REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
UNIVERSITY OF ÇUKUROVA
THE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING DEPARTMENT

EFFECTS OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENST ON SPEAKING SKILLS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Mahmut ÖZKAN

MASTER OF ARTS

ADANA, 2011

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ÖZET

ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN BAKIŞ AÇILARINA GÖRE SOSYAL YAPILANDIRMACI SANAL ÖĞRENME ORTAMLARININ KONUŞMA BECERİLERİNE ETKİSİ

Mahmut ÖZKAN

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı
Danışman: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Gülden İLİN
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Konuşma, İngilizcenin yabancı dil olarak öğretildiği derslerde hedeflenen en önemli becerilerden biridir, ancak bu becerinin ihmal edildiği görülmektedir; çünkü birçok öğrenci, yeterli İngilizce bilgisine sahip olmasına rağmen kendisini ifade edememekten yakınmaktadır. Bu durumun birçok nedeni vardır; derslerin odak noktası, konuşmanın değerlendirilmemesi, konuşma etkinliklerine ayrılan zamanın azlığı bunlardan sadece birkaçıdır. Ayrıca, öğrencilerin nasıl öğrendiğini açıklayan geleneksel yaklaşımlar; öğretmenlerin, derslerini nasıl ele alacağı konusunda yıllardır büyük ölçüde etkili olmuştur. Bu bakış açısının sonucu olarak bugün, öğretmenlerin İngilizceyle ilgili bilgilerini, hedef-dilde herhangi bir etkileşim olmadan, öğrencilere aktarmaya çabaladıkları, öğretmen-merkezli birçok sınıf bulunmakta. Ancak sonuç, konuşma becerisi açısından her zaman olumlu olmamaktadır.

Öte yandan, yabancı dil öğretiminde sosyal yapılandırmacı ilkeler, öğretmenle öğrencilerin birbirleriyle gerçek hayattaki gibi ve anlamlı bir şekilde etkileşim kurabilecekleri, daha uygun ortamlar oluşturmaya yardımcı olabilmektedir. Birçok çalışma, sanal öğrenme ortamlarının ve web 2.0 araçları gibi uygulamaların sosyal yapılandırmacı ilkelerin kullanımına olanak sağladığını göstermektedir (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007; Woo & Reeves, 2007). Bunlarla birlikte teknolojinin kullanılması, öğrenci motivasyonu üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahiptir.

Bu tartışmaların ışığında, bu çalışmadaki amacımız, sosyal yapılandırmacılığı vurgulayan sanal öğrenme ortamlarının, alan eğitimi İngilizce olmayan üniversite öğrencilerinin konuşma becerilerine olan etkilerini bulmaktır. Çalışmanın katılımcıları olan, 51 alan eğitimi İngilizce olmayan üniversite öğrencisi, haftada üç saat zorunlu

İngilizce eğitimi aldılar. Katılımcılar, bu 3 ders saatinin 2'sini sınıf-temelli derslerde geçirdiler, kalan 1 saat boyunca ise 'Moodle' adındaki sanal öğrenme ortamını kullandılar.

Etkileri incelemek için, çalışma başlangıcında katılımcılara bilgisayar hazırlık ölçeği uygulandı. Çalışmanın sonunda ise, katılımcılara iki anket dağıtıldı ve sonuçları desteklemek için 15 katılımcıyla görüşme yapıldı. Sonuçlar, öğrencilerin görüşlerine göre, sosyal yapılandırmacı sanal öğrenme ortamlarının yalnızca konuşma becerilerine değil aynı zamanda diğer dil becerileri ve alanlarına da önemli olumlu etkilerinin olduğunu göstermektedir. Sonuçlar ayrıca, sınıf-temelli yabancı dil eğitiminin sanal öğrenme ortamlarıyla desteklenmesinin yararlarını da ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Konuşma becerisi, sosyal yapılandırmacılık, sanal öğrenme ortamları, harmanlanmış öğrenme.

ABSTRACT

EFFECTS OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVIST VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENST ON SPEAKING SKILLS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Speaking is among the most important skills aimed at in English as a foreign language classes, and yet it seems to be ignored since many students complain about failing to express themselves although they have some adequate knowledge in English to do this. Reasons vary; focus of lessons, lack of speaking evaluation, lack of time devoted to speaking can be counted among others. Moreover, traditional approaches that explain how students learn have had enormous influence on the way teachers handle their lessons for many years. As a result of this perspective, there are many teacher–centred classrooms today where teachers strive to transfer English-related knowledge and skills to minds of students with almost no interaction in the target language. The result, however, is not always favourable in terms of speaking skill.

Social constructivist principles in foreign language teaching, on the other hand, may serve to constitute more convenient environments where students as well as the teacher can interact with each other in a real life-like and meaningful manner. Various studies show that virtual learning environments and such applications as web 2.0 tools facilitate the use of social constructivist principles (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007; Woo & Reeves, 2007). The use of technology, in turn, has significant effects on student motivation.

In the light of these discussions, our aim in this study is to find out the effects of virtual learning environments, with an emphasis on social constructivism, on speaking skills of university level non-English major students. The participants of the study, 51 non-English major university students, who had three hours of compulsory English

education per week, used a virtual learning environment named ‘Moodle’ for 1 hour each week, spending the other 2 hours in classroom-based courses.

In order to investigate the effects, the participants were administered a computer readiness scale at the beginning of the study. At the end, two questionnaires were distributed, and to support the data fifteen participants were interviewed. The results show that the social constructivist virtual learning environment has, in the participants’ opinions, significant positive effects not only on speaking skills but also on various language skills and areas. In addition to these findings, the results also reveal the benefits of integrating virtual learning environments into classroom-based foreign language education.

Keywords: Speaking skill, social constructivism, virtual learning environments, blended learning.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAI: Computer-Assisted Instruction

CALI: Computer-Assisted Language Instruction

CALL: Computer-Assisted Language Learning

CD: Compact Disc

CMC: Computer Mediated Communication

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as a Second Language

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

IT: Information Technology

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

MALL: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

TELL: Technology-Enhanced Language Learning

VLE: Virtual Learning Environment

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

The written language has been the main focus of the language teaching for most of its history (Brown & Yule, 1983). Although generations have used both written and spoken language to transfer their social, cultural and scientific heritage to others, one has had to learn the language of the written texts in order to be an educated person, because it is the language of literature and scholarship, as is the case with Latin and Greek languages. Atkins (2000) explains the reason of learning these two classical languages in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a way of intellectual advancement and reading the classics of Greek and Roman literature, an idea that is supported by many including Stern (1983) and Brown (2007). Obviously, as Atkins (2000) puts it the aim was not to *communicate* in those languages as they were not spoken by anyone. One of the results of the focus on written language in foreign language education is a tradition of grammar and translation teaching. Although it is not a new method of learning languages, Grammar-Translation Method, which advocates analysing the grammar of the target language and applying this knowledge to translation of sentences and texts, gained importance in this process, and became the dominant method of foreign language teaching in Europe between 1840 and 1940 (Richards & Rogers, 2001). Its main focus, too, is not communication or speaking in the target language. Effects of this traditional perspective can still be observed in different ways in many language classrooms throughout the world today (Brown, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

The spoken language, on the other hand, has also been an important subject in language learning and teaching, and yet it "only made a decisive impact on foreign language teaching in general after the end of the Second World War" (Brown & Yule, 1983, p. 2), when, in addition to written communication, people from different parts of the world needed to *talk* to each other in a foreign language more than ever.

In today's borderless globalized world, with the help of World Wide Web, as Ellis (1997) puts it, people not only communicate within their local speech communities, they also get in touch with many others all around the world, and as never before,

learning a second language has been a necessity for receiving education or securing employment, not to mention for maintaining economic, political and cultural relations with other nations regionally and globally, and for following the cutting edge scientific and technological improvements, and so on. Today, knowing a language is referred to as being able to speak in that language (Ur, 1996), and thus, speaking seems much more important than the other skills (i.e. listening, reading and writing) in second language learning (Egan, 1999 & Ur, 1996).

Although it is of major importance, speaking has been until recently ignored in schools and universities (Egan, 1999). Research indicates various reasons for this negligence; focussing on other skills, difficulty of designing and administering speaking activities (Ur, 1996), such practical problems as uncertainty of the appropriate form of spoken language or the role of pronunciation (Brown and Yule, 1983), difficulty of speaking a language (Shumin, 2002), anxiety and motivational factors (Dörnyei, 2005), lack of testing and evaluation of speaking can be counted among others.

Approaches to human learning process, too, have influenced the place of speaking activities in foreign language classes. Traditionally, if students can be trained to repeat chunks of information, to learn them by heart (Brooks & Brooks, 1993), or to form habits through imitation and drilling correct sentences for hours, then they are viewed as 'having learned'. The assessment procedure is carried out through easily prepared, objectively evaluated and accountable multiple-choice or short-answer tests.

One of the results of this process is teacher-centred classrooms, where teachers strive to transfer their English-related knowledge to minds of students with almost no interaction in the target language. Dewey (1916), on the other hand, says that "education is not an affair of 'telling' and being told, but an active and constructive process" (p. 46) and that "no thought, no idea, can possibly be conveyed as an idea from one person to another" (p. 159), indicating that transmission of knowledge does not guarantee learning.

Richards and Rodgers (2001) depict another result as follows; "thousands of school learners, for whom foreign language learning meant a tedious experience of memorizing endless lists of unusable grammar rules and vocabulary and attempting to produce perfect translations of stilted or literary prose" (p. 6).

The outcome of the traditional understanding of learning, as stated above, it seems, is not always favourable in terms of speaking skill, as speaking requires more than *knowing* the rules of the language. As Murray & Christison (2011) state, grammar

and vocabulary, literature, and sometimes culture of English-speaking cultures have been the focus of foreign language education in many countries. Learning to speak a foreign language, however, requires more than knowing its structural and semantic rules (Shumin, 2002). Bygate (1987) gives an analogy of a car driver; the driver not only needs to know the names and functions of the controls and how they are operated, but also he or she needs to have the ***skill*** to use these controls to get the car going normally and safely. Bygate (1987) distinguishes knowledge from skill, indicating that "knowledge is only a part of the affair, we also need skill" to speak a foreign language (p. 4).

Learning by heart and forming habits, as Cook (1994) puts it, may have a role in language learning; however, if we aim at developing the skill to communicate in unpredicted circumstances in foreign language then we have to create atmospheres where students as well as the teacher interact with each other in a real-life-like and meaningful manner. Larsen-Freeman (2000) explains the predominant view of the language learning process in the light of the innovations in the field in the late 1980s and 1990s as "language learning is best served when students are interacting – completing a task or learning content or resolving real-life issues – where their attention is not directed toward to language itself, except when a focus on linguistic form is necessary" (p. 179).

Social constructivist principles in foreign language education seem to offer some help in this context. Wilson (as cited in Lefoe, 1998) describes a constructivist learning environment as "a place where learners may work together and support each other as they use a variety of tools and information sources in their guided pursuit of learning goals and problem-solving activities" (p. 456). In Piaget's words (as cited in Murray & Christison, 2011), learners are not passive recipients of information, but rather they actively construct or build new ideas or concepts on their previous knowledge or experience; therefore, according to constructivist theory, as Richards and Rodgers (2001) puts it, the teacher collaborates with his or her students to create knowledge and understanding in their mutual context, "as constructivist learners 'create meaning', 'learn by doing', and work collaboratively 'in mixed groups on common projects'" (p. 109).

This change in perspective has placed emphasis on learner-and learning-centred environments over traditional teacher-centred classrooms. As Piaget and Vygotsky (as cited in Beck & Kosnik, 2006) note the importance of dialogue with others in

knowledge construction process, Swain (2004) states that “language use and language learning can co-occur” within collaborative dialogue, where learners are pushed to “process language more deeply - with more mental effort” to create linguistic form and meaning to meet communicative goals, “and in so doing, they can notice what they can and cannot do” (p. 97-99). Within a constructivist environment, students not only learn from their teachers but also from their peers through collaboration and reflection on these experiences. In such an environment students can interact with each other, discuss, and draw conclusions of their own about a given subject, as a result, speaking gains a substantial role in foreign language learning. Therefore, social constructivist principles seem to help constitute environments where students and the teacher can interact with each other in a meaningful and real life-like manner.

Growth of information and communication technology (ICT) in the last couple of decades has increased the opportunities to create such environments. McMahon (1997) describes the Internet as an ideal forum for constructivist learning, stating that it has a strong potential for social interactivity. Kaufman (2004) describes the technologies that are based on constructivist principles as “powerful educational tools that extend human capabilities and contexts for social interactions” (p. 306). According to Woo and Reeves (2007), “With the development of the Internet and its communication and sharing affordances such as Email, chat, Web discussion forums, and other technologies, people are being exposed to more varied and frequent interaction opportunities than humans have ever experienced before” (p. 20). With the advances in ICT and with the emergence of a new generation of students, who are called the ‘net generation’ or, in Prensky’s (2001) words, ‘digital natives’, English language teachers and learners can be equipped with several educational tools that offer help to build such social constructivist environments, where students may have various opportunities to learn and speak English.

This present study probes to investigate possible effects of the social constructivist virtual learning environments (VLEs) on English learning perceptions, with a specific reference to speaking skills, of the first grade non-English-major undergraduate students within a compulsory English language course.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Learning a second language has become increasingly important over the last century. People have had to learn a second language for not just as a pleasing hobby but as a means of getting education and securing employment (Ellis, 1997). English, in this context, is referred to as the current lingua franca (Wardhaugh, 1986; Graddol, 1997; House, 2003; Seidlhofer, 2005) of the 'global village'. It is the dominant language of business and political transactions, technology, scientific and educational information, the Internet, and even the entertainment industry. English speaking students and academics are more likely to reach cutting-edge information in various fields as researchers around the world generally share their findings in English. English is also almost necessary for travelling abroad and communicating with international individuals and institutions, no matter what their mother tongues are.

Increasingly globalized world needs more than simply knowing about the English language; it requires using this knowledge through communicative skills such as speaking. An increasing number of educators, governments, ministries of education and employers need people who can speak English (Baker & Westrup, 2003), and thus, many English learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

In many foreign language classrooms, however, speaking skill often seems to be neglected. Traditionally, the focus of the lessons has been on knowing ***about*** the language, such as structural formulas and vocabulary items. It is often the traditional teacher-centred approaches aiming at transmitting this knowledge to students' minds that cause lack of speaking activities in the target language and interaction among students. Considering the context of Turkey, English language teachers' own speaking deficiency (Ozsevik, 2010) and/or their transmission-based educational culture (Kırkgöz, 2008) are among other factors that play a role in the lack of communicative activities in the classroom. According to Carless (2003), teachers' perceptions of being under pressure to complete the syllabus and to prepare students for examinations held for the English course at school or for high-stake tests held outside school are barriers for implementing communicative tasks, which is the case with Turkey as well.

Difficulty of designing and implementing speaking activities, especially when compared to other skills (Ur, 1996), motivational factors inhabiting speaking, anxiety of students when speaking a foreign language (Dewaele, 2007; Egan, 1999; Phillips, 1992;

Pichette, 2009; Woodrow, 2006), the lack of testing and evaluation of speaking are among the factors that should be taken into account for the negligence of speaking activities in the foreign language classroom.

Students' perceptions of learning and achievement can be important determiners how activities and tasks are handled in a language classroom. It is quite normal for students with traditional background of education who are accustomed to the contexts mentioned above in primary and high schools to prefer the same kind of English education when they go to universities. Research indicates that students feel secure when they are directly instructed by the teacher (Hong, Lai & Holton, 2003).

Small amount of teaching hours within an academic year, not to mention time devoted to prepare and apply such tasks within such a small length of time, can be regarded as a barrier for the lack of speaking activities in a foreign language classroom. Nunan (as cited in Yang, 2006) suggests 200 hours of instruction for adequate exposure to second language (L2); average instruction time students receive in compulsory English language education in state primary schools and high schools is far below this number; 76 hours and 152 hours, respectively. As for the universities, the number is even smaller; according to the Regulation on Principles of Foreign Language Teaching published by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK, 2008), university students have compulsory foreign language courses for no less than 60 hours within an academic year. In practice, this number leads to an average of 2-4 hours of foreign language education per week in two semesters, with a total of 64-128 hours per year, which is again far below the adequate exposure time mentioned by Nunan above. In addition to small amount of class time, large classes are also regarded as obstacles for the kind of pair/group-work activities involving communicative activities (Kırkgöz, 2008).

Rapidly developing information and communication technology (ICT) has an increasing effect on the field of English language teaching (ELT). Various innovations, such as mp3 players, iPods, podcasts, the Internet, web 2.0 tools and the like, offer new dimensions for learning and teaching foreign languages. VLEs, with their inherent dynamism and opportunities, provide cost-free contexts and materials for both teachers and students beyond the bounds of time and place.

Some of the VLEs provide participants with direct communication within text/audio/video chat with each other, as is the case with face-to-face (f2f) classrooms. One of the advantages might be that participants can reach each other and the resources of the course whenever and wherever they like. Besides, VLEs can offer an online

platform where the teacher can share with students not only documents (Word, PowerPoint, PDF files, etc.) but also multimedia files such as audio, video files, web pages and so on, freeing participants from the burden of carrying the resources along with them all the time. In addition, students can upload the files of their own, ask and answer questions to the teacher and their peers, work individually on the tasks and/or collaborate with each other in pairs or groups to do tasks. The use of forums, wikis and blogs allows sharing the products/tasks of students with the rest of the class, with an opportunity for observers to give feedback and for the producers to edit the product whenever needed. In a sense, in Heppell's (2007) words, VLEs help build an understanding of learning which is not restricted to a specific place or time.

Research indicates that well designed VLEs seem to yield positive attitude among learners, fostering reflection, metacognition (Oliver & McLaughlin, 1999), autonomy (Schwienhorst, 2007), and motivation (Erben, Ban, Jin, Summers, & Eisenhower, 2007) in today's 'net generation', who are quite familiar with technological advances and the Internet. After mentioning anxiety as a debilitating factor in speaking English, Woodrow (2006) suggests some ways of reducing anxiety by "setting out-of-class tasks utilizing the rich linguistic resources available to learners" (p. 324).

This raises the question of whether such e-learning technologies could augment the f2f classroom-based foreign language education, which has led us to carry out a study on the effects of VLEs on speaking skills.

There is a growing body of research on the effects of such web tools; however, Lowerison, Côté, Abrami and Lavoie (2008) mention that the history of educational technology has many examples of new promising technologies being "embraced with naive enthusiasm at first, only to be later discredited and discarded" (p. 424) either because they did not receive widespread interest and/or because early applications were poorly designed and fell short of the exhibiting their potential. Lowerison et al. indicate that this is the case with e-learning as well, arguing that along with other reasons 'not taking pedagogy into consideration' plays an important role in this problem. In other words, this problem may stem from a limited understanding of how human beings learn and how this understanding applies to e-learning (Lowerison et al.). While trying to eliminate the problems of conventional teacher-centred classrooms, this time technology-centred approach might pose a threat to possible solutions offered by e-learning contexts. The danger lies in technology-centred approaches; in Meyer's (2001) words, "Instead of adapting technology to fit the needs of human learners, humans were

forced to adapt the demands of cutting-edge technologies." (p. 10). Dalgarno and Lee (2010) indicate the importance of designing such environments as follows; "technologies themselves do not directly cause learning to occur but can afford certain learning tasks that themselves *may* result in learning or give rise to certain learning benefits." (p. 17). Technology, as many state it (Warschauer, 2009; Wills & Alexander, 2000), is just a tool, what matters is how to use it for educational purposes. With a metaphor of a delivery truck, Hanson-Smith (2008) says that "We are grateful to UPS, but the content of the box isn't theirs." (slide 5).

In the light of the discussions above, designing VLEs in line with pedagogical principles, namely social constructivist model of instruction, is of major importance. Our aim in this study is to see the possible effects of a VLE which is designed with social constructivist pedagogical principles on foreign language education, with a specific reference to speaking skill, of non-English-major undergraduate students who take compulsory service English course

1.3. Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study is to investigate possible effects of a virtual learning environment named Moodle on the effectiveness of the compulsory English course for non-English major university students with a specific reference to speaking skill.

1.4. Research Questions

The study attempts to find out answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the students' views on the effectiveness of classroom-based compulsory service English classes at university level?
2. What are the students' views on the effectiveness of speaking instruction in the same context?
3. What are the students' views on the effectiveness of the compulsory service English classes through virtual learning environments?
4. What are the students' views on the effectiveness of speaking instruction in the same context?
5. Do the social constructivist tools of the VLE contribute to the improvement of speaking and interactional skills?

1.5. Operational Definitions (In Alphabetic Order)

The following terms in the study are used in the meanings suggested below:

Blog: A website that allows users to reflect, share opinions, and discuss various topics in the form of an online journal while readers may comment on posts. Most blogs are written in a slightly informal tone (personal journals, news, businesses, etc.). Entries typically appear in reverse chronological order. ('Blog,' n.d., Noun, para. 1).

