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OUT-OF-CLASS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND
EXPERIENCES OF TURKISH SECONDARY AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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OUT-OF-CLASS ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND
EXPERIENCES OF TURKISH SECONDARY AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ÖZET

Ortaokul ve Lise Öğrencilerinin Ders Dışı İngilizce Öğrenme Ortam ve Deneyimleri

Türkiye'de yabancı dil öğretiminin ana sorumluluğunu resmi okullar ve özel kurslar üstlenmektedir. İngilizce ise diğer birçok ülkede olduğu, gibi ülke genelinde bu kurumlar aracılığıyla, öğretilen ve öğrenilen en yaygın yabancı dildir. Çok önem verilmesine rağmen, İngilizcenin geleneksel yollarla ne derece öğrenildiği her zaman tartışılır ve henüz tatmin edici cevaplar bulamamıştır. Öte yandan, özellikle son yıllarda teknolojinin gelişmesiyle yabancı dil öğrenme konusunda, sınıf sınırlarının çok ötesine geçmemizi sağlayan bir çağda yaşıyoruz. Bu nedenle, sınıf dışı dil öğrenme ortam ve deneyimleri, İngilizce öğrenmeyi çok daha kolay ve zahmetsiz bir aktivite haline getirmenin yanı sıra, daha zevkli hale getirerek, geleneksel öğrenme biçimine katkıda bulunmada büyük öneme sahiptir. Bu çalışma, daha iyi bir dil öğreniminin gerçekleşmesi için, ortaokul ve lise öğrencilerinin ne tür sınıf dışı dil öğrenme etkinliklerine ne sıklıkla katıldıklarını araştırmayı amaçlamamaktadır. Bunun için toplam 253 ortaokul ve lise öğrencisine boş zamanlarında ne tür ders dışı İngilizce öğrenme ortam ve deneyimleri yaşadıklarını görmek için bir anket uygulanmıştır. Bu sorular İngilizce dinleme, okuma, yazma ve konuşma etkinliklerinin neler olduğunu görmeyi amaçlamıştır. Anket, ayrıca teknolojik cihazların ve sosyal medya platformlarının İngilizce öğrenmek için ne sıklıkta kullanıldığını da ölçmektedir. Anket SPSS programı ile analiz edilmiştir. Verilerin analizinde t-testi ve ANOVA testi, açık uçlu sorular ise betimsel yöntemlerle analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlar, İngilizce dilinde en sık tercih edilen etkinliklerin müzik dinlemek ve film izlemek olduğunu göstermiştir. En az tercih edilen etkinlikler ise, İngilizce günlük tutma, İngilizce gazete okuma ve

aile üyeleriyle İngilizce konuşma etkinlikleridir. Dört temel becerinin sıklık açısından genel sıralamasına bakıldığında ise, dinleme açık ara farkla en sık görülen beceridir, bunu sırasıyla okuma, konuşma ve yazma takip eder. Ayrıca, araştırmaya göre, İngilizce çevrimiçi oyunlar, dinleme ve izleme etkinliklerinden sonra öğrenciler tarafından en çok tercih edilen ikinci etkinlik olarak göze çarpmaktadır. Araştırma, kız öğrencilerin genel olarak erkek öğrencilerden daha fazla sınıf dışı dil öğrenme ortam ve deneyimlerine karıştığını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Ancak ortaokul ve lise öğrencileri arasında anlamlı bir fark saptanmamıştır; hemen hemen aynı miktarda sınıf dışı dil öğrenme etkinliği gerçekleştirmektedirler. Ayrıca, ANOVA testi, sınıf dışı dil öğrenme etkinliklerine en sık 10. ve 9. sınıfların katıldığını göstermiştir. Öte yandan, sırasıyla 12. 6. ve 5. sınıfların bu etkinliklere en az katılım sağladıkları saptanmıştır. Açık uçlu sorular hakkındaki yorumlarına gelince, çalışma, öğrencilerin çoğunlukla gerçek hayatta konuşulan İngilizce diline doğrudan maruz kalmayı istediklerini ortaya koymuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ders dışı dil öğrenimi, sınıf dışı dil öğrenme etkinlikleri, dil öğreniminde özerklik, ortaokul ve lise öğrencileri.

ABSTRACT

Formal schools and private courses have been assuming the main responsibility of teaching foreign languages in Turkey so far. English, on the other hand, like in many other countries, is the most common language that is taught and learned as a foreign language (EFL) via these institutions throughout the country. Despite its prominence in the country, however, how effective English is learned through mainstream ways has always been negotiable due to reasons that have not found satisfactory answers, yet. On the other hand, we live in an age that allows us to go far beyond the walls of the classrooms when it comes to learning a foreign language, especially, thanks to the advancement in technology in recent years. Therefore, out-of-class language learning (OCLL) has a great role in a way that could make learning English a much easier and effortless activity, as well as a joyful engagement in addition to mainstream language learning routines. For this reason, the present study aimed to investigate how frequently students at secondary and high schools engaged in what type of out-of-class language learning activities (OCLLAs) in order to find a solution for a better language learning to take place. To do this, a questionnaire was administered on a total of 253 secondary and high school students to see what type OCLLAs they carry out in their free time. These questions aimed to see what listening, reading, writing, and speaking activities were carried out in English. The questionnaire also included a section about the frequency of using technological devices and social media platforms for the purpose of learning English. The survey was analyzed via SPSS program. T-test and ANOVA test was used to analyze the data while open-ended questions were analyzed via descriptive methods. The results showed that the most frequently preferred activities in English were listening to music and watching movies. The least frequently preferred activities

were writing activities such as keeping diaries in English and reading newspapers in English, and talking to family members in English. As for the overall order of four basic skills in terms of frequency, listening is by far the most frequent skill followed by reading, speaking, and writing, respectively. The study also showed that playing video games in English is the second most preferred activity after listening and watching activities. The research, also, found that female students did more OCLLAs than male students on the whole. But, no significant difference was detected between secondary and high school students; they nearly carried out the same amount of out-of-class language learning activities. Furthermore, ANOVA test results showed that 10th and 9th grades engaged in OCLLAs the most frequently. On the other hand, the 12th, 6th and 5th grades, respectively, did the least amount of OCLLAs. As for students' comments on open-ended questions, the research revealed that they mostly wanted direct exposure to spoken language in real life settings.

Keywords: out-of-class language learning, out-of-class language learning activities, autonomy in language learning, secondary and high school students.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESL	: English as a Second Language
EFL	: English as a Foreign Language
NATO	: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
EU	: European Union
EPI	: English Proficiency Index
EF	: Education First
OCLL	: Out-of-Class Language Learning
OCLLAs	: Out-of-Class Language Learning Activities
CPH	: Critical Period Hypothesis
LBC	: Language beyond Classroom
FL	: Foreign Language
ELT	: English Language Teaching
SPSS	: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
LGS	: Liselere Giriş Sınavı (High Schools Admission Exam)
YKS	: Yükseköğretim Kurumları Sınavı (University Entrance Exam)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Learning a foreign language has been on everybody's agenda for decades in Turkey. People at all ages have been investing money on learning a language for various reasons. Employees in most of the state institutions are paid additionally depending on the number of foreign languages they know; the private sector prioritizes job applicants who can speak at least one foreign language; people who can speak a foreign language are considered higher in social settings. Even people who have no aim towards this goal feel admiration towards those who can speak at least one foreign language besides their mother tongue.

English, in addition to being a second language (ESL) in some countries, and a foreign language (EFL) in others, has become *lingua franca*, which means that it is a language that is spoken by people who have no shared language to communicate. (Richards, 2015 p.13) Having such a great position throughout the world, English is the most preferred foreign language for people who want to learn an additional language in Turkey, too. Where people learn English is basically at state and private schools, universities and private language teaching centers. Rather, these places are supposed to be teaching English. That is, schools and private courses assume the main responsibility to teach English in the country.

The journey of teaching foreign languages at schools in Turkey goes back to the late years of the Ottoman Empire with teaching of mainly French and German (Boyacıoğlu, 2015). By the time, English has gained popularity and become the most widespread foreign language in the country. Especially with Turkey being a member of

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and with an agenda of being a member of EU (European Union), English began to gain more and more importance. (Demirpolat, 2005 p.8).

Turkey started implementing 4+4+4* educational system at schools in 2012, whereby children could start primary school at the age of 5. (Bayyurt, 2012 p.2). With this new system, teaching English started at 2nd grade. Children start learning English as a required course at schools when they are 2nd grade at primary schools since then (see figure 1). They have weekly 2 hours of English lesson in their school program in state schools. This continues with the same number of hours per week until they are 5th grade. For 5th and 6th grades, it's 3 hours per week; and 7th and 8th graders have 4 hours of English in their school program at schools (Ministry of National Education Board of Education, 2018) These numbers may change at private schools. Some private schools also may start teaching English at 1st grade. Furthermore, some pre- school institutions like nursery schools have been teaching foreign languages when children are at much earlier ages.

Figure 1

Weekly course schedule for primary and secondary schools

DERSLER		SINIFLAR							
		İLKOKUL				ORTAOKUL			
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
ZORUNLU DERSLER	Türkçe	10	10	8	8	6	6	5	5
	Matematik	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
	Hayat Bilgisi	4	4	3					
	Fen Bilimleri			3	3	4	4	4	4
	Sosyal Bilgiler				3	3	3	3	
	T.C. İnkılâp Tarihi ve Atatürkçülük								2
	Yabancı Dil		2	2	2	3	3	4	4
	Din Kültürü ve Ahlak Bilgisi				2	2	2	2	2
	Görsel Sanatlar	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Müzik	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Oyun ve Fiziki Etkinlikler	5	5	5	2				
	Beden Eğitimi ve Spor					2	2	2	2
	Teknoloji ve Tasarım							2	2
	Trafik Güvenliği				1				
	Bilişim Teknolojileri ve Yazılım					2	2		
	Rehberlik ve Kariyer Planlama								1
	İnsan Hakları, Yurttaşlık ve Demokrasi				2				

As for high schools (9-12 grades), English is taught 4 hours a week each year (Table 2). The table illustrates the number of English lessons per week for Anatolian High Schools, the most common formal high school type. Like primary and secondary schools, there are private high schools, where the number of English lesson hours could be more per week.

Figure 2

Weekly course schedule for high schools

ANADOLU LİSESİ					
HAFTALIK DERS ÇİZELGESİ					
DERSLER		9.	10.	11.	12.
		SINIF	SINIF	SINIF	SINIF
ORTAK DERSLER	TÜRK DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI	5	5	5	5
	DİN KÜLTÜRÜ VE AHLAK BİLGİSİ	2	2	2	2
	TARİH	2	2	2	-
	T.C. İNKILÂP TARİHİ VE ATATÜRKÇÜLÜK	-	-	-	2
	COĞRAFYA	2	2	-	-
	MATEMATİK	6	6	-	-
	FİZİK	2	2	-	-
	KİMYA	2	2	-	-
	BİYOLOJİ	2	2	-	-
	FELSEFE	-	2	2	-
	BİRİNCİ YABANCI DİL	4	4	4	4
	İKİNCİ YABANCI DİL	2	2	2	2
	BEDEN EĞİTİMİ VE SPOR	2	2	2	2
	GÖRSEL SANATLAR/MÜZİK	2	2	2	2
	SAĞLIK BİLGİSİ VE TRAFİK KÜLTÜRÜ	1	-	-	-
	ORTAK DERS SAATİ TOPLAMI	34	35	21	19

Apart from formal schools and language centers, students' engagement in English has been limited in the country. Rather, learning English out of the schools is an opportunity that needs to be discovered, yet.

As to what exactly out-of -classroom settings could be, opportunities that technology alone has brought in the last decade, could be enough via true access and use. If the learners have or are given opportunity to use such surroundings and opportunities they will benefit it substantially.

