# Language in Focus

# Language in Focus:

*Exploring the challenges and opportunities in Linguistics and English Language Teaching (ELT)*

Edited by

Katarzyna Papaja and Cem Can

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# FOREWORD

Applied linguistics is a field of academic enquiry that deals with the theoretical and empirical investigation of real issues in which **LANGUAGE IS IN FOCUS**. These issues range from aspects of linguistics, such as first or second language acquisition, literacy, language disorders, foreign language learning/teaching, bilingual education/CLIL, multilingualism, and interactional issues of interpersonal and intercultural communication, to language variation, linguistic discrimination, and language policy.

New approaches, theoretical concepts, and methods are prerequisites for dealing with particular educational issues, therefore **CHALLENGE** and **OPPORTUNITIES** are the main themes of this book. This publication results from selected presentations given at the LIF2014 conference, which took place in Antalya, Turkey. The main focus of this event was to reflect the internationality of the English language by bringing academicians, researchers, teachers, and educational authorities from all over the world together and providing them with the opportunity to exchange an interdisciplinary dialogue on the theoretical as well as purely practical implications of applied linguistics and ELT. This collection embraces original contributions in different areas of applied linguistics, namely:

- ELT methodology and classroom applications
- Content and language integrated learning (CLIL)
- SLA/ELT focused theories and research  (productive and receptive skills, linguistic and communicative competences, code-switching, classroom interaction analysis, assessment and evaluation)
- Psychological and psycholinguistic perspectives in SLA/ELT (attitudinal patterns, motivation, individual learner differences, learning strategies, learner autonomy)
- Corpus linguistics and learner corpora
- Syntax and interfaces with morphology and semantics
- Lexical processing
- Phonological processing
- Cross-linguistic influences

- Discourse analysis
- Sociolinguistic theories and research (quantitative and qualitative approaches to the study of language, ethnographic and anthropological approaches to the study of language; language contact)
- Socio-cultural considerations (intercultural competence development, multiculturalism in theory and practice, ethnic/language minority classrooms)
- Multilingualism/bilingualism
- Educational language policies
- Translation and interpreting

The article "Identity Construction through Narrative Analysis in Language Learning Situations" by Nazlı Baykal discusses why narrative inquiry appears suitable to explore one's identity construction in the field of applied linguistics and language learning research. Specifically, it investigates the English (as a foreign language) learning situation of Turkish university students and their newly formed identities through a narrative analysis of their learning experiences.

The next article, "A Study of the Receptive Vocabulary Knowledge of Young Turkish Learners" by Kağan Büyükkarci and Gülin Zeybek, focuses on second language receptive vocabulary knowledge of young Turkish learners. Data were collected from the students (N=67) studying at seventh and eighth grades in primary schools in Isparta (Turkey). Two tests at Level 1 (Meara 1992) were used to collect data in order to find the level of receptive vocabulary knowledge. The differences between the receptive vocabulary levels according to grade and gender are analysed, and the results show that there is no significant difference between students' receptive vocabulary levels in these respects.

"To Exist or Not Exist: the Existential There in Picle and Ticle" by Cem Can and Katarzyna Papaja is an investigation of the use of *there* constructions taken from the written corpora the International Corpus of Learner English (the Polish and Turkish component of ICLE), and the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS). The focus of this article is to analyse *there* constructions from the perspective of second-language learning and to compare the use of these structures by native and non-native speakers of English-Polish and English-Turkish learners. This investigation is valuable, as any findings in this area can lead to the improvement of teaching techniques. Therefore, the study reveals some important differences in the use of *there* constructions as regards their frequency, structural complexity, polarity, and pragmatic value, which have crucial implications for the pedagogical treatment of

*there* constructions in Polish and Turkish foreign language teaching methodology.

The fourth article, "Project-based Learning as an Effective Instrument in Developing Learners' Intercultural Awareness" by Marek Derenowski, is an attempt to present the usefulness of culture-based project work in developing intercultural awareness among foreign-language learners. In modern education there is a very strong imperative to learn to communicate with people whose cultural heritage and background are different from ours. One way to effectively cater for the increase of the learners' intercultural awareness is to make them directly involved in Project Based Learning (PjBL), which serves as a motivator, stimulus, and challenge. While working on their culture-based projects, learners have the genuine opportunity to connect the outside world with the classroom reality, as well as to work on their personal interests and hobbies. Furthermore, culture-oriented projects allow learners to encounter these aspects of culture which are not usually present in the foreign-language curriculum.