Constructivism: A learning theory that focuses on learning as a cognitive process, in which knowledge is expanded on the basis of learners interactively using their prior knowledge and new information in order to generate new knowledge (Rüschoff, 2009).

E-learning: A software solution for educational purposes, which is based on theoretical postulates, trends in cognitive science, artificial intelligence, and pedagogy (Höbl & Welzer, 2010).

Forum: An Internet message board where users can post messages regarding one or more topics of discussion ('Forum,' n.d., Noun, para. 4).

Social Constructivism: A theory of learning which draws heavily on the work of the Soviet psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934). It suggests that learners add to and reshape their mental models of reality through social collaboration, building new understandings as they actively engage in learning experiences. Scaffolding, or guidance, is provided by teachers or more experienced peers in the learner's zone of proximal development, that is, the zone between what a learner can achieve independently and what s/he may achieve with support (Pegrum, 2009).

Virtual Learning Environment: A virtual learning environment is a system working over the Internet designed to support teaching and learning in an educational setting. They provide a collection of tools such as those for assessment (particularly of types that can be marked automatically, such as multiple choice), communication, uploading of content, return of students' work, peer assessment, administration of student groups, collecting and organizing student grades, questionnaires, tracking tools, and so on ('Virtual Learning Environment,' n.d., para 1-2).

Wiki: A collaborative website which can be directly edited using only a web browser, often by anyone with access to it ('Wiki,' n.d., Noun, para. 1).

1.6. Abbreviations (In Alphabetic Order)

The abbreviations that are used in this study are as follows:

CAI: Computer-Assisted Instruction
CALI: Computer-Assisted Language Instruction
CALL: Computer-Assisted Language Learning
CD: Compact Disc
CMC: Computer Mediated Communication
EFL: English as a Foreign Language
ELT: English Language Teaching
ESL: English as a Second Language
ICT: Information and Communication Technology
IT: Information Technology
L1: First Language
L2: Second Language
MALL: Mobile-Assisted Language Learning
SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TELL: Technology-Enhanced Language Learning
VLE: Virtual Learning Environment

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The rapid growth of information and communication technology has influenced our lives in many ways. Computers and the Internet have changed the way people work, learn and even entertain although they have a history of couple of decades only. Various fields and lines of work, from banking to military, make use of these technologies, and the field of education is no exception. As Chapelle (2008) states, teachers using computer technology to help learners with their language study were seen as innovative and unconventional 20 years ago, today teachers who fail to employ technology in language teaching are likely to be considered at least out-of-date. The term 'e-learning' has now become commonplace in this context, and it is used to refer to all forms of electronically supported learning and teaching (e-learning, n.d.). İnözü and İlin (2007) state that "(w)eb-based learning, the use of CD-ROMs and interactive computer programs are considered as the new forms of education of the future." (p. 280).

The field of ELT has a growing amount of research on computer-assisted language learning (CALL). As Hubbard (2009) puts it, the question is no longer whether we should make use of computers in language learning, but how to use them. In this respect, theories on human learning have a significant role in determining how computers should be used and how CALL framework should be designed. Changing and developing technologies have been accompanied by different approaches and instructional designs. For this reason, this chapter will present the literature on CALL and designing language learning activities with technology in line with pedagogical principles with specific reference to speaking skill.

2.2. Computer-Assisted Language Learning

Computer-assisted language learning has been a concept in language learning and teaching since 1960s. Throughout its history, as Levy (1997) states, different terms and acronyms have been used for this concept; CAI (Computer-Assisted Instruction), CALI (Computer-Assisted Language Instruction), TELL (Technology-Enhanced

Language Learning), and CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning), and it is probable that we will hear the term MALL (Mobile-Assisted Language Learning) being used more frequently in near future.

The use of different terms can be regarded as the indicators of the fundamental changes in understanding of the concept. Warschauer and Healey (1998) divide the history of CALL into roughly three main stages; behaviouristic CALL, which later in 2000 was modified as 'structural' CALL by Warschauer, communicative CALL, and integrative CALL, indicating that each stage has a different level of technology and a certain pedagogical approach.

Influenced by the behaviouristic school of learning, the initial years of CALL, which could be regarded as CAI (Computer-Assisted Instruction), were mainly characterized by repetitive language drills, known as 'drill and practice' (Yang, 2010). Warschauer and Healey (1998) note that the computer at this stage of CALL was regarded as a mechanical tutor which was never tired or judgemental and allowed learners to work at an individual speed. Ahmad, Corbett, Rogers and Sussex (as cited in Warschauer and Healey) describe one of the earliest systems in the era, PLATO, which had a central computer and terminals connected to it, as an environment where learners had "extensive drills, grammatical explanations, and translation tests at various intervals" (para. 4). Behaviouristic CALL, or structural CALL, provided learners with "dialogues and pattern drills designed to condition learners to produce automatic, correct responses to linguistic stimuli" (Kern & Warschauer, 2000, p. 3), which emphasised mimicking the correct structure, reflecting the strong influence of the school of behaviourism.

Warschauer and Healey (1998) describe the late 1970s and early 1980s as the second stage, communicative CALL, the time when behaviouristic approaches to language teaching were rejected at both theoretical and pedagogical level and when personal computers were creating greater possibilities for individual work. As a response to behaviouristic theory of learning, cognitive approach argued that learning could not be explained by imitation and habit formation in which learners simply react with conditioned response; rather, learning was a cognitive process where learners actively generate and transform knowledge (Warschauer, 2000). Among the popular CALL software of the era, as Warschauer and Healey (1998) state, were text

reconstruction programs and simulations, which allowed learners to discuss and discover patterns of language and meaning individually, in pairs or groups. Warschauer (2000) indicates that the communicative CALL was characterized by communicative activities performed as a way of practicing English. He goes on to state the importance of communication and interaction in this stage as follows;

> ... through interaction, learners can develop language as an internal mental system. The content of the interaction is not that important, nor is the nature of the community, nor, really is the learners' own speech or output. What is important is how the interaction helps provide input to the learner to develop a mental system (Warschauer, 2000, New Pedagogies section, para.3).

With the emergence of the Internet, multimedia and social media, the beginning of the 21st century has seen another shift in focus and tools in CALL. This is the time of integrative CALL. Kern and Warschauer (2000) point out that this change stems from theoretical and technological developments; "Theoretically, there has been the broader emphasis on meaningful interaction in authentic discourse communities. Technologically, there has been the development of computer networking, which allows the computer to be used as a vehicle for interactive human communication." (p. 11). As the name suggests, there has been a change in the nature of the interaction. In other words, learners can interact not only with the *tutor computer*, as was the case with the previous two CALL stages, but also they can interact with their peers, teachers and other people all around the world. This new approach is characterized by task-based, project-based, and content-based approaches, which try to integrate learners in real social contexts, and also to integrate many skills of language learning and use (Warschauer & Healey, 1998).

It should be noted that although Warschauer and Healey (1998) divide the history of CALL into three stages according to theories and technologies used, they state that these three stages have not occurred sequentially,

> with one following the other, from "bad CALL" to "good CALL". At any one time, any of these may be combined for different purposes. However, there has been a general trend or development over the years, with new ideas and uses of computers being introduced in combination with those previous (Warschauer, 2000, New Pedagogies section, para. 1).

Therefore, being in the interactive CALL stage now does not necessarily mean that practice drills should be avoided. It is quite possible to see an eclectic approach according to diverse needs of learners throughout the world.

During its initial years, World Wide Web, which could be called Web 1.0, was regarded as a source of information, and therefore the CALL web sites, where the content of the information was under the control of the webmasters, focused mostly on receptive skills (Todd, 2009). Learners could mostly read or listen to the materials published by the site creator in this context.

Todd (2009) states that Internet users observed the emergence of a second generation of the Web after 2005, which is named 'Web 2.0', encouraging creativity, collaboration and sharing between users, either site creators or other users. Web 2.0, therefore, allows users to generate content rather than being the recipients of it (Todd). The 'read-only' or 'first generation' web (Web 1.0) connected information, whereas the participatory, second generation web (Web 2.0) connects people, and it does so in ways never before possible (Warschauer, 2009).

Thomas (2009) states that "The cover page of *Time* magazine in December 2006 famously announced that the person of the year was YOU", implying that they are "witnessing the emergence of new forms of participation on the web, based on sharing, collaboration, feedback, enhanced interactivity and evaluation." (p. xxii). The fact that millions of people throughout the world use blogs and wikis on a daily basis (Thomas), and that people have new forms of communication, text production, collaboration and social networking (Levy, 2009) has captured the attention of educators, linguists and language learners (Thomas). Solomon and Scrum (2007) reveal the optimism brought about these changes as follows;

> [t]he shift to Web 2.0 tools can have a profound effect on schools and learning, causing a transformation in thinking. This will happen because the tools promote creativity, collaboration, and communication, and they dovetail with learning methods in which these skills play a part. For example, when students collaborate on a project and present what they've learned, they've honed their thinking and organizational skills. … The old way of doing things is presentation-driven; information is delivered and tested. This approach prepares students for jobs that require simply

> following directions and rote skills. The new way is collaborative, with information shared, discussed, refined with others, and understood deeply. It prepares students to become part of a nimble workforce that makes decisions and keeps learning as the workplace changes. What makes the difference is preparing students with 21st-century skills using a flexible approach rather than teaching just what will be tested (Solomon & Schrum, 2007, p. 21).

Eastment (2008) points out that "until recently it was difficult to create a comprehensible and coherent online resource. You could write a web page in Site A, and blog at Site B, and use messaging service at Site C, but trying all your efforts together was more problematic." (p. 326).

In this context, virtual learning environments (VLE) are regarded as one of the most pervasive of these emerging technologies as they *combine* "a number of different tools that are used to systematically deliver content online and facilitate the learning experience around that content" (Weller, 2007, p. 2).

2.2.1. Virtual Learning Environments

Wikipedia defines a VLE as a "system designed to support teaching and learning in an educational setting" which "normally works over the internet and provides a collection of tools such as those for assessment ... communication, uploading of content, return of students' work, peer assessment, administration of student groups, collecting and organizing student grades, questionnaires, tracking tools, etc." (Virtual learning environment, n.d., para. 1-2).

There are many synonyms for the term VLE. Zsolt and István (2008) give some of them as follows; Course Management System (CMS), Learning Management System (LMS), Learning Content Management System (LCMS), Learning Support System (LSS), Managed Learning Environment (MLE) or Learning Platform (LP). According to Wikipedia, instead of using virtual learning environment, a more accurate term may be a virtual environment for learning since it removes any ambiguities and indicates that it is the environment that is virtual not the learning (Virtual learning environment, n.d.). Although these terms are often used interchangeably, the trend in the United States is in

favour of using CMS and LMS, but LMS is more frequently used to refer to software for managing corporate training programs rather than courses in traditional educational institutions, whereas in the United Kingdom and many European countries VLE and MLE are the more common terms, the latter referring to a wider infrastructure of information systems and thus covering the former (Virtual learning environment, n.d.).

There are commercial VLEs, such as Blackboard and COSE, as well as open source ones like Moodle, Sakai, and LAMS, which are offered free of charge. Often VLE software needs to be installed on a server, either at an institution or using one of the hosting services, as is the case with Moodle, and once the VLE software is installed on a server, end-users (teachers, students or other participants) can log on to the VLE from all over the world just like logging on any website on the Internet, without having to download or install any software.

After stating that VLEs support interrogation of heterogeneous technologies and multiple pedagogical approaches, Keller (2005) goes on to say that the system could contain such different functions as text, audio-video based lectures, chat groups, discussion forums, examinations and queries, e-mail and libraries providing links to electronic documents. Therefore, although the purpose of a VLE is to facilitate e-learning (Weller, 2007), the way of implementation varies with institutions, creators and educators of the VLEs. VLEs enable teachers to build their own activities and resources according to the diverse needs of their students, and thus the teacher does not have to do with or be restricted by the materials provided by a piece of software or CD-ROM. In general VLEs could

a) provide pure online courses where participants receive education online only without having to attend to face-to-face (f2f) instruction, or supplementary online courses for f2f classroom-based education, which are then called ‘blended learning’ or ‘hybrid courses’.
b) allow two modalities of communication; synchronous or asynchronous. In a synchronous communication, which is otherwise called real-time communication, all participants go online at the same time as the name suggests, whereas in asynchronous modality each individual joins the VLE whenever he/she wishes. It is important to note that a VLE does not necessarily allow communication in only one of these two modalities; there

can be room for both synchronous and asynchronous communication in a VLE.

c) have different underlying pedagogies, and employ various educational methods and tools, ranging from teacher-centred instruction to learner-centred interactive tasks. We should also note that VLEs allow the teacher to employ many of these different tools in an eclectic manner.

Kinshuk (2010) states that VLEs are being used in all kinds of educational scenarios: "formal, informal and non-formal learning ranging from classroom-based instructor-led education to just-in-time, interest-focused and community-driven situations that some could argue as not directly falling under the umbrella of education as we know it" (p. xvi).

VLEs do not have a long history, and yet they are being widely used in today's world of education, and they seem to be employed a lot more in the future. Weller (2007) says that the number of students in higher education is increasing worldwide. He quotes from Goddard (1998) who argues that this number will increase in the coming years as well. Considering their capacity to increase the enrolment and to overcome the economic burden placed on institutions as well as on students, VLEs, although not necessarily the only option if f2f education is absolutely demanded as the sole approach, could be a viable method for many institutions to offer distance, or at least blended, solutions that combine f2f and online delivery (Weller). According to Cole (2000) virtual universities will change the nature of education in the 21st century. Most higher education institutes today have one form of VLE or another, and taking into consideration the increasing number of students who demand higher education, there will be a lot of people using this software in the coming years (Weller).

2.2.1.1. Moodle

Moodle is one of the fastest growing free, open source VLEs, and is also commonly referred to as an LMS or a CMS (Stanford, 2009). According to Moodle statistics as of 2011 April, there are more than 50 thousand registered Moodle sites with over 40 million users in more than 200 countries around the world (Moodle Statistics, n.d.). Cole and Foster (2007) state that universities, community colleges, K–12 schools,

businesses and even individual instructors use Moodle to add technology to their courses.

When we compare commercial VLEs with open source ones, one of the major differences is that end users, namely teachers and learners, do not have the freedom to modify, customize, or contribute to the source code of the software to fit their needs in commercial VLEs. Conversely, in an open-source VLE, users all around the world usually have the freedom to access, modify and develop the source code (Munro, 2003), as is the case with Moodle. Users can download, install, run, copy, distribute, study, change and improve the software of Moodle without cost (Free Software Foundation, n.d.; Kök, 2008). Therefore, the core software and modules of Moodle are not only customized by programming staff at the headquarters, but also they can be developed, modified and supported by users and programmers all around the world, which is an advantage of Moodle over the commercial VLEs. These features also allow Moodle to be flexible for the needs of learners and teachers.

According to Moodle description of Vikipedi (Moodle, n.d.), the code being freely available to everyone, problems related with the software can be overcome faster in Moodle than its commercial counterparts as Moodle has a large number of testers, developers and users, which is, again, an advantage of Moodle over commercial VLEs. A number of higher education institutes are looking for a less expensive and equally functional e-learning support system and Moodle is the answer for many (Corich, 2005; Munro, 2003; Sclater, 2008). Open University adopted Moodle as the basis of its institutional virtual learning environment in 2005 (Scalter), and this adoption, according to Polding (2007) “has been a tremendous validation boost to Moodle as a system and has meant that many institutions are now looking seriously at open source for the first time, rather than regarding it as a poor relation of the commercial systems.” (p. 61).

Stanford (2009) presents some features that make Moodle particularly attractive to teachers:

- Easy to use — end users do not need any programming knowledge
- Access to resources through the Internet
- Interaction and collaboration between participants
- Independent learning ways

- Keeping tracks and records
- Feedback on tasks
- Secure environment
- Automatic backup.

As Eastment (2008) puts it, “Moodle allows the teacher to create an environment where instructions, worksheets, videos, forums, and virtually any other e-learning facility you can think of can all be stored together, simply and accessibly” (p. 326). Stanford (2009) invites ELF teachers to imagine the things they do in a school – “putting up timetables, presenting syllabuses, having discussions, presenting videos of new materials, organizing tests, collecting marks, providing feedback to students, guiding students to do their own learning, building a library…” (p. 7), he goes on to state that Moodle can do all of these things and it offers teachers much more besides.

The acronym Moodle stands for *Modular Object Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment*. As the name suggests, there are modules in Moodle through which various activities are conducted. Moodle has two kinds of modules, core modules and add-on modules. Core modules, which can be called the default modules, are the in-built features of Moodle generally created by the programming staff of Moodle. Once the software package is installed, the default modules can be readily accessed on the Moodle website without having to add or install anything else. Core modules can be summarized as follows;

- Assignment module
- Book modules
- Chat module
- Choice module
- Database module
- Forum module
- Glossary module
- Hot Potatoes Quiz module
- Journal module
- Lesson module
- Quiz module

- Wiki module
- Workshop module

Add-on modules (aka contributed modules), on the other hand, are usually developed by users world-wide. They are not found in the default installation software package and need to be installed manually on the local server of Moodle. The core modules and features can be extended by new add-on modules and plug-ins created especially for a specific new functionality (Zsolt & István, 2008). For example, voice recording application (NanoGong), can be integrated into Moodle, allowing teachers and learners alike to record and listen to their voices. Exabis e-portfolio is another add-on application, which is an electronic form of portfolio, allowing users to collate, organize, and present their work (Stanford, 2009). Hundreds of such sophisticated modules created by enthusiastic developers can be downloaded from the Moodle website (Zsolt & István).

The design of Moodle is based on social constructivist pedagogy, with a goal to provide a set of tools that support inquiry-and discovery-based approach to online learning in an environment which allows for collaborative interaction among students (Brandl, 2005).

There is a growing body of research that explore the advantages and disadvantages of using VLEs and Moodle in particular, providing suggestions on how to use them effectively in language learning and teaching. Psaroudaki and McKay (2008) study the effect of Moodle-based English language learning course on non-English major university students, and they report an increase in student motivation, autonomy and knowledge as well as attendance to the English course compared to traditional classes.

Similarly, Miyazoe and Anderson (2010) describe the positive perceptions of students towards online writings in Moodle course, e-wikis being the most favourable, followed by blogs and forums. They also discuss that these online writing tools have a positive effect on students' language learning progress. Muscara and Beercock (2010), too, point out a notable increase in classroom interaction and improvement in output organising skills throughout the Moodle course along with several peer teaching and

language practice opportunities, despite initial difficulties in adapting to this new way of learning.

Brandl (2005) points out that “Moodle has great potential for supporting conventional classroom instruction, for example, to do additional work outside of class, to become the delivery system for blended (or hybrid) course formats, or even to be used as a standalone e-learning platform” (p. 17).

The potentials will be further elaborated on in the forthcoming sections, which focus on what VLEs can provide for language learners and teachers.

2.2.1.2. Common Features and Tools in VLEs

VLEs provide not only educators but also learners with various tools, which could assign each participant an active role in the learning process. Below are the description of some tools and features of VLEs and some research findings related with them;

a) Communication: VLEs support communication between students and educators, between students and students, or across student groups through synchronous and asynchronous chat and discussions (Joint Information Systems Committee [JISC], 2011). These communication activities can be carried, either in pairs or groups, out via text, audio and/or video media. As Erben, Ban and Castañeda (2009) state, these tools reduce the social distance of interaction between the teacher and student, between the students themselves, and even between the teacher and parents. Some VLEs also provide e-mail facilities as an asynchronized communication medium, which can be used on a one-to-one or one-to-many basis (JISC). The file upload facilities allow students and educators to share various resources (articles, notes, images, PowerPoint, audio and video files, etc.) with each other. Online calendars, diaries or timetables are among other communication tools, and they can provide an overview of key events during courses and may include submission dates for assessments, remainders about other course related events (JISC). This feature enables participants to view calendars, assignments, syllabi and assignments.

b) Interaction and Collaboration: McLoughlin and Lee (2007) state that "Collaboration and cooperation have long been recognised as ingredients of effective pedagogy" (p. 671). Similarly, a VLE is a tool that permits collaboration in any given classroom endeavour (Erben, Ban & Castañeda, 2009). There are various tools within VLEs, e.g. wikis, forums, chats, blogs and workshops, which support collaboration within and across student groups. Hansson (2005) describes a blog "as a popular form of communication between people who want to publish their ideas and reach wide audiences" (p. 71). A blog is created by a single user who can add text, audio and video messages on the blog. The other participants can add text and audio comments on the blog as well. Wikis, on the other hand, are created by more than one user collaboratively. This time, contribution of users is not a comment or response, as it might be the case in a blog, but a change of what has previously been done (Kessler, 2009). The whiteboard application is another useful tool for interaction and collaboration. It allows participants to upload images and discuss them through text or audio chat while simultaneously viewing an image, which is a useful way of 'visualizing' ideas and concepts (JISC, 2011).