Out-of-school activities could be done at schools, too; teachers could moderate such activities as English-only days, magazines, debates and competitions (Benson, 2011 p.9). Or students could read English books, magazines, newspapers; play video, online games; listen to music; watch movies, series; chat with foreigners online; write emails, send instant messages or make comments on online social platforms in English. These and many other activities can be carried out independently from the boundaries of formal rules and procedures. Students can pursue any of the activities on their own will and interest.

Out- of- class language learning requires students to be “autonomous.” However, this does not necessitate language learners to “take total responsibility of their learning” as suggested by (Holec, 1979, p.65). Student’s awareness of the total language learning process is not required; they will not have to select, design, monitor and evaluate their whole learning process. Rather, they will have a chance to go beyond the structured, formal atmosphere of learning. Hence, learning a language is going to be much more pleasurable with the opportunities that are already presented to the learner thanks to the many settings, tools, and platforms that are readily available out of the classrooms in today’s world.

Krashen, (1982) makes a distinction between “learning” and acquisition. According to his theory, acquisition happens when you are not aware of acquiring language, but you are subconsciously using the language as a medium of communication while you are reaching your aim. With this definition, for example, students playing games in English can easily and more naturally learn vocabulary or statements from their English speaking game partners online. Or they can pick the language through directions given by the software while they are playing online computer games.

Learners, for example, whose main purpose is to pass to the next level in a computer game, will be using the language necessary for them to reach a natural *communicative* (p.25) aim. Parallel with this example, students mainly focused on the many other out-of-class activities done in English, will have acquired English in an easier, more profitable, and pleasurable way when they are actually carrying out their hobbies. Playing games is only one of the examples as stated above paragraphs. Students can read books, listen to songs they like, watch their favorite movies/series or talk to their friends etc.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Teaching English from primary to high school students is largely under the responsibility of state schools. And it's clear that, to meet this need, the best a typical state school can offer is a 4 class hours a week, disregarding how effective language education is carried out on the whole, taking into account such factors as large classroom sizes, insufficient materials and test-focused programs and overcrowded curriculum (Richards, 2015 p.71). Private schools can offer more hours with better opportunities as mentioned, however the same problems hindering the most effective way of teaching languages at schools apply to these private institutions, too.

Turkey is a country where English is taught as a foreign language. That is, English has never been an official language in the state, nor have there been English speaking communities mixed in the culture, thus enabling the language to penetrate into daily usage. On the other hand, it is quite common in conversations to hear arguments and judgments about the importance of knowing another language, preferably English. This concern can be oriented around individual/intellectual development or financial/social rewards of knowing/speaking English. Parents are also anxious about

their children's language education, in addition to their own interest. Thus, in a country where teaching language is mainly carried out by formal schools, to what extent language learning is actualized has been negotiable among people.

According to *English Proficiency Index*, Turkey ranked 79th out of 100 countries in 2019 (EF EPI, 2019). As for its position in the region, it ranks 32nd among 33 European countries. With a score of 46.81, it is under the "very low proficiency" category. Likewise, the country ranked 62/80 in 2017, and 73/88 in 2018, placed in the same category both years. As stated by (Dinçer and Yeşilyurt, 2013 p.2) the fact that classrooms are the only place where the students are supposed to hear English, and thus, students being exposed to inadequate amount of language spoken in these settings could be one of the main reasons why Turkey ranks low English proficiency level.

It can be inferred that as a country where English is learnt as a foreign language, students largely depend on formal schools. Seeing that these schools lack the potential to meet this demand for various reasons in terms of teaching English, there should be ways to meet the country's quest for more opportunities for foreign language input. There should be medium to go beyond the classroom walls to be able to hear, read and speak English.

1.3. The Purpose of the Study

Within the framework depicted in the above sections, it is clear that although learning English is a much highlighted subject in the country, opportunities to teach it in the best way is still undiscovered. Out-of-class language learning activities, on the other hand, could be a good complementary and even an alternative way to have the desired level of English in the country among school children. To be able make the

most use of such activities, it is important to have empirical data as to what activities students are engaged in and how frequently each activity is preferred.

Therefore, this study focuses on out-of-class activities carried out by the students at secondary (5th – 8th grade) and high schools (9th – 12th grades) in Turkish context. The research is intended to find answers to the following research questions in order for further suggestions and guidance as to what could be done to grant a thorough learning of English among the students at school age.

1.4. Research Questions

The aim of this study is to reveal out-of-class activities settings and experiences among secondary and high school students in Turkey. To reach this aim, the research is conducted to answer the following questions:

1. How often do the secondary and high school students report doing out-of-class language learning Activities?
2. Does the frequency of activities differ by individual factors such as gender, educational level and grade?

1.5. Overview of the Methodology

The purpose of this section is to introduce the main methodology and the strategies applied in the current research in general terms.

The study includes 123 secondary schools students and 130 high school students to see what type of English activities they carry out in their free time. To do this, a questionnaire of 26 items was administered in March, 2020. 24 of these questions aimed to see what listening, reading, writing, and speaking activities were carried out in

English. The questionnaire also included a section about the frequency of using technological devices and social media platforms for the purpose of learning English.

Two open-ended questions were added at the end of the questionnaire to have more information about the use of out-of-class language learning activities among students. One of the questions was to see if they did any more activities not stated in the above items of the questionnaire. The last one was directed to learn what students would like to do for better English learning, but for some reasons they couldn't.

1.6. Significance of the Study

Language learning cannot be limited to classrooms taking into account that learning a language is not like learning other academic lessons. Rather, language is in every moment of life, and it has its meaning in real life. Classrooms are important to teach basic concepts and rules of a language. However, it is out-of-class that language is used; heard, spoken and written to communicate.

In a context like Turkey, it may seem disadvantageous to learn English because of scarcity of the language spoken in daily life. However, especially, with the technology in today's world, it is quite possible to hear almost any language spoken around the world. And successful language learners can make use of these opportunities. Likewise, language teachers can integrate some of the out-of-class language learning activities to their classroom teaching.

This study is significant as it aims to reveal out-of-class language learning activities carried out by the secondary and high school students in Turkish context. It may help teachers and program developers revise their program according to the frequency of preference of particular activities. Students, on the other hand, may be

aware of some alternative and complementary language learning environments and experiences of language learning.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

The current study might have limitations, too. First of all, the study was carried out in a district of Turkey, with participants limited to 123 secondary school students and 130 high school students from a private school. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all parts of the country.

Secondly, the main tool for the study was a questionnaire consisting of questions directed to the students. It is basically quantitative research. Although with two – open ended questions it was aimed to gather as much more details as possible, a combination of various methods could be useful to have more comprehensive results.

1.8. Definition of the Terms

Out-of -class Language Learning

Out-of-class Language learning (OCLL) refers to language learning that can take place anywhere “*except inside the classroom.*” (Benson, 2001 p.62). Out-of-class language learning activities (OCLLAs) are activities beyond the classroom to *compensate for* the limitations of classrooms. These activities provide the necessary written or aural input, and communicative interactions where there would be exchange of information and real feedback, which classrooms usually fall short of (Richards, 2015, p.146).

Frequency of Activities

By frequency of activities, it is meant how often students do the out-of-class language learning activities on a scale of 5-likert type questions. Students are asked to mark 1 to 5 depending on how often they think to be doing each activity. Option 1 refers to very *rarely*; and option 5 refers to *always*. In this respect, option 2 is *rarely*; option 3 is *sometimes*; and option 4 means *often*.

Educational Level

Educational level refers to the subdivisions of formal education. In this study, it is used to refer to the *secondary* and *high school* students that are the subject to the study. In this respect, secondary school includes 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades; and high school constitutes 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades.

4+4+4 Educational System

This system refers to the reformation in the field of education that took place in Turkey in 2012, whereby children could start primary school at the age of five. The first four years is primary education, the second four is secondary school, and the last four years refers to the high school education.

English as a Lingua Franca

Lingua franca is used to mean a language that is spoken by people who have no shared language to communicate (Richards, 2015 p.13). English is considered as *lingua franca* these days seeing that it has been the most widely spoken common language for the people from all around the world for decades.

English Proficiency Index, (EF EPI)

The EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) is the world's largest ranking of countries/regions by adult English skills. It is published annually. EF EPI reports show, in detail, the most common pitfalls and highlight the most effective strategies for improving English proficiency.



CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Learning a Foreign Language

Learning a language other than one's mother tongue is a desired phenomenon all around the world for various reasons. In some cases people need to learn a language because they feel the necessity to do so. In other cases, people prefer to learn a language to reach their goal or have more prestige in their lives or careers.

Learners may choose to learn a language basically for internal and external reasons. They may choose to learn a specific language themselves for personal reasons, or the conditions might put the necessity to learn a language for the reasons because that specific language is the only way to be able to contact the society, or it is required to pass to a higher level in school or in the job.

On the one hand, learning English may be associated with different values by the learners such as earning money or having a good time listening to music or watching movies (Richards 2015). Not all the learners might have the aim of absolute *mastery* of communicative function of learning English (p.24). On the other hand, among the many functions of learning a language, communication holds an important role. Language is for communication (Brown, 2007 p.6). People use their first language to communicate. Likewise, it is quite natural to be learning a foreign language for communicative purposes.

2.2. The Role of Motivation and Autonomy in Language Learning

Learners are the main actors in out-of-class language learning seeing that they will not have any teachers or tutors that moderate them in the time of carrying out the activities. So, students' motivation and their skills to be able to engage in such activities have a very important role in out-of-class learning. Therefore, it is necessary to clarify what motivation and autonomy each mean; and what implications they have in the teaching of language referring to the literature.

2.2.1 Motivation in Language Learning

The term motivation is frequently used in contexts where education is involved. Surprisingly, there is little consensus in the literature as to what exactly the concept of motivation means. However, researchers seem to have the common idea that motivation is the factor that triggers an individual's behavior and gives energy to act in a certain way. (Dörnyei 1998, p.117)

Among the many factors to consider when it comes to language learning such as sociological, psychological, linguistic and personal aspects, one very important factor is learner motivation. Brown (2007) considers motivation as a *star player* making an analogical cast where success and failure is the theme. He continues arguing motivation to be the *key factor* in success (p.168). Similarly, according to (Ushioda, 2008, p.19) whether it is second or foreign language learning involved, it is almost impossible to succeed without motivation.

(Griffiths, 2010) highlights the necessity of motivation in language learning other than the first language stating whether it is *intrinsic* (originating from within the learner), *extrinsic* (originating outside the learner), *instrumental* (used as a means to an

end), or integrative (used as a means of integrating with a desired community) (p.6). With this definition, it can be inferred that to learn a second or foreign language, there can be more than one source of motivation.

According to (Dörnyei, 1998) extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation affect each other in such a way that there can be cases where the first one might undermine the latter. Based on this explanation, research has shown that learner's inner motivation might be extinguished by the implementation of some classroom language learning activities such as compulsory reading (p. 121). So, we can talk about both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations in language learning. And we should keep in mind that inner motivation is more personal and delicate. Besides, it is more dominant and influential in language learning.

(Akçay&Bütüner, 2015) found that most of the students living in a touristic area had a high percentage of intrinsic motivation to learn a language. The research showed that children wanted to learn a foreign language to be able speak to foreigners visiting their town and help them. The second most common reason why students wanted to learn a foreign language was because they wanted to be able to understand the language of movies they are watching and music they are listening to. The same study found that learning a language for good grades at school was the third most important reason. Among the other factors was living abroad and having a good job (p.5).

As a conclusion, it can be inferred that language learning is a phenomenon that has a lot to do with motivation. Young adult learners in schools might have different motives to learn English. Some might have social and recreational reasons, and others might have an inclination to learn English for more practical reasons such as passing with good grades and having good-paying jobs. In either case, however, one thing is

certain: knowing a language means to be able to understand and produce the language in real settings.

