



How do the psycholinguistic factors affect the foreign language learning process of preparatory class students?

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Abstract

It is a widely accepted fact that some individuals are more successful than others in the foreign language learning process. This difference could be explained by the psycholinguistic factors which affect an individual's foreign language learning process more or less. These factors which affect (language shock and culture shock, anxiety, affective filter), social distance, age difference, aptitude, motivation, personality, learning style, and learning strategies are all directly related to the characteristics of the learner and attitudes of the learner toward target language. Therefore, in this study it is aimed at investigating the influence of psycholinguistic factors on the foreign language learning process of preparatory class students.

Key words: *Psycholinguistic factors, social factors, motivation, affective factor, language learning*

Introduction

Language is such a complex phenomenon that it has become the common study point of many social sciences such as linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, neurolinguistics, and historical linguistics. In the case of examining these fields in detail, it is possible to find many definitions and theories which try to explain language, its nature and development through the history, and the effects of psychology and society on the language. Linguistics is the scientific study of human language and the main concern of this field is to define the language and its nature, form, meaning, and context. Language has been defined by many scholars so far. From the perspective of linguistics, language is "a system of arbitrary, vocal symbols which permit all people in a given culture, or other people who have learned the system of that culture, to communicate or to interact" (Finocchiaro, 1964: 8). As the definition put forward by Finocchiaro presents, the field of linguistics brings some controversial issues into question in the context of language. One of these controversial issues is the difference between acquisition and learning.

In 1970s, Krashen described the Monitor Model in which the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis takes place. He puts forward that individuals have two independent means of developing knowledge of a second language as acquisition and learning. While acquisition is a subconscious and intuitive process of constructing the system of a language, learning is the process in which learners attend to form, figure out rules, and are generally aware of their own process. The process of second/foreign language learning and teaching is such a complex process that many approaches, theories, and methods have been put forward to define this process. In the case of examining the developments in the field of language learning and teaching chronologically, it is clearly realized that there is a movement from behaviorist approach to humanistic approach.

The views that dominate the language learning and teaching approaches and methods could be classified as structural view, functional view, and interactive view. While the structural view treats language as a system of structurally related elements to code meaning, the functional view sees language as a vehicle to express or accomplish a certain function such as requiring something. On the other hand, the interactive view treats language a vehicle for the creation and maintenance of social



relations, focusing on patterns of move, acts, negotiation and interaction found in conversational exchanges. The main focus in these views is on the teaching, teacher, and product.

With the emergence of humanistic approach, there has been a serious shift within the field of language learning and teaching. The main emphasis is on the learner and learning. The learner is treated as a whole person with his/her feelings, interests, strengths, weaknesses, and needs. With the effect of humanistic approach, many profound innovations are put forward in language learning and teaching process such as inductive teaching, strategy training, process evaluation. These developments, especially the emergence of humanistic approach, have provided the emergence of psycholinguistics, too. Psycholinguistics is the study of the psychological factors that enable humans to acquire, use, comprehend, and produce language. In the field of psycholinguistics, the effects of different dimensions on the process of language learning/acquisition are discussed today. Gass and Selinker (2008) put forward nine dimensions which affect the language learning/acquisition process positively or negatively as affect (language shock and culture shock, anxiety, affective filter), social distance, age difference, aptitude, motivation, personality, learning style, and learning strategies.