In the model below, Anderson (2008) illustrates the two major human actors in the e-learning: learners and teachers, and their interactions with each other and with the content provided in the online environment;

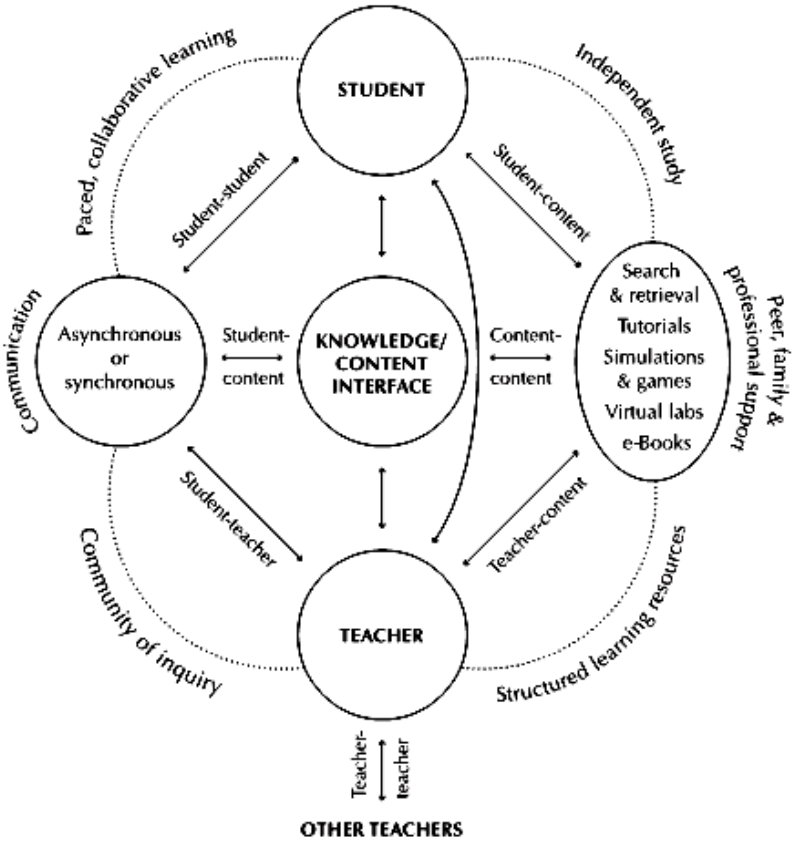


Figure 2.1 A model of interactions in an online learning (Anderson, 2008, p. 60)

In this model, we can see that there is room for autonomy in e-learning where students deal with the knowledge/content and related areas in an independent study.

In order to create interaction and collaboration among pairs and groups of learners, VLEs allow different grouping alternatives. The teacher can determine how many groups will be there and how many members each group will have. In addition, the teacher can assign participants (either teachers or students) to one or more groups on the course or activity level. In other words, it is possible to shuffle the group members for different activities and courses. Groups and pairs can be automatically created or formed manually by the course teacher. Macdonald (2003) notes the importance of collaborative working and grouping and emphasizes "the interplay between competence and affective factors such as growing confidence, motivation and group dynamics' and 'the importance of the affective aspects of collaborative working – group cohesion and the evolution of mutual trust (p. 378 & 384). Creating such an atmosphere and making use of group dynamics is possible in VLEs.

c) Assessment and Evaluation: VLEs have tools for both formative and summative assessment (JISC, 2011). There can be tests and quizzes which have wide-ranging response types, i.e. multiple-choice, true-false, matching, short-answer, essay, workshop, and so on, along with frequent assessment opportunities. Black and William (as cited in Gillespie, Boulton, Hramiak & Williamson, 2007) note that "regular assessment of learning is very motivating and helps to improve self-esteem and results" (p. 65). VLEs could allow text, audio and/or video formats to be incorporated into many of these assessment types. A variety of question or assessment types can be administered according to the needs of learners, and the results can be automatically transferred to the gradebook tool of the VLE, or evaluated individually by the educator (Gillespie et al.). There is also a room for peer review, correction and evaluation in VLEs.

   Electronic portfolio is another feature VLEs can provide. The e-portfolio allows learners to use images, voices and text in the work they produce, enabling them to express their ideas more creatively (Gillespie, Boulton, Hramiak & Williamson, 2007). Learners can submit their work to the teacher and/or share their work with their classmates (Erben, Ban & Castañeda, 2009), and receive feedback from their teachers and/or peers.

d) Course Management/Tracking: Wu (2008) describes some of the key features of course management as follows;

Teachers can

- check activity reports showing what students have done so far, when they completed an assignment or uploaded a file, how long it took them to do it, how frequently they access the course, and which areas they have accessed
- set the deadlines and timeframes of activities, and restrict the access to an activity once the deadline has passed
- determine whether an activity can be re-submitted or re-done, and also how many times it is possible to re-do it, how long it should take to complete an activity

- create a new course, hide existing courses, copy and modify existing course materials, and transfer currently enrolled students to another new course, etc.
- create, re-name, move, modify or delete files and folders, and reach course and the materials any time without having to use their own computers.

Hurd (2008) states that VLEs, which are available 7/24, "can provide an ideal opportunity, particularly for independent language learners, to work together, to discuss and reflect on learning, to give and receive support and thus gradually overcome their inhibitions." (p. 224). Within such web-based learning environments, participants collapse time and place, and they do course work in their own time and their own pace, freeing themselves from schedules imposed by others (Cole, 2000).

2.2.2. Advantages and Disadvantages of CALL

Halvorsen (2009) points out that an entire new generation is now growing up, and they are making use of new technologies to share and communicate with each other through user-created content. He goes on to say that "millions of users visit social network sites on the Internet, sharing their photos and information, chatting, blogging and editing friend lists and generally creating and recreating their online identities" (Halvorsen, 2009, p. 240).

In this respect, motivation is one of the first advantages of CALL. Chomsky (as cited in Arnold and Brown, 1999) describes the importance of motivation as follows "about 99 percent of teaching is making the students feel interested in the material" (p. 13). Various studies indicate that computers can increase motivation of students (Erben, Ban, Jin, Summers & Eisenhower, 2008; Lee, 2000; Warschauer & Healey, 1998; Galavis, 1998). It may be expected that the new generation of students are quite familiar with the Internet technology and that dealing with language tasks within this environment might increase their motivation; however, we should also take into consideration learners and educators who have limited computer and Internet efficacy and experience. Peng et al. (as cited in Yang & Lin, 2010) indicate that learners' attitudes and Internet efficacy have been identified as important factors that affect learners' motivation, interests and performance in Internet-based learning environments. Similarly, Mitra *et al*. (as cited in Keller, 2005) state that "contextual factors — such as

age, gender, learning style, degree programmes and previous knowledge of computers — assumed to influence students' perceptions" (p. 299). Having said this though, we should also note that learners' perceptions at the beginning of the course might change throughout the course; therefore, as Yang & Lin put it, there may not be an important relationship between self-efficacy and their participation in online activities, because the more learners participate in the online activities, the more proficiency they gain in time.

Another important advantage of using online tools is that users will be able to access resources from home as well as school; besides, teachers can upload various electronic resources on a VLE, reach and modify them wherever and whenever they want, which can prevent many of the problems involved in transferring work to and from school (Gillespie, Boulton, Hramiak & Williamson, 2007).

Independence from a single source of information, be it the teacher or textbooks, is another advantage of learners within CALL (Lee, 2000). In addition to various authentic materials, technology can provide learners with authentic audiences as well (Erben, Ban, Jin, Summers, & Eisenhower, 2008).

CALL may have positive effect on increasing learners' achievement (Hurd, 2008; Lee, 2000), and reducing learner anxiety (Warschauer, 1996); Erben, Ban, Jin, Summers, & Eisenhower, 2008; Hurd, 2008; Levy, 1997; Siskin, 1999). Also teachers can create activities through CALL which are sensitive to individual differences. Siskin (1999) states that slow learners can go over the material more slowly and review it as much as they like, and also students who learn fast can accelerate and enrich their learning using computers. According to Oxford et al. (as cited in Torut, 1999, p. 1), "The computer offers great flexibility for class scheduling and pacing of individual learning, choosing activities and content to suit individual learning styles". Therefore, CALL allows students to go at their own pace and review the materials with a patient tutor that never gets angry or play favourites (Siskin, 1999), supporting them with different types of tools. Shy and inhibited students can be supported within CALL which provides an individualized, learner-centred, collaborative learning atmosphere (Lee, 2000). Besides, there is a room for autonomy and independent learning in CALL (Galavis, 1998; Warschauer and Healey, 1998). For example, as Erben et al. put it, "a learner can take control of his or her learning by referring to a dictionary or rewriting the message until he or she deems it satisfactory for posting." (p. 17).

Teachers and students gain new roles along with the online courses. As Adair-Hauck, Willingham-McLain, and Youngs (1999) indicate, the teacher's "energies are channelled in different directions such as evaluating, choosing, designing, adapting software, serving as consultant to students, assuring that the overall course learning objectives are being met, and that the course is an integrated whole." (p. 293). These new roles of the teacher place students in the centre of the learning process, which was traditionally occupied by the teacher, so students also have some new roles "as they gain the freedom to work when and where they choose but also face the responsibility of doing considerably more work outside of class" (Adair-Hauck et al., p. 293).

Schroeder, Minocha and Schneider (2010) indicate that technological tools are increasingly being used in the education domain and have received widespread attention. For example, students' using blogs as online reflective diaries and communicating their understanding to the educator and their fellow students increase their own understanding of the subject domain (Du & Wagner, 2007). Also, wiki applications enable students to collaboratively create course related content that is continuously refined and updated throughout the development of the course (Trentin, 2009). Such applications enable new forms of community-based collaborative learning (McLoughlin & Lee, 2007), allowing students to learn interactively and collaboratively (Schroeder et al). As Liao (as cited in Shih, 2010) indicates, if carefully planned, activities involving cooperative learning enable students to reflect on and evaluate their work in the group and provide suggestions for improvement. In addition to such collaborative activities within a local area, facilitating students' communicating on a global level and thus raising awareness of different cultures and nations can help students to feel citizens of a global classroom (Lee, 2000).

Gillespie, Boulton, Hramiak and Williamson (2007) regard online assessments as a way of reducing teachers' workload, and state that once assessments are set up, they can be used for other or future student groups. The teacher can manually mark assessments at home or at school, learners can peer-review and evaluate each other's work, again, without the problems of transferring or losing work; in addition to this, majority of VLEs can provide some form of computerised marking, and summaries of these assessments can be printed or exported for use in summative assessment and reporting to parents (Gillespie et al.). Taylor & Gitsaki (as cited in Lai & Kritsonis,

2006, p. 3) state that during the assessment process, “teachers can get the essential information from a well-designed language learning program and then offer feedback tailored to students’ learning needs”.

In CALL learners receive feedback from their teachers or peers only; they can get feedback from the CALL software itself or simply ‘notice’ the gaps in their linguistic knowledge themselves. Payne and Whitney (2002) quote Swain’s proposal of the Output Hypothesis and point out that learners ‘notice’ the gaps in their own linguistic knowledge, or interlanguage, “as a result of external feedback (e.g., clarification requests, modelling, and overt correction) or internal feedback (monitoring) of language they have produced” (p. 8). Lai and Zhao (2006) examine students’ noticing their problematic language productions and interactional feedback from their conversational partners in a text-based online chat, and they find that text-based online chat promotes noticing more than face-to-face conversations, especially in terms of learners’ noticing of their own linguistic mistakes. Lai and Zhao also state that “[t]ext-based online chat has the great potential of increasing noticing for two reasons: first, it allows conversation to flow at a slower pace compared to face-to-face conversation, and thus gives the "speakers" longer processing time in receiving and producing the target language; secondly, it saves texts in such a manner that users can access previous messages quite easily” (p. 102). According to Kitade (as cited in Smith, 2008) “internet chat provides opportunities for learners to self correct both grammatical and pragmatic errors in their own linguistic output for essentially two reasons: first, there is no turn-taking competition and, second, there is more time for things like self-monitoring” (p. 104). There is a room for such noticing and becoming consciously aware of one’s own language production in CALL. As a result of these processes, when put in Payne and Whitney’s (2002) words, learners output can have a function of helping to internalize linguistic forms, test hypotheses about the language, and increase control over previously internalized forms.

We should also note that using technology “can promote greater language production and a higher level of language sophistication, as well as enhance critical-thinking skills according to particular cultural contexts” (Erben, Ban, Jin, Summers and Eisenhower, 2008, p. 16).

Taylor and Gitsaki (2003) discuss the changing roles of the teacher and learners throughout the history of CALL. According to them, the teacher is researcher and framer, and learners are autonomous and creative in the 21st Century CALL, which can be regarded as an advantage, too.

Nunan, Penelope, Eva and Barry (2010) discuss the benefits of technology in second language learning, and list them as follows;

- Technology allows individual study plans.
- It provides learners with instruction without the boundaries of time and place, and with patient tutoring.
- Students have a private space to make mistakes, and they receive immediate, individualized feedback.
- Technology provides detailed records of achievement.

Taylor and Gitsaki (2004) point out the importance of modern pedagogical theories that emphasize student-centred classrooms, learner autonomy, and project-based learning, and state that well-designed web-based activities foster seven qualities of meaningful learning presented by Jonassen (1995); "active, constructive, collaborative, intentional, conversational, contextualized, and reflective" (pp. 138-139). Below are the qualities promoted by web-based activities (Jonassen, 1995; Taylor & Gitsaki, 2004);

- The Web-based activities (...) promote active learning where learners are engaged in "mindful processing of information where they are responsible for the result" (Jonassen, 1995, p. 60).
- Learners integrate new knowledge with prior knowledge and collaborate with their classmates in project-based L2 learning.
- Learners intentionally work toward an objective either in groups or on their own.
- During the activities (...) learners engage in L2 conversations with their classmates through sharing the information they found on the Web and role playing or negotiation L2 content.

- Learners are involved in real-world, meaningful tasks (e.g. using the Web to plan a vacation, creating a home page, reading news online, searching for restaurants, creating a newspaper, etc.).
- Finally, learners can reflect on the decisions and processes involved in the learning process.

As for the limitations and disadvantages of using computer technology in language learning and teaching, Erben, Ban, Jin, Summers and Eisenhower regard the technical difficulties at the most basic level (2008), indicating that inconveniences such as broken links, a server being down temporarily, incompatible components, can easily upset or frustrate students as well as teachers. They advise checking the technology before walking into the classroom. In this respect, Agrawal (2008) points out the necessity of having a special room along with technicians to keep the computers working in case of breaking down and technical problems, but then again, maintenance activities may require interruptions to class or study time (Galavis, 1998), which might be another disadvantage.

Another disadvantage is the lack of computer and Internet literacy, either of students or teachers. It is necessary for all users to have basic computer and internet knowledge to benefit from CALL efficiently. Otherwise, it will increase the anxiety level of learners and thus have a negative impact on learning. On the other hand, as stated above, the initial lack of proficiency and low self efficacy in terms of computer and Internet literacy may not necessarily last throughout the online course. As Yang & Lin (2010) put it, the more learners participate in the online activities, the more proficiency they gain in time, and thus technology anxiety might gradually disappear.

Financial barriers and availability of computers are among other challenges (Lee, 2000). Gips, DiMattia, and Gips (as cited in Lai & Kritsonis, 2006) state that educational cost will be increased by computers and this will harm the equity of education, discussing the possible difficulty to be encountered by low-budget schools and low-income students when the computers become a basic requirement, not to mention expensive hardware and software. Finding the proper software is another problem, as Agrawal (2008) states computers can do whatever they are programmed to do, and yet each piece of software has its own limitations (Agrawal).

We should also bear in mind that many students and teachers reject a change from traditional classrooms, and it is rather difficult to for difficult for some students to get used to being independent learners (Galavis, 1998).

Design of the CALL environment is of major significance. Poorly designed technology-enhanced classrooms might arouse in students and the teacher alike a feeling of being lost, and as a result, students, for example, may visit irrelevant websites when they are asked to search for important information about the target culture" (Erben, Ban, Jin, Summers & Eisenhower, 2008, 18). Similarly, Hansson (2005) emphasizes the negative effects of non-experiential and theory-free introduction these technologies on teachers' self-esteem, confidence and professional identity, stating that catching up with the new technology puts the teachers' professional identity at risk.

Siskin (1999) states the tendency to use technology for its own sake without proper design or consideration of how it may be used to best effect. In this respect, Oblinger and Hawkins (2005) invite each institution and related to people to discuss the question "Are we too focused on the "e" and not enough on the learning?" (para. 11). They point out that the main point in education is learning, the 'e' part is just a mechanism.

In the light of these discussions, it is important to bear in mind that "[t]echnology is not a panacea or a magic bullet that suddenly transforms all learning. The effectiveness of educational technology depends on how it is employed to meet educational goals for particular kinds of students in specific language learning environments..." (Oxford et al., as cited in Torut, 1999, p. 1).

2.2.3. Comparison Studies: Face-to-Face, Online, or Blended Learning

Chapelle (2003) compares traditional second language learning tasks with technology-mediated ones for the options they afford a language teacher. Figure 2 depicts the expanding options for second language tasks with the use of technology (Chapelle, p. 24).

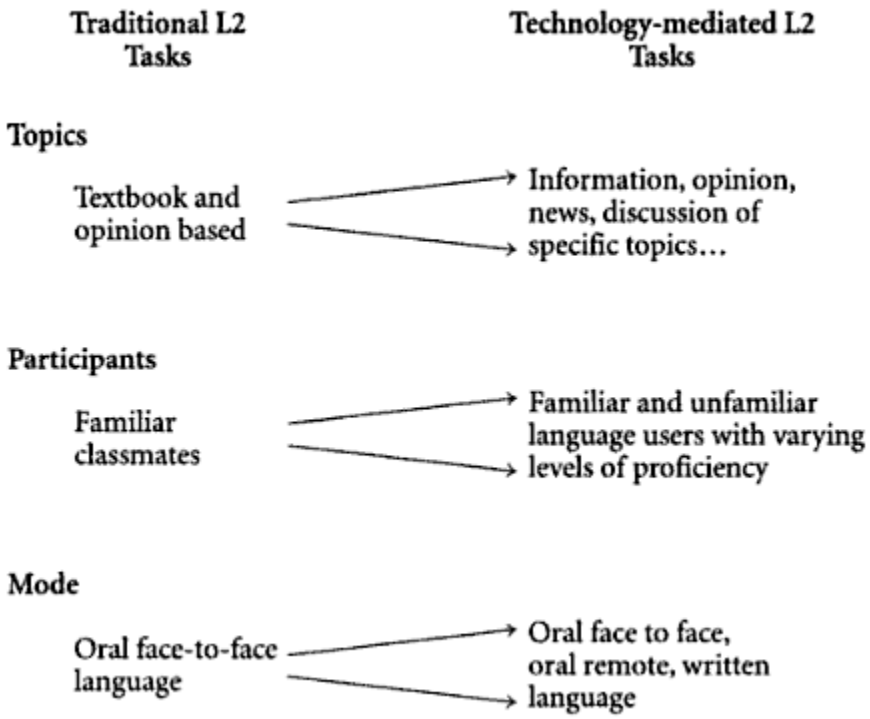


Figure 2.2 Expanding options for L2 tasks with technology (Chapelle, 2003, p. 24).

This figure does not suggest that the capabilities given by the technology-based tasks are impossible to arrange in a classroom setting; rather, the normal procedures and constraints in the classroom of paper-based books and materials offer fewer options than the normal means of developing tasks through technology (Chapelle, 2003).

Schroeder, Minocha and Schneider (2010) write about the benefits of student-centred learning concepts that have been discussed for a long time, and refer to Garrison and Arbaugh (2007) who discuss that the implementation of such concepts was problematic because of practical issues such as the difficulty of arranging for meaningful and lasting interactions among larger student numbers. However, web-based tools such as wikis and blogs could provide a solution to this problem; "As social software allows large numbers of students to not only present their own insights but also consolidate and refine each other's contributions, the enthusiasm about the potential impact of these applications on teaching and learning seems to be well justified." (Schroeder et al, p. 160).

Instead of dealing with f2f and online learning separately, a relatively new option is increasingly being discussed in both academic and corporate circles; blended or hybrid learning, which involves combining f2f and online learning (Graham, 2006).

Although some may use the term blended learning (BL) to refer to combining different instructional methods or combining different delivery media for their educational purposes, combining f2f and online education more accurately reflects the historical emergence of BL systems and essence of the concept (Graham, 2006).

Osguthorpe & Graham (as cited in Graham, 2006) identifies various reasons that educators and learner might choose a BL system: "(1) pedagogical richness (2) access to knowledge, (3) social interaction, (4) personal agency, (5) cost-effectiveness, and (6) ease of revision" (p. 8). Graham also states that according to BL literature, the most common reason provided is that BL combines the best of both f2f and online environments. We should also note the danger of combining the least effective elements of both worlds if BL environment is not designed well (Graham). Brenton (2009), on the other hand, notes the importance of the teacher's presence in online courses as follows "(t)he role of the teacher in e-learning is just as important to student learning as it is in the seminar room or lecture hall" (p. 97).

