs or perceptions shape their stance towards this process. Moreover, they provide inspirations for teachers, as well. Knowledge of students' beliefs as regards language learning give language teachers an insight into learners' "expectations of, commitment to, success in and satisfaction with their language classes" (Horwitz, 1988, p. 283 in Rieger, 2009, p. 98). Davis (2003) also holds the opinion that people's beliefs are instrumental in affecting their behaviours, and he adds that "people act on the basis of perceptions and their *definition of the situation*" (p.207). To view this issue from a broader angle, several studies indicate that learners' beliefs have an impact upon learners' own learning approaches, emotional states, linguistic outcomes such as competence, knowledge and skills in target language (TL) and non-linguistic outcomes like reactions to TL and factors concerning TL (Ellis, 1994; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992, 1993 in Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). It is obvious that language learning and teaching are fed through learners' standpoints. These cognitions hold a great significance in uncovering and enhancing lots of variables, one of which is learner identity.

Learner identity constitutes one of the significant educational concepts since it makes student-learning more meaningful, conscious and solution-oriented. It is students' understanding of themselves as learners (Hood, 2007). This understanding or self-perceptions help students to clearly define learning behaviours in gaining knowledge. "The ways in which individuals view the world and their perceptions of themselves within the world, particularly within a learning situation, will play a major part in their learning and construction of knowledge (Williams & Burden, 1997 in Hirano, 2009, p.34). Hence, beliefs students develop regarding themselves encourages construction of learner identity, which allows them to manage their learning process in a more effective and fruitful manner.

1.2 Learner Beliefs

Learning is a multi-dimensional process. One of these dimensions is students' cognitions or beliefs that they bring to educational stage. Learning cannot be confined to just teacher instruction or teacher decisions. Students also occupy an important place in learning process, and their beliefs and views give a meaningful shape to this process. Student beliefs are "general assumptions that students hold about themselves as learners, about factors influencing learning and about the nature of language learning" (Victori & Lockhart, 1995, p.224 in Rieger, 2009, p.98). Student cognition is associated with how students deem learning and teaching process and themselves as learners. Thus, their mental lives concerning language hold a great significance in effective learning. Cotterall (1995, p.203 in Macdonald, 2005) posits that

Language learners hold beliefs about teachers and their role, about feedback, about themselves as learners and their role, and about language learning and learning in general. These beliefs will affect (and sometimes inhibit) learners' receptiveness to the ideas and activities presented in the language class, particularly when the approach is not consonant to the learners' experience (p.43)

Student thinking also provides an understanding about the impact of teaching process upon student learning. As Marland and Edwards (1986) posit, student thinking gives an insight into how teaching process affects the learning process students go through. “Teacher effects are mediated by the psychological processes or reactions of students, and teacher variables cannot be considered in isolation from student variables” (Bess, 2000, p.91 in Wuan, 2004. p.2). One of these variables is student cognitions, beliefs or student thinking. These beliefs play a determinant role in how student will act and feel. Rott (2002, p.24) propounds a cycle displaying the interplay among cognition, behaviour and emotion:

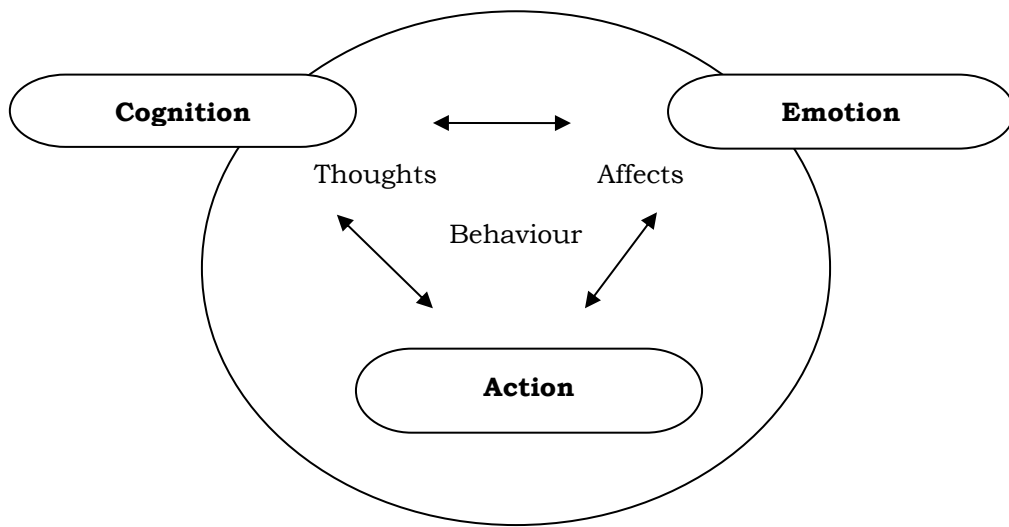


Figure 1. The Interaction between Cognition, Emotion and Action

As it is obvious, cognition has a role in determining how students will develop an affective and behavioural stance towards learning. This in turn influences learning results, teaching and achievement. As Davis (2003) proposes, beliefs may provide enlightening and beneficial insights into thinking processes and behaviours as regards language learning. “The thought processes or cognitions of students are believed to be a critical intervening variable between the teacher’s delivery of effective instruction and student learning outcomes” (Thurlow, Ysseldyke & Christenson, 1987, p.7). Consequently, student thinking gains greater place in learning and teaching process.

In brief, student cognitions or beliefs constitute a key component of both language learning and teaching process. They render this process more concrete and learner-centred due to the fact that views and perspective are elicited from students’ mouths, which enables an entrance into their mental lives. Hence, the process becomes clearer since student cognitions shed light into different aspects of language learning. One of these aspects is analytic learning.

1.2.1 Analytic Learning

There are different learning styles, one of which is analytic learning. Analytic learning refers to learning sequentially and in detail. SIL International (1999) asserts that analytical learners have an advantage in language learning due to the skill of analysing and comprehending the principles of language systems, and offers some guidelines to make the language learning process more effective through analytic learning:

- Basing language learning on lots of written or audio texts
- Using techniques requiring actual process messages in language learning
- Not studying language only as an artifact
- Using intuitive ability to recognize patterns

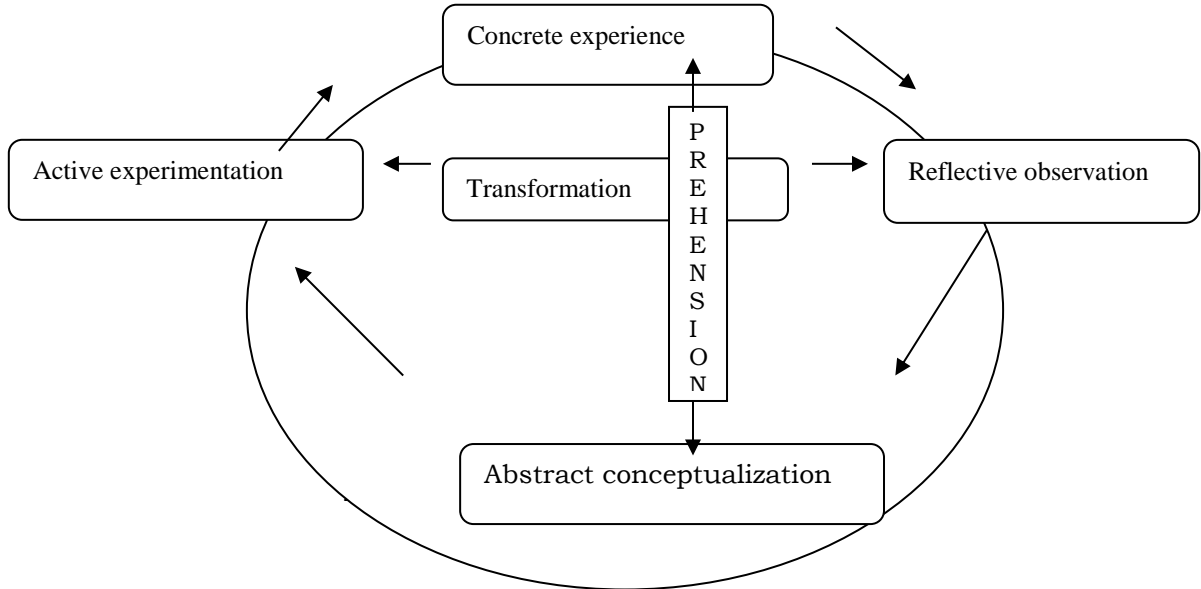
Apart from these, LeFever (1995, p.56) offers the characteristics of the analytic learners: These learners often