2.2.2. Autonomy in Language Learning

A learner's act to perform specific activities in his own way to achieve his goal will yield better in any learning. This takes us to the term learner autonomy. Autonomy in language learning refers to learner's independence of other sources (Harmer 2001). He highlights the learner's ability to use their own power to overcome phenomena and obstacles. In literature, a more common definition to this term is the '*ability to take responsibility for one's own learning*' (Holec, 1979p. 3).

Based on these definitions, in this study, the learner's willingness to learn a language and his independence on the classroom and the teacher is regarded as autonomous learning. With this definition, it can be inferred that language learning is personal and it can be achieved outside the classroom in addition to the classroom instructions. Rather, an autonomous learner is well aware of what language learning activities that occur in the classroom lack and how to compensate for these areas outside the classroom.

According to (Little, 1990) autonomy is not a *stable* easily defined term. Rather, he describes autonomy as having potential to be able to make judgments and act *independently* in a variety of situations (p.1). (Benson, 2011, p.2) sees the meaning of autonomous language learning to be very different from the 1970s. He highlights the opportunities that the digital age has brought and implies many other possible aspects and definitions of autonomy in parallel with these advancements.

It is clear from the definitions that learning a language is gaining an aspect that is more related to the learner himself than the teacher. The technology alone has formed an environment where there might be little necessity for formal boundaries such as schools and classrooms to learn a language. Therefore, the main role in such a game might inevitably shift from teacher to the learner. It seems that learners have and will have more opportunities outside the classrooms in the real world to come across the language they want to learn. Eventually, it will be more motivated and autonomous learners that will have benefited more in this quest. To sum up, as to what exactly it is meant by autonomy in language learning; firstly, a language learner should have responsibility in learning, he should be able to find his way of learning and act accordingly.

2.3. Age and Gender Factors in Language Learning

One of the aims of this study is to determine the differences between male and female students in using out-of-class activities. Also, the subjects of this study are adolescents and young learners. Therefore, the researcher finds it useful to review the literature for the better understanding of these concepts.

2.3.1. Age Factor in Language learning

This study is about language learners whose age differs between 11 and 18. According to literature, this age group contains both young and adult learners. Besides, some of these learners could be at the centre of a discussion in the literature relating to the critical *age hypothesis*, which will be discussed broadly in this section. Thus, it is necessary to briefly review some of the literature about the topic.

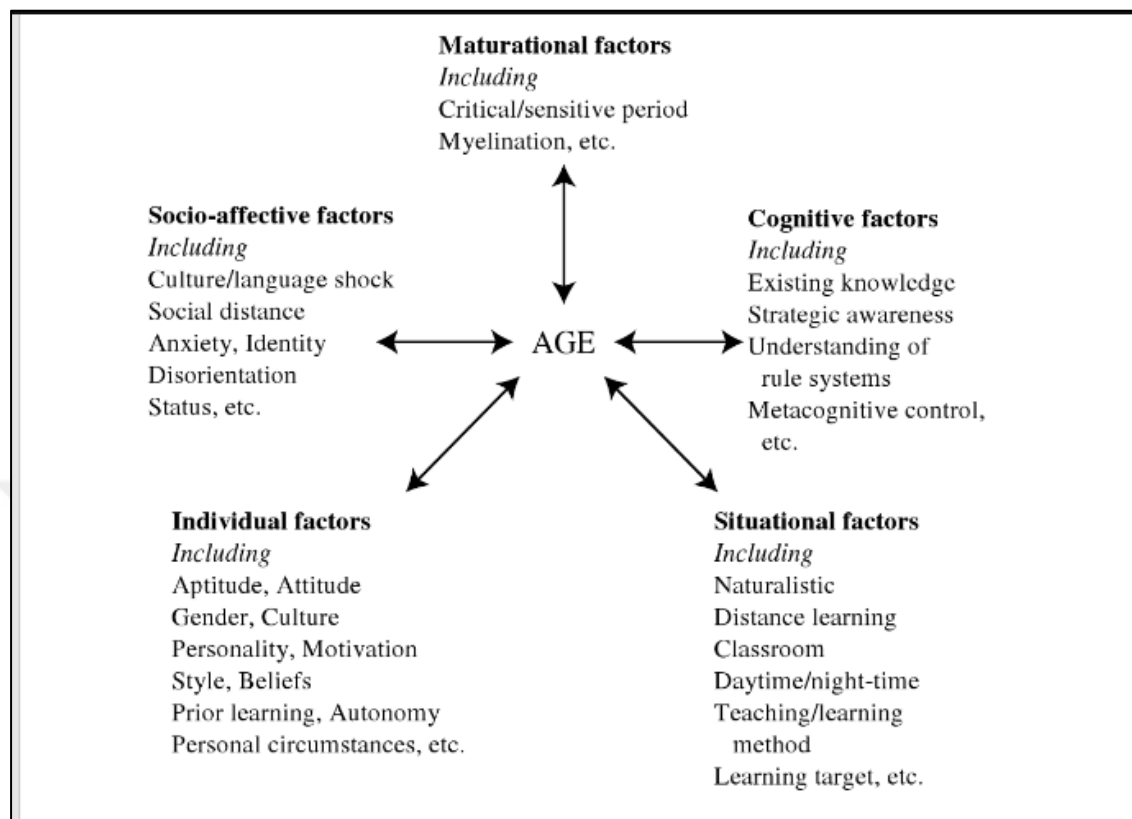
There are numerous factors affecting learning a second language. Among these is age factor. Rather, in the literature there seems to be no consensus on the best age to learn another language. Some researchers seem to favor the idea of “*the younger the better*” bearing in mind that there is no certain evidence that adults cannot achieve just the same. (see Brown, 2000; Griffith, 2008)

In the literature, a highly debated issue about age and learning is critical age or critical period hypothesis (CPH). The discussion about this term orientates around the question of whether there is a best age or period for people to learn a second language. (Brown, 2000, p.60) points out to the classic argument that the critical period in second language learning is around puberty. However, he skeptically introduces the idea that by the age of 12 or 13 people are “over the hill” in second language learning pertaining to the possibility of success.

According to Moyer (2004, p.20) age is something that cannot be isolated from other factors, therefore, its influence cannot be determined fully unless researched in relation to *co-occurring* factors. Birdsong (2006, cited in Ellis, 2015) concludes that age has some effects, but is continuous and it is hard to separate into definite periods. Since age is a long continuum and cannot be tested in isolation, consensus on a definite time is really hard to reach. Griffith (2008) emphasizes the co-occurring factors that interact with age in a detailed diagram (figure 3). She continues to agree with the idea that *younger is better* since, according to overall research, maturational, socio-affective, psychological, and cognitive factors seem to work better in favor of younger learners in second language learning for the long run especially when it comes to pronunciation. (p.47)

Figure 3

Griffith's diagram of factors that interact with age to influence language learning



Krashen et. al. (1982), reviewing early studies, reaches the conclusion that syntactically and morphologically older children and adults outperform younger children; and the earlier exposure to language brings about better overall proficiency (cited in Moyer, 2004). Ellis (2015) concludes that older learners are faster in initial stages, however, younger learners easily catch up and in the long run they take the lead.

In conclusion, learners in this study are secondary and high school students. Based on the literature above, the general idea is that although there is no definite answer to the question of whether adults or the young are more advantageous in second language learning, has barely a definite answer. This is because of other co-factors affecting language learning, which makes it difficult to fully test the effect of age alone. However, to see that younger learners seem to be advantageous when it comes to

phonological aspects of language such as pronunciation, and more importantly the overall competency, the researcher feels satisfied to have pre-assumed that the learners in this study were at a *critical age* (not in the same sense as in the literature) before the research.

2.3.2 Gender Factor in Language Learning

Among the many factors related to learner differences in language learning gender, too, has its place in the literature. The general idea that male are better at mathematical skills and females are better at verbal skills leads to the thought that girls are supposed to excel boys in language learning. However, in literature, it is hard to find a significant difference when it comes to the results of research. Based on the research, Ehrlich (1994, p.425) accounts the pre-supposition that females are better at language learning to their more positive approach to learning a new language. Ellis (1994), on the other hand, highlights the role of male and females in relation to their social roles and the access to target language. He speculates female superiority; rather he points to men proficiency because their jobs take them to more socially interactive places when women are *enclosed* at home (the case of Asian in Britain) (p.204)

The discussion is not new, however, it seems that a large part of literature takes the issue of male or female superiority in language learning in a perspective of their stance in social and cultural contexts. And a large number of studies show that men were more socially interacted with people because of their jobs and many other requirements, which enabled them to be more exposed to target language. This, in return, made men more proficient in second language learning. Nyikos (2008, p.73) states that technology has enabled researchers to find out more about the differences between male and female learning in relation to their modes of processing information.

This is a broad area that encompasses a very large area of research. The researcher, however, is interested in the part that is related to language learning. Findings of science are of value; however, to this age not much has changed as to the pedagogy of teaching and learning language. Technology, however, has certainly helped in such a way that enabled men and women equally access to the target language input, and has eased the way to practice it.

The factors related to discussions around social and cultural context variability between men and women, on the other hand, has gained another aspect, again, with the advantages technology has brought. Women may equally benefit from the social context via the internet only. After all, they are already as much a social being as men in this age because of their jobs and social status in comparison to past examples mentioned in the literature.

In short, gender difference in second language learning is not the hot topic of this research per se. However, the researcher finds it necessary to have given some space to this discussion as the findings of this study are going to be discussed in this respect, too, like in many similar ones. Secondly, with this topic, the researcher wanted to emphasize the fact that in today's world language learning is not limited to conventional contexts like classrooms, job settings, and many other opportunities that were once a variable between men and women. Therefore, girls and boys can equally enjoy the advantage of advancements the age has presented. Yet, the topic is going to be discussed around the differences (if any) between male and females' choice of activities.

2.4. Learning Environments: In-Class and out-of-Class Language Learning

Language learning basically occurs in two contexts: “foreign language” context and “second language” context (Chaudron, 1988). Language learning occurring in *foreign language* context means there is no or little target language used naturally in the neighborhoods where learning occurs. In such a context, language learning mostly resembles the learning of many other disciplines like geography or mathematics (p.5). In *second language* context, however, learning a language entails elements such as culture, sociality, and communicability. In this context, learners are surrounded by the natural language out of the teaching frame. Second language context, thus, offers more input and output opportunities in the natural form of target language. Language classrooms, on the other hand, might have meaning in both of these contexts if/when formality and pedagogy is taken into consideration in teaching and learning a target language. Van Lier (1988, p.47), defines language classrooms as places where people gather for *a limited period of time* for the purpose of learning a language led by one of the participants *assuming* the role of a teacher.

It is clear from the explanations above that whether learned in foreign or second language contexts; language learning entails two indispensable elements: classrooms and out-of-classrooms. The success in the integration of these two settings, however, seems to be dependent on the environment, where learning is taking place. Namely, if learners of English are in a country or place where it is language spoken by the local people, odds are the learners will benefit more from the environment, having lots of opportunities to practice the language in more meaningful and communicative situations. Foreign language learners, on the other hand, can be considered as “unlucky” not to be able to make use of such a complementary environment. Out-of-

class language learning gains importance right in this case. Bearing in mind, no matter in which context the language is learned, language classroom might have its place, however, it is out-of-class that enriches and completes learning by presenting the language learned in a natural, meaningful and communicative way.

Classrooms give the opportunity to meet the language; they introduce the language to the learner. However, using the target language outside of the classroom is an important part of language learning because the learner either interacts with the language or witnesses the use of the target language in real life. Thus, out-of-class language acquisition is regarded as a very important and effective way to practice English (Knight, 2007, p.21) In addition, an important reason why classroom teaching should be integrated with out-of-class learning is because there is substantial evidence that classroom teaching alone is not adequate for the development of higher levels of proficiency in target language. (Nunan & Choi 2018, p.51).