The dimension of "affect" which is an important issue under the heading of psycholinguistics consists of three aspects as language shock and culture shock, anxiety, and affective filter. Language shock refers to the realization that a learner must seem comical to speakers of the target language while culture shock, which was firstly proposed by Oberg (1960) in the early 1960s, is the personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life or exposure to a new culture. Foreign language anxiety is the feeling of uneasiness, worry, nervousness and apprehension experienced by non-native speakers when learning or using a second or foreign language. Anxiety is not always a negative factor in learning. One of the hypotheses take place in Krashen's Monitor Model is the Affective Filter Hypothesis. The affective filter is a theoretical construct that attempts to explain the emotional variables associated with the success or failure of acquiring/learning a second language. The affective filter is an invisible psychological filter that can either facilitate or hinder language production in a second language. When the affective filter is high, individuals may experience stress, anxiety, and lack of self-confidence that may inhibit success in acquiring a second language. On the other hand, a low affective filter facilitates risk-taking behavior in regards to practicing and learning a second language. Krashen has claimed that the best acquisition/learning will occur in the environments where anxiety is low and defensiveness is absent.

Social aspects of using a second language cannot be ignored since second language learning involves the acquisition of a second identity. In this process, social distance may occur. "Social distance" is the cognitive and affective proximity of two cultures that come in contact within an individual. Distance is used metaphorically to denote dissimilarity between two cultures. Some learners may feel distance against the target culture in the process of second language learning.

The notion of "age differences" is another dimension discussed under the headline of psycholinguistics. It is possible to get different views and studies about the influence of age on the language learning/acquisition process. As a general view, children acquire their first language easily and well while individuals who learn a second language in an educational setting can have difficulty in the process. One of the most sensational views put forward on this issue is the Critical Period Hypothesis which claims that there is an ideal time to acquire language and after that period further language acquisition becomes much more difficult. The theory has been extended to a critical period for second language learning and it is commonly believed that there is continuous decline in ability to learn with age.

The next dimension discussed in the field of psycholinguistics is "aptitude". Aptitude is defined as "natural ability or skill at doing something" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2000). In the context of language learning, language aptitude refers to the potential that a person has for learning languages. It does not refer to whether or not an individual can or cannot learn a foreign language. It is assumed that virtually everyone can learn a foreign language in the case of given adequate opportunity. It is claimed that some learners show a tendency to learn a language while some learners do not. A student's likelihood of success and ease in learning a foreign language is measured by means of language aptitude tests. There are different effects on language learning aptitude such as personality, motivation, first/second language, age, intelligence, and so on.

"Motivation", which is one of the psycholinguistic dimensions, is the key concept in the language learning process. Motivation is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as "a reason or reasons for



acting or behaving in particular way" and "a desire or willingness to do something; and enthusiasm". It can be considered a driving force, in other words, a psychological drive that compels or reinforces an action toward a desired goal. In this sense, motivation related to foreign language learning could be defined as the purpose for doing things that will lead to learning a foreign language. Maintaining a high level of motivation during a period of language learning is one of the best ways to make the whole process more successful.

"Personality" and "learning styles" are among the psycholinguistic factors which affect the foreign language learning process directly or indirectly. Personality is the particular combination of emotional, attitudinal, and behavioral response patterns of an individual. On the other hand, learning styles is a term generally used to describe an individual's natural or habitual pattern of acquiring and processing information in learning situations. Some aspects of personality and learning style are extroversion/introversion, risk taking, field independence/dependence, and visual/auditory/kinesthetic. A learner's being extrovert, in other words, his/her being sociable, gregarious, active, assertive, passionate, and talkative; or his/her being introvert, in other words, his/her being passive, quiet, reserved, withdrawn, sober, aloof, and restrained has an effect on the foreign language learning process. Linguists define risk-taking as an ability of being eager to try out new information intelligently regardless of embarrassment in linguistics. It is suggested that a tendency to take risks in the process of foreign language learning is associated with the success in that process. On the other hand, in general, people who exhibit field dependence tend to rely on information provided by the outer world, the field or frame of a situation and their cognition (toward other things) is based on this overall field. Contrastingly, field-independent people tend to depend on their inner knowledge and analyze problems all by themselves, without reference to the frame. There is a common belief that there are different learner types as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Visual learners take in information visually whereas auditory learners take in information auditorily. On the other hand, kinesthetic learners learn best when the whole body is involved in the process. To get an effective foreign language teaching/learning process, it is important to choose appropriate methods, techniques, and materials in accordance with the learner types.