- like information presented logically and sequentially
- value facts, figures and theories
- debate to logically prove the correct stance or answer
- set long-range plans to see their consequences
- are curious about ideas
- enjoy listening and taking notes
- like teachers who are information givers
- learn from a traditional methodology
- need competition
- prefer studying alone

These are some of the features of analytic learners. However, analytic learning is not only one style learners can hold. There are others, one of which is experiential learning.

1.2.2 Experiential Learning

Experiential learning, as its name suggests, is based on the experiences and practice. It is depicted as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience” (Kolb, 1984, p.41 cited in Kolb, Boyatzis & Mainemelis, 1999, p.2). Kolb (1984) also notes that in experiential learning, students reflect upon their experiences, and thus new insights emerge. The researcher also refers to the cyclical nature of experiential learning. To make this cycle more clear, Kohonen (2006 ,p.46) provides Kolb’s (1984) model of experiential learning:



As it is apparent, experiential learning has a cyclic process. Through experiences and reflections on these experiences, learners go through changes in their knowledge and gain new knowledge.

To sum up, experiential learning constitutes one of the important types of language learning in students' life. Those who have a tendency to learn through practice or actual usage of language adopt and appeal to experiential learning. However, learning is not only mental but also affective process. Therefore, it is quite significant to take into account the affective components of learning such as self-efficacy and self-confidence, which give a meaningful and influential shape to the learning process.

1.2.3 Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to the state of self-sufficiency, which acts as a notable aspect in student cognitions. Reeve (2005, in Dişlen, 2010) depicts that self-efficacy as the individual's capacity of regulating his/her abilities to cope with the situations he or she encounters, and adds that it also implies benefit from individual resources on various occasions. It holds a great significance in educational setting. Within the framework of this context, it is described as an item involving students' views of their intellectual and social skills, previous successes and failures, and comparisons with others (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005, in Dişlen, 2010). High level of self-efficacy allows learners to deal with hard tasks without sense of uneasiness, to feel less anxious, and it boosts high self-esteem and resilience (Pajares & Schunk, 2002, in Dişlen, 2010). Efficacy beliefs is a means of determining the amount of effort students will make on a task, the duration of persistence in the face of obstacles, and their conditions in hard situations. As the level of self-efficacy raises, the amount of struggle increases, as well. (Pajares, 1996, in Dişlen, 2010). Concerning the influence of self-efficacy, Bandura (2006, p.4) asserts that

Belief in one's efficacy is a key personal resource in self-development, successful adaptation, and change. It

operates through its impact on cognitive, motivational, affective and decisional processes. Efficacy beliefs affect whether individuals think optimistically or pessimistically, in self-enhancing or self-debilitating ways. Such beliefs affect people's goals and aspirations, how well they motivate themselves, and their perseverance in the face of difficulties.

Adult students with low self-efficacy display tendency to give up a task. In contrast, those with high self-efficacy show disposition to participate in the task. Similarly, efficacious learners manifest more persistence in the face of difficult occasion (Wlodkowski, 1999, in Dişlen, 2010). Therefore, students' positive perceptions about their own capabilities play a big role in obtaining positive outcomes. Moreover, the sense of self-efficacy is also related with the concept of autonomous learning. Derlage, Winstead and Jones (2005) quote Bandura and remark that control of outcomes enhances people's a sense of self-efficacy, and Reeve (2005) also adds that perceived control is a necessary processor for constructing belief about an individual's competence, efficacy and skill (in Dişlen, 2010). As a consequence, consciousness on the importance of self-cognitions enables more effective learning atmospheres. Self-efficacy, as an important element of positive self-cognitions, enables learners being more active in the learning process, hinders passivity and nurture more positive points of view about themselves as learners and learning process itself.