Graham, Allen, and Ure (as cited in Graham, 2006) find that, overwhelmingly, people choose BL for three reasons: "(1) improved pedagogy, (2) increased access and flexibility, and (3) increased cost-effectiveness" (p. 8).

Hurd (2008) notes that there is already evidence that computer-mediated communication can help minimise anxiety and increase motivation, and she discusses the opportunities provided by BL as follows;

> blended learning and blended tuition through the use of synchronous and asynchronous tools way well have a beneficial effect on the learner by offering a different kind of support and complementing a particular advantage of distance language learning: the opportunity to work at your own pace and control output according to individual preference and need (p. 224).

Graham (2006) determines that transmissive rather than interactive strategies are still widespread in most current teaching and learning practice in higher education; however, combining f2f instruction with computer-mediated instruction increase the level of active learning strategies, peer-to-peer learning strategies, and learner-centred strategies.

Grgurovic, Chapelle, and Shelley (as cited in, Chapelle, 2010) carry out a comparative research on more than 40-year history of CALL, and they find that blended and online learning is comparable or superior to traditional courses.

2.2.4. Enthusiasm and Anxiety

Although research indicates that CALL has many advantages, it is not difficult to state that it has not reached its full potential (Todd, 2009). Various studies below indicate shortcomings of CALL implementations.

While acknowledging that computers are more powerful and multimedia has become more integrated today, Todd (2009) criticizes the 15-year CALL practice for focussing on what is easiest to design rather than what is needed to be learned. He also states that CALL paradigms so far, with the exception of computer mediated communication (CMC), have focussed largely on receptive skills, i.e., reading and listening.

Levy (2009) discusses that advances in technology have led to new forms of communication, text production, collaboration and social networking, and yet there is by no means a total difference in language learning and teaching. Similarly, Blin and Munro (2008) indicate that there is little evidence of significant change in teaching practices, although technology is now commonly available in most higher education institutions and there are dedicated staff employed to support e-learning.

Siskin (1999) states the tendency to use technology for its own sake without proper design or consideration of how it may be used to best effect. Similarly, Mikropoulos and Natsis (2011) state that there are many technological approaches that VLEs follow, but few pedagogical ones. In this respect, Oblinger and Hawkins (2005) invite each institution and related to people to discuss the question “Are we too focused on the "e" and not enough on the learning?” (para. 11). They point out that the main point in education is ‘learning’, the ‘e’ part is just a mechanism. Levy (1997) also criticizes being led by the capabilities of the latest technological innovation, as there can be a tendency to pick up the latest technological innovation and get to work on a project, and he advises CALL community to build upon what has gone before.

The current implementations of VLEs are “accused of being focused on improving administration and replicating behaviourist, content-driven models” (Blin & Munro, 2008, p. 1). Similarly, Weller (2007) claims that there is much debate on e-learning; it excites hype and anxiety among educators. He further states that according to e-learning detractors, the Internet is a broadcast medium, and a cost effective and unprecedented content delivery mechanism. Users can access this content wherever and whenever they want. In this environment, the educator is replaced by the content, which could be reused and reached by many. As for e-learning enthusiasts, on the other hand, the Internet is an unprecedented means of communication, facilitating two-way communication, encouraging discussion, dialogue and community in a way that is not limited to time or place; the role of the educator is to facilitate dialogue and support students in their understanding of resources. Regarding the Internet as a content delivery medium or communication medium represents two main pedagogical camps; instructivist or constructivist approaches to education, respectively (Weller).

These findings lead us to reiterate Oxford et al.’s words (as cited in Torut, 1999); “[t]echnology is not a panacea or a magic bullet that suddenly transforms all learning. The effectiveness of educational technology depends on how it is employed to meet educational goals for particular kinds of students in specific language learning environments..." (p. 1).

Wills and Alexander (2000) support the view that “(t)echnology in itself does not change or improve teaching and learning.” (p. 70). Similarly Dalgarno and Lee’s views (2010) echo in Wills and Alexander’s where they put forward that “technologies themselves do not directly cause learning to occur but can afford certain learning tasks that themselves *may* result in learning or give rise to certain learning benefits” (p. 17). Considering Warschauer’s description of Web 2.0 tools (2009), technology is “a powerful tool that can have both positive and negative impact and that must be carefully exploited in line with learner needs, teacher capacity, and local social contexts” (p. xx). When put in Hanson-Smith’s (2008) metaphor, technology is a medium, and “Media are like delivery truck.... We are grateful to UPS, but the content of the box isn’t theirs” (slide 5).

In fact, history of educational technology has many examples of such new promising new promising technologies being “embraced with naive enthusiasm at first,

only to be later discredited and discarded" (Lowerison, Côté, Abrami & Lavoie, 2008, p. 424) either because they did not receive widespread interest and/or because early applications were poorly designed and fall short of the exhibiting their potential.

Miyazoe and Anderson (2010) describe the optimism for one of the emerging technologies in the field of education, namely the use of blogs in language education, as follows "Although positive expectations for the use of this new technology in language education were expressed early (Campbell, 2004; Pinkman, 2005), it will take several more years before blogging becomes a stable component of quality teaching practices." (p. 187). This optimism and caution correspond with the Kennedy and Levy's (2009) discussion of reactions to new technologies. They refer to Gartner's Hype Cycle Model, which describes five different categories or stages that occur in the emergence of any new technology as follows;

> ... technology trigger; peak of inflated expectations; trough of disillusionment; slope of enlightenment; and plateau of productivity. This trajectory provides a sense of how unrealistic initial expectations can quickly lead to disappointment, and the realization that it is only through extended use and systematic evaluation over time that a more reasoned assessment of the technology may be arrived at; unfortunately, this is time that typically we do not have, as yet another new technology makes its presence felt (Buckingham, 2007; Lanham, 2006; Levy, 2007a). (p. 445)

In this respect, Cuban (as cited in Thomas, 2009) reminds us to temper the over-enthusiasm for the new technologies, as the previous examples, such as radio, TV, movies among others have shown that they remain readily available but underused, even though many extravagant claims were made about them. Lowerison, Côté, Abrami and Lavoie (2008) indicate that this is the case with e-learning as well, arguing that along with other reasons 'not taking pedagogy into consideration' plays an important role in this problem. In other words, problems may stem from a limited understanding of how human beings learn and how this understanding applies to e-learning (Lowerison et al.).

In this respect, taking into account how human beings learn and designing CALL activities in line with pedagogical principles are of major significance. As

Jonassen et al. (as cited in Adriaen, 2002) say, there needs to be a shift to learning *with* technology rather than *from* technology. It may also be useful to note the initial tendency in CALL research to test the technology to see what effect it might have on language use, which is now gradually being replaced by the tendency to test theories of second language acquisition within the context of CMC (Kern, Ware & Warschauer, 2008).

These discussions have led us to focus on how to design language learning activities in VLEs in line with pedagogy and methodology of foreign language education. In the next section we will have a closer look at approaches to designing courses with technology.

2.3. Approaches to Course Design with Technology

Traditional models of learning adopted by teachers tend to focus on what the teacher does rather than on what students do in order to learn (JISC, 2011). According to JISC, these models describe f2f courses as places where the teacher is seen to 'pour' information into students' heads by talking about important concepts, ideas and facts. Such traditional classrooms are dominated by teacher talk, leaving only a third of classroom talk to students (Blanchette (2009). When we consider the use of mother tongue (L1) in such environments, it would not be unreasonable to say that as such classrooms, as Tang (2011) says, deprive students of opportunities for exposure to the target language.

2.3.1. Behaviourist Course Design

As seen in behaviouristic CALL in the previous sections, early models of computer applications reflect this model of teaching, with the teacher being substituted by the computer (JISC, 2011).

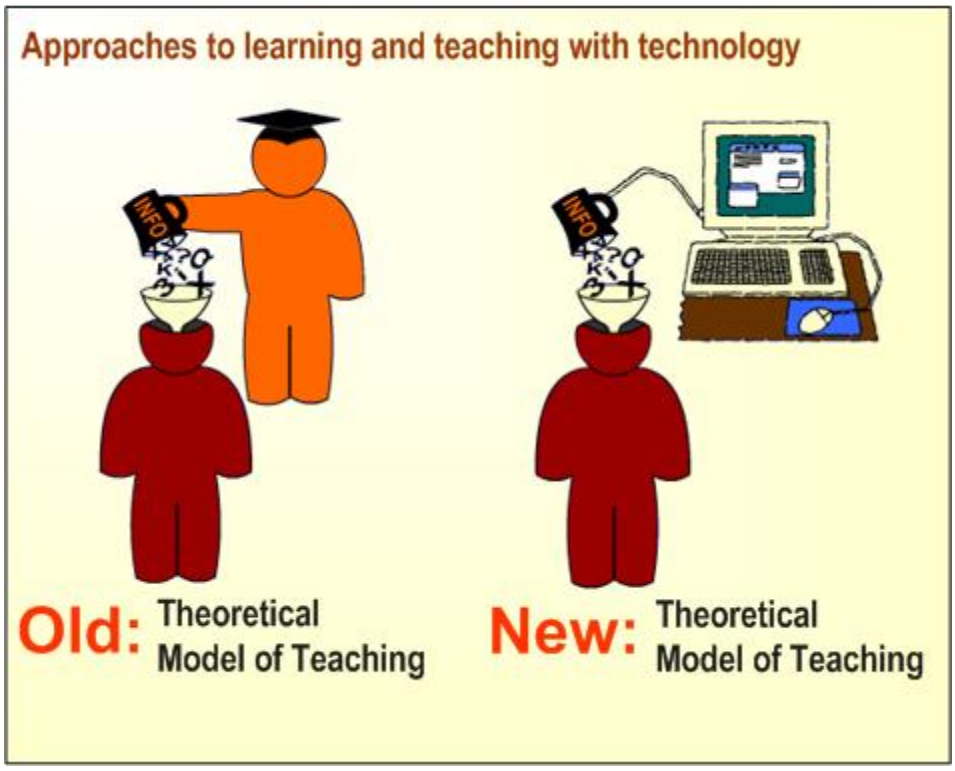


Figure 2.3 Approaches to learning and teaching with technology (JISC, 2011)

Influenced by behaviourist theory of learning, the online courses in such CALL environments are mainly characterized by content delivery and repetitive language drills, known as 'drill and practice' (Yang, 2010). According to behaviourism, knowledge can be transferred from a source (the teacher) to the receiver (the learner), who is regarded as the passive recipient of this knowledge. This theory explains the learning process as follows;

> learning a new behavior happens as a result of conditioning—either classical conditioning where the behavior becomes a reflex response, as in the case of Pavlov's experiments with dogs, or operant conditioning where behavior is reinforced by a reward or punishment, as in Skinner's experiments (Murray & Christison, 2011, p. 141).

Learning according to this view is seen as a habit formation, which is brought about imitation, reinforcement and repeating the new behavioural pattern until it becomes automatic (Littlewood, 1987). As Good and Brophy (as cited in Ally, 2008) state, this theory focuses on "overt behaviours that can be observed and measured as indicators of learning" (p. 20).

According to behaviourists, second language learners acquire the appropriate language behaviours (or 'habits') through repetition and reinforcement, like children learning their native languages (Mackey, 2006). Patel and Jain (2008) list some essential points of this theory as follows; "[l]anguage is learnt only through practice ... Learning takes place fast if a correct response is given to the students ... Every new item must be learnt by reinforcement by further practice before learning begins" (p. 38). Similarly, it is important for learners to avoid making errors (Doff, 1998).

Traditionally, as Jackson (as cited in Brooks & Brooks, 1993) states, learning is taught to be a 'mimetic' activity that involves learners repeating, or miming, newly presented information. Brooks and Brooks describe atmosphere further; "[i]f students can be trained to repeat chunks of information, then they are viewed as "having learned". The predominant ways in which students are asked to express this learning is through multiple-choice or short-answer tests." (p. 16). According to Taylor (1995), universities generally have been the exemplars of transmissionist paradigm characterized by the dominance of lecturing, with knowledge being regarded as a commodity which can be transferred to the students' minds, as is the case with behaviourist approaches described above.

As a result of these perspectives, as Mackey (2006) says, teachers often require learners to repeat linguistic forms in drills without necessarily paying much attention to meaning. Ellis (1990) states another result, "[m]any learners found pattern-practice boring and lost interest in FL learning. Even learners who were 'motivated' to preserve found that memorizing patterns did not lead to fluent and effective communication in real-life situations" (pp. 29-30).

2.3.2. Social Constructivist Course Design and the Web

More recently, traditional models of static transmission of knowledge and skill acquisition are replaced by three interrelated emerging trends, namely constructivist, problem solving, collaborative approaches to language education (Felix, 2002).

According to constructivism, "[l]earning is an active process of constructing rather than acquiring knowledge and instruction is a process of supporting that construction rather than communicating knowledge." (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996, p.

171). McMahon (1997) contributes to the discussion saying that "[l]earners do not transfer knowledge from the external world into their memories; rather, they create interpretations of the world based upon their past experiences and interactions in the world" (para. 15).

As the name suggests, social constructivism emphasizes the social side of the process of knowledge construction. Roberts (1998) states that "[c]onstructivist theory is framed essentially in terms of individuals. However, (...) each person's development occurs in constant exchange with their social circumstances" (p. 44). Similarly, Wilson (as cited in Lefoe, 1998) describes a constructivist learning environment as "a place where learners may work together and support each other as they use a variety of tools and information resources in their guided pursuit of learning goals and problem-solving activities" (p. 456).

In such contexts, as Wilson (as cited in Lefoe, 1998) states, learners have more control and the teacher takes the role of 'coach and facilitator', or 'co-learner' when put in Harper and Hedber's words (as cited in Lefoe). Swain (2004) explains that "language use and language learning can co-occur" within collaborative dialogue, where learners are pushed to "process language deeply - with mental effort - and to create linguistic form and meaning to meet communicative goals, and thus they can notice what they can and cannot do" (p. 99).

Within a social constructivist environment, students not only learn from their teachers but also from their peers through collaboration and reflection on these experiences. McMahon (1997) points out that unlike traditional competitive approaches, most social constructivist models stress the need for collaboration among learners. Therefore, social constructivist principles seem to help constitute environments where students and the teacher can interact with each other in a meaningful and real life like manner. In such environments, students may be said to interact with each other, discuss and draw conclusions of their own about the given subject; as a result, speaking gains a substantial role in foreign language learning.

Gruba (2004) points out that "[s]ocial constructivists promote close ties between authentic activities, collaborative learning, a variety of materials, the student ownership

of outcomes and critical reflection" (p. 3). In line with Gruba, Can (2009) also writes about some other advantages of this approach as follows;

> [c]onstructivist approach is promising at promoting learners' language and communicative skills as well as at fostering their autonomy, social and interactive skills contributing to their development into more confident, pro-active and responsible individuals by supporting incentives on diverse media in language learning and teaching (p. 60).

According to Driscoll (as cited in Gruba, 2004), the five key principles of this learning theory are as follows:

- Integrate authentic activity within a complex learning environment. Students readily discern what will and will not be useful to them. They know, for example, that the Internet will be part of their lives. The use of real Internet resources heightens a sense of authenticity and provides motivation.
- Emphasise social negotiation as integral to learning. Placing a collaborative task at the core of a class focuses student attention on group dynamics and interpersonal communication; task completion hinges on students' collaboration. Audience awareness, a key part of effective communication skills, is also developed at several levels through interpersonal, group, institutional and, potentially, global interactions.
- Juxtapose content, include multiple modes of representation. Collaborative tasks, by their very nature, contain a juxtaposition of ideas and information. Working through a range of electronic resources with colleagues helps students to gain experience in a variety of modes: spoken, written, individual, group and technologically mediated.
- Keep instruction relevant to student needs. Well-designed collaborative tasks allow scope for students to shape outcomes; their ownership of the work is made clear from the beginning. As a need arises in relation to a task – and this includes conflicts within the group – we can provide guidance and some perspective.
- Reflect on practice. Thinking about what went right, what went wrong and how it can be improved next time is a powerful way to deepen

> understanding. Done well, reflection encourages a critical perspective and transferability of learning to other contexts (pp. 74-75).

Roberts (1998) notes the strong influence of constructivist model of language acquisition on language curriculum design, and quotes from Williams and Burden that "ELT has widely adopted constructivist views of language learning" (p. 25).

Research indicates that web is an appropriate place for carrying out constructivist strategies such as problem-solving, critical thinking, reasoning and the reflective use of knowledge (Dougiamas, 2000; Felix, 2002; Lefoe, 1998; McLoughlin & Lee, 2007; McMahon, 1997; Woo & Reeves, 2007; Zeng & Takatsuka, 2009).

There is a growing body of research investigating the effects of social constructivist web-based activities on language learning and teaching. Although some studies state being cautious while integrating technology into language classrooms and choosing a course design (Beatty & Nunan, 2004), various studies report positive uses of these technologies over the past few years (Küfi & Özgür, 2009). In the next section we will examine the research findings related to learning English as a foreign or second language in web-based learning environments that have social constructivist elements in their course design.

2.3.3. Studies on the Effects of Social Constructivist ICT on Language Learning and Teaching

According to Salaberry (2000), various studies claim that text-based CMC has several advantages over f2f communication for the development of L2. One of the advantages Salaberry points out is that students use more target language in text-based CMC than in oral classroom activities. Increased level of motivation and reduced anxiety are among the other advantages of synchronous CMC. Finally, synchronous computer interaction is claimed to foster sociolinguistic competence. Salaberry also claims that text-based CMC helps learners to focus on two features simultaneously; meaning and form. Focusing on meaning is the ultimate goal of CMC interactions as participants normally have specific goals and objectives in this setting. As for focusing on form, it is easier both for teachers and learners to analyse their scripts and focus on a specific use of form, for example verb endings, not also during their production but also after the CMC session has ended. Salaberry states that these two features may lead

learners to reflect on their own language production as they attempt to create meaning, a goal of collaborative tasks set by Swain (as cited in Salaberry).

Similarly, in their study with tertiary ESL students with intermediate English proficiency, Lai and Zhao (2006) explore the role of noticing during text-based online chatting and find that such an environment promotes noticing more than f2f conversations, especially in terms of learners' noticing of their own linguistic mistakes.

Zeng and Takatsuka (2009) investigate tertiary level EFL learners' participation in synchronous task-based CMC and find that learners mutually attended to each-other's language use and their mutual attention to language form enhanced their language development.

Kamshi-Stein (as cited in del Puerto & Gamboa, 2009) compares web-based bulletin board discussion to f2f discussions, and discovers that the former contributed to a substantial increase in students' participation and to a higher degree of collaboration and peer support. Similarly, Fitze (2006) compares f2f and online written conferences with a group of advanced EFL learners. The study reveals that the total number of words produced in two settings did not differ significantly; however, online writing displayed greater lexical range and more interaction, and written online conferences provided a greater equality in participation.

Wikis and blogs which are among social constructivist tools that foster collaboration and cooperation, allow students to interact not only with their teacher but also with their peers. In a context of collaborative writing activities using a wiki, Ioannou-Georgiou (2005) compares the pen and paper based collaborative writing activities with the ones done online, and she finds out that students often have negative perceptions against the method of process writing which involves drafting and revising before a piece of writing is finalized, especially if the teacher is the only one who reads the final paper. However, if they know that their work will be published on the Internet for a real audience, they have higher motivation and are willing to revise and spend much more time improving their work than they would normally for a traditional piece of writing (Ioannou-Georgiou). Adding a collaborative aspect to such a work, Kessler and Bikowski (2010) report on autonomy and collaboration in language learning

through a wiki-based collaborative writing activity, indicating that student interaction and language use appear to benefit from such flexible learning environments.

Franco (as cited in Miyazoe and Anderson, 2010) tests wikis for low-intermediate level ELF students in a language school in Brazil, aiming to check peer-correction in a group setting. He reports positive perceptions of the wiki activity and progress in language acquisition.

As an example of the use of wikis with advance level learners, Kessler (2009), in his study with pre-service non-native speaker English teachers, investigates participants' correction of their own and others' grammar errors in 15-week wiki-based collaborative writing task. The results reflect a high frequency of peer-edits, indicating that participants were willing and able to work collaboratively in such an autonomous environment; however, participants did not correct the problems in form that did not impede meaning, which may indicate that learners may not have inherent willingness to strive for total accuracy. Kessler concludes that it may be important to provide students with a variety of collaborative tasks and contexts in which they can interact, as "[t]hey may benefit simultaneously from autonomous contexts in which they do not feel compelled to strive for accuracy as well as contexts that provide explicit demands for accuracy" (p. 92).

In her study with college preparatory writing course students, who used the wiki application for peer editing and commenting on essays, Turgut (2009) reports participants' improved ability to generate interesting ideas and confidence in experimenting with their writing.

As for the use of blogs in EFL, Wu (2006) investigated adult university level, low-intermediate EFL learners' reactions to peer feedback and teacher feedback in a blog environment in EFL composition class, during which no f2f teacher-student writing conferences took place. The results show that majority of the students' feedback do not serve a linguistic function to give meaningful and constructive comments but serve a pragmatic function to give complimentary praise or blessings. Another finding is some students fail to respond to teacher feedback, which Wu thinks may stem from their low English competence.