The next article, "An Investigation of the Use of a Specialised Corpus by Engineering Students with Low English Proficiency to Develop Abstract Journal-Writing Skills" by Suparada Eak-in, presents a study that was conducted to investigate low-proficiency students' strategies in learning significant lexico-grammar features in each component of a journal abstract using the corpus-based method. These components are known as moves and steps and are based on an examination of a specialised corpus of journal article abstracts in engineering. The data of this corpus were utilised by students to write a well-organised abstract using lexical items and grammatical patterns that are typical in each move and step. This paper reports and discusses the qualitative parts of the main study that look into the process, practice, and problems arising from students' encounters with DDL tasks. The findings are used to develop a pedagogical model for the use of specialised corpora to develop low-proficiency students' English for specific academic purposes (ESAP) writing.

It is a common truism that fostering the vitality of metaphor in sundry mundane words has been possible thanks to the ongoing processes of conceptualisation, association, and recasting. These, in turn, find fertile ground in English language teaching (ELT) settings. The article "Metaphorical 'Myopia' in Non-Constructivist Construal: A Didactic Account" by Souâd Hamerlain encloses the mentioned trope within a didactic sphere to observe its behaviour both as a purely linguistic adornment and, more sensibly, as a "cognitive instrument," to use Black's

(1993) terminology. It also identifies English language learners'
metaphoric "myopia" as a predictable upshot of purely semantic readings
(Davidson, in Sacks, 1978). Interestingly enough, a pragmatic account of
metaphor may well explicate the shift from the purely linguistic to the
contextually charged deciphering of figurative language at large.
Connectedly, the dogmatic belief that heralds the precedence of the literal
learning/interpretation over the figurative is questioned, and followed by
relating the pragmatic fabric to students' inventiveness and valid
interpretations of highly culture-sensitive metaphors.

   "A Contrastive Study of Cultural Values and Politeness in Japan and
the United States" by Yuka Iwata examines the similarities and differences
of definitions of politeness and politeness strategies employed when
serving customers between English and Japanese speakers. Free-listing
and prototype analyses highlight the differences in the conceptualisations
of politeness. It is revealed that the Japanese definitions of politeness are
more concrete, specific, and detailed in describing manners and
behaviours compared to the English counterparts, which are conceptual
and general. The two cultural groups are divided as to being respectful. In
providing definitions of politeness, none of the Japanese samples referred
to "respectful" as "polite." Regarding politeness strategies in the tourism
context, none of the English samples point out the use of respectful
language, unlike the Japanese.

   The article "A Needs Analysis of the ESP Course: the Case of
Telecommunications Students at SUP'COM Tunis" by Rym Jamly
describes the educational situation of the English for specific purposes
(ESP) course at the Higher School of Communication of Tunis
(SUP'COM). More specifically, it conducts a needs analysis investigating
both the learning and the professional students' needs to gain insights into
the design of a learner-based curriculum. With these ends in view, both a
structured interview and a questionnaire are adopted. The analysis of the
data collected yields important findings, which suggest that students were
aware of both their learning and target situation needs, but the fact remains
that the course content does not match them. Thus, both ESP teacher
training and an elaboration of the students' productive skills (speaking and
writing) are recommended.

   The following article, "A Comparison of Argumentative Writing by
American, Chinese, and Turkish University Students" by Erkan
Karabacak, Jingjing Qin, and İsmigül Hatipoğlu, presents a comparison of
the argumentative papers written in English by Turkish, Chinese, and
American (US) university students regarding the Toulmin model (1958;
2003), the use of outside sources, and their behaviour in referencing

sources. The findings suggest that, although three groups were able to take a position and support their claims with data, the percentages differed in several categories. For example, essays written by American students included more counter-claims and rebuttal-claims than the Turkish and Chinese students' essays. In addition, American students' essays had the highest percentage of outside-source use. Lastly, an analysis of citation behaviour revealed that Chinese students provided minimal references to the sources when compared to the other two groups. Other findings are also shared and implications for teaching academic writing to EFL students are discussed.

The article "Group Dynamics and Learner Personality as Factors Influencing Foreign Language Learning Success" by Anna Kozioł presents an investigation of students' self-perceptions and their peers' evaluations of their character traits, and also focuses on how personality affects popularity in the classroom hierarchy and foreign-language success. The study was conducted with a group of 48 lower secondary school students aged 16. Its components were students' self-evaluation, their classmates' personality assessments, and learners' popularity in the classroom. As the study demonstrates, these factors are closely connected.

The aim of the next article, "Selected Aspects of Future Teachers' Identities and Attributions" by Anna Michońska-Stadnik, is to present a set of selected identity features, opinions, and attributions of a group of student teachers of English (N=73) in two teacher-training institutions in Poland, comprising 28 from Wrocław, which is a large city, and 45 from a smaller town which hosts a teacher-training program in a local state school of higher professional education. The results of distributed surveys reveal the existence of some contextual and gender differences in the researched group. For example, young women traditionally attribute their success in learning to effort, whereas men attribute it to their abilities. Still, contrary to some earlier findings, there were no statistically significant differences between men and women in their general attribution styles. When it comes to analysing student teachers' opinions and identities, some interesting findings were revealed. For instance, women seem to be more determined to search for new experiences than men. It can be assumed that, regardless of their place of study and gender, student teachers of English are open-minded, positive about their future profession, and reveal mostly internal attributions.