1.2.4 Self-Confidence

Self-confidence forms a significant respect of students' self-beliefs. It hints at an individual's reliance on his/ her capabilities pertaining to learning (Dişlen, 2010). Trust on his/her own skills and belief in the ability to learn are important components of the self-confidence concept. Success at school is an important indicative of self-confidence level. Students' positive belief in their ability to succeed contributes to their capabilities at school. (Nakamura, 2000, in Dişlen, 2010). If learners hold the belief that they are having a hard time because of not being good at learning, their difficulty will ruin their self-confidence (Cunningham and Cunningham, 2002). Self-reliant students construct sound perceptions about their qualifications and take reasonable steps in their learning. Pajares and Schunk (2002) set forth characteristics of the confident students as follows:

- Confident students do not view hard tasks as threats
- They have intrinsic motivation
- They set goals
- They show persistence in case of unsuccessful experience
- They can overcome confidence damages in a quick manner
- They deem failure as a recall to exert more effort (in Dişlen, 2010)

Self-confidence appears to yield positive results. However, there are times when adult learners face lack of self-confidence, which is ineluctable (Dişlen, 2010). Pascarella and Terenzini (2005, in Dişlen, 2010) favour this opinion by drawing attention to the self-confidence decrease in academic settings while passing from high school to university environment. "Learners with low self-confidence who underestimate their ability and are anxious tend to deal with their anxiety less effectively, and easily disengage from anxiety producing tasks." (Aida, 1994, in Nakata, 2006, pp.85-86). Wlodkowski (1999, in Dişlen, 2010) propounds the causes for deficiency of self-confidence, autonomy and eagerness among adult learners:

- These adults have not been trained to regard themselves as in charge of their own learning
- They have had negative or unfruitful experiences in school or learning settings
- They do not think they have free choices as regards their learning

Dearth of autonomy leads to lack of self-confidence (Dişlen, 2010). Likewise, unfavourable thoughts about individual's own learning process and negative influence from prior experiences ruin the inclination to continue learning. Thus, self-confidence and feeding positive feelings into the learners present students more fruitful and successful experiences in their academic environment.

1.3 Construction of Language Learning Identity

Learner identity has a key role in revealing students' underlying beliefs regarding learning process. As a matter of fact, it is like a mirror in that it reflects learners' stance towards this process and themselves as learners. Coll and Falsafi (2010, p.219) define learner identity as "a conceptual artifact that contains, connects and enables reflection over the emotional and cognitive processes of the experience of becoming and being a learner, in the past as well as in the present and the future". As Bernstein and Solomon (1999 in Coll & Falsafi, 2010, p.220) notes, "learner identity consists of generalized meanings about how one is recognized as learner by oneself and others, which then mediate the sense making of the participation and the perceived sense of recognition as a learner in specific situations and activities of learning". Identity and learning is quite interrelated. There is a bond that feeds each other. There exists a mutual influence between them; learning constitutes identity and identity gives a shape to learning. (Coll & Falsafi, 2010). As in general learning, the concept of identity holds a great significance in language learning, as well.

Language learning and identity are closely associated with each other. "Language and identity are mutually constitutive or reciprocally related in that language supplies the means for expressing identity, and identity in turn guides the ways in which individuals use linguistic resources to index their identities and evaluate the use of linguistic resources by others" (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 14 in Kearney, 2004, p.50). According to Yoshizawa (2010, p. 36) "the notion of identity presupposes that when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers, but also organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world". As it is apparent, identity is cultivated through usage of the language. By the same token, identity strengthens the issues relating to language. As Kearney (2004) states, studies on identity further the knowledge of language learning process, and enable us to recognize the role of individual learner in identifying and reaching their own objectives, which shows that identity re-evaluates language learner and it sheds light into how learner manages his/her language learning process. All these feed the way teachers approach the lesson, as well.