One specific use of language beyond classrooms is the variety and freedom it presents to the students. In classrooms, students are generally limited to one or two sources or types of input in target language. Namely, textbooks and the teacher are the main source of target language in a conventional classroom. However, taking into consideration the variability in the learner types and different preferences of activities, a complementary and more comprehensive setting is needed for the better acquisition of the target language. (Suh *et al*, 1999).

The nature of conversation in the classrooms is usually limited to teacher instruction; asking questions and giving feedback. The role of learners is usually answering the questions or making short comments. Ushioda (2011) calls this type of interaction as *pseudo-communication*, where the main focus is on the practicing of the

language rather than sharing ideas and *identities* in a more meaningful way. Besides, real communication is more challenging. It requires learners to be more diligent and competent. In addition to linguistic requirements, it demands cultural knowledge and the realization of the context truly. (Nunan & Choi 2018).

Considering the nature of classrooms that limit the learners to the frame mentioned above, out-of-class environments, on the other hand, are places and platforms where the learners are by themselves. In such a world, there is no teacher, who holds the control and gives security, and the interlocutors all have different backgrounds and proficiency. In this environment, the language used is for exchange of information or ideas whatever the intention of the learner is.

Whether the intention of the learners is to practice the target language explicitly, or use the language as a tool, out-of-class language learning environments give countless opportunities in all language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking). Furthermore, with the opportunities that technology has brought in this age, out-of-class language learning environments diminish the disadvantages of foreign language contexts pertaining to the lack of natural language used in the environment.

2.5. Out –Of-Class Language Learning

Benson (2001 p. 62) defines out -of- class language learning (OCLL) as learning activities that can take place anywhere “*except inside the classroom.*” Sundqvist (2011, p.107) suggests using “extramural” to be the *umbrella* term to refer to the huge extent of OCLL. (Reinders & Benson, 2017, p.560) define the concept as *language beyond the classroom* (LBC). (Nunan & Choi 2018, p.49) bring in the term *activation*, referring

to the OCLL activities to draw attention to their function as chances to practice the target language.

As seen, the concept of out-of-class language learning is defined in many terms by different researchers. This is followed by how they function in language learning and what main constituents of such a learning are. Richards (2015, p.146) prescribes beyond classroom activities to *compensate for* the limitations of classrooms. He refers to the necessity of input, written or aural, and communicative interactions where there would be exchange of information and real feedback, which classrooms usually fall short of. For (Nunan & Choi 2018, p.51) it is necessary to use language outside the classroom for a high level of proficiency. They consider outside the classroom as an arena where learners need to push hard to understand the linguistic and contextual aspects of target language spoken in communicative contexts, where the feedback would be *honest* in cases of failure (p.53). According to this explanation, out-of-class language activities present learners with many opportunities in many contextualized settings where language is used for its real purpose.

As for the constituents of out-of-class learning, a model is presented by Benson (2011). According to her model, language beyond classroom (LBC) has many dimensions in which details about LBC are depicted concerning the place of learning, formality, and pedagogy (see figure 4). Based on this model, LBC could be named as out-of-class, after class, extra-curricular, self-access, out-of-school, and distance learning. These names suggest the place where such learning could take place, too. She considers OCLL as informal or non-formal, requiring the learner to be autonomous, self-regulated and independent.

Figure 4***Dimensions of LBC (Benson 2011a)***

Dimension	Description	Terms
Location	Where and when the learning takes place	Out-of-class, after-class, extra-curricular, self-access, out-of-school, distance
Formality	The degree to which learning is linked to educational qualifications or structured by educational institutions	Informal, non-formal, naturalistic
Pedagogy	The degree to which teaching is involved	Non-instructed, self-instructed
Locus of control	How decisions are distributed between the learner and others	Autonomous, independent, self-regulated

According to Benson (2001, p.62), there are three types of out-of-class learning: Self-instruction, naturalistic, and self-directed naturalistic. In the first type, learners are in control of their learning. They deliberately plan their activities for the purpose of learning language. For example, they use resources such as grammar books to study the target language. In the naturalistic type, learners find themselves in interactional and communicative contexts, where they have to communicate in the target language. For the self-directed naturalistic type, there may not be a direct purpose of learning; it comes unintentionally like buying certain magazines of their interest, where learning language is the outcome.

Based on the concepts above, the term *activity* is preferred by the researcher as whether they use strategies or not; there are activities carried out intentionally or for pleasure.

Like in Hyland, (2004), this study looks for a *broad* scale of activities either done purposefully or for pleasure, which in the end, work for learning the target language. As for what exactly these activities could be, countless activities

could be listed. As (Nunan & Choi 2018, p.1) states, in contrast to the pre-globalized, *pre-Internet world* there are ubiquitous activities that today's world can present to the learner.

2.5.1. Out-of -Class Language Learning Environments

It is plausible to accept the proposition that language learning cannot be restricted to classrooms. Conversely, language is spoken in real life; therefore it should have its meaning in real life settings. So, conventional classrooms in this scenario seem to fall short to grant the best learning to happen.

Krashen (1981, 1982) makes a distinction between learning and acquisition. He means with his theory that when it comes to language, learning is not the appropriate word. Instead he proposes the term *acquisition*. So, he brings in the theory of comprehensible *input*, which asserts that for language to be acquired, there must be abundant natural language spoken or written in environments where learning is taking place; and the learners should be involved in the activities voluntarily. We can understand from this proposition that best language learning can take place where the target language is used in real life for real purposes.

Swain (2005), who is regarded as a critic of Krashen, argues *input* that Krashen suggests is not the only key to better learning; he brings in the term *comprehensible output*. By this, he means that learners of a language have to produce the language to be able to fully encode the language learned. So, language is learned best when a combination of both listening and speaking activities are involved. Similarly, Pfenninger and Singleton (2017, p. 180) gives reference to numerous studies showing that learner's experiences abroad and extracurricular activities contribute a lot in foreign language (FL) learning. The study

shows that such activities help gain enough proficiency; and later result in a better oral output.

It is understood from the arguments in literature that environments that can combine all the skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking) are ideal places where learning a foreign language can take place. From the discussions, we can assume that best places for language acquisition are rather to be found out of classrooms unless classrooms are designed in a way that can present all the elements of language that are found in real life.

2.6. Previous Studies

There are several studies on out-of-class language learning activities. Most of these studies are conducted on tertiary level students, or adults learning the language as a *second* language for integrative purposes. However, there are a few aiming to detect the frequency of activities done by teenagers and adolescents. Some of these studies are conducted in ESL and others are in EFL contexts, like this research.

In one of these studies, Pickard (1996) investigated 20 German-speaking university students. He wanted to carry out research to find out what out-of-class activities they preferred when they learned English in secondary school. The results showed that these students mostly preferred passive activities rather than active ones. Namely, students did more listening and reading than speaking and writing. According to this study, listening to radio ranked first. Students only preferred writing to respond to their pen-friends, and only did speaking while trying to help lost tourists to their town. Pickard concludes that this is because of the availability of the opportunities. According to the study, students mostly did listening and reading as there were materials and mediums compatible with these skills such as radio and reading materials. In contrast, students didn't practice speaking because there weren't enough English

speaking environments where they learned English. Another finding of this research is that students usually preferred activities in correlation with their interest. One more important result of the study is that the students in this study were aware of their weaknesses and tried to compensate for speaking skill by visiting countries abroad.

Yap (1998) investigated out-of-class language activities in Hong Kong context. This study included 18 secondary school students. According to this study, students mostly preferred reading newspapers and watching television. They rarely engaged in speaking activities in the target language because they hardly found an environment to practice English other than in the classrooms. This study, too, found that students did receptive activities rather than productive ones. Hyland (2004) carried out research on student teachers in Hong Kong. In her study, she found that students mostly wrote emails, read books and surfed on the internet as language learning activities. This study is different from some previous ones in that students did more writing than listening and secondly they engaged in internet surfing, a relatively new activity compared to previous studies. Yet, watching television, movies and videos, and listening to music are among the most common activities in this study, too. Similarly she found that talking to friends and family members in target language are the least frequently preferred activities. It's also interesting that a face-to-face interview of the same research revealed that the students didn't prefer to talk in English out of class for social and political reasons. In one way, they didn't want to embarrass the locals who couldn't speak the language. Also, they didn't want to seem to be showing off where only few people can understand English. A similar concern was mentioned by Ibadurrahman (2012). He asserts that students usually avoid talking in target language in EFL settings because they don't want to seem superior to others, where it is prestigious to know English. Sundqvist (2009) carried out a more recent but similar study in Sweden. Her

research included 80 Swedish teenagers (15-16 years of age). The main purpose was to determine the effect of *extramural activities* (as she described) on oral proficiency. She analyzed the frequency of activities similar to the previous literature and found that listening to music, watching television and movies were the most preferred out-of-class language learning activities in Swedish context, too. Playing games and surfing on the internet are other most common activities in her study.

Knight (2007) investigated out-of-school language activities of ESL learners in an adult community college in the United States. The participants were 41 adult learners of ESL from ten different countries. Some of them were working, others employed or looking for a job. The participants were directed questions about how much time they spent on individual or interactional activities like talking with the customers, or engaging in activities that required using English. The results showed that learning English in a country where it's the spoken language changes the type of activities frequently used. Knight found that talking to customers was one of the most frequent activities as well as reading newspapers, and listening to radio, in contrast to the case of many EFL learners. This could, at the same time, show that learners use speaking activities when they feel the necessity to make natural contact for real purposes such as shopping or occupational requirements as in this example. In literature, there is a recent study by (Cahyadin&Koso, 2019) in EFL context in Indonesia that found that EFL students, too, did more productive activities, especially speaking. Similar to Knight, (2007), they found that learners did more productive activities such as talking to colleagues, chatting with foreigners or speaking at the meetings. They preferred writing, too: they texted mobile messages, wrote English texts or comments on facebook in a considerable amount. Cahyadin&Koso base this finding mainly on three factors. According to them, the scarcity of printed media in English makes it hard to

access reading materials. Secondly, they believe that learners are very well intrinsically motivated towards speaking. Lastly, the environment is affordable in terms that there are lots of visitors from English speaking countries. And they report this to be an incentive for learning and speaking English in the environment.

We can conclude from the last two researches that learners' preferences about the type of language learning activities are highly dependent on the sort of environment they live in.

In Turkish context, there are a few studies done with students on out-of-class language learning activities. Most of these studies are done with learners of English at tertiary level. İnözü, Şahinkarakaş&Yumru, (2010) did research with first year ELT students. They found that students most frequently referred to their dictionaries used the internet and listened to music out-of-class. According to the study, students' reasons why they chose these activities are of success and academic concerns. The same study found that students *rarely* did speaking activities. Students are reported to have expressed reasons such as anxiety and lack of confidence behind scarcity of speaking activities. Also, limited opportunity in the environment for speaking is another factor in this study, too. Ekşi&Aydın, (2013) did research with preparatory students at university. They wanted to learn if students carried out any language learning activities beyond classroom hours. According to this study, students reported doing little out-of-class language learning activities for reasons such as lack of time and energy. Yet, the findings showed that activities they did most were passive ones such as listening to music and watching movies. They did very little speaking and writing activities similar to many studies in the literature.

Orhon, (2018) conducted a research to reveal activities carried out by 109 university students. She found watching movies, videos and listening to songs to be the most preferred out-of-class activities. Talking English with family members and writing activities were found to be the least preferred ones. Cengizhan (2019), wanted to reveal the frequency of out-of-class language learning activities among 245 university students. Similarly, she found that students mostly listened to songs, watched series or movies in English. In addition to previous studies, she found that students also did surf the internet in English. The least frequent activities were playing online games that require speaking in English and reading English newspapers.