Shih (2010) aims to establish a blended teaching and learning model combining online and f2f instructional blogging for an English for specific purposes course with a total of 44 university students majoring in English. The results of the study showed that such a model could contribute to learning effectiveness and student satisfaction if the blended model is implemented with sufficiently supportive tools and course plans.

Wang (as cited in Miyazoe and Anderson, 2010) explores the use of blog-based electronic feedback (e-feedback) with university intermediate level EFL students. The results indicate that students' attention focused more on micro-level (lexical and grammatical) concerns and less on macro-level (organization and content concerns).

The study done by Ware and O'Dowd (2008) is not conducted in a blog setting, but it also explores the use of peer feedback on language development. The advance level EFL students exchanged messages in a weekly asynchronous CMC. The findings show that although students preferred an inclusion of feedback on the grammatical forms of their exchange, such feedback only occurred when explicitly required by the teacher. The authors attribute the small number of feedback to some effects. Firstly, the asynchronous nature of the communication provided students with more time to compose their messages and to read, interpret, and respond to others' messages, and students were able to look up dictionaries. Secondly, they were advance level learners, so they might not have had difficulty to understand the gist of the messages, and thus eliminate the need to negotiate the meaning. Ware and O'Dowd state that these findings replicate the findings from similar research on synchronous interactions; Schwienhorst (as cited in Ware and O'Dowd) finds that even though students were encouraged to correct their partners' grammatical errors, there was very little evidence of error correction in the transcripts.

Lee (as cited in Ware & O'Dowd, 2008) suggests that students in telecollaborative exchanges may not feel comfortable providing corrective feedback, and thus, as Ware and O'Dowd put it, they want to mitigate or contextualize their language related feedback, offering praise on one another's work and thanking for the language-related feedback.

Forums are among social constructivist online tools that allow participants to ask and answer questions, discuss topics and so on. Savignon and Roithmeier (2004)

analyse discussions of two groups of students, one in Germany learning EFL and the other in the United States learning German as a foreign language, each studying their own target language through discussion topics such as ‘American dream’ and ‘death penalty’. The results of the study reveals that this kind of CMC appears to offer new possibilities for intercultural exchange and participation in the interpretation, expression and negotiation of meaning essential to the development of communicative competence.

Kol and Scholnik (as cited in Miyazoe & Anderson, 2010) conduct a study, aiming to establish a valid criteria for participants’ written contributions in forum discussions, in four English for Academic Purposes courses. The discussions constituted 15% of the students’ final grade, and reflection and interaction were chosen as the criteria for assessing online contributions. Although the data revealed no significant improvements in writing occurred between the first and fourth forums, the majority of the students perceived the forum as being helpful in their writing.

Miyazoe and Anderson (2010) examine three different online writing tools mentioned above, namely blogs, wikis and forums, in an upper-intermediate level EFL blended learning course in a university context. They state that students have positive perceptions of the blended course design with online writings, wikis being the most favourable, followed by blogs and forums. Qualitative text analyses of forum and wiki writings show progress in the students’ ability to differentiate English writing styles.

Stockwell (2007) reviews the literature in CALL across a five year period from 2001 through 2005 in order to examine what technologies CALL practitioners selected for the teaching of a certain language skill or area such as listening, grammar or pronunciation. The results indicate that 32 empirical articles in total focused on grammar, 26 on vocabulary, and 17 on both pronunciation and writing, 14 on listening, and only 10 on speaking. Stockwell grammar and vocabulary generally received consistent attention, whereas reading and listening showed consistent decreases. In contrast, speaking, pronunciation and writing (to a degree) showed increases over time, which Stockwell attributes in part to development of synchronised CMC technologies such as chat and audio-conferencing. He also attributes the decreases in grammar, listening and reading partly to shift towards speaking.

Heins, Duensing, Stickler and Batstone (2007) compare spoken interaction in online and f2f learning environments, and they state that students have higher ratio of target language use than their mother tongues in the online environment. Özdener and Satar (2008) state that recent research on computer-mediated communication shows that learners with the same native language use the target language more in computer-mediated communication (CMC) than they do in classroom environments. Confirming the findings of the previous studies, Özdener and Satar indicate that the vast majority of the synchronous chats in their study were in the target language, questioning the belief in CMC that 'students should chat with people whose native language is not the same, otherwise they will prefer to use their native language' (p. 12).

Chau (2007) describes a tertiary level e-portfolio project and states that e-portfolio represents a powerful learning mechanism for addressing learner diversity.

Hinkelman and Grose (2004) report on the application of a listening/reading comprehension placement test administered in open source software, namely Moodle, to 230 freshmen entering a university general English program. They point out that the open source software was successful in providing a practical technical platform for administering placement tests to large number of students in a short time. They also note that the administration time of the test was equal to comparable paper-based assessments, time savings, however, were dramatic in the marking and analysis of the test results as the computer-based scoring made these tasks almost instantaneous.

Previous research studies indicate that the capabilities of new technological tools present a whole new range of pedagogical issues that need to be further examined by CALL professionals (Wang & Chen, 2009).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents information about the research design, the participants, the instruments, the data collection procedures, and the methods used for data analysis.

3.2. Research Design

This research is a descriptive study which aims to compile information about the possible effects of a virtual learning environment which is designed with social constructivist pedagogical principles on foreign language education, with a specific reference to speaking skill, within compulsory service English course at university level. Figure 3.1 below summarizes the main elements of methodology of the study.

Research Design	Blended; qualitative and quantitative
Sampling Strategy	Convenience sampling
Participants	51 freshmen (Convenience Sampling)
Data Collection Tools	• Computer Readiness Scale and two questionnaires • f2f Interviews
Data Analysis Tools	• SPSS • Content Analysis (for analysis of interview data)
Syllabus and Tasks	Task-based; Course Syllabus
Time and Duration	• Induction courses: from November 2010 to January 2011 (8 weeks in total) • Normal courses: from January 2011 to June 2011 (18 weeks in total)

Figure 3.1. Overall research design

The study was conducted during 6 months, from November 2010 to June 2011, covering two semesters of the academic year to find answers to the following research questions:

6. What are the students' views on the effectiveness of classroom-based compulsory service English classes at university level?
7. What are the students' views on the effectiveness of speaking instruction in the same context?
8. What are the students' views on the effectiveness of the compulsory service English classes through virtual learning environments?
9. What are the students' views on the effectiveness of speaking instruction in the same context?
10. Do the social constructivist tools of the VLE contribute to the improvement of speaking and interactional skills?

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect data regarding the research questions above. Firstly, computer readiness scale was given to the participants at the beginning of the study. At the end of the study two other questionnaires concerning the participants' perceptions of the effectiveness of the application were administered. After the quantitative analysis of the questionnaires, 15 volunteering participants were interviewed. The results were analysed through SPSS and content analysis techniques.

3.3. Participants

Identified by convenience sampling strategy, the participants of this study were 50 first-grade undergraduate students attending the Classroom Teaching Department of Muallim Rıfat Faculty of Education, Kilis 7 Aralık University. This kind of sampling, as Mertens (2005) describes, involves choosing the participants who were readily available. The participants, of different age and gender groups, were the members of the classes the researcher was actually teaching. Their age, gender, social and English backgrounds were not taken into consideration.

3.4. Setting

The researcher and participants had three hours of English course a week in two semesters in the 2010-2011 academic year. Two hours were spent in the classroom having f2f language education. In the last hour, the researcher and participants went to the computer laboratory of the faculty, where there were 45 computers. The total number of the class was 56, so some participants had to use a computer with his/her classmate. In this class hour, the participants continued the language education on the VLE, namely Moodle. The researcher was with the participants not only in f2f courses but also during the Moodle courses in case they might have task related problems and/or technical glitches with the system.

3.5. Procedure

Although the academic year began in mid-September in 2010, the study started in November due to the technical problems related with the university web server on which Moodle was installed. During the first one and a half months before the study started, the researcher and participants had all three hours of English course in the classroom, following the syllabus of the course. Allocated to real and false beginner to A1 level of the Common European Framework (Leigh, del Pozo, & Guillén, 2008), Platform 1 (Betterton, Leigh, Ludlow, & Reilly, 2008), which includes a paper textbook and a reference guide, audio CD, and self-study CD, was the course textbook.

Although the courses were carried out in the classroom during this time and in the two hour period after the integration of Moodle, they were not teacher-centred ‘teach and chalk’ sessions where the students were regarded as the passive recipients of knowledge. Student-centred activities involving cooperation and interaction between learners occupied a significant place throughout the classroom sessions.

The study focused on the speaking skill; however, we tried not to neglect the other skills and areas at the expense of improving speaking skill throughout both classroom-based and online courses. There are two main reasons behind this; first, people use all language skills and areas when communicating in real life, so we preferred a combination of activities involving different skills. Secondly, if the focus of the activities in both contexts were on speaking skills only, it would highly probably

lead to a prejudice against this skill, which, in turn, might affect the validity of the study. Thus, we designed our study in such a manner that while none of the skills were ignored or excluded within the concerns of the study, speaking skill was given a specific emphasis.

From November on Moodle was integrated into the classroom-based courses. In the initial two months of the study (November & January, 2010), the researcher gave induction courses to students in the computer lab, including sessions where they were introduced to computers, the Internet, and to Moodle as majority of the students had low computer skills according to the Computer Readiness Scale (51%, n. 26). Besides, an important number of them stated that they had not used computer before coming to university (21,6 %, n.11), and an even greater number of students had not used the Internet before (27,5 %, n. 14). As Browns (2002) puts it, such introductory courses help build self efficacy and reduce computer anxiety.

In the induction courses, the students not only learned the basic functions of the computer and the Internet from the researcher and their peers, but also started using the VLE, namely Moodle, for language learning purposes. In the first units of Moodle, the students were asked to do various tasks in order to get used to learning English with the software.

One of these tasks was to build a dictionary of their own class using the Glossary module (See Appendix 7). The students were asked to add newly learned vocabulary items, to edit and comment on them when necessary. At the end, the participants had a dictionary of their own set up with their collaborative efforts.

Another activity was to collaboratively set up a categorized vocabulary list specific to each unit of the course using the Database module (See Appendix 8). Unlike the Glossary module which dealt with all the vocabulary in all units of the course, the Database module allowed the students to work with the words specific to each unit. In other words, this vocabulary study was much more contextualized as it focused on, for example, words related with food and nationalities in Unit 1 Food, town in Unit 2 and house in Unit 3 and the like. Taking the responsibility of their own vocabulary learning the students not only dealt with the meanings of the words but also provided example sentences and/or related words in this module.

Speaking activities had some place in the induction courses as well. Taking into account the students' different levels of English background, various tasks, ranging from identifying sounds and repetition practice to preparing for speaking inside and outside the classroom and online speaking activities, were used throughout the online course. The speaking activities described below were done following the advice of Stanford (2009). First of all, exercises like finding the word stress (See Appendix 9) and matching rhyming words (See Appendix 10) were used to help especially low-level students to practise basic pronunciation. Secondly, using the listening and repeating activities (See Appendix 11) allowed the students to practise saying individual sounds, word stress, intonation as well as longer utterances. The students were able to record their voices and upload them for their teacher and peers to check, and to compare their utterances with the original versions of these words and sentences themselves. In addition, they were able to repeat these activities as many times as they like, which, as Stanford states, is a useful feature of Moodle. Another activity related with speaking was 'Dialogue Minus One', as Stanford names it, which aimed to prepare students to speak inside and outside the classroom (See Appendix 12). In this activity, the students heard only half of a dialogue and they had to provide the other half, using the prompts that the teacher had provided them with. The advantage of this activity was that the students could listen and practice carefully, and get used to new words and expressions and practise new language functions such as interrupting, inviting, asking questions, and refusing in their own time as they wanted (Stanford). Final example of speaking activities carried out mainly in the induction courses was giving oral presentations using the NanoGong module (See Appendix 13). This module allowed the students to record their voices, listen to them, re-record if they were not content with their performances, and upload their voice on Moodle for their teacher and their peers to check. In this activity, each student was asked to give oral presentations on various topics such as a famous person and a room of the house.

Although the activities described above were used mainly in the induction courses, they were included in the rest of the course as well. Another point related with these speaking activities was that they involved self-study most of the time and the outcomes were mainly monologues. After the first units of the course, however, the students were engaged in online audio chats done in pairs and groups which allowed for real interactions and collaboration between the students.

Listening activities in Moodle gave students the opportunity to listen the recordings repeatedly until they felt comfortable with them (Stanford, 2009). Also, the students were able to practice them whenever and wherever they wanted. Listening activities were accompanied with tasks such as a quiz whose results were received by the teacher or a Dialogue Minus One activity through which the students practiced dialogues (See Appendix 14). Evaluated automatically by the system, the scores were accessible to teacher and the testing student.

Reading, writing, and grammar activities also had an important place during the induction courses as well (See Appendix 15). However, the induction courses included mainly self-study activities as they focused on adapting the students to use Moodle. During this time, completing the activities was not strictly required because of two basic problems; one with the sound component of the students' computers, and the other with uploading of text and other files to Moodle. The students' computers, which were called the client computers, were connected to the host computer. The sound problem resulted from the lack of sound card in the client computers. The problem was partly solved by using the sound card of the host computer. Uploading problem stemmed from one of the additional modules uploaded to Moodle; however, it was overcome after a few weeks' trial and error.

The students received help not only from the teacher but also from their peers as to how to do the tasks and use Moodle during this process. The induction courses finished towards the end of the fall semester, and after that the students were invited to use Moodle in a much more real life-like and meaningful manner, interacting and collaborating with each other using English.

One example of the social constructivist tools in Moodle which provides interaction and collaboration among the students was the use of PoodLL module (See Appendix 16). PoodLL is an add-on module designed for Moodle that includes various activities such as audio chat, which cannot be found in the version of the Moodle used in this particular study, pair and group work, text-chat, audio and video recording and so on. Using PoodLL in this study, the teacher was able to make pairs and groups of students to let them have text and audio chat, besides PoodLL allowed the teacher to change the number of students in groups and shuffle the students in the pairs and groups using PoodLL Admin Console (See Appendix 17). The students had the opportunity to

revise the language learned in the f2f courses and to have information gap activities through audio and text chat while simultaneously viewing an image related with the task on the computer screen. The teacher was also able to observe the students using Poodle admin console without necessarily joining a group, and it was also possible for the teacher to join the pairs and groups and communicate with the students (See Appendix 17).

Another social constructivist tool focusing on different language areas and skills was Exabis E-Portfolio (See Appendix 18), which is an add-on module that allows students to have portfolio work within Moodle. The students, being able to upload, edit, delete and share their voices, pictures and texts, used this module to talk about themselves, their families and hometown throughout the spring semester. They received feedback not only from their teacher but also from their peers on their work, and were asked to reflect on their performance. Their e-portfolios were also used as an assessment tool instead of their paper-pen mid-term examination.

Wikis were among the social constructivist tools used in this study (See Appendix 19). In groups of 4-5, the students wrote about a famous person throughout the spring semester. They were asked to give information on that person, and were also reminded that they could make use of the vocabulary and structures learned in different units of the course. Using the wiki module, each student in the group was able to contribute to and edit the content and delete the errors and unnecessary material on the work. The work was created collaboratively by the individuals and it belonged to the whole group.

In this study, blogs were also used as a collaborative writing tool (See Appendix 20). Unlike wikis, the students formed the blogs individually; however, they were able to see the other students' work and make comments on them.

Forum module was also used in Moodle (See Appendix 21); however, the main aim was not to have discussion sessions in the target language. Rather, questions about the tasks were asked and answered, and problems encountered were discussed in the first language. Also, some announcements were made by the teacher using the forum module. Similarly, there was a chat room in Moodle which allowed the participants to have a real-time synchronous text messaging repeated on a set date outside the normal

class hours. The students were invited to join the sessions whenever it was suitable for them.

Other language skills and areas such as listening, reading, grammar and vocabulary were not neglected in the Moodle tasks done during the spring semester (See Appendix 22).

Some of the Moodle activities such as wikis, blogs, quizzes, reading and writing activities were used as the evaluation tool instead of the classical sit-down final examination.

Although the study was completed at the end of May 2011, the students used Moodle till the end of the academic year in June.

3.6. Data Collection Tools

In this study, two kinds of instruments were used to collect data: three questionnaires and interviews. Some of the questionnaire items were taken from previously conducted related research and others were prepared by the researcher in accordance with the research questions and aims of the study. After the questionnaires, a semi-structured interview was conducted.

3.6.1. Questionnaires

A Computer Readiness Scale was distributed to the participants at the beginning of the study and two other questionnaires were administered at the end of the study. Most of the items in these questionnaires were composed of 3-5 Likert scale questions. Many resources were reviewed in the development of the questionnaires; however, the studies conducted by Brown (2002), Battersby (n.d.), and İnözü and İlin (2007) were utilized by the researcher in the designing of the questionnaires due to their similarity to the research questions and aims of this particular study. After piloting the questionnaires with 15 students from a different department who also used the same VLE for the compulsory English course, some of the questionnaire items were refined, and they got their present form.

Before the induction courses started, the participants were given a Computer Readiness Scale (See Appendix 1 and 2) which explored the participants' computer and internet literacy and use, readiness to CALL, and previous internet and VLE experiences. It had 18 items with generally 3 to 5 Likert scale questions along with open-ended ones.

At the end of the study, a questionnaire (See Appendix 3 and 4), which focused on effectiveness and comparison of English courses in the f2f and VLE courses, was administered. This questionnaire, too, had 28 items including 3 to 5 Likert scale questions as well as open-ended ones. A second questionnaire (See Appendix 5 and 6) was given one hour after administering the first in order to probe the effectiveness of the social constructivist tools within the VLE in terms of language learning, and development of language skills in this context. Including mainly 3 to 5 Likert scale questions, this questionnaire had 29 items.

Due to the low proficiency levels of the students, the participant copies of the computer readiness scale and questionnaires were in the first language of the participants, namely Turkish (See Appendices 1, 3 and 5). The English translations of the scale and questionnaires are also provided at the end of the thesis (See Appendices 2, 4 and 6).

3.6.2. Interviews

A semi-structured interview with an emergent design was conducted face-to-face with 15 participants in order to support the data obtained from the questionnaires. The participants were interviewed in three groups. Following the advice of McMillan and Schumacher (1997) and Patton (2002), the interviews were tape-recorded with the permissions of the interviewees and later transcribed so that the researcher could be more focused on the interview and interviewees and not have any information loss.

3.7. Data Analysis

In the study, both quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques were employed. The questionnaires were analysed with the SPSS 17 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program. The data obtained from the interviews, on the other hand, were subjected to content analysis.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings acquired from the statistical analyses and the content analysis mentioned in Chapter 3. First, the data in the Computer Readiness Scale were analysed in order to bring more insight about the participants. Then, the first questionnaire, concerning the participants' perceptions on the effectiveness of the f2f courses and online courses along with the language skills dealt with in these courses, was analysed. Next, the second questionnaire, which deals with the participants' views on the effectiveness of the social constructivist tools within the VLE, was evaluated. Finally, in order to support the data obtained from the scale and questionnaires above, the interviews held with 15 participants were analysed by means of content analysis.

4.2. Findings from the Computer Readiness Scale

The Computer Readiness Scale consists of two parts; the first part includes questions concerning general information about the participants, their computer ownership and skills together with their Internet access and use. The second part, on the other hand, focuses on the participants' previous experiences regarding computer, Internet and VLE and their motivation to learn English through the Internet as well as their perception of usefulness of learning English in this context.

4.2.1. Information on the Participants

Although the gender and age variables were not taken into consideration while analysing the data obtained from the scale and questionnaires, they are presented here in order to give a more detailed description of the participants of the present study.

Consisting of 32 females (62,7%) and 19 males (37,3%), totally 51 first grade students took part in the study. They were all attending the Classroom Teaching Department of Muallim Rıfat Faculty of Education in Kilis 7 Aralık University. Twenty-seven of the participants (52,9%) were under the age of 20, while 23 of them (45,1%) ranged between 20-25 and only one of them was over 25.

4.2.2. Computer Ownership and Skills

The participants were asked whether they had a personal computer or laptop and whether their computer was with them in Kilis.

Table 4.1
Computer Ownership of the Participants

The results indicate that the majority of the participants (n. 29, 56,9%) do not have a personal computer or laptop. Out of the 22 computer owners, on the other hand, only half of them (n. 11) stated that their computers were with them in Kilis, which means there were 40 participants who do not have computers with them.

The participants were also asked about their computer skills, and the results show that (See Table 4.2) there were more participants with low computer skills (n. 26, 57,7%) at the beginning of the study.

Table 4.2
Computer Skills at the Beginning of the Study

When asked whether or not studying on the computer disturbed them, the majority of the participants (n. 30, 66,7%) stated that it did not. However, the rest of the population, which constituted a significant rate (n. 15, 33,3%), were somewhat uncomfortable with studying on the computer.