The following article, "Speech Competence of Pre-service EFL Teachers: The Sources of its Problems" by Oksana Nazarova and Çise Çavuşoğlu, aims at presenting a research study focusing on the speech competence of 17 ELT students from a private university in the Turkish

Republic of Northern Cyprus. The data presented here comes from the qualitative phase of the study where the specific factors that could cause problems in developing public speaking competence were identified by a thematic analysis of interviews, observations, reflective essays, and artifacts. This analysis yielded seven factors that could cause students' minimal public speaking competence: (1) low English-language proficiency, (2) self-reported public speaking anxiety (PSA), (3) low level of self-efficacy, (4) foreign language anxiety (FLA), (5) general communication apprehension, (6) age, and (7) lack of motivation. The paper discusses how low levels of English proficiency appeared to influence the mastery of such basic performance standards as clear language, effective non-verbal behaviour, and effective use of vocal expression and paralanguage. Being a prospective teacher of English also seems to create an additional demand for students' language competence, which in turn can lead to PSA, FLA, and low self-efficacy in speech situations.

"Testing in English for Medical Purposes in Higher Education in Turkey: A Longitudinal Inquiry" by Neslihan Önder Özdemir aims at discussing longitudinal study reports on the design of an appropriate test for medical English courses in the Faculty of Medicine, Uludağ University, Turkey. The examination questions were detailed using real sample examination questions that were prepared considering the longitudinal critical needs analysis (n=525) results. The questions focused on areas such as technical and sub-technical medical vocabulary, current medical research articles and connectives, along with medical students' feedback (n=47). The test attempted to assess students' medical English knowledge in five primary domains: assessment of academic vocabulary knowledge, assessment of connectives, assessment of medical research article comprehension, assessment of academic reading skills, and assessment of academic writing skills.

The main purpose of the article "The Use of Support Verb Constructions (SVC) in the Argumentative Essays of the Turkish EFL Learners: KTUCLE vs. LOCNESS" by Ali Şükrü Özbay and Mustafa Naci Kayaoĝlu is to analyse the overall frequency and use of support verb constructions (SVC) by learners of English in a tertiary level EFL setting in Turkey. For this purpose, the argumentative essays written by university students of English in their first and second years were taken as samples for the study. A lexical investigation of the KTUCLE corpus, solely compiled to serve the objectives of this study, entailed the presence of another similar-sized argumentative corpus and, as a result, the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS) was selected to compare the

findings. The purposive sampling methodology was used and the analysis was done by comparing the language use of the learners who were categorised into two distinct levels with respect to their present language proficiency levels through the Oxford Online Placement Test, and their levels (n:105) were determined based on the scores of the test. The data for the study are both qualitative and quantitative in nature. A quantitative corpus-based frequency analysis of the two learner corpora findings were followed by the analysis of the learners' diaries. The main findings of this contrastive learner corpus analysis reveal that, compared to LOCNESS, there is a lower use of support verb constructions by the language students in KTUCLE.

The article "The Role of Receptive and Productive Vocabulary in Content and Language Integrated Learning from the Perspective of University Students" by Katarzyna Papaja provides an outline of the research on the importance of receptive and productive vocabulary in CLIL, starting with a brief insight into the phenomenon of CLIL and a general overview of the study, which was conducted among university students who study scientific subjects in a foreign language. The data presented and discussed were collected through questionnaires. Additionally, special attention was paid to the role of incidental vocabulary learning, which is supposed to give the learner a richer sense of word use and meaning.

The subsequent article, "The Importance of Situational Context and Response in Memory Retention and Recall: Reader Performance in an English as a Foreign Language Learning Context" by Debopriyo Roy, Stephen Crabbe, and Ihor Lubashevsky, discusses the importance of situational context and response in memory retention and recall. Limited data from a website analysis study carried out for six weeks as in-class assignments in an EFL course at a Japanese technical university suggest that, for analytical assignments, readers use different systems, such as online/paper dictionaries or translation software, alongside different strategies, such as reading headings/topic sentences or skimming and scanning body text for main ideas, to obtain information in a given learning context. The use of such systems and strategies seems to reduce dependence on information retention and recall based on memory. However, it does not necessarily lead to performance improvement, even with massed practice. For this, the elimination of redundancy in assignments and the inclusion of instructor feedback might be also necessary.

"Devices and Techniques for Memory Retention in a Foreign Language Learning Context" by Debopriyo Roy and Stephen Crabbe

brings together information about devices and techniques that aid with memory retention, particularly working memory capacity, and are, or have the potential to be, pertinent in foreign language learning. The purpose of this is to serve as a reference and repository for educators and students in a foreign language learning context. Memory retention is vital for foreign language learning to be effective. Cognitive psychology and neuroscience research has developed devices and techniques that aid with memory retention, particularly in support of individuals with memory problems (loss or impairment). However, many of these devices and techniques are, or have the potential to be, useful and relevant to the study of a foreign language.