Coşkun&Mutlu, (2017) did a most relevant study to this one. They aimed to investigate extramural activities carried out by 292 high school students to learn English in a state school. The research aimed to determine the frequency of out-of-class language learning activities under four main skills; reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The research found that high school students (grades 9 to 12) *rarely* did reading, writing and speaking activities. However, they *sometimes* did listening activities (M=3.00). Second most frequent activity was reading followed by speaking and writing respectively. The researchers analyzed the data in terms of gender, too. They found that girls did significantly more out-of-class activities than boys in general. They especially did reading, writing, and speaking activities more frequently than boys. However, boys and girls did more or less the same amount of listening. Coşkun&Mutlu concluded that students in this study did activities related to *receptive skills* (listening, reading) more frequently than *productive skills* (speaking, writing). They also infer that students in this study didn't carry out enough extramural activities on the whole.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the methodology of the research and the approaches are presented. Firstly, the pilot study is explained and later the main study is presented giving details about the setting, participants, data collection and analysis of the data.

3.1. Research Methodology

The researcher used a survey to determine the role of out-of-class language learning activities among secondary and high school students. Through survey, the researcher could gather enough data to base the study. Also, surveys made it possible to reach the data that would be very difficult to observe (McIntyre, 2011).

In this study, a quantitative approach was followed. That is, a questionnaire was directed to the students to see the frequency level for each activity they have been doing out of the class to learn English. The questionnaire included 3 parts. The first part asked the students to fill in personal information about their gender and the school level they attended. The second part included 24 5-likert type items; and part third part was 2 open-ended questions. One of them was to learn if students did any more activities not mentioned in the above items; the last one was to learn if there were any activities that they wanted to do but for some reason they couldn't do. These questions are thought to be complementary to the whole research as they fill the gap, if any, that questionnaire didn't cover. Also, the researcher, with this study, aims to reveal advantages and disadvantages that the students face when they are learning a foreign language in this context. That's why the last question especially aims to highlight some missing but/or

crucial points that are necessary for learning a language in an *English as a foreign language* (EFL) context.

The researcher followed this methodology because it was the best way to gather data for the research regarding the conditions when data were collected, which made it difficult to hold face to face interviews.

3.2. The pilot study

To test the instrument, the questionnaire, a pilot study was implemented on a total of 40 students (22 secondary and 18 high school students) at a private school and private course within the same institution in a province of the Eastern Black Region in Turkey. The piloting included 16 females and 24 male students from all the classes. Piloting made it possible to check if there were any items or expressions in the survey that the students found hard to understand. And also, it helped the researcher to have feedback from the students about the feasibility of the study.

The questionnaire consisted of three parts. First part included information about the students: age, gender, and class attended. The second part included 24 Likert type questions and the third part included 2 open-ended questions. Totally, there were 26 questions. The first 24 likert questions (1= never, 2= rarely, 3= sometimes, 4= often 5= always) were to see the frequency of out-of-class activities. The last 2 open-ended questions required the students to express some additional notes about other possible activities that they carry out as mentioned in the above paragraph. The administration of the questionnaire took 15 minutes.

3.2.1. Implications for the Main Study

The pilot study helped the researcher to review the questions and the expressions included in the questionnaire. In a way, it functioned as double-check, because as a result of the pilot study, the researcher thought of changing only one word that more than one student asked the meaning of: few students asked the meaning of *podcast* in the item 11, which aimed to investigate the frequency of listening to music and podcast together. The researcher thought to change or discard the word podcast, however, the word was kept, as it didn't change the way the students perceived the question.

3.3. Main Study

Implementation of the pilot study showed that there were no critical issues to consider before the main study was implemented. Thus, the researcher started to apply the main study one day after the piloting, at the beginning of March 2020.

3.3.1. Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at a private secondary school and a private course within the same institution in Giresun, a province in the eastern part of Black Sea Region in Turkey. The research includes 123 (48,6%) secondary school students (grades 5,6,7, and 8), and 130 (51,4%) high school students (grades 9,10,11, and 12). Of these participants, 144 (56,9%) are female and 109 (43,1%) are male. All of the participants are of Turkish origin. Their ages ranged from 11 to 18. An average secondary school student is between 11 and 14; and an average high school student is between 15 and 18. There wasn't difference to this rule as for the participants' age range, so the researcher didn't include the age of the participants in the statistics for

analysis, but categorized them according to their level of education and the class they attended.

Table 1

Participants

	Grade								Total
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Female	14	15	23	25	16	19	16	16	144
Male	11	10	10	13	16	15	17	17	109
Total	25	25	33	38	32	34	33	33	253

3.4. Data Collection Tools

The data for the main study were collected through a questionnaire. A questionnaire was developed to investigate students' out-of-class language learning activities. It was adopted from Hyland's (2004) and Cengizhan's (2019) questionnaire. The questionnaire was then translated to Turkish and administered in the version of Turkish language to make it comprehensible for the students.

The final version of the questionnaire consisted of three parts. Part A includes personal information about participants' age, gender, level of education and class they attended. Part B included 24 likert-type questions (1= never, 2= rarely, 3= sometimes, 4= often 5= always). The questions were then categorized under five main subgroups

during analysis. The data was analyzed under the categories of *reading*, *writing*, *listening*, *speaking* and use of *technological devices* (see table 2).

The items in the reading part were mostly taken from Cengizhan (2019). They were kept as it is because each item was comprehensive enough to include the necessary details to match the purpose of the current research. However, item eighteenth in the same category was created by the researcher. As for writing part, the researcher analyzed studies in the literature. And it was decided to include three items to mean writing for the subjects of this study. Listening items, on the other hand, are repeated in several studies compatible with this one. (e.g. Sundqvist (2009), (Yavuz, 2015), Cengizhan (2019)). So, six items were selected to analyze listening activities for the present research. As for the speaking part, depending on the review of the related literature, the researcher compiled and wrote all the items, except for the item fourth, which is the same as Cengizhan (2019).

The fifth category was partly constructed to analyze if students used their technological devices in English language. They were asked if the language of their smartphones or personal computers and their social media accounts like twitter or facebook etc. are in English language. Also, the section included how often they played video games in English. It was aimed with this section to analyze how often they used their technological devices and social media tools for the purpose of out-of-class English learning.

The two open-ended questions in the last part of the questionnaire were taken from Hyland's (2004). The items were reworded to check (1) if students did any more out-of-class activities to learn English and (2) to check if they would like to do any certain activities but for some reason they couldn't. This section was included to gather

as much detail as possible related to the students' preferences and their interest regarding language learning activities. In short, this part made it easier to make more comprehensive conclusions and implications as to what could be done for the best language learning to take place in addition to the conventional classroom practices.

Table 2

Items by sub-groups

Item no	
Reading	
1	I read in English (electronic or printed books, magazines or articles)
2	I read newspapers in English (Electronic or printed)
5	I play video games that require reading in English.
18	I surf on the internet in English (blogs, forums etc.).
Writing	
16	I write to native friends via instant messages, Whatsapp or other tools.
19	I keep a diary or chronicle in English.
21	I do English grammar exercises.
Listening	
6	I play video games that require listening in English.
7	I watch movies and series in English.
8	I listen to English radio and podcasts.
9	I watch English videos.
10	I listen to English songs
11	I watch English channels on TV.
Speaking	
4	I play video games that require speaking English.
12	I speak in English with family members.
13	I speak in English with natives around.
14	I speak in English with natives in foreign countries on holidays.
15	I speak with natives online.
17	I speak with my Turkish friends in English for practice.
24	I speak in English to myself.
Use of Technological Devices	
3	I play video games in English.
20	The language of my twitter and facebook etc. is English.
22	The language of my cell-phone is English.
23	The language of my computer/tablet is English.

3.5. Reliability

The questionnaire was designed in Turkish language to make sure of understanding and clarity, taking into account the level of English of the participants. The questionnaire was found reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha=.923$). Homogeneity and normality statistics proved that the data in the study were normal and homogenous except for the writing sub-skills. This might be because the number of items related to writing skills is relatively less than the other skills.

Table 3

Test of homogeneity of variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
reading	1,723	7	245	,104
writing	3,720	7	245	,001
listening	1,362	7	245	,222
speaking	2,842	7	245	,007
technology	1,817	7	245	,085
overall	1,545	7	245	,153

Based on George and Mallery (2010), skewness and kurtosis analysis for overall data showed that the data were normally distributed as the values are between +2.0 / - 2.0. Therefore, parametric tests were used for statistical analysis.

Table 4***Skewness and kurtosis analysis***

Skill	Skewness	Kurtosis
Reading	,475	-353
Listening	-.123	-.607
Speaking	,738	-.140
Writing	1,052	,989
Use of technology	,905	,171
Overall	,562	,017

3.6. Data Analysis

The aim of this study was to see out-of-class language learning activities carried out by secondary and high school students. A questionnaire consisting of 26 questions was directed. The first 24 questions aimed to determine how frequently students carried out activities categorized as writing, reading, listening, speaking skills and use of technological devices and tools for this purpose. Quantitative data were analyzed via Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

An independent t- test and one-way ANOVA were used to analyze research questions. T-test was used to analyze the research questions related to gender and differences between secondary and high school students. For the differences between the grades, One-way ANOVA was used.

The last two open-ended questions in the questionnaire aimed to gather further information about out-of-class activities other than the ones in the previous section.

They were optional. Students who had additional activities or thoughts were asked to write them down in the space provided. Therefore, the data included in this section were analyzed by the method of quantitative content analysis.



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, data collected through questionnaire are analyzed. Quantitative data results are presented first. Then, the results are analyzed in detail under each research question. The findings for each research question are analyzed under separate headings by interpreting and giving references to relevant literature. The open-ended questions are analyzed in a way that students' answers and opinions in this section are presented verbatim by translating from Turkish to English.

4.1. Research Question 1: How often do the secondary and high school students report doing out-of-class language learning activities?

Each of the 24-likert type questions aimed to detect a different out-of-class language learning activity. Therefore, the researcher finds it necessary to present the mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) for each distinctively (see table 5). Also, the data were analyzed dividing these questions under five different categories (i.e. reading, writing, listening, speaking, and use of technological devices and tools). First, the results regarding the findings for each of the activities are presented. Later, the findings are presented by the sub-categories.

Table 5
Frequency of each activity

Activities	M	SD
1. I read in English (electronic or printed books, magazines or articles)	2,72	1,25
2. I read newspapers in English (Electronic or printed)	1,66	1,10
3. I play video games in English.	3,47	1,46
4. I play video games that require speaking English.	2,95	1,48
5. I play video games that require reading in English.	3,32	1,46
6. I play video games that require listening in English.	3,14	1,51
7. I watch movies and series in English.	3,67	1,46
8. I watch English channels on TV.	2,38	1,42
9. I watch English videos.	3,52	1,41
10. I listen to English songs.	4,20	1,19
11. I listen to English radio and podcasts.	1,67	1,14
12. I speak in English with family members.	1,87	1,14
13. I speak in English with natives around.	2,07	1,30
14. I speak in English with natives in foreign countries on holidays.	1,96	1,35
15. I speak with natives online.	2,15	1,47
16. I write to native friends via instant messages, Whatsapp or other tools	2,03	1,45
17. I speak with my Turkish friends in English for practice.	2,26	1,30
18. I surf on the internet in English (blogs, forums etc.).	2,83	1,49
19. I keep a diary or chronicle in English.	1,36	,90
20. The language of my twitter and facebook etc. is English.	2,13	1,47
21. I do English grammar exercises.	2,73	1,45
22. The language of my cell-phone is English.	1,95	1,35
23. The language of my computer/tablet is English.	1,85	1,36
24. I speak in English to myself.	3,09	1,58

The table above shows the frequency of out-of-class language learning activities carried out by secondary and high school students in the order of the questionnaire while the table below depicts the frequency of OCLLAs under each sub-category.