It should also be noted here that the English lesson was not the only course in which the participants used the computer. They had been having a basic computer

course since the beginning of the academic year, which is another compulsory course for undergraduate students at the university.

When asked whether they had used computer before coming to university, 11 out of 51 participants (21,6%) replied negatively, stating they had been using the computer for less than a year. Similarly, 14 participants (27,5%) indicated that they had not used the Internet before coming to university, stating that they had been using the Internet for less than a year. Moreover, 16 participants (31,4%) confessed that they had little experience of using computers and that they felt uncomfortable using it. These results reveal that though the majority of the participants had some experience in computers and the Internet, there were a significant number of students with no experience in these technologies.

The low computer skills and high level of discomfort rates led us to give induction courses for the purposes of preparing the participants for using the computers and Internet as well as the Moodle English course.

The fact that the majority of the participants had low computer skills according to the findings mentioned above might seem to constitute a hindrance for our study; however, when asked to compare their computer skills before and after the study was conducted, the participants indicated that, as they believed, there was a considerable increase in their computer skills (See Table 4.3 and 4.4).

Table 4.3

Computer Skills before the Study

Table 4.4

Computer Skills after the Study

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 reflect that the vast majority of the participants gained proficiency throughout the course (See Figure 4.1).

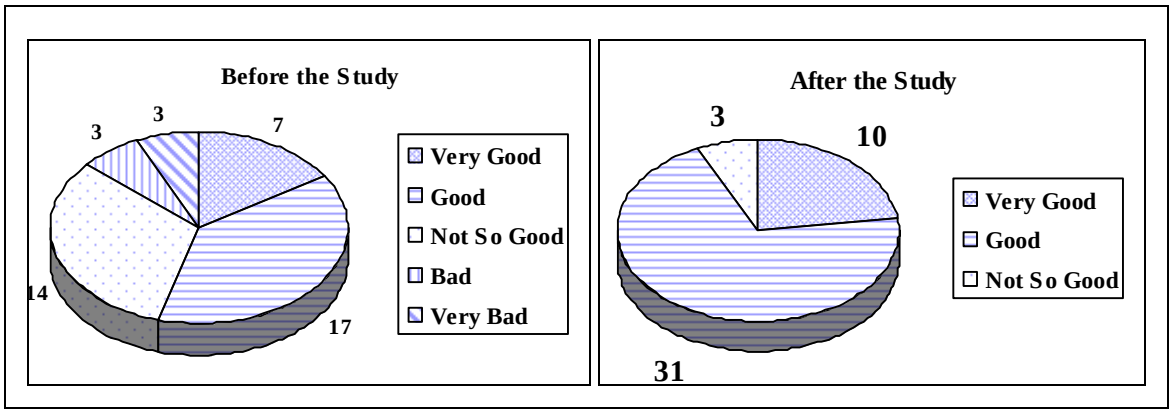


*Figure 4.1.*Computer skills before and after the study

These results are in line with the findings of Yang and Lin (2010) in that participants can gain proficiency in time and that their initial lack of proficiency does not necessarily have a negative effect on such studies.

4.2.3. Internet Access, Use and VLE Experience

As for the Internet access, the majority of the participants (n. 40, 78,4%) do not have an Internet connection in the places they stay at. University and internet cafés are the only places to go online for 19 participants (38%). However, 30 participants (61,2%) indicate that it is not a problem to find a place to go online.

The participants were also asked about their frequency of Internet use, and the results are given in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Frequency of Internet Use before the Study

Although ‘never’ was not the option for any of the participants, the majority of them (n. 32, 62,8%) chose ‘sometimes’ and ‘rarely’ while those who said ‘always’ and ‘usually’ had a rate of 37,2% (n. 19), which shows that the Internet was used less than ‘usually’ by the majority of the participants.

As for the previous VLE experience, only nine participants stated that they had taken a course through a virtual learning environment. The interview results indicate that the participants used a variety of software and web sites, but the aim of using was generally the same; preparation for the university entrance examination. In this respect, they had taken courses on mathematics and geometry; however, some participants indicated that they had received web design and music courses online as well.

4.2.4. Motivation for and Usefulness of Learning English through the Internet

In order to check their willingness and motivation to use this technology to learn English, the participants were also asked whether they were interested in the concept of learning English using the Internet.

Table 4.6

Interest in Learning English through the Internet

The results reflect that the majority of the participants (n. 33, 64,7%) were interested in learning English through the Internet, although there were 11 participants (21,5%) who were uninterested, and seven (13,7%) who were undecided.

Another question in the scale was whether the participants thought English education through the Internet would be useful.

Table 4.7
Usefulness of English Education through the Internet in Students' Opinions

It should be noted that the results were obtained before the study started, and they indicate that the majority of the participants (n. 35, 68,6%) thought that English education through the Internet would be useful. The participants were asked the same question after the study was completed; the results are presented in the next section (See Table 4.9).

4.3. Findings from the Questionnaires

At the end of the study, two questionnaires were administered in order to investigate the effectiveness of the English education in both contexts, namely f2f and Moodle, and the effectiveness of the social constructivist tools in the VLE. Due to the absenteeism, the number of the participants in both questionnaires is 44.

4.3.1. The First Questionnaire

The first questionnaire focused on the effectiveness of the English education in the f2f and VLE courses. It also aimed to compare the language skills dealt with in the two contexts with a specific reference to speaking skill.

The participants were also asked to compare the advantages, level of anxiety, motivation and autonomy in these two contexts, and to state their preferences for the

course design (f2f, VLE, or the blended course design). Finally, perceived easiness to learn and to use Moodle was questioned in this questionnaire.

4.3.2. Effectiveness of the f2f and VLE Courses

As seen in Table 4.8, although 59,1% of the participants (n. 26) agreed that the f2f courses are effective for learning English, there was an 18,2% (n. 8) who disagreed with its effectiveness and 22,7% (n. 10) who were undecided.

Table 4.8
Effectiveness of the f2f Courses

When it came to the effectiveness of the VLE courses, there were higher rates for its effectiveness (See Table 4.9); 86,4% of the participants (n. 38) found the VLE courses effective while only 9,1% (n. 4) thought that these courses were not effective and 4,5% (n. 2) remained undecided.

Table 4.9
Effectiveness of the VLE Courses

When we compare the participants' perceptions of effectiveness questioned before the study started (See Table 4.7) with their perceptions at the end of the study (See Table 4.9), we can see that there is an increase in the perceptions of effectiveness. Before the study started, 68,6% of the participants thought the online courses would be useful for learning English; at the end, 86,4% found the application effective.

When we return to the comparison of effectiveness of f2f and VLE courses, Figure 4.2 illustrates this comparison giving the number of the participants.

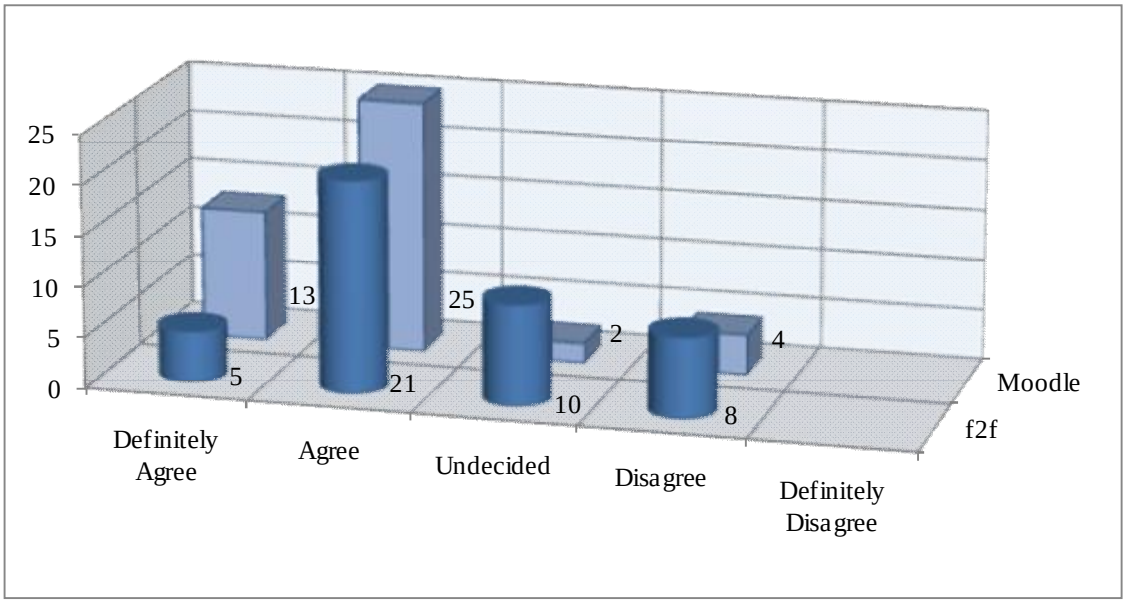


Figure 4.2. Comparison of effectiveness of English courses in both contexts

When asked whether they thought the online courses were useful for language learning, a significant number of students (n. 38, 86,4%) found them useful whereas there were only two undecided (4,5%) and four disagreeing (9,1%) participants.

In order to further investigate the effectiveness, if any, of the either context, the participants were asked different questions in the questionnaire, the results of which are analysed in section 4.3.3. In addition, the participants were interviewed on the effectiveness of these two contexts a week after the administration of the questionnaires. The findings of the interviews will be dealt with in section 4.5.

4.3.3. Comparison of the Effectiveness in the Two Contexts

There are various reasons for the high effectiveness rates of the Moodle courses. For example, 63% of the participants think that the Moodle courses had more advantages, such as reviewing and practising as much as one needs. Reaching the course outside the classroom, which is regarded as another advantage, is considered as useful by 95,4% of the participants.

Motivation is another factor in the effectiveness of this context; 84,1% stated that the Moodle courses increased their motivation while 15,9% remained undecided.

Another noteworthy finding is that there were no any responses opposing the increase in motivation with the Moodle courses.

One of the reasons for this high rate is the varying level of anxiety in the two contexts. When asked whether they were anxious while speaking in the f2f context, 38,6% said ‘yes’ whereas according to 43,2% of the participants the answer was ‘sometimes’ and 18,2% responded ‘no’ to this question. The rates of the anxiety level in the Moodle speaking activities, on the other hand, is as follows; 20,5% ‘yes’, 45,5% ‘sometimes’, and 34,1% ‘no’.

The rates above indicate that the level of anxiety is lower in the Moodle courses. There were also two open-ended items in the questionnaire investigating the reason of anxiety, if any, in the two contexts.

Table 4.10

Reasons for Anxiety in the f2f Courses

n		
	Shyness	6
	Fear of making mistakes and thus being embarrassed	4
	Not knowing adequate knowledge in English	3
	Excitement	2
	Difficulty in expressing oneself in English	1
	Not knowing the pronunciation of words	1
Total		17

The major reasons the participants provided for the anxiety in f2f courses are shyness and a fear of losing face; they worried that they would be laughed at by their peers if they said something wrong, be it a pronunciation or vocabulary error or the like. The feeling is evident in one of the participant’s words:

Extract1:

“60 people are listening to you. It is not a good thing!”

The other explanations appear to be related to these concerns.

Table 4.11

Reasons for Anxiety in the Moodle Courses

n		
	Not having adequate knowledge in English	3
	Not knowing what to do	3
	Fear of having low grades	2
	Fear of submitting homework later than deadlines	2
	Low level of computer skills	2
	Not knowing the pronunciation of words	1
	Difficulty of pronouncing some words	1
	Not noticing whether having learned or not	1
	Not being able to speak well	1
	Fear of not being able to do what is expected	1
Total		17

As for the anxiety in the Moodle courses, 'not having adequate knowledge in English', which can also be found among the anxiety reasons in the f2f courses, was among the most frequently cited explanations. As discussed in the interviews, 'not knowing what they were supposed to do on Moodle' appears to have stemmed from the difficulty of some activities, lack of adequate English knowledge and lack of basic computer skills. Some of the other concerns seem to be related with doing homework and receiving grades as a result of their Moodle activities, which might, of course, be expected to raise anxiety among students. The other reasons reached at the end of the analysis appear to coincide with the reasons of anxiety in the f2f courses, such as not being able to speak well and problems with the pronunciation of words.

According to 79,5% of the participants, the Moodle courses improved their language learning experience, and 77,3% think that they learned more language skills in Moodle than they would have learned in f2f courses. There was more opportunity to speak in the Moodle courses according to 77,3%. Besides, 70,5% stated that through the online courses they gained self-confidence in using English. There were a considerable

number of participants (n. 37, 84.1%) who stated that the activities carried out in the online courses aimed at the English skills they needed in the real world.

The participants also indicated that they gained autonomy through the online courses. For example, according to 70,5% of the participants, the teacher's presence is not necessary if they have understood how the activities should be done. An even larger number of participants (84,1%) indicate that their ability to study by themselves improved via the online courses. When they were asked in which context (in the f2f courses, in the Moodle courses or in both) they were more active, 75% of the participants stated that they were more active in the Moodle courses (See Table 4.12).

Table 4.12

Activeness of the Students

Table 4.12 reflects that although there were students (n. 7) who were active in both contexts, the number of students more active in f2f classroom is only four while the majority (n. 33) claimed that they were more active in the Moodle courses.

Similarly, 77,3% argued that the Moodle courses were more student-centred, while 11,4% stated that f2f courses were more student-centred, and according to the other 11,4% both contexts were student-centred.

Finally, fun factor might have increased the effectiveness rate of the Moodle courses; there were more fun in the Moodle than in the f2f courses according to 75% of the participants. Likewise, the participants stating that they enjoyed the online learning program constituted the 70, 4% of the population.

4.3.4. Language Skills in Both Contexts

In the first questionnaire, the participants also compared the development, if any, of language skills in both contexts. The results are shown in Tables 4.13 and 4.14.

Table 4.13

Skills Development in the f2f Courses

	Improved		**Undecided**		**Not Improved**	
	F	***%***	***f***	***%***	***f***	***%***
Vocabulary	31	70,5	9	20,5	4	9,1
Structure	29	65,9	11	25	3	6,8
Writing	26	59,1	12	27,3	5	11,4
Listening	27	61,4	6	13,6	11	25
Reading	21	47,7	13	29,5	10	22,7
Speaking	15	34,1	11	25	18	40,9
Communication	18	40,9	12	27,3	14	31,8

According to the majority of the participants, all language skills and areas, except speaking, improved in the f2f courses. The online courses, however, have higher rates of improvement (See Table 4.14).

Table 4.14

Skills Development in the Moodle Courses

	Improved		**Undecided**		**Not Improved**	
	F	***%***	***f***	***%***	***f***	***%***
Vocabulary	39	88,6	3	6,8	2	4,5
Structure	22	50	17	38,6	4	9,1
Writing	34	77,3	4	9,1	2	4,5
Listening	34	77,3	8	18,2	2	4,5
Reading	39	88,6	2	4,5	2	4,5
Speaking	35	79,5	5	11,4	4	9,1
Communication	26	59,1	14	31,8	1	2,3

The majority of the participants stated that all the language skills and areas, with the exception of structure, improved far better via the Moodle courses than the f2f courses. The high rate of 'structure' in the f2f courses was also discussed with the interviewees, which will be further dealt with in section 4.5, and the most frequently cited reason was that they thought grammar was learnt better in the f2f courses.

It is also noteworthy that there were significant differences in the rates of reading and speaking; in the 2f2 courses, there was an improvement of 47,7% while the rate in the Moodle courses is nearly doubled, 88,6%. As for the speaking skill, there was an improvement of 34,1% in the f2f courses while the improvement rate in the Moodle courses was more than double 79,5%, which, considering all the language skills and areas, constitutes the highest difference rate between the two contexts.

Figure 4.3 illustrates the comparison of the effectiveness of the speaking activities in both contexts giving the number of the participants.

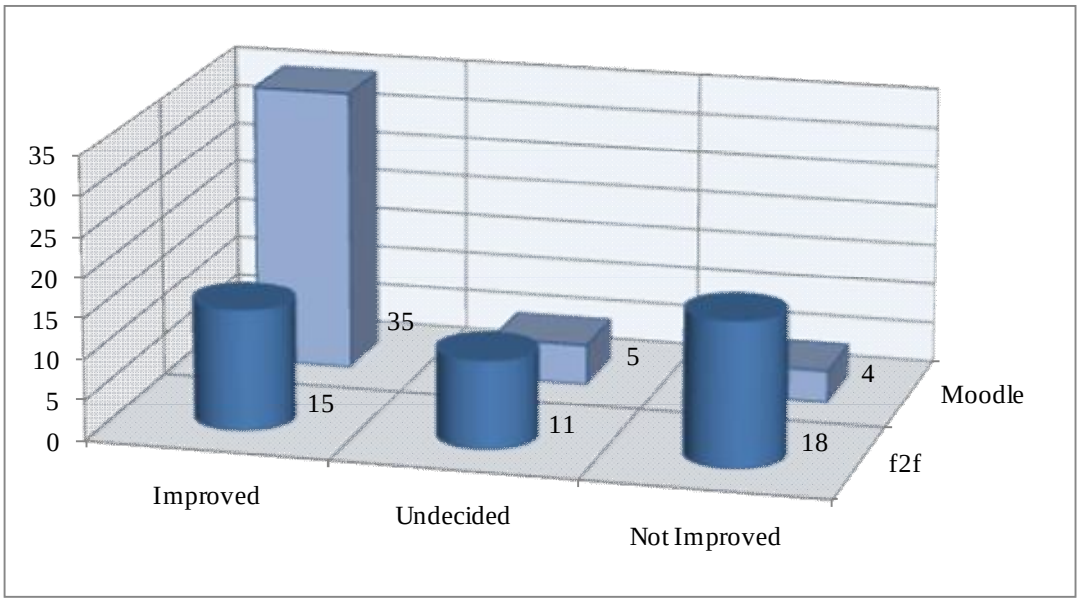


Figure 4.3. Comparison of effectiveness of speaking instruction in the two contexts

For the purposes of the study, effectiveness of the language skills instruction, especially that of speaking skill, was questioned in detail in the interviews. The results will be discussed in detail in section 4.5, which deals with the interviews.

4.3.5. Blended Course Design

Although the VLE has higher rates when compared to f2f courses, when the participants were asked to choose between three different modalities, namely having f2f courses only, having Moodle courses only, or integrating f2f courses with Moodle, the majority of the participants (81,8%) were in favour of integrating VLE with f2f courses, rather than having English courses in either of these contexts only.

Table 4.15

Preferences for the Course Design

When asked whether or not integrating Moodle with f2f education, 79,5% of the participants were in favour of such integration.

There was an open-ended question following the modality question above, asking the participants to explain the reason of their preference.

Table 4.16

Reasons for the Preference of Blended Learning

n		
	Integrating the theoretical aspect of the f2f courses with the practical aspect of Moodle	10
	Opportunity to revise what is learned in the f2f courses	3
	Reducing embarrassment	4
	Effectiveness	3
	Permanent Knowledge	2
Total		22

As Table 4.16 shows, the majority of the participants enjoyed the practicality of blended course design. Besides, blending seems to provide opportunities for revision and to reduce embarrassment. Three participants noted that blended learning was

effective and two other participants stated that through blended course design they gain permanent knowledge.

4.3.6. Easiness to Learn and to Use Moodle

Moodle is regarded as easy to learn by the majority of the participants (n. 31, 72,1%) and easy to use by 72,1% (n. 31) as well, and yet there were three undecided participants, along with nine who disagreed that it was easy to use and to learn.

4.4. The Second Questionnaire

In the second questionnaire, which was distributed to the participants an hour after the first questionnaire, the participants were asked to compare their computer skills regarding before and after the study was conducted. Computer access, frequency of using Moodle, and being comfortable with using Moodle were among other questions.

The main focus of the second questionnaire, however, was on communicative, interactive and collaborative aspects of the VLE. More specifically, we tried to investigate the efficiency of the social constructivist tools within Moodle such as forums, blogs, wikis, e-portfolios and audio-chat.

In addition, the rate of noticing mistakes and remembering language related information, functions of feedback, and preferred kind documents (online or hard-copy) are among the other subjects asked to the participants in the second questionnaire.

Finally, there was an open-ended question which invited the participants to offer any suggestions for the improvement of Moodle application.

4.4.1. Computer Access and Skills

The opportunity to access computers was questioned, and it seems that the majority of the students (59,1%) do not have a regular access except when they were at university.

Although the participants' previous and present computer skills were compared in section 4.2.2 above, it may be useful to reiterate the increase in the computer skills throughout the study, as this finding, along with the low rate of direct access to the

computer, appears to help overcome any possible prejudices against applying and studying CALL with a group of students with these characteristics.

4.4.2. Frequency of and Being Comfortable with Using Moodle

Although the participants had one hour of Moodle course each week, the frequency of Moodle use reflects that 9,1% of the participants (n. 4) used it about once a day and that 38,6% (n. 17) used 2-3 times a week. On the other hand, there was 38,6% (n. 17) who used it about once a week, and 13,6% (n. 6) with a frequency of using Moodle less than once a week.