The next article "Acquiring the Locality Condition on English Reflexives by Persian Learners" by Ali Safari examines the nature of Persian adult learners' interlanguage when they acquire the locality condition on English reflexives. The question to be answered is whether UG assists Persian adult learners in acquiring binding patterns of English. Using grammatical judgment and story-based truth value judgment tasks, given to 60 elementary and advanced Persian-speaking learners of English, it was found that subjects can demonstrate knowledge of abstract and complex properties of language which could neither have been learned from L2 input nor derived from L1 grammar or direct instruction.

The next article is "Is English still a False Friend?: a Study of Language Interference and the Importance of Learning (English) in the Twenty-first century" by Isabel Fernandes Silva, Célia Quintas, and Ana Luísa Teixeira, and describes the interference and importance of learning English. Internationalisation, communication, and networking are buzzwords in contemporary society. However, educational models seem to lack consensus in terms of social cognitive learning processes: some focus on the individual, others on context, and others on information (Santana 2001). Yet, education should be viewed from a systemic perspective and linked to educational institutions (Senge 1990). This is particularly relevant in English language learning (ESL), considering that English skills are increasingly an element of professional and social segmentation. The Portuguese educational policy on foreign languages, and in particular on English as a foreign language, has undergone several changes in recent decades. Whereas in the mid-1970s English was the second foreign language students learned at secondary school, today it is taught to primary school children. The authors' contention is that, despite the Portuguese educational and audiovisual policy (where only children's films and programs are dubbed) and the investment in the use of ICT for

learning, university students and skilled professionals still reveal some difficulties in avoiding language interference.

The article "The Effect of Music on Task Performance of Monolinguals and Bilinguals" by Anja Šarić explores the way in which background music affects task performance in children. More specifically, it aims to investigate whether monolingual and bilingual children exhibit different behaviour for distinct types of music. In line with previous research, the predication is that relaxing music will enhance children's performance, and that disturbing music will decrease the level of success. Due to their better-developed executive function, bilinguals are predicted to show less discrepancy in different trials. Thus, it is expected that music will have a smaller effect on the task performance of bilinguals when compared to the age-matched monolinguals. The task used to measure the potential changes in the performance is a mathematical test.

The objective of the article entitled "The Use of English Articles by Polish Students Based on Corpus Studies" by Artur Świątek is to demonstrate the use of the system of English articles by non-native Polish users of English, representing B1 and B2 levels. This element of English grammar is a long-term interest of the author. The prior research conducted by the author concentrated on the acquisition of the English article system in different proficiency groups by Polish subjects, namely pre-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced (Świątek 2013). For the needs of this article, these studies focused on the available corpus studies only, where two levels of English were investigated, namely B1 and B2. The selected levels and instances of use of English articles by Polish subjects constitute the core idea of this article. It is believed that the demonstrated examples will provide a thorough image of the challenges the article system evokes for L2 Polish study participants.

"Economic Translation: Challenges and Hindrances" by Sofiene Tergui explores the realm of Translation Equivalence. The notion of Translation Equivalence is undoubtedly one of the most problematic and controversial areas in the field of translation theory. The term has caused, and will probably continue to cause, heated debates within the field of translation studies. Equivalence is indeed a constitutive feature and the guiding principle of translation. As Catford points out, "the central problem of translation-practice is that of finding Target Language equivalents. A central task of translation theory is that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence" (1965, 21). In order to explore the realm of Translation Equivalence, different methods used to achieve equivalence when translating an economic report, entitled "Extralegality in Tunisia and the connection to the Arab Spring (2013),"

from English (L3) into Arabic (L1) and French (L2) are presented. However, addressing non-equivalence in some cases will pave the way to introducing several methods and procedures to overcome this problem.

The following article by Natalia Troufanova, "Aspects of Business Vocabulary Acquisition in a Tertiary Russian ESP Context," is an attempt to clarify the major problems confronting language advisers who teach business vocabulary to Russian ESP economics students. A wide range of issues contributes to these problems, including the structural, semantic, and systemic characteristics of economic term systems, the basic methods of word-formation, as well as disciplinary and stylistic variation in Business English. Furthermore, the emergence of English as a world language has promoted regular economic contacts, and hundreds of English loanwords are now becoming an integral part of Russian business language.

"The Effects of Teachers' Caring Behaviour on Students' Learning in an EFL Class in Higher Education" by Seden Tuyan explores the possible positive impacts of a caring teacher-student relationship on language learning in an EFL class at YADYO, School of Foreign Languages at Çukurova University, Turkey. A two-part questionnaire with Likert scale and open-ended questions was used to evaluate students' perceptions of the caring behaviours of the teacher and her use of language that indicate the presence of caring to the students. The data also consist of semi-structured student interviews and her own reflections on her teaching experience related to a caring teacher-student relationship and its effects on language learning.