All in all, the process of identity construction keeps learning and teaching dynamic since this process itself is "shifting, dynamic and under reconstruction" (Coll & Falsafi, 2010, p.228). All these features encourage the language learner to know himself/herself better, to develop more sound approach to language learning, and to build a self-concept as a learner.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

In this study descriptive research design was applied. Freshmen's beliefs on language learning and their language learner identities were dealt with. It holds both qualitative and quantitative features. Quantitative side reflects the statistical part whereas qualitative side represents the interpretative side of the research. A mixed method design was used in this study, which means that questions of the study can be answered by utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methods (Mertens, 2005). Quantitative and qualitative data collection followed a sequence in this study. Questionnaire results provided a base for the interview. Quantitative analysis of the questionnaire was followed by the content analysis of interview.

2.2 Participants

Freshmen in different departments at Osmaniye Korkut Ata University (Turkey) constituted the participants of the study. To go in detail, participants were students enrolled at Faculties of Engineering, and Arts & Science. Since students have been accustomed to traditional teacher-centred language education and they are new to university, 104 freshmen at university were chosen in this study to reveal their perceptions about language learning and their language learning identities. Student groups were selected through "Purposive Sampling" as they were sampled with a purpose in mind. However, participants within each group were chosen via simple random sampling. The study did not take the gender, age and socio-economic status of the participants into account.

2.3 Instrumentation

A questionnaire and a series of subsequent interviews were used for collecting the required data in this study. The questionnaire results were subjected to the statistical analysis, which constitutes the quantitative side of the study. To support the questionnaire results, the participants were interviewed about their perceptions on learner autonomy, which represents the qualitative side.

2.3.1 Questionnaire to the Students

A questionnaire was administered to 104 freshmen students attending different departments. The questionnaire was taken from Tanaka & Ellis (2003), and translated by the researcher. It consisted 27 items. The items are divided into three categories, each reflecting different belief statements about language learning:

- Analytic learning
- Experiential learning
- Self-efficacy/ confidence

These categories made the questionnaire more meaningful, concise, systematic and organized. This instrument was a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire. On the Likert scale questionnaire, respondents identified their opinions about a statement by choosing one of five responses, which were strongly agree (5), agree (4), not sure (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The participants were ensured that their names would not be exposed without their consent.

2.3.2 Interview with the Students

After administration and analysis of the questionnaire, students within each department were interviewed on their cognitions on language learning. Participants were subjected to semi-structured interview so as to allow for individual responses and enable the students express their feelings and opinions without strictly structured confines. Four interview questions were posed to 10 randomly selected students, and the questions were in parallel with the categories in the questionnaire. During the interview, students were asked about their habits of analytic and experiential learning. They were also asked about their trust in themselves in terms of ability to learn English. Moreover, their perceptions about their own language identities were elicited in the interview. They depicted themselves as a language learner. The interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed.

2.4 Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were carried out in this study. The results of the questionnaire were analysed through Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) program (SPSS 17.0 version for Windows). The quantitative data were displayed in charts. Participants' responses were coded numerically, put into record and subjected to the interpretation. The qualitative data gathered through the interview with students were explored through content analysis. Frequencies of occurrence of ideas were counted, repeated responses of different participants were noted down and these data were construed.

3. FINDINGS

Questionnaire results in each category and interview responses were analysed in a consecutive manner in parallel with each other to render the results more understandable, concise and coherent. Findings of the questionnaire and interviews are propounded as follows.