"Learning strategies" is the last dimension discussed under the heading of psycholinguistic factors affect the foreign language learning process. Learning strategies are used by students to help them understand information and solve problems. A learning strategy is a person's approach to learning and using information. Learning strategies consist of four main components as cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, social strategies, and affective strategies. "Cognitive strategies involve the manipulation of the learning materials/input by means of repetition, summarizing; metacognitive strategies involve higher-order strategies such as analyzing, evaluating, organizing learning process; social strategies involve interpersonal behaviors aimed at increasing the amount of foreign language communication with native or non-native speakers; and affective strategies involve taking control of the emotional conditions and experiences that shape one's subjective involvement in learning" (Dörnyei, 2005; p. 169). In the context of foreign language learning, the key issue is how the learners strategically use linguistic information to practice the target language.

Literature review

The notion that the psycholinguistic factors affect foreign language learning process is such a sensational movement that it is possible to reach similar researches conducted on the effects of psycholinguistic factors on foreign language learning process. Some of these studies are as follows:

Language and Culture Shock

Fan (2010) investigates the understanding and experiences of ten Asian background students in relation to language shocks. It involves the participation of ten Asian background students from the TESOL (Teaching English to the Speakers of Other Languages) program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Tasmania. Semi-structured interviews and focus group meetings were organized to gather the live experience of these students. The results indicate that the differences in cultures and language indeed have an impact on these Asian background students' English language learning/teaching. Also, teachers and the university are expected to take an active role in preparing their students in overcoming of culture and language shocks and the development of positive attitude towards English language learning.



Anxiety

Andrade and Williams (2009) present an overview of research devoted to foreign language learning anxiety and then examine in detail the reactions reported by Japanese university students to an anxiety-provoking situations in English-as-a-foreign language (EFL) classes. Questionnaire data was obtained from 243 Japanese learners in conversational English classes at 31 four-year universities in Japan. The research was conducted to determine the physical, emotional, expressive, and verbal reactions to the anxiety-provoking situation, the characteristics of anxiety in terms of occurrence, duration, intensity, expectation, and degree of hindrance, and the relationship between anxiety and pair and small group work. The findings indicate that some degree of anxiety affected 75% of the learners and that the debilitating aspects of anxiety strongly hindered about 11% of them. Other findings include significant differences between male-female and high-low perceived ability groups on several dependent variables.

Affective Filter

Robertson (2011) conducted an action research and explored the role of affective filter in an adult English language learner classroom. By observing two adult English language learning classrooms, surveying the students and interviewing their teacher, this study found that when adult affective filter was lowered, they used their target language more frequently and comfortably. Surveys responses from students suggest that the language learners were found that these students were intrinsically motivated by their life goals to learn their target language. In the teacher interviews created a collaborative learning environment to make students feel more comfortable with each other and reduce anxiety. The observation and interview data confirmed that student's affective filter was lower during cooperative activities when compared to whole class activities.

Social Distance

Nix (1993) investigated the existence of social distance between various ethnic groups. Social distance was measured by an adaptation of the Bogardus-scale. A questionnaire was administered to 131 graduate and undergraduate American and international students, living in residence halls on the university campus. The instrument asked various demographic questions and included a social distance scale. The findings revealed that social distance was a function of ethnic background, current educational level, and previous interaction with other ethnic groups. In addition, it was found that whether or not the respondent was an international or American student significantly affected social distance.

Age Differences

The studies on the influence of age factor on foreign/second language acquisition/learning could be grouped in two as the studies supporting critical period hypothesis and the studies refuting critical period hypothesis. Oyama (1976) examined 60 male learners who had immigrated to the United States. Their ages ranged from 6 to 20 years old and they had lived there for between 5 and 18 years. Two adult native speakers judged the native-ness of the learners accents during a reading-aloud task and during free speech. The results showed a significant negative correlation in age of arrival and acquisition, which meant that the younger their age of arrival was, the more authentic the accent they acquired. For instance, the youngest arrivals were rated the same as native speakers. However, no significant relationship was found between the length of stay and their accent.