"From ESP to CLIL: Designing Materials for the University Classroom" by MarinaTzoannopoulou focuses on the similarities and differences between content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and English for specific purposes (ESP), highlights the main features of CLIL pedagogy, and shows how they were implemented in the design of an ESP Journalism course in a Greek institution. The 4 Cs Framework (communication, content, cognition, and culture) was implemented as the theoretical basis for the design of the course. Emphasis was placed on content and language learning through a multiple focus on language, content learning, and cognition, the construction of a safe and enriching classroom environment, and the promotion of active and cooperative learning. Moreover, the use of authentic materials through scaffolding, and the use of interaction as a technique to accompany learning and make students increasingly autonomous, have also been used in the materials design of the course.

   The article entitled "The Effect of Vocabulary Knowledge in L2 Reading" by Serkan Uygun and Enisa Mede presents a replication of a study conducted by Qian and Schedl (2004). The main aim of the study is to discover the correlation between the in-depth vocabulary knowledge of second-language learners in their academic reading performances. There are two main instruments that measure the vocabulary knowledge of the learners. The vocabulary breadth/size tests measure the amount of words that the language learners know. In contrast, the vocabulary depth tests measure how well the language learners know a word. While the breadth/size tests focus on the quantity, the depth tests focus on the quality of the knowledge.

   The last article, entitled "Englishes and ELF: Implications for Classroom Practices and Teacher Education," by Paola Vettorel, discusses Italian EFL primary and lower-secondary school trainee teachers' opinions and stances on the implications that Englishes and ELF can have in ELT pedagogic practices. By means of a questionnaire survey, trainees' awareness of their and their students' contact with Englishes and ELF, their opinion regarding the inclusion of different varieties of English in classroom activities, and their awareness of ELF-related concepts are investigated. These issues are then further discussed during the course, since one module is dedicated to the spread and development in English and to ELF.

   We hope that the variety of topics presented in this volume will satisfy the readers' academic and professional interests and stimulate them further in their own research.

                                            Cem Can and Katarzyna Papaja

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CHAPTER ONE

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION THROUGH
NARRATIVE ANALYSIS IN LANGUAGE
LEARNING SITUATIONS

NAZLI BAYKAL

## 1. Introduction

The main aim of this study is to discuss why narrative inquiry appears to be suitable for exploring one's identity construction in the field of applied linguistics and language learning research. Specifically, it investigates the English (as a foreign language) learning situation of Turkish university students and their newly formed identities through a narrative analysis of their learning experiences.

## 2. Identity in the Social Sciences Today

In order to understand the relationship between language and identity, it is important to understand the poststructuralist theory of language. Poststructuralist theories of language are associated with the work of Bakhtin (1981), Bourdieu (1977; 1991), Hall (1997), and Weedon (1997). These theories are distinct from structuralist theories of language, which cannot account for struggles over the social meanings that can be attributed to signs in a given language (Norton 2010, 349). Poststructuralists take the position that the signifying practices of a society are sites of struggle, and that linguistic communities are heterogeneous arenas (Ibid., 350). If we take the position that linguistic communities are not homogeneous, we need to see that this is directly relevant to our understanding of the relationship between language and identity.

Weedon, often cited as a foundational theorist in poststructuralist discussions of identity, uses the term "subjectivities" to refer to, "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her

sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation in the world"
(1997, 32). Identities are viewed as social, discursive, and narrative
options offered by a particular society in a specific time and place to
which individuals and groups of individuals appeal in an attempt to self-
name, self-characterise, and claim social prerogatives.

In this paper, identity is understood as "how a person understands his
or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across
time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the
future" (Norton 2000, 5). This conception of identity puts the individual,
such as a language learner, into multiple possible social groups or roles
that may be realised at any given time, and considers how language itself
works to construct those identities.

## 3.  Identity in Language Learning

Issues connected with identity in relation to second/foreign language
learning and use have been theorised and researched in various ways over
several decades. By the late 1970s, "learner centeredness" emerged as a
key concept in second/foreign language teaching, based on a now largely
unquestioned understanding that learners' varied responses to teaching are
as important as the teaching itself. This view emphasised the social and
contextual dimensions of language learning research, together with an
epistemological and methodological broadening (Firth and Wagner 2007,
91). Framing language learning as a social process takes on board
sociocultural factors such as subjectivity, agency, (multiple) identities,
participation in an imagined community, and investing for our possible
(future) selves, depicting learners as dynamic, temporally transforming
and (re) positioning, and multifaceted social beings. Furthermore, new
avenues of inquiry have opened up with the rise of learner-focused
research, where learners' perceptions of their educational experiences
(which are biographically continuous, i.e. accounting for experiences of
the past, present, and future) provide valuable insights into their learning
process (Benson and Nunan 2005).