Table 6

Frequency of activities by sub-groups

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Reading	253	2,63	,96
Writing	253	2,04	,92
Listening	253	3,10	,92
Speaking	253	2,34	,93
Use of Tech.	253	2,35	1,04
Overall	253	2,54	,82

The table clearly shows that students carry out listening activities more than other basic skills ($M=3,10$, $SD=.92$). Listening is followed by reading ($M=2,63$, $SD=.96$), which is followed by speaking activities ($M= 2,34$, $SD=.93$) and writing activities ($M=2,04$, $SD=.92$) respectively. It is clear that students do listening OCLLAs more than other skills and the frequency is very low for writing OCLLAs. Frequency of speaking activities is also lower than listening and reading activities. In short, students do more *receptive* (i.e. reading and listening) language learning activities than *productive* (speaking and writing) ones. As for the fifth subgroup concerning the use of

technological devices and tools for the benefit of learning language, the frequency is nearly the same as speaking OCLLs ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.04$).

In order to analyze each activity one by one, the following two tables are derived to show the most and least frequently preferred activities:

Table 7

Five most preferred activities

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. I listen to English songs	4, 20	1, 19
2. I watch movies and series in English	3, 67	1, 46
3. I watch English videos	3, 52	1, 41
4. I play video games in English	3, 47	1, 46
5. I play video games that require reading in English	3, 32	1, 46

The table shows 5 most preferred out-of-class activities by secondary and high school students. As seen in the table, the mostly preferred activity is listening to songs in English. ($M = 4.20$, $SD = 1.19$). Second most preferred activity is watching movies and series in English ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.46$). These two activities are followed by watching videos in English ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.41$), playing video games ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.46$), and playing video games that require reading in English ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.46$).

Table 8***Five least preferred activities***

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. I speak in English with family members	1, 87	1, 14
2. The language of my computer/tablet is English	1, 85	1, 36
3. I listen to English radio and podcasts	1, 67	1, 14
4. I read newspapers in English (Electronic or printed).	1, 66	1, 10
5. I keep a diary or chronicle in English	1, 36	, 90

The table shows out-of-class language activities that are preferred least frequently. As seen, the learners keep a diary or chronicles in English very rarely ($M = 1.36$, $SD = .06$). Listening to radio or podcasts, reading newspapers, and speaking with family members are other activities that learners of English rarely prefer to do in English.

These two tables evidently show that learners at secondary and high school mostly prefer to *listen to music* and *watch movies or serials* in the target language. As will be discussed more detailed in analysis for the four basic skills later, *listening* has the first place among the other skills. This is not surprising, though. Research has shown that students usually prefer *receptive skills* (reading and listening) more when compared to *productive skills* (speaking and writing) as language learning activities. On the other hand, in this study, *playing video games in English* is second most preferred activity after listening and watching activities.

4.2. Research Question 2: Does the frequency of activities differ by individual factors such as gender, educational level and grade?

The research aimed to analyze if the frequency of out-of-class language learning activities changed by individual factors, too. Therefore, the data was analyzed to check if factors such as gender, educational level and grade differed in terms of the frequency of OCLLAs among the students. The table below shows the differences by gender:

Table 9

Frequency of activities by gender

		N	M	SD	P
R	Female	144	2, 69	1, 00	, 304
	Male	109	2, 56	, 91	
W	Female	144	2, 19	, 98	, 003
	Male	109	1,61	,75	
L	Female	144	3, 29	, 87	, 001
	Male	109	2, 84	, 93	
S	Female	144	2, 41	, 91	, 169
	Male	109	2, 24	, 95	
UT	Female	144	2, 36	1, 09	, 915
	Male	109	2,34	,99	
Overall	Female	144	2,64	,82	, 029
	Male	109	2,41	,81	

R=Reading, W=Writing, L=Listening, S=Speaking, UT=Use of Technological devices

The frequency of out-of-class language learning activities was analyzed by gender using an independent t-test. Data was analyzed based on the five sub-categories. As seen in the table, for each sub-category, there are 144 female students and 109 male students. It is evident that female students do significantly more OCLLAs ($M = 2.64$, $SD = .82$) than male students ($M = 2.41$, $SD = .81$) in total, $p = .029$ ($p < .05$). And as for listening and writing, too, the difference is statistically significant. Girls significantly do more listening OCLLAs than boys. On the other hand, there is no significant difference between male and female students when it comes to reading, speaking and use of technological devices for the purpose of learning English ($p > 0.05$).

Secondly, an analysis was made to see the differences between secondary and high school students. The table below shows the results:

Table 10***Frequency of activities by educational levels***

	Category	N	M	SD	P
Reading	Secondary	123	2,64	,92	,950
	High School	130	2,63	1,00	
Writing	Secondary	123	2,12	,87	,200
	High School	130	1,97	,97	
Listening	Secondary	123	3,07	,92	,614
	High School	130	3,13	,93	
Speaking	Secondary	123	2,44	,87	,095
	High School	130	2,24	,97	
Technology	Secondary	123	2,26	,95	,155
	High School	130	2,44	1,12	
Overall	Secondary	123	2,56	,75	,763
	High School	130	2,53	,88	

An independent t-test was used to see if frequency of activities changed by high school and secondary school students based on the five categories. There were 123 secondary school students and 130 high school students for all the five sub-categories.

The research showed that there is no significant difference between high school and secondary school students in doing OCLLAs on the whole; ($M = 2.56$, $SD = .75$) for secondary school students, and ($M = 2.53$, $SD = .88$) for high school students. They nearly carry out the same amount of language learning activities out of the class for all the sub scales ($p > 0.05$).

Lastly, data was analyzed to check if there was any difference between classes (grades) in doing out-of-class activities. One-way ANOVA was used to analyze the data based on the five sub-categories. The research number of students for each class is depicted in the table 11. Analysis is done separately for each sub-category.

Table 11

Frequency of activities by each grade (reading)

Grade	N	M	SD	P
Grade 5	25	2,54	1,07	,001
Grade 6	25	2,17	,70	
Grade 7	33	2,88	,91	
Grade 8	38	2,71	,84	
Grade 9	32	2,85	,99	
Grade 10	34	3,16	1,07	
Grade 11	33	2,42	,78	
Grade 12	33	2,18	,88	

The results above show the frequency of reading activities. Based on the findings, it is clear that 10th graders do more reading activities than all other grades ($M = 3,16$ $SD = 1,07$). It is followed by 7th graders ($M = 2,88$, $SD = ,91$). 6th graders do the least reading OCLLAs ($M = 2.17$, $SD = .70$). For the reading part, the difference is statistically significant between 10th and 6th graders ($p < 0.05$). It is also notable that 12th graders do the second least reading activities ($M = 2.18$, $SD = ,88$).

Table 12

Frequency of activities by each grade (writing)

Grade	N	M	SD	P
Grade 5	25	2,04	,84	,001
Grade 6	25	2,00	1,07	
Grade 7	33	2,38	,75	
Grade 8	38	2,00	,88	
Grade 9	32	2,20	1,00	
Grade 10	34	2,44	1,23	
Grade 11	33	1,75	,60	
Grade 12	33	1,50	,57	

The table above shows the frequency of writing activities. According to statistics, 10th graders do the most amount of writing activities, leading the first two ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 1.23$) followed by 7th, and 9th graders, respectively. 10th graders do significantly more writing OCLLAs than 11th and 12th graders ($p < 0.05$). When compared to 7th and 9th graders, the difference is also significant against 12th graders.

Table 13*Frequency of activities by each grade (listening)*

Grade	N	M	SD	P
Grade 5	25	2,87	1,02	,001
Grade 6	25	2,65	,98	
Grade 7	33	3,25	,95	
Grade 8	38	3,32	,69	
Grade 9	32	3,30	,80	
Grade 10	34	3,50	,92	
Grade 11	33	3,02	,78	
Grade 12	33	2,68	,97	

When it comes to listening, the table above shows that 10th graders do listening activities the most (M = 3,50 SD = ,92) followed by 8th and 9th graders respectively. 6th graders do the least amount of OCLL listening activities followed by 12th graders. 10th graders do significantly more activities than these two ($p < 0.05$).

Table 14*Frequency of activities by each grade (speaking)*

Grade	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.
Grade 5	25	2,15	,82	
Grade 6	25	2,34	1,06	
Grade 7	33	2,58	,81	
Grade 8	38	2,43	,80	
Grade 9	32	2,48	1,04	,000
Grade 10	34	2,85	1,07	
Grade 11	33	2,12	,69	
Grade 12	33	1,66	,67	

The table shows the frequency of out-of-class speaking activities carried out by each class. It is evident that 10th graders do speaking activities more than other classes (M = 2.85, SD = 1.87) followed by 7th and 9th and 8th graders, respectively. And the difference is significant between 5th grade, 11th and 12th grade ($p < 0.05$). On the other hand, 12th graders carry out speaking activities less than all other classes while the difference is significant compared with 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th grades.

Table 15*Frequency of activities by each grade (use of technological devices and tools)*

Grade	N	M	SD	Sig.
Grade 5	25	1,94	,85	
Grade 6	25	1,95	,85	
Grade 7	33	2,40	,80	
Grade 8	38	2,42	1,06	
Grade 9	32	2,86	,92	,008
Grade 10	34	2,72	1,21	
Grade 11	33	2,28	,94	
Grade 12	33	2,06	1,12	

The researcher aimed to analyze the data to see if the students used their technological devices such as cellular phones, tablets or computers and their social media accounts for the benefit of learning English; or whether they play online games in English. It can be inferred from the table 15 that 5th graders rank the last in using of the devices and social media for the benefit of learning English. (M = 1.94, SD = .85). There is a steady increase after that. 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th graders use technological tools and social media more, respectively, with 9th graders ranking the top (M = 2.86, SD = .92). From this point there is a decrease for 11th (M = 2.28, SD = .94) and 12th graders (M = 2.06, SD = 1.12)

Lastly, an analysis is presented below to show each grade's total engagement in out-of-class activities:

Table 16***Overall frequency of activities by each grade***

Grade	N	M	SD
Grade 5	25	2,34	,78
Grade 6	25	2,28	,83
Grade 7	33	2,74	,65
Grade 8	38	2,64	,70
Grade 9	32	2,77	,84
Grade 10	34	2,99	,97
Grade 11	33	2,38	,61
Grade 12	33	2,05	,76
Total	253	2,54	,82

The table above illustrates average frequency of out-of-class activities on the whole ($M = 2,54$, $SD = ,82$). According to the analysis, an average student in the research carries out activities between *rarely* (2) and *sometimes* (3) frequency level, based on the 5 likert-type scale. When we look at the mean of each grade in this perspective, it is evident that 12th grades are first below the average ($M = 2.05$, $SD = .76$). The difference is significant between 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th grades. It is clear that they *rarely* do out-of-class language activities, followed by, 6th and 5th grades ($M = 2.28$, $SD = .83$) and ($M = 2,34$, $SD = .78$) respectively. These classes, too, are closer to the *rarely* frequency level. When it comes to the highest frequency level, grade 10th ($M = 2.99$, $SD = .97$) and 9th ($M = 2.77$, $SD = .84$) appear to be the first two classes that carry out language learning activities out-of-class the most frequently. They are

followed by grade 7th ($M = 2.74$ $SD = .65$). These three grades are closer to *sometimes* frequency level.

To summarize, though not significant between all classes, there is an order of frequency of doing out-of-class language learning activities among classes as depicted above. The researcher finds it necessary to highlight such an order to be able to mention pedagogical implications. Therefore, the table below (table 17) shows the order of the classes from the most to the least frequent use of OCLLAs:

Table 17

Order of the grades by the frequency of activities carried out

Order/grade	M	SD
1. Grade 10	2,99	,97
2. Grade 9	2,77	,84
3. Grade 7	2,74	,65
4. Grade 8	2,64	,70
5. Grade 11	2,38	,61
6. Grade 5	2,34	,78
7. Grade 6	2,28	,83
8. Grade 12	2,05	,76

4.3. Students' Responses to the Open-ended Questions:

Two open-ended questions were added at the end of the questionnaire. Item 25th asked students to write down any more activities not mentioned in the questionnaire. 26th item aimed to learn if students wanted to engage in any more language learning activities out-of-class, but they couldn't for some reason. This section received 103 comments (approximately % 40 of the total number of attendees). As for activities not mentioned in the questionnaire, a few students mentioned *mobile applications*, *memorization of vocabulary*, and *translation activities* from English to Turkish.