Burstall (1975) compared two groups of students with five years of instruction in England and Wales. One group had begun learning French at the age of 8, whilst the other had begun at the start of secondary school when they were 11 years old. Burstall found that the secondary school starters were superior in three areas (speaking, reading, and writing) to the early starters, who were superior in only one area (listening) when compared at the age of 16.

Motivation

Ushida (2005) investigated the role of students' motivation and attitudes in second language (L2) study within an online language course context (LOL). Students' attitudes and motivation were examined within a socio-educational framework (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993) while learning contexts



were examined based on Dörnyei's (1994) components of foreign language learning motivation. Students' learning behaviors and learning outcomes were used as predictor and criterion variables in a series of quantitative and qualitative analyses. The results showed that students tended to have relatively high anxiety about the LOL course at the beginning of the semester, perhaps due to their lack of familiarity with the specific LOL learning environment. However, students' motivation and attitudes toward L2 study were relatively positive and stable during the course. The findings provided some evidence that motivated students studied regularly and productively to take every opportunity to perfect their language skills. It was also found that each teacher idiosyncratically implemented the LOL course, thereby creating a unique class culture and affecting students' motivation and attitudes toward studying the L2 in the LOL context. The findings reinforced the importance of students' motivation and attitudes in L2 study and, equally important, the continuing critical role of the teacher in technology-enhanced teaching.

Learning styles

Tabanlıoğlu (2003) aimed to identify the learning styles and strategies of students, to check whether there were significant differences in the learning style and strategy preferences between male and female learners, and investigate whether there was a relationship between students' learning style and strategy preferences. A total of 60 students were asked to complete two questionnaires. One was used to identify students' perceptual learning style preferences and the other was used to identify students' learning strategies. In addition, think aloud protocols were held to determine the cognitive and metacognitive strategies students used while reading. The data analysis of the first questionnaire revealed that students' major learning style preferences were auditory learning and individual learning. Furthermore, significant difference was found in the preference of tactile learning between males and females. The analysis of the second questionnaire revealed that cognitive strategies were favoured the most. No significant difference was found in the preferences of learning strategies between males and females. The analysis with respect to the relationship between learning styles and strategies revealed that visual styles had a significant relation with affective strategies; auditory styles had significant relationships with memory, cognitive, affective, and social strategies; there was a significant relationship between the individual learning style and compensation strategies; none of the learning styles had a significant relationship with metacognitive strategies. The think aloud protocols revealed that students used various cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

Learning strategies

Chang, Liu, and Lee (2007) investigated the influence of gender and major on college EFL learning strategy use in Taiwan. A total of 1758 Taiwanese college EFL learners took part in this research study. The participants completed the two sets of self-reported questionnaires, including Background Characteristics and Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1989). The findings of the study were as follows: There was not a great difference among the frequency of each strategy, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, metacognitive strategies, affective strategies, social strategies, that Taiwanese college EFL learners report using, all in medium-use level. Statistically significant differences were found in the use of cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, social strategies and overall strategies with regard to gender. Statistically significant differences were found in the use of six subcategories of language learning strategies and overall strategies with regard to major. In the end of this study, the pedagogical implications were provided.

Aim of the Study

The aim of the present study is to determine the views of the preparatory class students at Mehmet Akif Ersoy University on their own foreign language learning process. In addition, the study tries to examine how the psycholinguistic factors affect the foreign language learning process of preparatory class students attending Mehmet Akif Ersoy University in Turkey.

Research Questions

The present study seeks answers for the following questions:



1. What are the views of preparatory class students at MAEU on their own foreign language learning process?
2. How do the psycholinguistic factors affect the foreign language learning process of preparatory class students at MAEU?
3. Is there a difference between the views of preparatory class students at MAEU and the independent variables (gender, age, high school graduated from, and the department they belong to at the university)?