Much of the emerging research on identity, especially from a
poststructuralist perspective, focuses on the dynamics of identity
construction with performance and "agency," portraying learners as
individuals with wants, needs, and multifaceted identities, making
deliberate choices with respect to language learning (Pavlenko 2007).
Agency refers to people's ability to make choices, take control, self-
regulate, and pursue their goals as individuals leading to personal or social

transformation (Duff 2012). A sense of agency enables learners to imagine, take up, and perform new roles or identities.

An additional notion introduced by Norton (2000), connecting agency to language learning and identity issues, is "investment," which captures the degree to which learners actively put symbolic, material, and other resources into their language learning based on a kind of cost-benefit self-evaluation, and in light of their desires and hopes for the future (Duff 2012).

The notion of investment conceives of the language learner as having a complex social history and multiple desires. It presupposes that when language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with target language speakers, but they are also constantly organising and reorganising a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. Thus, an investment in the target language is also an investment in a learner's own identity; an identity which is constantly changing across time and space (Norton 2000, 11). Recent approaches to identity, in general, examine it in terms of a learner's unique past, present, and future experiences, desires, trajectories, and opportunities (Ibid.; Pavlenko and Norton 2007).

One of the common methods for the design, collection, and analysis of data related to identity construction in language learning research is narrative inquiry (analysis).

## 4. The History of Identity Research in Second/Foreign Language Learning

One reason for the rise of identity issues relates to human rights advances in the advanced industrialised nations of the world in the twentieth century (Block 2007, 3). In the work of many social scientists, there has been a movement away from a preoccupation with stability, function, and structure to a priming of individual agency, and a shift from fixed essentialised versions of demographic categories, such as race, ethnicity, gender, and age, to a generally constructivist perspective which sees these categories as more fluid and unstable (Ibid., 3). The poststructuralist view of identity has become broadly popular among many social scientists, and this has been the general view of identity taken up by a growing number of SLL/FLL researchers. A survey of recent publications focusing on topics such as language learning, language socialisation, and multilingual language practices reveals how this poststructuralist view of identity has gained popularity. The publications include Norton's (2000) study of immigrant women in Canada; Pavlenko, Blackledge, Piller and Teutsch-

Dwyer's (2001) edited collection on language learning and gender; Schechter and Bayley's (2002) study on language practices and language affiliations of Mexican American families in the United States; J. K. Hall's (2002) textbook on culture and research; Bayley and Schechter's (2003) collection of papers on language socialisation and multilingualism; Kanno's (2003) study of the life stories of Japanese returnees; Miller's (2003) account of the language and socialisation processes of immigrant children in Australia; Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) collection of papers on the negotiation of identities in different language, cultural, and political contexts; Omoniyi's (2004) study of the relationship between sociolinguistic variables such as language choice, language mixing, and attitudes towards language and the ongoing construction of identities on the Nigerian/Benin border; Benson and Nunan's (2005) collection of papers on second language learners' accounts of their experiences; and Block's (2006) research on multilingual identities in London. The publications that methodologically draw first-person narratives of language learners with reference to personal investment in language learning are: Oxford and Green (1996); Murphey (1997; 1998); Norton (2000); Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000); Benson and Nunan (2002); and Kinginger and Pavlenko (2002), among others. This study draws on the biographical narrative accounts of English language learning experiences of Turkish EFL students majoring in ELT and analyses their identity construction along their learning process.

## 5. Narrative Inquiry and Language Learning Research

Although narrative inquiry has a long intellectual history both in and out of education, it is increasingly used in studies of educational experience. The research of narrative is the study of the ways humans experience the world (Connelly and Clandinin 1990, 1). This perspective is condensed into the view that education and educational research is the construction of personal and social stories; stories are in the form of experiences and instances of sense-making. This focus on experience situates narrative in a matrix of qualitative research.

For Dewey, education, experience, and life are intertwined. Experience is both personal and social. Another criterion for experience is "continuity": the notion that experiences grow out of other experiences, and lead to further experiences; just like a continuum of past, now, and future. We learn to move back and forth between the personal and the social, simultaneously thinking about the past, present, and future (Clandinin and Connelly 2000, 2).

A number of researchers working on the second/foreign language learning tradition have emphasised qualitative research directed at the holistic description of second/foreign language learning experiences and greater influence on the social, affective, and cognitive dimensions of the learning process. Within this trend, the biographical recollection of language learning experiences has a significant place.

Identity, likewise, is approached by means of qualitative methods, such as narrative inquiry, and theory that ranges from interpretive to poststructural to critical (Duff 2008). Interpretive research tends to focus on how language learners and others make sense of their experiences, and also how researchers in turn make sense of (interpret) data obtained from interviews, observations, narratives, and other sources.