Some of the answers are as follows:

"I try to translate comments below YouTube videos in English." (Male, 11th grade)

"I draw English cartoons." (Female, 12th grade)

"I often use "duo lingo" application." (Female, grade 8th; 12th)

Some students also reported that they were engaged in some speaking and listening activities that they themselves created:

I'm trying to talk in English in my "English only day" a week. (Male, grade 6th)

"I pretend to be a famous dancer or singer. I sing my song. Then, I make my speech as if there was audience in front of me." (Female, 11th grade)

“I record my voice when I’m reading an English passage. Then, I listen to my recording and try to tone my voice to perfect my pronunciation.”(Female, 9th grade)

Students’ *attitudes* towards learning English in or out-of-class was not the primary concern of the research, however, taking into consideration the comments they have made, quite a few students seem to have been extremely keen on learning English. We can understand this from the comments above concerning speaking and listening activities the students themselves have created.

The item 26, on the other hand, revealed students’ eagerness to engage in English speaking environments once given the chance. In other words, the section reflected their willingness towards exposure to English. Most of the students’ opinions include *going abroad* to practice English. Second most common one is to be able to *talk to foreigners* in their surroundings. Some comments are as follows:

“I would like to go abroad via a student exchange program to practice my English.” (Female, grade 9)

“I would like to take part in girls’ camps to practice my English. (Female, grade 9)”

“I would like to go abroad in my summer holidays, especially to US (Female, grade 10)

Some students, on the other hand, wanted to be able to talk to foreigners via video chatting. And they needed guidance as to what platform to use and how. Some of them already know of some internet sites or online platforms to do so:

“I would like to practice my English without paying too much. I suggest a platform like Cambly, but a free one.” (Male, grade 12)

“I would like to talk to foreigners via online platforms, but I don't know which one to use and how (Female, grade 9)”

A few students would like to experience language learning settings within formal arrangements in the framework of their school or education system of their country. They make suggestions as such:

“We could have pen-friends arranged by ministry of education, I think it would work.” (Female, grade 7)

“Our school could arrange field trips to abroad countries.” (Female, grade 7)

Apart from these, one or two students mentioned having native speakers in their school schedules would be useful to be able to practice their English. One student wanted to be able to read manuals or magazines about automobiles, but he found himself unlucky not to be able to understand the content.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Learning English is one of the most prevalent activities in Turkey for various reasons. Likewise, it is a dream to be able to *speak* the language. Schools and private courses are the basic mediums that assume the responsibility to meet this demand.

Children start learning English at an early age within the formal curriculum of the formal education and continue taking courses till the end of high school. At universities, there are language courses, too. In addition, there are hundreds of private language centers all over the country. Yet, when it comes to the end result, an average high school student will only have gained just a little to mean English by the time he/she graduates.

Country's quest for the best English learning still prevails. However, methods and policies, whatever the reason, allow only for a little achievement. Speaking, which should be the most natural outcome of learning a language, is the least accomplished English skill in the country.

In this study, the researcher focused on a possible treatment to the problem: *Out-of-class language learning activities* (OCLLAs). OCLL is thought to be a good complement to the classroom learning to learn English in a more desired way. The study aimed to see how frequently students dealt with English activities outside the school. For this purpose, secondary (N=123) and high school students (N=130), a total of 253 students were analyzed to see what activities they carried out in English in their free time under the following research questions:

5.1. Research Question 1: Frequency of Activities:

The present study found that an average student carried out OCLLAs somewhere between *rarely* and *sometimes* frequency level ($M=2.54$) on a -5 -point likert scale. When it comes to skill by skill analysis, we can say that students *sometimes* did listening and reading; however, they *rarely* carried out speaking and writing OCLL activities. Namely, the frequency of the first two skills is higher than the average for all skills, but the frequency for the latter two is below this average.

Among the 24 activities, *listening to songs in English* was the most preferred activity done in English. Other most popular activities were *watching English movies and videos*. Activities that require listening were the most preferred language learning activities on the whole. Only with one exception: *listening to radio* was among the least preferred ones. In the most relevant and recent literature, too, listening activities are the most popular ones among the learners of a foreign language (e.g. Pickard (2007), Sundqvist (2009), Ibadurrahman (2012), İnözü, Şahinkarakaş&Yumru, (2010), Ekşi&Aydın, (2013), Orhon, (2018), Cengizhan (2019). Apart from this, *playing computer games in English*, and *computer games that require reading* were among the most preferred activities together with listening and watching activities. Also, *surfing on the internet in English* had relatively a higher frequency.

In this study, activities that students preferred the least were *keeping a diary in English*, *talking in English with family members*, and *reading newspapers in English*. The frequency of the writing activities on the whole is considerably lower than reading and listening activities. When it comes to speaking activities on the whole, the frequency of carrying out activities such as *speaking with foreigners around*, *talking*

with family members in English is very low except for *talking with natives online*, which is slightly higher than other speaking activities.

It can be concluded that students prefer to do listening and watching in English. They don't carry out speaking and writing activities enough. When it comes to reading, they do not read in English as frequently as listening. Rather, they mostly read instructions while they play online English games.

Finally, to make an order of four basic skills in terms of frequency, *listening* activities are the most frequently preferred activities followed by *reading*, *speaking*, and *writing activities*, respectively.

As mentioned in the above paragraphs, there are some exceptions in this research regarding speaking and listening activities. Firstly, although overall frequency of listening activities is much higher than other skills, *listening to radio* is among the least preferred activities. This could be because of the radio being a thing of the past as a physical object. And it has been replaced by software programs on computers or smartphones. And secondly, although speaking activities are preferred only rarely, the item "*I speak to myself in English*" has, interestingly, a much higher frequency than overall speaking activities. The finding is interesting in that it might imply students' eagerness for speaking in English.

To sum up, we can conclude that the study correlates with the findings of previous studies which found that students preferred more *receptive* skills (i.e. listening and reading) than *productive* skills (i.e. speaking and writing). This result is best found in the places where English is thought as a foreign language (EFL). For example, Sundqvist (2009) found listening to be the most preferred activity in English among Swedish teenagers learning English in Sweden. Similarly, Pickard (1996) investigated the same results among German-speaking university students learning English. In

Turkish context too, listening to music and watching English movies and videos ranked first as activities carried out in English out-of-class. According to Coşkun&Mutlu, (2017), students in high school *rarely* did speaking, writing, and reading; however, they *sometimes* did listening activities in English. Furthermore, they concluded that students didn't do enough extramural activities on the whole.

In literature, there are studies that contradict with the findings of this research, though. However, most of such research entails students learning English in ESL (English as a second language) settings. For example, Knight (2007) conducted research among adult ESL learners in the U.S. The research found that learners did more *speaking* and *reading* activities than listening. They frequently spoke to locals in English and read newspapers in English. Similarly, (Cahyadin&Koso, 2019) found that students in Indonesia did a considerable amount of speaking in their free times. This latter study was conducted in EFL context among eight *good* university students. And the research was conducted in a selected district, where there were enough native speaker visitors all year round. Further, they report students selected for the research to be highly motivated.

5.2. Research Question 2: Frequency of activities by individual factors such as gender, educational level and grade

The study showed that female students did more out-of-class English activities than male students on the whole. Furthermore, the difference is more for *listening* and *writing* activities. The research also revealed that boys and girls benefited equally from technological devices; used social media platforms; surfed on the internet in English about the same amount. Coşkun&Mutlu (2017) also analyzed the difference between boys and girls and they found that, similar to this research, girls did more reading,

writing, and speaking activities; however, in their research boys and girls did about the same amount of listening activities.

In literature, there are studies that assume females to be more interested in learning languages. And it is believed that this positive attitude towards learning a foreign language caused the presupposition that girls are better at learning languages (Ehrlich, 1994). Among some other factors that might distinguish male and females' success in learning another language is the opportunity to access the learning environments according to some other research (Ellis, 1994).

As the present study involves school girls and boys in formal education in the same environment, and with families more or less with the same social and cultural background, girls' dominance in doing OCLLAs can be accounted for the first mentioned reason, which presumes that they have a more welcoming attitude towards learning a foreign language.

The researcher wanted to see if secondary and high school students carried out the same amount of out-of-class English activities. It was found that secondary and high school students engaged in activities more or less the same. Although the difference is not significant, there might be implications. Rather, because each level contains four distinct grades, some classes might help the rate to go up or down; which makes it necessary to analyze each grade one by one. The literature, on the other hand, is short of such an analysis; therefore, the researcher will continue to discuss the findings grade by grade to make more accurate conclusions and implications depending on the present study.

As shown in details in the results section, an overall picture as to which grade ranked more in doing OCLLAs, and possible reasons will be discussed. According to the present study, grade 10th ranked first. They *sometimes* did OCLLAs, which is above the overall average. They were followed by grade 9th and 7th, with a frequency which can fall in *sometimes* level, too. Grade 8th is the fourth in doing OCLLAs with an average between *rarely* and *sometimes* level. They are followed by grade 11th and 5th graders respectively, with an average closer to *rarely*. And lastly, grade 6th and 12th rank the last with an average to mean *rarely*.

As seen, there are differences between each grade in doing OCLLAs. Different classes engage in English activities in different amounts, which might have implications. Thus, it is worth discussing possible reasons.

It is known that in Turkey, students are assigned to high schools and universities depending on centralized exams. Eight graders have to take the High School Entrance Exam (Liselere Giriş Sınavı-LGS) at the end of class 8th to attend a particular high school relevant to their score on this exam. Likewise, high school students have to take the Higher Education Institutions Examination (Yükseköğretim Kurumları Sınavı-YKS) at the end of class 12th to be accepted to a university depending on their score from this exam. So, exam anxiety is felt differently among classes. Naturally, eighth and twelfth grades experience this pressure more than other classes. Depending on this fact, it is presumed that low frequency in doing OCLLAs among twelfth classes can be best explained by their over engagement with the preparation for the exam at the end of the educational year. Similarly, it is argued that eighth graders would have engaged more in English activities without their worries from exam preparation. Furthermore, the case for eighth graders is slightly different from twelfth classes, in that the exam

they take includes some English questions, too. This can be the reason why they don't fall under the average frequency seeing that they might be dealing with some English out-of-class activities as a preparation for the English section on the exam, which constitutes %9 of the total exam.

When we go back to analyze the classes that carry out OCLLAs most, the assumptions that are made above can be justified. It is clear that the top-three classes, namely, tenth, ninth, and seventh classes, are relatively more free of exam anxiety as there are years ahead before the exam day comes. Depending on this notion, however, 5th and 6th grades would be expected to score even higher. In the light of these findings, the researcher presumes that the low frequency for these grades can be best explained by maturational factors. That is, as a consequence of their young age, they may have relatively less opportunities to access OCLL environments and are generally considered too young by their parents, which means more control, thus less access to OCLL environments such as outside activities or online platforms.

5.3. Students' Comments on Open-Ended Questions

Students were asked to see if they wanted to do certain OCLLAs not mentioned in the questionnaire; and it was aimed by the last question to see if students wanted to do any activities but they couldn't for lack of opportunities or for some other reasons. Their comments on the last two open-ended questions prepared for this purpose reveal that students mostly wanted exposure to spoken language in addition to their school program. Many of the students wanted to be abroad for a certain period of time for this experience. Quite a few students wanted to make contact with native speakers via online platforms. And some of them also wanted to include native speakers of the target language in their school program. Their comments further showed that they didn't have

a chance to talk to native speakers. Also, they wanted guidance as to which platforms to use for the purpose of practicing English. A few of them already engaged in online applications that teach English and some of them asked for free online conversation platforms.