Significance of the Study

The present study is important since it reveals the views of the preparatory class students on their own foreign language learning process. In other words, the study enables the students to evaluate their own foreign language learning process. In addition, the study determines the influences of psycholinguistic factors on the foreign language learning process of preparatory class students. Moreover, it gives valuable data for the instructors and provides the instructors to review and reform the foreign language teaching process in accordance with the students' views.

Restrictions

The present study is restricted with fifty preparatory class students at MAEU in the fall semester of 2012-2013 academic year.

Research Design and Methodology

On account of the fact that the purpose of the present study is to determine the influence of the psycholinguistic factors on the foreign language learning process by means of the students' views, it is a descriptive research which aims at specifying, delineating, or describing naturally occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989). Accordingly, the survey research method which is any procedure used to gather and describe the characteristics, attitudes, views, opinions, and so forth of students, teachers, administrators, or any other people who are important to a study was used to carry out this study.

Population and Sampling

The population of the present study is 250 preparatory class students. Accordingly, the sample of the study is 40 preparatory class students, 27 females and 13 males. The participants have different English language education background and their linguistic levels are pre-intermediate. These students have an intense English language program since September of 2012-2013 academic year. The students who have the preparatory class voluntarily belong to different faculties and vocational schools at MAEU.

Data Collection Instrument

In order to carry out this study, a questionnaire which aims at revealing the influence of psycholinguistic factors on the foreign language learning process and getting the views of the students on foreign language learning process was developed and applied. The questionnaire consists of ten parts including questions on psycholinguistic factors (language shock, culture shock, anxiety, affective filter, social distance, age, aptitude, motivation, learning styles, and learning strategies) and forty-five questions.

Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 15.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program. For the item analysis, percentages and frequencies were measured. For the independent variables, independent samples T-test was used.

Results

The results below were reached at the end of the process of analyzing the questionnaires:

Table 1. *Gender*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	13	32,5	32,5	32,5
	Female	27	67,5	67,5	100,0
	Total	40	100,0	100,0	

As it is seen in Table 1, 13 male and 27 female students participated in the study.

Table 2. *Age*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18	10	25,0	25,0	25,0
	19	11	27,5	27,5	52,5
	20	12	30,0	30,0	82,5
	21	7	17,5	17,5	100,0
	Total	40	100,0	100,0	

As it is seen in Table 2, the ages of participants range from 18 to 21.

Table 3. *High School Graduated From*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AHS	16	40,0	40,0	40,0
	VHS	24	60,0	60,0	100,0
	Total	40	100,0	100,0	

As it is seen in Table 3, 16 students graduated from Anatolian High School while 24 students graduated from Vocational High School.

Table 4. *The Views of the Students on the Influence of Psychological Factors on Foreign Language Learning Process*

Item	Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
		%	%	%	%	%
1	To learn a new foreign language makes me happy.	52,5	47,5	0	0	0
2	I feel stressed in the process of learning a foreign language.	10	35	22,5	27,5	5
3	I am affected negatively by the thought that my classmates will laugh at me when I speak English.	20	25	22,5	0	32,5
4	The fear of making mistakes while speaking English affects my performance negatively.	52,5	35	10	2,5	0
5	Language and culture are inseparable concepts.	70	25	0	2,5	2,5
6	Learning a foreign language means learning the culture of that society,	27,5	35	20	10	7,5