This paper attempts to reinforce the significance of taking a narrative approach in identity studies in the field of language learning; in line with the scope of the paper, it is foreign language learning in a non-native language learning circumstances. The paper examines language learners' identity construction through written biographical accounts of learning experiences in learning English in the Turkish context. Biographical accounts of language learning are the prominent means of data collection within the framework of this study, as these accounts are based upon first-person narratives of relatively long-term processes of language learning and focus on learners and their experiences. Many of these are accounts of the sense that is made of learning experiences as learners participate in a variety of activities and situations over relatively long periods. Taking a narrative-oriented perspective as the methodology, the study agrees that narrative informs the concept of self and identity. By following a poststructuralist understanding of identity and utilising narratives as "experience," the study constructs self, and thus identity, through narratives. Framing language learning as a social process implies that learning a second or foreign language requires a learner-focused research where the learners' perception of their educational experiences is recognised as a valuable source of data (Benson and Nunan 2005). Many leading narrative researchers claim that narrative inquiry offers alternative ways to examine issues that are inaccessible using more experimental methodologies (Bruner 1986; 1990; Clandinin and Connelly 2000). Following a social-constructionist and poststructuralist understanding, identity is constructed as we engage in different activities. Thus, we are concerned with the language-learning activity and how the participants of this study constructed their identities through narrating their language-learning experiences. Which aspect of our identities becomes salient is very often contingent upon place and time (Block 2007). Additionally, as

Roberts (2002, 1) states, biographical research "seeks to understand the changing experiences and outlooks of individuals in their daily lives, what they see as important, and how to provide interpretations of the accounts they give of their past, present and future." Hence, taking a narrative approach and collecting data through the biographical accounts of language learning to reach the identity formations of the learners (the participants of this study) are very much in line with the purposes of this study.

# 6. Method

The data for this study is compiled from 24 language learning experiences/stories written in narrative form by fourth-year students of the English Language Teaching Department of Suleyman Demirel University, Isparta, Turkey. The participants had an average of 14 years of EFL education. The participants were given a set of guiding questions related to their English-language education, starting from the primary level, at the beginning of the first semester of their final (fourth) year. They were instructed to write two pages (double spaced, about five-hundred words) about their English-learning experience, which would be a self-evaluation of the whole process. The deadline for turning in the assignments was the middle of the second semester. After a thorough analysis of the written narratives, the researcher, along with a colleague from the same department, agreed on the identity categories that were identifiable in the language-learning narratives of the subjects of this study which fit the multi-layering proposed by Clandinin and Connelly's "three dimensional inquiry space" model. In this model, "temporality" refers to the notion of continuity in the sense that experience can move backwards and forwards: it has a past, a present, and a future. The second dimension, "sociality," overlaps with the idea that individuals interact with their surroundings. "Personal" refers to the desires, hopes, and feelings of an individual, while "social" points towards the surrounding factors and forces. Finally, "situation/place" emphasises the place and context where inquiry takes place.

**Table 1.1. Three-dimensional inquiry space model**

| Sociality | Temporality | |
|---|---|---|
| **Personal** Look inward to internal conditions such as desires, feelings, and hopes. **Social** Look outward to existential conditions in the environment with other people and their intentions, purposes, assumptions, and points of view. | **Past** Look backward to remembered experiences, feelings, and stories from earlier times. **Present** Look at current experiences, feelings, and stories. **Future** Look forward to implied possible experiences. | **Situation/Place** Look at context, time, and place situated in a physical landscape or setting with characters' intentions, purposes, and different points of view. |

Some of the guiding questions directed to participants to become the background of narratives are as follows:

> How did you learn English before you came to university?
> What positive and negative experiences did you have and what did you learn from them?
> How have you changed your ways of English language learning since coming to university?
> What are the areas that you still want to/feel the need to improve in?
> What are the areas in which you find yourself proficient enough?
> What are your language-learning plans and goals after graduation?
> How do you think your next couple of years will be, professionally, socially, and personally?

This method examines identity in terms of a learner's past, present, and future experiences; agencies; and the personal and social dimensions of their lives involving desires, trajectories, and investments in relation to language learning. Within this perspective, the analysis of biographical narratives of language learning goes beyond the solely linguistic (Norton 2000; Norton Peirce 1995).

Critical incidents mentioned by narrators for how they form learners' identities are:

(1) Investment patterns for how learners made decisions about their past, present, and future
(2) Agency patterns examining sites of professional, social, and personal identities
(3) Language items that denote characteristics of the particular language-learning identity are the items of analysis throughout the data.

The above-mentioned items provided the identity categories to be set in line with the narratives of the participants.

# 7. Data Analysis

## 7.1. Identity Categories

In this section, excerpts from participants' narratives will be given and information related to items of analysis will be put forward. The actual names of participants are written before each excerpt with their consent.