Table 1. Analytic Learning

ITEMS	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
2 Permitting mistakes makes speaking correctly difficult	16	15,4	23	22,1	21	20,2	30	28,8	14	13,5
4 I can learn well by writing down everything	15	14,4	31	29,8	29	27,9	24	23,1	5	4,8
5 It is important to learn grammar to speak well	41	39,4	46	44,2	12	11,5	5	4,8	0	0
7 It is important to review what I have been taught in the class	57	54,8	38	36,5	4	3,8	5	4,8	0	0

8	I should be able to understand everything I read	33	31,7	39	37,5	15	14,4	14	13,5	3	2,9
11	Memorization is a good way to learn English	28	26,9	60	57,7	15	14,4	1	1,0	0	0
13	I can learn well by following a textbook	16	15,4	42	40,4	25	24,0	17	16,3	4	3,8
17	I want my teacher to explain important points in my mother tongue	50	48,1	37	35,6	15	14,4	1	1,0	1	1,0
18	I can learn English well in a class where teacher maintains a good discipline	27	26,0	34	32,7	18	17,3	20	19,2	5	4,8
20	I should be able to understand everything the teacher says	34	32,7	49	47,1	8	7,7	10	9,6	3	2,9
25	It is important to learn vocabulary to speak English well	63	60,6	30	28,8	8	7,7	1	1,0	2	1,9
27	I want my teacher to correct all my mistakes	57	54,8	34	32,7	8	7,7	3	2,9	2	1,9

Table 1 presents the freshman students' beliefs about analytic learning in foreign language. Approximately 42 % (n=44) of the students do not hold the belief that permitting mistakes renders speaking English correctly hard later on. A bit more than one thirds of the students believe that if they are permitted to make mistakes in English, it will be difficult for them to speak correctly later on. In addition, less than a quarter of the students are unsure about the effect of mistake permission on speaking correctly. When it comes to learning by writing down everything in their notebook, roughly 45 % (n=46) of the students favour such a technique in learning English well. Same number of students (27 %) holds both uncertain and negative beliefs about the role of writing down everything in learning English well. During the interview only one student noted his/her tendency to writing everything:

Excerpt 1:

"I feel like writing even the slightest things"

Apart from this, nearly 84 % (n=87) of the students regard grammar-learning as important for speaking well. None of the students remarked disagreement with the importance of grammar in speaking, which indicates that a great majority of the students support the idea that grammar improves speaking skill. Similarly, most of the students consider review of what is taught in class as significant in learning English well. None of the students deny the importance of review in good language learning. More than two thirds of the students feel that they should be able to comprehend everything they read in English. Although 15 students are unsure on its necessity, 17 students do not feel such a need of understanding everything read in English. Moreover, about 85 % (n=88) of the

freshman students are of the opinion that memorization is a good way to learn English. According to questionnaire results, most of the students prefer memorization in order to learn the target language well. Likewise, it seems that more than half of the students need systemic proceeding while learning since they claim to learn well by following a textbook. 87 out of 104 students would like their teacher to explain important points in their first language. Only two students do not hold such an expectation. A great number of students feel the need of mother tongue usage in clarification of the important things in target language. Another expectation from teacher is maintaining a good discipline in the classroom. More than half of the students assert to learn well in classroom where teacher builds a good discipline while a quarter of the students do not attribute their effective learning to a good discipline in the classroom. In addition to these, 91 students would like their English teacher to correct their all mistakes. Only five students show disagreement with the idea of having their all mistakes corrected by their teacher while learning foreign language. Furthermore, nearly 80 % (n=83) of the students believe that they should be able to understand everything the teacher says in English class. Only three students disagree with such a belief. When it comes to vocabulary, approximately 90 % (n=93) of the students are of the opinion that it is important for them to learn vocabulary so as to speak English well. According to interview results, students do not prefer learning things in English sequentially, in detail and by memorizing. 90 % of the students voiced their objection to such kind of learning.

Excerpt 2:

"I would like to learn English within a certain structure; however, sequential and detailed learning and memorizing do not foster retention of that knowledge".

Only one student noted an inclination towards an analytic learning. S/he stated that such kind of learning suits best for him/her. Learning through application is difficult for him/her.