	too.					
7	To learn about other cultures motivates me.	37,5	27,5	20	15	0
8	This is the first time I have ever learned about the American and British cultures deeply.	35	50	10	5	0
9	The difference between British/American and Turkish cultures amaze me.	62,5	35	0	2,5	0
10	I eliminate the prejudices about other cultures thanks to the foreign language learning process.	55	40	5	0	0
11	I have some prejudices about other cultures in the process of learning foreign language.	17,5	52,5	157	12,5	0
12	I think there are big differences between the British/American and Turkish cultures.	56	20	5	14	5
13	To learn the differences between cultures changes my point of view.	45	49	4	1	1
14	I feel social distance toward target culture.	15	10	10	45	20
15	Cultural transmission affects my foreign language learning process positively.	36,5	22,5	3	20,5	17,5
16	I have extremely high anxiety in the process of learning a foreign language.	52,5	35	10	2,5	0
17	Because I have extremely high anxiety, I cannot have an effective foreign language learning process.	35	27,5	2	20	15,5
18	I have extremely low anxiety in the process of learning a foreign language.	17,5	10,5	20,5	25	26,5
19	Because I have extremely low anxiety, I have an effective foreign language learning process.	40	42,5	5	10	2,5
20	I always monitor my improvement in the foreign language learning process.	35	45	12,5	7,5	0
21	High monitoring affects my performance positively.	35	40	15	10	0
22	High monitoring affects my performance negatively.	60	32,5	5	2,5	0
23	I rarely monitor my improvement in the foreign language learning process.	40	42,5	5	10	2,5
24	Low monitoring affects my performance positively.	65	35	0	0	0
25	Low monitoring affects my performance negatively.	62,5	35	2,5	0	0
26	Age has great influence on the effective foreign language learning process.	62,5	35	2,5	0	0
27	I support the idea that foreign language education should begin at early ages.	70	27,5	2,5	0	0
28	I think that I am a bit late for an effective foreign language learning process.	75	20	5	0	0
29	There is a direct relationship between aptitude and foreign language learning.	27,5	45	22,5	5	0
30	I have an aptitude for learning a foreign language.	40	42,5	5	10	2,5
31	I am highly motivated in foreign language learning process.	35	45	12,5	7,5	0
32	My success in foreign language learning process increases my motivation.	52,5	47,5	0	0	0
33	My failure in foreign language learning process decreases my motivation.	27,5	35	22,5	10	5
34	I dare to take risks in the foreign language learning process.	20	25	22,5	0	32,5
35	I do not dare to take risks in the foreign language learning process.	52,5	35	10	2,5	0
36	I am a field dependent learner in the foreign language learning process.	70	25	0	2,5	2,5

37	I am a field independent learner in the foreign language learning process.	27,5	35	20	10	7,5
38	I am a visual learner.	37,5	27,5	20	15	0
39	I am an auditory learner.	35	50	10	5	0
40	I am a kinesthetic learner.	62,5	35	0	2,5	0
41	I am an extroverted learner.	55	40	5	0	0
42	I am an introverted learner.	17,5	52,5	157	12,5	0
43	Being an introverted learner affects foreign language learning process positively.	52,5	47,5	0	0	0
44	Being an extroverted learner affects foreign language learning process positively.	10	35	22,5	27,5	5
45	I use some strategies to be successful in foreign language learning process.	40	42,5	5	10	2,5

The statistical results above provide valuable data to understand the influence of psychological factors on the foreign language learning process. The statistical data reached could be interpreted for each psychological factor as follows:

Language Shock: The questions 1-4 refer to the factor of language shock. While most of the students are eager to learn a foreign language and are confident in the process of learning, most of them feel stressed in the case of making mistakes. They think that the fear of making mistakes affects their performance negatively.

Culture Shock: The questions 5-15 refer to the factors of culture shock and social distance. Most of the students are aware of the importance of culture and the influence of culture transmission on the language learning process. Most of the students are eager to learn about the other cultures, they are tolerant toward the differences among cultures, they do not have prejudices about other cultures, and they do not feel social distance toward the target culture.

Anxiety: The questions 16-19 refer to the factor of anxiety. Most of the students have high anxiety in the process of foreign language learning and they think that they cannot have an effective foreign language learning process because of this high anxiety.