5.4. Implications

The present study was conducted to see what out-of-class language learning activities students at secondary and high school carried out. The first part included items to see the frequency of pre-selected activities. The second part contained two open ended questions. We begin with the following implications that are derived from the second part of the research.

Students' expressions as to what they would like to do as an activity to learn English is quite important for the researcher. Namely, students' comments on what would be a good way to practice the target language and their suggestions seem to be a good solution for the dilemma concerning language learning in the country. If we categorize the suggestions and try to analyze what can be done on the side of the authorities and parents, most of the problem could be solved perhaps in a shorter period of time in the most effective way.

So, to name each activity mentioned in students' comments distinctively and to brainstorm about what can be done is necessary to take a proper action. Therefore, a route like the following one could be useful to enlighten agents who are interested in a better and more effective way of teaching English.

Native Speakers at Schools: This is a practical way that schools can offer students the opportunity to hear the language and talk with a person from the country of the target language. Actually, most of the private schools already have this

application in their English program. Though, to what extent it is actualized can be negotiable for even such schools, too. State schools, which constitute the majority, on the other hand, can include native speaker class hours in their English program, too.

Online Talk with Native Speakers: Students will benefit a lot from an online chat with a native speaker during certain periods either within school curriculum or at home. This can be done in addition to native speakers at schools, or it can be preferred in cases where and when in person meetings are less possible. Online meetings for such a purpose will seem quite plausible on the side of the students as well as teachers and educators because we are living in an age when technology can support an online meeting in its full capacity.

Pen-friends: The implementation of pen-friends to assist learning a foreign language is not new in the country. It was a common and desired way that state schools as well as private schools either carried out or held on their agenda way before electronic mails were around. So, with today's technology, which has the potential to connect students all over the world in less than seconds, arranging pen-friend tools would be quite easy. Students could make use of pen-friends to gain fluency and enough vocabulary by writing and responding to their friends from another country. This tool would be useful especially for students who initially feel more comfortable with writing than talking. The tool could be in the form of an online chat, which is more practical and common especially among the youngsters today. And this new form of pen-friends application could be named as *chat-friends*.

Trips to Abroad Countries: Learners of a foreign language who live in a district where there is use of the target language in real life certainly are more advantageous than those who cannot hear or utter words or sentences in the target

language. Those who live in touristic or historical places could be considered as lucky in this sense because at least during certain seasons there would be visitors from abroad, who could be a chance to practice the language. However, it is evident from students' reports that such an opportunity is missing in the lives of Turkish students, especially for the ones who live in inner parts of the country.

Certain trips to countries that speak the target foreign language could mean a lot. By this way, students will have an opportunity to hear the language spoken on the streets, in the shopping centers, at the hotels they stay at and the places they visit. A minimum of two weeks abroad with a good planning would best serve for the purpose of exposure to language in real life. Further, it would trigger the necessary motivation towards using the foreign language throughout the learning process.

If given the chance, students would rather prefer the activities listed above in order for a better and more meaningful learning of a foreign language, namely English in this context. To what extent they can be accomplished is another point of discussion, though. As they entail more than one factor ranging from government's education policy and families and educators, it might seem at first, to take action for this goal. However, bearing in mind the importance of knowing English in the country and the quest for better language education could be enough motivation to take action at once.

In this respect, decision makers in the related part of the government related to education as well as educators and teachers, schools and families should all assume responsibilities in this process. They all have their role in granting the best conditions for learning to take place.

Therefore, the following suggestions are presented as to what can be done on the part of each side at the first look.

- Native speakers should be implemented in the English programs of the schools. To do this, families may encourage school management and engage in finding proper native speakers.
- Online platforms that allow students to make video chat sessions should be arranged by school management within language class hours. Or authorities may facilitate such an activity outside schools. Families should volunteer to provide the best conditions at home for this purpose such as setting up tools and allocating necessary places at home.
- Schools should encourage finding appropriate pen-friends. Similarly, parents should be supportive in doing so.
- Schools should make the feasibility check for an experience in the form of short trips to abroad countries. Families should be volunteering for such an opportunity and ready to meet necessary requirements.
- Research should be made for student exchange programs to foreign countries. And especially, high school students should be encouraged to take part in such activities.

Considering the list above, teachers, school managements and policy makers have the role to research, giving counseling and guidance for families and students. They also need to be willing to make necessary contacts with their foreign counterparts and colleagues. Families, on the other hand, need to be open to new experiences and willing to allocate financial support for the best language learning to take place for their children.

Apart from the conclusions above, the following suggestions can be made depending on the students' preferences reflected on the first part of the questionnaire. It is clear that students usually prefer passive skills (i.e. reading and listening). However, opportunities for productive skills (speaking and writing) should be provided, too. As a conclusion, to provide students with more effective *receptive* and enough *productive* language learning activities the following suggestions are of great importance:

- Students should be encouraged to hear the English spoken in real life. For this reason, they should be guided to watch appropriate movies in English with the application of subtitles when necessary.
- Native speakers of English may be invited to classrooms to give a chance to hear the language and exchange of the language.
- Likewise, speaking clubs should be arranged within school programs, whereby English is practiced with a native or near-native speaker of English.
- Students may be taken to conferences, seminars or meetings where English is the medium of conversation. Online sessions such as webinars would be good opportunities for the times when face-to-face and in-person contact is difficult to make.

The above listed suggestions are specifically good for speaking and better conversational skills to improve. Students will be able to grasp a true sense of the language while experiencing a genuine person talking about real things.

Apart from these, a number of practices can be suggested to improve their English regarding all the skills; below are some of them:

- Students were found to be highly engaged in mobile applications, and internet sites that are usually designed to enhance vocabulary, and listening. Therefore, they should be guided to make most use of such practices.
- Appropriate listening and reading materials can be developed and uploaded on schools' online education portal, where students can access from outside school, too.
- A selection of graded readings should be provided. Also, free reading passages should be compiled and students should be encouraged to read any of them depending on their interest.
- The research showed that students were engaged in writing activities only a little. And they mostly did this in the form of messages, or chats on mobile or smart phones. Therefore, a proper messaging or chat system can be developed to fill the gap in writing skills.

Most importantly, first of all, the study revealed that some classes do more OCLLAs than others. It is suggested that special attention should be paid to 7th, 9th and 10th, which are found to be more eligible to carry out activities in English considering the fact that, unlike 8th and 12th grades, they don't have centralized exams that take too much mental energy and time to prepare for. Also, they are mature enough to manage and survive in OCLL environments. Therefore, above mentioned grades should be provided enough opportunities for the best English learning to take place.

Secondly, students subject to this research are between 11-18 years of age. It means that they are at an ideal age for second language acquisition to take place depending on the literature in favor of the *critical period hypothesis*. So, above

mentioned OCLL opportunities should be presented for all grades at maximum level for the best English language acquisition to take place in the country.

Moreover, it was found that students of all grades have been engaged in English online games at a remarkably high rate. Therefore, it is suggested that online games can be used in a way that make the most use of the English input and output, which could enhance students' listening, speaking and discourse abilities, whereby they would be able to feel comfortable enough to communicate in the target language when encountered in real life contexts.

5.5. Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

This study aimed to analyze the out-of-class language learning activities (OCLLAs) among secondary and high school students in a small province of Turkey. The researcher tried to include as many as students in the research; the total number could reach up to 253 students, which is quite an acceptable size for a research. However, the number of participants could be much higher under normal circumstances. So, a study consisting of a higher number of participants could be carried out to see the frequency of OCLLAs among school children. Secondly, the study is limited to only one district of the country. A more comprehensive study across the country would be better to see the frame of OCLLAs carried out nationwide in order to make more conclusive suggestions and implications.

Furthermore, the present study used a questionnaire and gathered mostly quantitative data, although open-ended questions were included to gather more comprehensive information to some extent. Bearing in mind the conditions when the data was collected, the study did collect enough data to meet the purpose of the study;

however, a more detailed interview in conventional terms could be used in further studies. Lastly, the conclusions made in the last part of the study pertaining to why each class did different amounts of OCLLAs are based on personal and subjective analysis of the researcher. Although the assumptions are made based on facts about the examination system of the country, a further study could analyze these results in a more systematic way to justify the present study.



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Appendix C. The Questionnaire

Sınıf Dışında Yürütülen İngilizce Aktiviteler Üzerine bir Araştırma

Değerli Katılımcı,

Bu anket ortaokul ve lise öğrencilerinin sınıf dışında yürüttükleri yabancı dil aktivitelerini incelemek amacıyla yapılmaktadır. Anket 26 sorudan oluşmaktadır. Araştırmanın verileri bilimsel amaçlı kullanılacak olup, üçüncü şahıslarla paylaşılmayacaktır. Ankete katılımınız gönüllülük esasına göre olup, çalışmanın sağlıklı olması adına, ankete vereceğiniz cevapların içten olması önem arz etmektedir.

Teşekkür ederim.

Kişisel Bilgiler

Yaş:

Cinsiyet:

- ☐ Kız
☐ Erkek

Okul:

- ☐ Ortaokul
☐ Lise

Sınıf: _____

Sınıf Dışı Genel İngilizce Kullanımı

Lütfen aşağıdaki aktiviteleri hangi sıklıkla **İngilizce** dilinde yürüttüğünüzü belirtiniz.

S/N	Aktivite	Hiçbir zaman	Nadiren	Bazen	Genellikle	Her zaman
1	İngilizce okuma yapıyorum (elektronik ortamda veya basılmış kitap, dergi, makale vb.)					
2	İngilizce gazete okuyorum (elektronik ortamda ya da basılmış)					
3	İngilizce video oyunları oynuyorum.					
4	İngilizce konuşmamı gerektiren oyunlar oynuyorum.					
5	İngilizce okumamı gerektiren oyunlar oynuyorum.					
6	İngilizce dinlememi gerektiren oyunlar oynuyorum.					
7	İngilizce dizi ve filmler izliyorum.					
8	Televizyonda İngilizce kanalları izliyorum.					
9	İngilizce video izliyorum.					
10	İngilizce şarkı dinliyorum.					
11	İngilizce podcast, radyo programları dinliyorum.					
12	Evde aile bireyleriyle İngilizce konuşuyorum.					
13	Çevremde bulunan yabancılarla İngilizce konuşuyorum.					
14	Tatillerimde, yurtdışında Yabancılarla İngilizce konuşuyorum.					
15	Telefon ya da bilgisayar programları üzerinden yabancılarla İngilizce konuşuyorum.					
16	Yabancı arkadaşlarımla İngilizce yazışıyorum (mektup, e-mail, sms, whatsapp vb.)					
17	Türk arkadaşlarımla pratik amacıyla İngilizce konuşuyorum.					
18	İnternette İngilizce web, blog, forum sitelerinde geziniyorum.					

		Hiçbir zaman	Nadiren	Bazen	Genellikle	Her zaman
19	İngilizce günlük, hatıra defteri tutuyorum.					
20	Facebook, Twitter gibi sosyal medya hesaplarımı İngilizce kullanıyorum.					
21	İngilizce dil bilgisi alıştırmaları yapıyorum.					
22	Cep telefonumu İngilizce kullanıyorum.					
23	Bilgisayarımı İngilizce kullanıyorum.					
24	Kendi kendime İngilizce konuşuyorum.					

25. İngilizce öğrenmek amacıyla yürüttüğünüz başka aktivite var mı?

Evet / Hayır

Cevabınız evet ise, hangi aktiviteleri ne sıklıkta yapıyorsunuz?

26. İngilizcenizi geliştirmek amacıyla yapmak istediğiniz, fakat yapamadığınız bir şey

var mı? Kısaca bahseder misiniz?