These findings indicate that a total of 21 participants (47,7%) used Moodle in addition to the regular Moodle course hours at the university laboratory; however, frequency of Moodle use was almost restricted to a weekly basis for an undeniable number of participants (n. 17, 38,6%), and for the rest (n. 6, 13,6%) the frequency was even less than once a week.

Another item in the questionnaire was about whether the participants felt comfortable using Moodle on their own. The majority of the participants (n. 36, 81,8%) agreed that they did, and yet there were five undecided participants (11,4%) and three more (6,8%) who disagreed with being comfortable using Moodle by themselves.

4.4.3. Effectiveness of the Social Constructivist Tools in Moodle

As for communicative, collaborative and interactive aspects of Moodle, the participants were firstly asked whether or not there were more opportunities for collaboration and interaction in Moodle than in the f2f courses. There were only six undecided and three disagreeing participants whereas the majority of the participants (n. 35, 79,6%) responded in the affirmative.

Another question was on whether they sent messages/e-mails to their peers and teacher through Moodle and whether they found this application useful. The results indicate that 70% of the participants sent messages/e-mails, and 96,7% of the senders found this application useful.

The usefulness of the social constructivist tools such as forums, blogs, wikis, e-portfolio and audio-chat was investigated in different questionnaire items. Following tables reflect whether or not the participants thought these tools were useful.

Table 4.17
Usefulness of Forums

The forum module, as stated in Chapter 3, was not used to have discussion sessions in the target language; rather, the aim here was to ask and answer task related questions and to solve technical problems using the first language, and to make announcements. As seen in Table 4.17, this application was found useful by all the participants except one.

Table 4.18
Usefulness of the Blogs

Apart from five undecided participants, all the students (n. 39, 88,6%) found the blog application useful. Interestingly, there were no responses to the contrary.

Table 4.19
Usefulness of the Wikis

The wikis are found useful by a greater number of participants (n. 42, 95,5%). There were only two undecided students. Again, there were no opposing views.

Table 4.20
Usefulness of the E-Portfolio

The e-portfolio application, too, has a significant usefulness rate. There being only two undecided and no opposing participants, 41students (95,3%) think that the application was useful.

Table 4.21
Usefulness of the Audio-Chat

Due to the technical problems encountered, the number of participants using the audio-chat application was smaller. However, there being no opposing responses, this application has a high usefulness rate as well (n. 25, 89,3%).

The participants were also asked to rank these tools from the most favourite (1) to the least favourite (5). The results indicate that the e-portfolio application, chosen by 12 participants, can be regarded as the most favourite tool. Following the e-portfolio, the wiki application was the most favourite tool for 10 participants. Next comes the audio-chat application with 8 participants. Finally, the blog and forum were the most favourite application for 6 participants each.

In the questionnaire, there were some other items questioning the usefulness of these social constructivist tools. For example, the participants were asked whether the collaborative tools in Moodle were useful for learning English. There were 42 affirmative responses and only 2 undecided participants.

In addition, the participants were asked whether or not these collaborative tools were useful for the improvement of speaking skill (See Table 4.22).

Table 4.22

Improvement of Speaking Skill

The results indicate that 40 participants regard these tools as useful for the improvement of speaking skill, along with only three undecided and one disagreeing students. When asked whether these tools were useful for communication, all the participants, with no exception, agreed that they were.

In order to find out more on the effectiveness of the social constructivist tools, the participants were asked in which context (f2f, Moodle or both) they had more opportunity learn from their own work, from their peer's work, from their peers and from their teacher. The results are shown in the following tables.

Table 4.23

Learning from Personal Work

Table 4.23 shows that the majority of the participants (n. 24, 54,5%) think they learnt more from their own work through Moodle. However, there are an important number of participants (n. 14, 31,8%) believing that they had equal opportunity to learn

from their own work in both contexts, and still six participants (13,6%) believe that the f2f courses provided them with better learning opportunities.

Table 4.24

Learning from the Others' Work

When it comes to learning from the others' work (See Table 4.24), Moodle has an overwhelming superiority (n.32, 72,7%).

As seen in Table 4.25, a similar high rate of Moodle can be seen in learning from peers.

Table 4.25

Learning from the Peers

Learning from the teacher, on the other hand, might be expected to be higher in the f2f context; however, there does not seem to be statistically significant difference between the rates of learning opportunities from the teacher in the either context (Table 4.26).

Table 4.26

Learning from the Teacher

As seen in the analyses above, the majority of the participants found the collaborative tools effective for learning English; however, we received interesting results when we asked the participants to compare their feeling comfortable doing two types of activities; the ones involving individual study and the ones involving collaborative study.

When asked whether or not they were more comfortable with the activities involving individual study 29 participants (85,3%) responded affirmatively, there being only three undecided (8,8) and two disagreeing participants (5,9%).

Another interesting finding was that when asked whether or not they felt more comfortable with the activities that require cooperation with others, we have only 10 agreeing participants (29,4%) along with 21 undecided (61,8%) and 3 disagreeing ones (8,8%).

A common explanation obtained from the interviews was that the presence and contribution of others might have both positive and negative effects on learning English. When writing a collaborative text on a wiki, for example, a student might feel upset when his/her work has been edited in a wrong way or deleted by someone else in the group. Disproportionate number of postings of the group members is yet another example; that is, a student can add 10 posting about a subject at a time whereas the others may not be able to find anything to contribute further. Although there may be opportunities to learn from others in these occasions, such an intrusion may cause a sense of discomfort among the students. When it comes to the individual activities, on the other hand, a student has the freedom of producing on his/her own and, as a result, receives individual feedback from the others, which leads to a greater comfort.

Having said this though, the learning from and contribution of others cannot be underestimated, because among the questionnaire items was whether or not the presence of the other students in the online courses contributed to learning English. The findings reflect that 29 participants (66,3%) agreed with such a contribution, and yet there are seven undecided (16,3%) and seven disagreeing participants (16,3%).

As a result, it may not be unreasonable to state that although the level of being comfortable varies according to collaborative and individual activities, collaborative activities have significant effects on language learning in the participants' opinions.

In section 4.5, these findings are discussed in further detail.

4.4.4. Noticing and Remembering Language

Among the items of the second questionnaire was the rate of noticing mistakes. The participants were asked to state whether or not the Moodle courses helped them more to notice the mistakes they had done when compared to the f2f courses. The results show that the majority of the participants (n. 38, 86,4%) responded affirmatively, and yet there were five undecided (11,4%) and one disagreeing participants (2,3%).

Another question was whether or not they retained the information which they had gained in the Moodle courses better than the information they had learned in the f2f courses. There being nine undecided (20,5%) and one disagreeing participants (2,3%), the majority of the participants (n. 34, 77,3%) replied to this question affirmatively, suggesting that the knowledge learned in the Moodle courses are more permanent.

4.4.5. Other Concerns

The frequency and function of feedback were among the other questions. The majority of the participants (n. 33, 75%) stated that they received more feedback on the activities they had done in the Moodle courses, while there were five participants (11,4%) referring to the f2f courses, and six participants (13,6%) stated that they received feedback equally in both contexts.

When asked on the function of the feedback, the majority of the participants (n. 34, 81,4%) agreed that receiving feedback contributed positively to their self-confidence whereas there were eight participants (18,6%) opposing this view.

Another item of the questionnaire was on the participants' preferred sort of documents (online or hard-copy), the majority of them (84,8%) indicated that studying with online documents was useful; however, 15,2% preferred hard copy of the documents.

The final item of the questionnaire was an open-ended question asking the participants to offer any suggestion for the development of the Moodle English courses. The participants suggested

- Special induction courses, both for basic computer skills and Moodle itself, be given to students,
- There be special computer laboratories for Moodle courses,
- There be better functioning communication programs, such as audio-chat program,
- and Moodle be used in other courses as well.

4.5. The Interviews

After the analysis of the questionnaires, 15 volunteering students were interviewed in three groups. Designed in line with the research questions and according to the findings obtained from the questionnaires, the interview questions focused on

- effectiveness of the language education and development of speaking skill in the f2f courses,
- effectiveness of the language education and development of speaking skill in the Moodle courses,
- effectiveness of the interactive and collaborative tools such as wikis, blogs, and e-portfolio in Moodle,
- comparison of the feeling of comfort in collaborative and individual activities,
- role of computer literacy in studying with Moodle,
- and opinions on having the exams on Moodle.

The content analyses of the interviews are presented in the following sections.

4.5.1. Effectiveness of the f2f Courses

The first question of the interview was whether or not the f2f courses were effective. The results indicate that the f2f courses were not regarded as effective by the majority of the participants (See Table 4.27).

Table 4.27

Effectiveness of the f2f Courses

n		
	Effective	6
	Not effective	9
Total		15

The participants were asked in what ways the f2f courses were effective and in what ways they were not. The results of this question are as follows:

Table 4.28

Reasons for the Effectiveness of the f2f Courses

n		
	Better grammar education	4
	Lack of English background	1
	Importance of the teacher's presence	1
Total		6

As seen in Table 4.28, the most significant emerging factor for the effectiveness of the f2f courses is grammar education. Four participants stated that the theoretical aspects of the courses are learned better in the f2f courses.

Another participant explained the reason of effectiveness as follows:

Extract2:

"Face-to-face courses were effective because for a person who has no English background ... English and Moodle together will be hard."

Finally, a participant stated that when the teacher was around the students focused more on the lesson; however, this explanation was rejected by another participant as follows:

Extract3:

"I think Moodle was better in this respect because while you are teaching in the classroom everybody can deal with something else, but in Moodle everyone is studying, or at least learning from his/her friend."

The following table reflects the emerging patterns for the ineffectiveness of the f2f courses.

Table 4.29

Reasons for the Ineffectiveness of the f2f Courses

n		
	Low motivation	3
	Being less active	2
Total		5

One interviewee explained the low motivation in the f2f courses as follows:

Extract4:

"What happens in the classrooms happens and stays there. Moodle is more permanent."

Another interviewee pointed out the reason for being less active as in the following excerpt:

Extract5:

"It is impossible for everyone to involve in the course actively."

4.5.2. Effectiveness of the Speaking Instruction in the f2f Courses

The participants were asked about the effectiveness of the development of speaking skills in the f2f courses. The majority of the participants stated that they were ineffective. Table 4.30 reflects the reasons given for the ineffectiveness:

Table 4.30

Reasons for the Ineffectiveness of Speaking Instruction in the f2f Courses

n		
	Fear of making mistakes and embarrassment	7
	Difficulty of speaking in a large class in a limited time	3
	Not giving importance	3
Total		13

The most significant emerging factor is the anxiety of making of making mistakes and thus being embarrassed. One participant stated her idea as follows:

Extract6:

"Everybody laughs at your tiniest mistake, so you become nervous automatically."

According to three participants, the limited class hour and the large class played an important role in the lack of development of the speaking skill in the f2f courses. One participant explained the situation as follows:

Extract7:

"Within 40-45 minutes, in a 60-student class ... it is difficult for everyone to actively participate in the lesson."

When they were reminded of the speaking activities involving pair and group work, one participant pointed out his ideas as in the following excerpt:

Extract8:

"We were speaking, but we were not giving importance."

4.5.3. Effectiveness of the Moodle Courses

The interview results for the Moodle courses reflect the positive opinions obtained from the questionnaires. All the interviewees agreed with the effectiveness of the Moodle courses. The reasons vary:

Table 4.31

Reasons for the Effectiveness of the Moodle Courses

n		
	Being more active	3
	Correcting errors	3
	Practical aspect	2
	Comfort	2
	Receiving help from the others	2
	Accessing the teacher without the boundaries of time and place	2
	Receiving better feedback	1
	Permanent knowledge	1
	Giving more importance	1
Total		17

As seen in Table 4.31, being more active during the online courses was counted among the reasons of effectiveness by three participants. Being able to correct the errors any time was regarded as another positive factor by three participants. Two participants pointed out the importance of putting the theory into practice with Moodle.

Comfort is another factor increasing the effectiveness of the Moodle courses. A participant pointed out his being comfortable as follows:

Extract9:

"If we don't understand something during the lesson, we may abstain from asking about it because of being shy. But Moodle was different. We could overcome this in Moodle."

Being able to get help from others was emphasized by two participants. One of them stated his idea as follows:

Extract10:

"If you can't do (it)*, you can get help from someone else."*

Reaching the teacher whenever needed, receiving better feedback, giving importance to the online activities, and having permanent knowledge through the activities in Moodle were counted among other factors contributing to the effectiveness of the Moodle courses.

Finally, giving importance to the online activities was another factor contributing to the effectiveness of Moodle. One participant indicated his idea as follows:

Extract11:

"We give more importance to both what we do and what others do in Moodle."

4.5.4. Effectiveness of the Speaking Instruction in the Moodle Courses

All the interviewees agreed that the Moodle courses were effective for the development of speaking skill. When asked about the reasons of their effectiveness, the following patterns emerged:

Table 4.32

Reasons for the Effectiveness of Speaking Instruction in Moodle

n		
	Comfort	4
	Voice recording and listening	3
	Receiving feedback	2
	Correcting mistakes	2
	More opportunity to speak	2
Total		13

The most significant finding from the interviews is that the participants felt more comfortable in the Moodle courses and also less excited to speak. A participant, who helped one of his friends to correct his mistake in the pronunciation of a word, clarified the importance of being comfortable in Moodle as follows:

Extract12:

"If he had made that mistake in the classroom, everyone would have burst into laughter."

Three interviewees noted the practicality of recording and listening to their voices as many times as they liked. According to two interviewees, receiving feedback on their work and being able to correct their mistakes any time were among the positive aspects of speaking in Moodle. There were more opportunities to speak in Moodle according to two interviewees.

4.5.5. Effectiveness of the Social Constructivist Tools in Moodle

The interviewees were asked about the effectiveness of the interactive and collaborative tools such as wikis, blogs, and e-portfolio in Moodle.

4.5.6. Wikis

The questionnaire results indicated that wikis are regarded as useful, besides it is one of the most favourite tools in Moodle. However, the interviews reflect that it is a tool around which there is some controversy. Although the application was regarded as useful in general, there are some points about wikis which bother some interviewees.

Table 4.33

Wikis

n		Like	Dislike
	Group work	2	3
	Errors being corrected	4	1
	Viewing the history	3	
	Competition	2	
Total		8	4

Group work is the core feature of wikis, and yet it seems to be the least favourite aspect. One of the interviewees explained his dislike as follows:

Extract13:

"It would be better if it were (an) *individual* (study). *Because someone in the group says what you were going to say, so there is noting left for you to say."*

Another interviewee's ideas support the above views:

Extract14:

"You notice that someone in the group has written 10 sentences ... You can't find anything else to say."

Therefore, it seems probable that disproportional posting rates in wikis raise anxiety among some of the interviewees, and they stated that they would rather do this activity individually than in a group.

The interviewees generally liked their errors being corrected by the other members of the group, and yet an interviewee stated that she was annoyed when her error was corrected by someone else.

The interviewees enjoyed the viewing the history function of wikis, which allowed the users to view the history of the final work and to see the contributors and their contribution.

It was stated that there is a sense of competition among the group members, and the interviewees regarded it as an encouraging factor. An interviewee's words reflect this encouragement:

Extract15:

"It is better when there is competition. You work harder, thinking 'I should pass him/her'."

4.5.7. Blogs

The blog is a controversial application as well. In general, the interviewees found the application useful. Table 4.34 displays the results reached.

Table 4.34

Blogs

n		Like	Dislike
	Learning from others	5	1
	Viewing other's work	4	2
Total		9	3

One of the interviewees stated the advantages of the blogs as follows:

Extract16:

"You can learn the aspects (of a subject) which you didn't think of from others. You learn from him/her, and he/she learns from you."

There are some objections to this opinion, arguing that viewing other's work might lead to 'copy and paste', that is, imitating someone else's work without any effort or understanding. However, the general inclination was that although 'copy and paste' might be the case for some students, the pieces of work done in blogs were generally synthesis of the works of the composing student and other students rather than pure imitations.

4.5.8. E-portfolio

The e-portfolio application was the most favourite tool according to the questionnaire results. The interview findings explain its high rates. Table 4.35 reflects the emerging patterns from the interviews.

Table 4.35

E-Portfolio

n		
	Enjoyable	5
	Restricted sharing	5
	Observing development	4
	Feedback	3
	Technical problems	2
	Difficult	1
Total		17

Five interviewees indicated that they enjoyed the e-portfolio application. Although the participants were invited to share their portfolios with their peers, only a small number of them did this. The interviewees quoted two explanations for this restricted sharing. The first was that they felt ashamed of letting the others see their mistakes. The second explanation was that the information they gave on the e-portfolios was personal and private.

Four participants stated that they observed developments in their English levels, which is one of the major purposes of the portfolio application. An interviewee commented on her English background as follows:

Extract17:

"My level was so low. I saw that I improved."

Receiving feedback on the work they did was also admired by the interviewees. In this respect, several interviewees made some comments on the effectiveness of the application:

Extract18:

"I have in my mind all the sentences that I said in the portfolio."

Extract19:

"It was the combination of what we had covered since the beginning of the year."

It seems that the 'e' part of the portfolio caused some troubles for some of the participants. An interviewee noted the difficulty of the application, and the reason she gave was the technical problems she encountered while recording her voice.

4.5.9. Examinations on Moodle

The interviewees enjoyed having the examinations on Moodle for three basic reasons:

Table 4.36

Examinations on Moodle

n		
	Disadvantages of sit-down exam	5
	Motivation	5
	Advantages of Moodle Exams	5
Total		15

On the disadvantages of sit-down examinations, an interviewee stated that:

Extract20:

"If it had been a normal exam, we would have studied one day before the exam."

Another interviewee supported the above view, saying:

Extract21:

"We studied on Moodle whenever we wanted. We investigated. It was fun."

Another interviewee commented on the motivational aspect of having the exams on Moodle:

Extract22:

"Having the exams on Moodle increased the motivation of everyone. All of a sudden, we headed towards it."

Similarly, another interviewee commented on the first semesters' induction courses, where their work on Moodle was not evaluated:

Extract23:

"In the first semester, we thought 'Why did we use it if we weren't going to have an exam on it?'."

A final comment on the online exams was related to receiving feedback:

Extract24:

"In a normal exam ... it is very difficult to receive feedback from the teacher. But in Moodle, we can see our errors. ... we can receive feedback from the exam itself."

4.5.10. Effect of Computer Literacy

According to the majority of the interviewees not having good computer skills is not a disadvantage for using Moodle. They stated that Moodle could be used with basic computer skills.

Table 4.37

Computer Literacy

n		
	Skills got better in time	5
	Low skill is not a disadvantage	4
	Basic skills are enough	3
	Low skill is a disadvantage	1
Total		13

An interviewee with low-computer skill indicated her development in time as follows:

Extract25:

"My computer skill was not good, but it got better and Moodle was very enjoyable."

However, there was an opinion regarding the disadvantages of low computer skills as stated in the following excerpt:

Extract26:

“A person with low computer skills may be prejudiced against Moodle.”

Another interviewee commented on another effect of low computer skills as follows:

Extract27:

“At the beginning of the year, the class was separate from each other. Moodle had them mingle. They helped each other. It was not just a lesson.”

In this respect, having low computer skills appears to have some positive aspects, if not advantages.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions of the study, its implications for the field of ELT, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research and practice.

5.2. Conclusion

The main purpose of this study was to investigate possible effects of a virtual learning environment named Moodle on the effectiveness of the compulsory English course for non-English major university students with a specific reference to speaking skill. The study was also concerned with the effectiveness of social constructivist tools in the VLE in students' opinions. Thus, the study attempted to find out answers to the following research questions:

11. What are the students' views on the effectiveness of classroom-based compulsory service English classes at university level?
12. What are the students' views on the effectiveness of speaking instruction in the same context?
13. What are the students' views on the effectiveness of the compulsory service English classes through virtual learning environments?
14. What are the students' views on the effectiveness of speaking instruction in the same context?
15. Do the social constructivist tools of the VLE contribute to the improvement of speaking and interactional skills?

In this respect, three data collection tools were administered; a computer readiness scale, two questionnaires and an interview. In the following pages, the research questions will be discussed in line with the findings obtained from the data.

Research Question 1: What are the students' views on the effectiveness of classroom-based compulsory service English classes at university level?

The overall results of the questionnaires indicate that the majority of the participants find the classes effective. Besides, for an undeniable number of participants, classroom-based courses are necessary for learning the theoretical aspects of language such as grammar. The interview results indicate that foreign language courses without the presence and guidance of the teacher may be perceived as difficult especially by students who have no English background.

In spite of being effective according to the questionnaires, the f2f courses are found ineffective in the interviews by the majority of the participants (See Table 4.8). According to the interviews, some participants have lower level of motivation and are less active in the f2f courses, the factors which seem to lead to the ineffectiveness of the f2f courses (See Table 4.29).