Affective Filter: The questions 20-25 refer to the factor of affective filter. Most of the students state that they always monitor themselves in the process of foreign language learning. While some of the students think that high monitoring affects their performance negatively, some students think that low monitoring affects their performance positively.

Age Differences: The questions 26-28 refer to the factor of age differences. Most of the students agree that foreign language education should begin at early ages and they are conscious of the influence of age factor on the effective foreign language learning process. Most of the students think that they are a bit late for an effective foreign language learning process.

Aptitude: The questions 29-30 refer to the factor of aptitude. Most of the students think that there is a direct relationship between aptitude and foreign language learning and they state that they have an aptitude for learning a foreign language.

Motivation: The questions 31-33 refer to the factor of motivation. It is seen that most of the students are highly motivated in the process of foreign language learning and they think that there is a direct relationship between success and motivation.

Personality and Learning Style: The questions 34-44 refer to the factors of personality and learning style. Most of the students do not dare to take risks in the foreign language learning process, they are field dependent, visual, kinesthetic, and auditory learners. It is seen that most of the students are extroverted and they think that being extroverted affects the foreign language learning process and success positively.

Learning strategies: The question 45 refers to the factor of learning strategies. Most of the students state that they use some strategies to be successful in the foreign language learning process.



According to the independent samples t-test results, no significant difference was found between the students views and their gender, age, and the high school they graduated from ($p>0.05$).

Discussion

As the results revealed, the present study provides valuable data for the literature and the people dealing with the field. This importance could be understood better in the case of comparing the present study with the other studies conducted in the field before. The study conducted by Fan revealed that the differences in cultures and language indeed have an impact on the Asian students' English language learning. On the other hand, the present study shows that a new foreign language and the target culture do not have a negative effect on the preparatory class students. The only issue the students hesitate is the fear of making mistakes. The study conducted by Andrade and Williams and the present study reveal that the learners have high anxiety in the process of foreign language learning and this situation affects the performance of students negatively. The study carried out by Robertson shows that low affective filter facilitates the foreign language learning process. The present study reveals the similar results and it is concluded that low affective filter enables the students to use target language frequently and comfortably. While the study carried out by Nix reveals that the participants significantly affected social distance, the present study do not reach such a result. The participants of the study do not feel social distance toward the target culture and society. This may be the result of that the participants do not live in the target country and culture.

There are different studies on the influence of age factor on the effective foreign language learning process. In the case of comparing the present study with the studies conducted by Oyama and Burstall, it is concluded that the participants think that they are a bit late for an effective foreign language learning process. The study conducted by Ushida on motivation shows that students' motivation and attitudes toward L2 were relatively positive and motivated students studies regularly. The present study reveals the similar results. The participants of the present study wanted to have an intense English language education voluntarily. Thanks to this situation, the students in the preparatory classes are highly motivated and there is a direct relationship between their success and motivation level. The study conducted by Tabanlıoğlu and the present study show that the personalities and learning styles of the students are different from each other. It is possible to find different students such as introvert, extrovert, visual, kinesthetic, auditory in a small classroom setting. The personalities and the learning styles of the students affect the foreign language learning process directly. The study conducted by Chang, Liu, and Lee shows that the students use some strategies to be successful in the foreign language learning process. The similar result is valid for the present study. Since the participants are conscious and motivated in the process, they develop and use some strategies to be successful.

Conclusion

It is a well-known fact that foreign language learning is a complex process. For many years, there has been a great discussion on the characteristics and necessities of an effective foreign language learning/teaching process. In addition to theories, approaches, and methods put forward to define this process, the brief summary of the studies conducted in the field shows that psycholinguistic factors have an influence on the foreign language learning process. It is possible to explain the complexity of foreign language learning by means of the psycholinguistic factors which are affect (language shock and culture shock, anxiety, affective filter), social distance, age difference, aptitude, motivation, personality, learning style, and learning strategies.



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