### 7.1.1. Identity 1: Educational Authority/Critic

Elvan: My English teacher in high school minimised my love for English because his way of teaching, attitude, and the way he spoke influenced me negatively. I, then, decided to become an English teacher and promised myself that I won't be like him. I tried very hard for this to happen.

Taha: I don't think I learned English at school. That's not how English is learned anyway; it is learned by living, by doing, and by speaking.

Mehmet: In high school … my English teacher was very good at teaching; she had different methods and techniques to teach English. She preferred using short stories for translation, vocabulary activities, and also for other skills.

This identity category is the most popular one among the participants of this study. In the first excerpt, along the temporal dimension, Elvan shares her past experience with her English teacher to project into the future of her teaching. Throughout her English-language learning experience, she observes what not to do to become a good language teacher. The method used, the attitude towards students, and the speaking styles are the selective criteria chosen to become an English language teacher. By means of the noun phrases ("his way of teaching," "the way he spoke"), she tries to emphasise and summarise what she regards as the recollection of the

instances of her language-learning experience worth mentioning. She shares an individualistic view concerning the practice of ELT. This is her "investment" for her career as an English teacher by making sense of who she is as a teacher and how she relates this sense making to the social world in particular ELT practice, as Norton (2000) suggests.

The critical incident during the language-learning experience is when she decided she would not resemble her English teacher. The strength of this decision is made obvious with the phrase "I promised myself." Her determination to not resemble her English teacher is reinforced with her self-determining attempts to achieve whatever it takes to become a good (English) language teacher, as indicated in the sentence "I tried very hard for this to happen." Elvan's recollection of her language-learning experience puts her into a new identity position: being a critic of her language teacher's performance in class.

The second excerpt displays a social dimension to the language-learning experience. Along the temporal dimension, Taha chooses to concentrate on the present, as opposed to Elvan who concentrated on the past and future. He has some reformative ideas about ELT (English is not learned at school). With most of his experience with English being work oriented during his teenage years, he confidently emphasises the practical issues in language learning, as can clearly be seen in the sentence, "English is learned by living, by doing and by speaking." In other words, he does not acknowledge the theoretical foundations and classroom practices of ELT. He sounds very self-confident about his ideas, which coincide with the self-image observed throughout his university education. Taha's displayed identity as the educational critic/authority in the above excerpt comes as a total criticism of long-held views about language teaching methodologies. This new identity gives him the necessary support and courage to position himself as an "authority," in spite of the fact that he had recently finished his studies.

In the last excerpt for this identity category, the participant Mehmet shares his "good language teacher" experience in the past. He gives details of what makes a language teacher a good one; this is a teacher who "uses different methods and techniques in the classroom to teach English." For the sake of reinforcing his "educational authority" identity, he provides details for the statement "different methods and techniques," that is, using short stories for translation, vocabulary activities and activities that cater for different language skills, etc. He believes that variety, as far as teaching methodology is concerned, is what makes a language teacher a good one. The critical incident in his language learning experience is his

encounter with this English teacher he categorised as "good" in his high-school years.

### 7.1.2.  Identity 2: A Respectable /Popular Person

> Saliha: Learning English has given me self-confidence … my experience taught me that I was a unique person, nowhere near being ordinary. On top of all this, I had a very prestigious status both because I knew English and I was the English teacher among friends. In the future, I see myself as a respected academician, an expert on her field, not an ordinary primary school teacher.

> Hülya: When I realised that my knowledge of English was better than many people around me because I was reading books and listening to music, I soon found myself in a situation that more people needed my help for their problems with English. This was a source of pride for me.

The identity outlined in this category emphasises the social dimension of the language-learning experience. The participant Hülya gains a new social status among her friends due to her knowledge of English. She gains a new identity just because she is a little bit more proficient in English than the people around her, although this new identity does not have any academic foundations that could be related to language teaching experience. The critical point of her experience with learning English is the time she realised that she had a better aptitude for English compared to her classmates. She also acknowledges the reason why: she reads books and listens to English-language songs. In this way, she invested for this better performance and flair. The social dimension of this language-learning experience is reinforced with the repetitive use of phrases including the pronoun "people" ("people around me," "more people needing help," "people's problems"). Here is an image of a language learner who takes over the mission of helping people with their language-learning problems; a person who is positioned as a teacher by other language learners. In line with this social mission, this new identity becomes a source of pride, as she indicates in the last line of the excerpt.

The participant Saliha equates her identity transformation—from a person who suffered from a lack of self-confidence and has a less-prestigious social status to one whose self-confidence has boosted and who has a respectable social position—to her English-language learning experience. Learning English provided her with a very respectable social status among other language learners compared to the period before she started. This identity transformation had positive effects on her self-esteem, since she positions herself as a "unique," "nowhere near …