Table 2. Experiential Learning

ITEMS	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1 I can learn well by speaking with others in English	53	51,0	43	41,3	3	2,9	3	2,9	2	1,9
9 It is important to try to think about my progress in English	28	26,9	60	57,7	15	14,4	1	1,0	0	0
10 I can learn well by listening to radio or watching TV in English	25	24,0	36	34,6	23	22,1	15	14,4	5	4,8
12 I can learn well by living in an English-speaking country	60	57,7	37	35,6	6	5,8	1	1,0	0	0
14 I should not be forced to speak in English class	15	14,4	16	15,4	24	23,1	31	29,8	18	17,3
15 I can learn well when studying just for pleasure	27	26,0	43	41,3	18	17,3	14	13,5	2	1,9

19	I can learn well by using English outside class	34	32,7	52	50,0	15	14,4	2	1,9	1	1,0
21	It is okay to guess if I do not know a word in English	21	20,2	44	42,3	24	23,1	9	8,7	6	5,8
22	I can learn well by reading English magazines or newspapers	27	26,0	44	42,3	20	19,2	12	11,5	1	1,0
24	I can learn well if I try to think in English	17	16,3	47	45,2	24	23,1	12	11,5	4	3,8

Table 2 propounds EFL students' views regarding experiential learning. Students state their beliefs about practical side of language learning. To illustrate, they concentrate on the importance of speaking in learning English well. 96 students hold the belief that they can learn well by speaking with others in the target language. By the same token, 97 students remark that they can learn well by living in an English-speaking country. None of the students displayed a strong disagreement with this issue. When it comes to listening or watching something in English, roughly 60 % (n=61) of the students believe that they can learn English well by doing these. Approximately half of the students do not also share the idea that they should not be forced to speak in the English class, which means they feel the need of speaking English in the class to learn well. However, one fourth of the students have unclear beliefs about being forced to speak in English class. When reading is in question, nearly 70 % (n=71) of the students claim to learn well by reading English magazines or newspapers. Only about 12 % of them do not think that they can learn effectively when they read in English. In addition, they prefer reflecting on their learning due to the fact that two thirds of the students (nearly 75 %) consider it important to try to think about their progress in English in order to learn well. None of the students indicated a strong agreement with this reflective side of experiential learning. What is more, 70 students learn English well when they study just for pleasure. Only about 15 % (n=16) of the students do not hold the same belief. Apart from these, students like using English outside class since roughly 83 % (n=86) of the students learn English well when they practice it outside the class. Only three students gave a negative response to this idea. When it comes to guessing in English, most of the students find it normal to guess an unknown word rather than knowing all the word. Nearly the same number of students (61,5 %) believe that they can learn well if they try to think in English. Interview findings supported the questionnaire results. 90 % of the students favour experiential learning. They prefer learning by applying. They believe that applying what is learnt leads to effective learning.

Excerpt 3:

"It is absolutely very effective. It prevents superficial learning"

Excerpt 4:

"Learning gets more efficient and permanent when it is associated with real-life. It is also important for my improvement and self-confidence".

Table 3. Self-efficacy & Confidence

ITEMS	Strongly Agree		Agree		Not sure		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
3 I can learn well when I try to study on my own	20	19,2	41	39,4	25	24	14	13,5	4	3,8
6 It does not matter if I make mistakes while speaking	18	17,3	39	37,5	18	17,3	24	23,1	5	4,8
16 I am satisfied with my progress in English so far	7	6,7	24	23,1	26	25,0	25	24,0	22	21,2
23 It is possible for me to learn to speak English well	35	33,7	46	44,2	16	15,4	5	4,8	2	1,9
26 It is possible for me not to get nervous when speaking English	21	20,2	37	35,6	19	18,3	19	18,3	8	7,7

Table 3 sheds light into freshman EFL students' self-efficacy/confidence beliefs in language learning. More than half of the students believe that they can learn English well when they study on their own. Only 18 students do not support the impact of individual study upon their effective learning. Similarly, more than half of the students do not view making mistakes when speaking English as a big problem. However, according to nearly 28 % of the students, it matters if they make mistakes while speaking. When it comes to satisfaction with their own progress in language, 45 % (n=47) of the EFL students have negative feelings about the issue. One fourth of the students are unsure about whether they are pleased with their improvement or not. Nearly one thirds of the students are satisfied with their progress in English. As far as self-confidence concerned, roughly 78 % (n=81) of the students believe that it is possible for them to learn to speak English well. Only seven students have low self-confidence in speaking English whereas 16 of them are unclear about it. With respect to self-confidence, interview results are in parallel with questionnaire findings. 80 % of the students hold the belief that they can learn English. One student has partial confidence. His/her confidence fluctuates depending on the situation. This fluctuation stems from concerns occurring while speaking. Another student remarked that his/her self-confidence in English learning has improved newly at university. However, most of the students have trust in themselves in terms of learning the target language.

Excerpt 5:

"As long as you believe and desire, you can learn. I have self-confidence in learning"

Furthermore, concerning nervousness, more than half of the students remarked that it is possible for them not to get nervous when speaking English. However, nearly a quarter of the students do not trust themselves in terms of getting nervous while speaking the target language. During the interviews, apart from the views about analytic, experiential learning and self-efficacy/confidence, students revealed their own language learner identities. Below are stated their identities regarding foreign language:

- ✓ I do not make an effort to learn English (4)
- ✓ I exert an effort; however, I cannot learn
- ✓ I get influenced by teacher so much; if I love the teacher, I become more willing to learn.
- ✓ I can learn when I begin to love. I believe that I am able to learn through a bit practice and effort.
- ✓ I have difficulties in speaking.
- ✓ I ask the reasoning behind what I have learnt
- ✓ Language is very important and necessary for me.
- ✓ I search the English equivalents of the objects I see outside and I try to find the meanings of the words I see in other courses.
- ✓ I study only for exam (2)
- ✓ I do not prefer English; I do not have a plan to learn English in the future.

The students also voiced some of the activities that complete their identities:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening (4) • Watching movies (3) • Writing messages to friends in English • Translation (3) • Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying grammar (2) • Learning new vocabulary (3) • Writing my own sentences (3) • Attending lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living in abroad • Speaking • Internet • Consulting those knowing English • Memorization
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4. Discussion and Conclusion

Data analyses mirror that students have certain standpoints to English. Since they are first year students at university, they are constructing new perceptions towards foreign language. They feel willingness towards learning it, and they prefer learning through practice. Most of the students hold the belief that practice or application is rather effective ways of learning. They believe that practice rather than memorization enables retention of knowledge. They find applying what is learnt or living in an English speaking country very useful to immerse into that language, which indicates that most of the students incline to adopt experiential learning. However, Duong and Nguyen (2006) calls memorization as double-edged sword and assert that memorization can become an effective tool in learning if it helps learners to internalize and apply what is learnt in actual communication whereas poor memorization hampers competent communication, and thus the authors suggest that teachers should raise awareness in good and poor memorization. When it comes to affective factors, majority of the students trust themselves in learning English. "Right attitudinal factors produce two effects: they encourage useful input for language acquisition and they allow the acquirer to be "open" to this input so it can be utilized for acquisition" (Krashen, 2002, p.9). Such kinds of positive emotions make them get more willing towards learning and give them the sense of success. Therefore, it is highly important to cultivate their positive stance towards language. However, their language learner identities from their voices reveal that they do not exert enough effort to succeed learning English. Disclosure of identities enables students to view themselves with clear eyes and reflect upon their learning habits. Norton and Toohey (2011) assert that students' success in their efforts for more powerful identities is likely to boost their language acquisition. Unearthing beliefs and identities raises students' self-awareness, and students construct personal theories or assumptions as regards learning process; thus, they give a shape to their approach to this process. Eliciting students' underlying beliefs with respect to learning and themselves as learners such as appropriate learning habits they adopt, their attitudes and emotions encourage

them to build their own learning identities. As a consequence, through these identities, students render learning a conscious and purposeful process. These beliefs and identities provide new insights for teachers, as well. In brief, self-perception or student thinking presents new perspectives to teachers, offers students new chances, raise consciousness and boosts better comprehension of learner and learning process, contributes to construction of learner identity, which paves the way for effective and fruitful language teaching and learning.

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