Implications: In order to eliminate possible disadvantages of purely online language education such as a feeling of being lost or confused that may be encountered especially by low-level students, it may be more beneficial to create blended courses where students and the teacher will be able to interact with each other not only in the classroom environment but also in the online course. Such an environment, if designed well, can also eliminate the disadvantages of classroom-based courses such as low motivation and being less active, as is the case in our study. The teacher's presence, availability and guidance in online courses should not be neglected, because, as Brenton (2009) puts it, "The role of the teacher in e-learning is just as important to student learning as it is in the seminar room or lecture hall." (p. 97).

Research Question 2: What are the students' views on the effectiveness of speaking instruction in the same context?

Speaking skill, according to the questionnaire results, is the least developed skill in the f2f courses (See Table 4.13). The results obtained from the interviews support this finding (See Table 4.29). Fear of making mistakes and thus losing face, not having adequate knowledge in English, difficulty in expressing oneself in English, excitement, difficulty of speaking in a large class in a limited time, problems related with pronunciation and not giving importance are the reasons provided for the ineffectiveness of speaking education in the f2f courses.

Implications: Speaking activities involving the participation of whole class may restrain some students from speaking due to the reasons specified above. On the other hand, speaking activities with pairs and groups, by definition, can be more advantageous and comforting. However, the fact that students may not give enough

importance to speaking activities and thus have low retention rate of the skill acquired through the speaking activities can hinder the development of speaking skill. In order not to restrict these pieces of knowledge and skills within the limit of classroom and class hours, it can be advisable to create atmospheres where students will feel not only comfortable but also eager to talk. The VLE seems to be a promising atmosphere to serve this purpose.

Research Question 3: What are the students' views on the effectiveness of the compulsory service English classes through virtual learning environments?

Due to the various advantages cited in the questionnaires and interview, English learning through the VLE is regarded as more effective than the classroom-based education (See Table 4.8 and 4.9, also Figure 4.2). Higher motivation, reaching the course anytime/anywhere, comfort and lower level of anxiety, gaining autonomy, being more active in a student-centred environment, receiving help from others, receiving better feedback, giving more importance to online activities, gaining permanent knowledge and having fun are some of the reasons provided for the effectiveness of the online courses (See section 4.3.3).

The online courses are not without risks, however (See Table 4.11). Not having adequate knowledge in English and low level of computer skills, for example, are among some of the factors causing anxiety among the participants. Not knowing what to do, not noticing whether having learned or not, the deadlines of activities, and the exams are also regarded as anxiety factors in the VLE.

Implications: The above findings are almost likely to necessitate the blending of such technologies into classroom-based compulsory English courses in higher education. Research indicates that ELT in Turkey is a problematic area, if not a failure in general (Çakır, 2007; Öztürk & Tılfarlıoğlu, 2007), and there are several reasons for this failure:

- lack of motivation,
- the use of traditional methods,
- insufficient lesson hours,
- lack of supporting materials,
- over-crowded classes,
- lack of chance to apply the language knowledge outside the classroom,
- being in mixed ability classes,

- transmission-based educational culture,
- and absenteeism (Ayhan, 1999; Çakır, 2007; Kırkgöz, 2008; Yıldız, 2006).

As can be seen in the above findings and previous chapters, the VLE appears to be a useful remedy for most of the problems cited in the previous studies. Therefore, it is highly recommended to integrate some sort of VLE into classroom-based compulsory foreign language education in higher education institutes. In this respect, designing online courses and activities in line with pedagogical principles of language learning and teaching is of utmost importance.

The teacher, as Brown (2002) suggests, must be aware of the profile of the users. There can be students with good computer skills but without any English background and those with good English but without computer skills. Induction courses which aim at both basic computer and web skills along with basic English knowledge with plenty of practice in both should be held from the beginning of the academic year.

Another point to be considered while creating online courses is the language of the web site and instructions. The difficulty of understanding and doing the online activities may lead to not knowing what to do. During the first weeks of the induction courses in this study, the language of both the Moodle web site and the instructions for the online activities was English, which caused problems of understanding for the majority of the participants. Therefore, the language was switched to Turkish. It is advisable to adjust the language to Turkish at the beginning of the online course.

An important factor that should be taken into account is the traditional educational background of some students. Research indicates that students feel secure when they are directly instructed by the teacher (Hong, Lai and Holton, 2003). Students coming from such backgrounds may be more dependent on the teacher and less autonomous to carry out studies individually, as a result of which some students may feel worried about whether they have learned or not in the online courses. Classroom-based courses may be more important for such students. However, they can be provided with feedback and scaffolding through pair and group work activities both in classroom-based and online courses, which may lead to being autonomous in time. This is one of the reasons for our suggesting blended course design rather than purely online courses.

Assessment in VLEs is of crucial significance. If there is no room for assessment in a VLE, it likely that motivation of students will decrease, and thus students may question the necessity of having online courses although they may see the

benefits of the application. On the other hand, if assessment is to be carried out through the VLE, it is likely to cause anxiety among students. Along with anxiety, however, online examinations can also increase students' motivation to study. After all, a healthy amount of anxiety may be necessary for language learning. Moreover, VLEs allow for peer assessment, which may increase the level of anxiety for some students. Even more importantly, most VLEs allow for both traditional and alternative assessment methods; in other words, a university teacher can hold summative end-of-unit tests as well as mid-term and final examinations on the VLE, fostering the extrinsic motivation of the students; besides, he/she can also utilize continuous long-term formative assessment methods which are oriented to process of language learning rather than the final product of the students, which fosters intrinsic motivation (Brown, 2004). Therefore, teachers are recommended to include both methods of assessment in their application of online courses.

The last but not the least, from the perspective of the teacher of the online course, it may be useful to share some personal experiences about the difficulties that a teacher can encounter during the online courses:

- Initial reluctance of students: if students are going to use the online learning platform for the first time, there may be some initial reactions towards it. This period should be accompanied with induction courses and patience from both the teacher and students.
- Technical difficulties: It is highly recommended for the teacher to receive help from an information technologies (IT) expert from his/her institution during the first phases of the application, especially before/during/after the installation of the software and first weeks of the application. Although it may be easy to learn and use Moodle and there may be thousands of Moodlers to give support on the internet, every teacher may not be a technology *savvy* to make the most of these opportunities. For example, the teacher might want to be in contact with the IT personnel of the institution before the installation as the software will be uploaded to and installed on the web server of the institution, besides, there may be some add-on modules to be installed later, not to mention some technological glitches that can occur while using the online course.

  Moreover, Moodle offers a lot to language learners and teachers even if it is used "as is", as Robb (2004) puts it; however, teachers may enjoy the

functionality of add-on modules and plug-ins, in which case the role of the IT personnel may gain more importance.

- The teacher and students' new roles: Online courses do not decrease the teacher's work, as Adair-Hauck, Willingham-McLain, and Youngs (1999) indicate, "Instead, his/her energies are channelled in different directions such as evaluating, choosing, designing, adapting software, serving as consultant to students, assuring that the overall course learning objectives are being met, and that the course is an integrated whole." (p. 293).

  We can note the long login time of the teacher in this respect. When compared to student, the teacher can spend more time on the VLE, preparing activities, interacting with students, giving feedback, evaluating and the like. However, these new roles of the teacher place students in the centre of the learning process, which was traditionally occupied by the teacher. So students also have some new roles "as they gain the freedom to work when and where they choose but also face the responsibility of doing considerably more work outside of class" (Adair-Hauck, Willingham-McLain, & Youngs, 1999, p. 293).

  We should also note that the VLE does not necessarily increase the workload of the teacher. For example, having summative assessment on the VLE can reduce the workload of the teacher to some extent. Another workload reducing functionality is being able to transfer the contents of a course (for example tasks and quizzes, etc.) to another course with a few mouse clicks.

Research Question 4: What are the students' views on the effectiveness of speaking instruction in the same context?

There is a significant difference in the rates of the development of speaking skill between the f2f courses and online courses (See Tables 4.13 and 4.14) both in the questionnaires and interview. According to the questionnaires, the improvement rate of speaking skill in the online courses was more than twice as big as the improvement in the f2f courses; in other words, the participants find the online courses far more effective in terms of speaking skill than classroom-based courses. With the exception of grammar, we can observe the superiority of online courses in the development of other language skills and areas such as reading, writing, listening, and communication (See Tables 4.13 and 4.14). The high rates can be attributed to the level of comfort, more

opportunity to speak, receiving feedback, being able to correct mistakes, and the functions of voice recording and listening (Table 4.32).

Implications: Students seem to have a more comfortable atmosphere in the VLE in this study. When we add the advantages of being more active and having more opportunity to speak in this context, along with the functions of recording their voices repeatedly until they have felt comfortable with them and receiving feedback on them not only from the teacher but also from their peers and thus being able to correct their mistakes, the VLE seems to be one of the most viable options available to improve basic speaking skills of students in compulsory English courses at university level. Language teachers and learners are recommended to make use of these functionalities. Pedagogical aspect of language teaching and learning, of course, should be taken into account while designing speaking activities not only in classroom-based but also online courses.

Research Question 5: Do the social constructivist tools of the VLE contribute to the improvement of speaking and interactional skills?

The questionnaires reveal that there are more opportunities for collaboration and interaction in the VLE than in the f2f courses according to the majority of the participants. Sending massages to the teacher and peers are found useful by the majority as well.

As for the social constructivist tools, namely, forums, wikis, blogs, e-portfolio and audio-chat, all are found useful for learning English by the vast majority of the participants (See Tables 4.17, 4.18, 4.19, 4.20, and 4.21).

These tools are also regarded as useful for the improvement of speaking skill by the overwhelming majority of the participants (See Table 4.22). In addition, all the participants agree that the tools are useful for communication.

An interesting finding from the questionnaires is that although the majority of the participants agree that they have learned from their own work, from their peers' work, from their teacher and from the teacher in Moodle than in the f2f courses (See Tables 4.23, 4.24, 4.25, and 4.26), they indicate that they are more comfortable with the individual activities rather than in activities involving collaboration with others. Nevertheless, the majority of the participants indicate that the presence of others has contributed to learning English.

The interview results, too, reflect similar high rates of the effectiveness of the social constructivist tools. Besides, they reveal the pros and cons of these tools:

- Wikis:

  Wiki module is considered to be useful in general, and yet it involves some points that bother some interviewees. For example, some interviewees complain that other group members say almost everything on a subject and that there is nothing left for them to add. Another annoying point is the error correction which is done by the members in the group. The fact that some postings can be edited in a wrong way or deleted accidentally is yet another annoying aspect of the wiki application.

  Nevertheless, there are many interviewees who enjoy the features of writing and error correction with a group of peers. In addition, viewing the history, or rather, the process of the work, and a sense of competition among group members that wiki atmosphere creates are some other popular features of wikis.

- Blogs:

  Some interviewees regard the ability to view others' work as an advantage which leads to learning from others, and yet the very same ability is regarded as a negative feature of blogs by some, arguing that this might lead to 'copy and paste', in other words, imitating someone else's words without any effort or understanding. The general inclination, on the other hand, is that blogs open up new horizons which lead to a synthesis of the works of the composing student and the works of the other students.

- E-portfolio:

  Being the most favourite tool, the e-portfolio module is liked by the majority due to several reasons. First, it is enjoyable. Secondly, it is helpful for the participants to observe their development. And finally, the participants enjoy receiving feedback on the work they have done.

- Forum and audio-chat:

  Forum module is used in the first language for mainly discussing the task related questions, to solve technical problems, and to make announcements. This module is found useful by all participants except one.

  Due to the technical problems encountered, the audio-chat module is used by a smaller number of participants; however, there being no opposing views, this application, too, has a high usefulness rate.

Due to the reasons stated above, forum and audio-chat modules are not dealt with in the interviews. Nevertheless, some criticisms on the applications of these tools and additional observations are discussed in the implications section below.

Implications: As seen in the findings above, the use of social constructivist tools appear to increase the opportunities for collaboration and interaction as well as speaking, and they seem to be useful for these aspects of foreign language education.

Forums can be used for making announcements and asking and answering questions on various topics and discussions with the participation of all the class members and the teacher. However, it may be difficult to make use of the forum module for discussions in the target language especially for students with low English competency. Instead, forum can be used as a problem solving platform where the participants ask and answer language related questions and discuss problems with the online/f2f courses using the first language, as is the case with this study. Not using the target language for these purposes may be regarded as a negative aspect of the application; however, in forums, students deal with the target language, think about it, and thus keep in touch with the process of language learning outside the classroom/university, which can make English more than a school subject that should be passed. For students with higher levels, on the other hand, forums can offer new possibilities for expression and negotiation of meaning essential to the development of communicative competence as suggested by Savignon and Roithmeier (2004).

There being no opposing views to the usefulness of the blogs, wikis, e-portfolio and audio-chat modules, where the students use the target language, they are highly recommended to be used in language classes, but they are not without risks. Below are some recommendations for the application of these tools.

Wikis, for example, may cause discomfort among some students in that they might feel upset when their work is edited and/or deleted by others and/or when others contribute to the work more than they can. This annoyance can be reduced, if not overcome, by providing several different wiki activities where members of wiki groups are shuffled periodically. Besides, as Liao (as cited in Shih, 2010) indicates, if carefully planned, such activities that involve cooperative learning enable students to reflect on and evaluate their work in the group and provide suggestions for improvement.

Both text and audio blogs can be used in the VLE. The postings can either be visible to the rest of the class or invisible, and either way has its own advantages. In

order for better knowers to help others, peer comments and assessment can be utilized more frequently in blogs.

E-portfolio can also be used for texts and audio recordings. Here, too, students can benefit from peer comments and assessment, but sharing portfolios with other students may cause discomfort for some students, so the teacher might want to let students choose whoever they want to share their e-portfolio.

Audio-chat in Moodle using the PoodLL module is highly recommended. On the other hand, facilities of computer laboratories should be taken into account because even a tiniest glitch in the software and hardware of the computers can frustrate not only students but also the teacher. In this study, for example, we suffered from the lack of headphones in the computer lab for a little while, and also from the lack of sound cards in the students' computers, otherwise called clients, which were connected to the teacher's server. The clients made use of the sound card of the server, but not for too long due to the expiry date of the trial version of the software. The problem was solved by making use of the computers in the internet cafe next door. Therefore, in order not to have frustrations, the teacher might want to check the availability of the facilities of the computer lab with support from the IT personnel.

Observations of written and spoken interactions between the participants in this study support the findings obtained by Heins, Duensing, Stickler and Batstone (2007), Özdener and Satar (2008), and Salaberry (2000) in that the students used more target language in the online activities than in classroom-based ones. This finding leads us, in Özdener and Satar's words, to question the belief in CMC that 'students should chat with people whose native language is not the same, otherwise they will prefer to use their native language' (p. 12). Moreover, oral interactions can be thought to be done better face-to-face rather than in online environments due to several reasons such as making use of the paralinguistic clues in the face-to-face context such as mimics, gestures and so on as well as the linguistic features. However, the higher ratio of using the target language in online spoken exchanges, high level of comfort, better retention and higher motivation also lead us to question the notion that oral interaction should be done face-to-face rather than in online environments.

Text-chat function can also be used in VLEs as they have a facilitating role in promoting more noticing of learners' own errors due to longer processing time and relative permanency of the text (Lai and Zhao, 2006).

We should also note the importance of having both real-time meetings on the VLE as well as the asynchronized gatherings, because both can have considerable benefits to students. For example, the former provides students with a chance to communicate with everyone in the class immediately while the latter gives a freedom to study individually and to reflect on works without the boundaries of time and place.

A final implication of the study can be related to initial and in-service teacher education. During the initial teacher education programs, student teachers are given technology preparation courses; however, as Kessler (2007) states, they are likely to learn using outdated technologies and programs, and thus they may not be able to be prepared to integrate newer technologies that would best serve their students' needs into their own classrooms. Given that a VLE is a part of technology preparation courses within the undergraduate education, student teachers can stay in contact through these technologies not only with the developments in their field but also with the faculty members even after they have graduated, which can lead to life-long learning. Such courses can be given as a part of in-service teacher education program, which promises to free the participants, both the trainer and trainees, of several burdens such as fixing the suitable time for the program, travelling across cities, accommodation and so on. In fact, this is a major demand repeated by various students of the current study who would like to gain access to the English courses on the VLE during the rest of their undergraduate education.

In conclusion, despite challenges, VLEs seem to be a convincing answer to many problematic areas of the field of foreign language education.

5.3. Limitations and Suggestions

In this study, we investigated the effectiveness of the VLE in terms of the students' perceptions, so the findings are related to the participants of the study, and thus they cannot be generalized. Taking into account learning outcomes and success of students with a greater population, further studies need to be conducted for more generalizable results. Also, we believe that the replications of this study with students at different age levels and educational backgrounds in various ELT contexts such as compulsory service English classes and preparatory English courses will contribute to the field.

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APPENDIX 1

Web-Temelli Dil Öğrenimi için
Öğrencilerin Hazır Bulunmuşluk Ölçeği

Bu dönem sınıfta işlediğimiz dersleri Moodle adındaki bir sanal öğrene ortamıyla destekleyeceğiz. Lütfen her soru için size en uygun seçeneği daire içine alın. Bu anketin tamamlanması 5 dakikadan fazla sürmeyecektir.
Zaman ayırdığınız ve katkıda bulunduğunuz için teşekkürler.

Bölüm 1: Genel Detaylar
Bu ilk bölümde lütfen kendiniz ve bilgisayar kullanım geçmişinizle ilgili bilgiler verin.

1. Ben ...

☐ erkeğim ☐ bayanım

2. Yaşım ....

☐ 20'nin altında ☐ 20-25 arası ☐ 25'ten yukarı

3. Kişisel bilgisayarım (masaüstü) veya dizüstü bilgisayarım var.

☐ Evet ☐ Hayır

4. Bilgisayarım Kilis'te, yanımda.

☐ Evet ☐ Hayır

5. Bilgisayar kullanma becerim ....

☐ çok iyidir

☐ iyidir

☐ çok iyi değildir

☐ kötüdür

☐ çok kötüdür

6. Bilgisayarda çalışmak beni rahatsız eder.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum

☐ Katılıyorum

☐ Kararsızım

☐ Katılmıyorum

☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

7. Kaldığım yerde İnternet bağlantım var.

☐ Evet ☐ Hayır

8. İnternet kafe veya üniversite dışında internete erişebileceğim bir yer var.

☐ Evet ☐ Hayır

9. İnternete girecek yer bulmak konusunda sıkıntı yaşıyorum

☐ Evet ☐ Hayır

10. İnternete ....

☐ her zaman girerim ☐ genellikle girerim ☐ bazen girerim ☐ nadiren girerim ☐ hiç girmem

Bölüm 2: Daha önceki bilgisayar ve sanal öğrenme ortamı deneyiminiz

Lütfen üniversiteye gelmeden önce, bilgisayara ve sanal öğrenme ortamlarıyla ilgili deneyimleriniz ve bakış açınızı genel olarak belirtiniz.

11. Üniversiteye gelmeden önce bilgisayar kullandım.

☐ Evet ☐ Hayır

12. ..... bilgisayar kullanıyorum.

☐ 1 yıldan az süredir ☐ 1 yıldan fazla süredir ☐ 2 yıldan fazla süredir

13. Üniversiteye gelmeden önce interneti kullandım.

☐ Evet ☐ Hayır

14. ..... internet kullanıyorum.

☐ 1 yıldan az süredir ☐ 1 yıldan fazla süredir ☐ 2 yıldan fazla süredir

15. Aşağıdaki hangi ifade bilgisayar kullanım deneyiminizi en iyi şekilde anlatır?

☐ Çok deneyimim oldu ve kullanırken kendimi çok rahat hissediyorum

☐ Birkaç deneyimim oldu ve kullanırken kendimi oldukça rahat hissediyorum.

☐ Az sayıda deneyimim oldu ve kullanırken kendimi çok rahat değilim.

☐ Çok az deneyimim oldu veya hiç deneyimim olmadı ve kullanırken kendimi hiç rahat hissetmiyorum.

16. Üniversiteye gelmeden önce, sanal öğrenme ortamı aracılığıyla öğrenme gerektiren bir derse katılmıştım.

☐ Evet ☐ Hayır

17. İnterneti dil öğreniminde kullanma konusu .....

☐ oldukça ilgimi çekiyor

☐ ilgimi çekiyor

☐ hakkında kararsızım

☐ ilgimi çekmiyor

☐ hiç ilgimi çekmiyor

18. Bence internet üzerinden İngilizce eğitimi faydalı olur.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum

☐ Katılıyorum

☐ Kararsızım

☐ Katılmıyorum

☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

APPENDIX 2

Readiness Scale of Students for Web-Based Language Learning

This semester we are going to support our classroom-based courses with a virtual learning environment named Moodle. Please circle the best answer for each question. This questionnaire should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Thank you for your time and contribution.

Part 1: General Details
In this first section, please tell us a little about yourself and your background of computer use.

1. I am ...

☐ Male ☐ Female

2. I am ....

☐ Under 20 ☐ 20-25 ☐ Over 25

3. I have got a personal computer or laptop.

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. I have my computer/laptop with me in Kilis.

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. My skill in using a computer is ....

☐ very good

☐ good

☐ *not so good*

☐ bad

☐ very bad

6. Studying on a computer makes me uncomfortable.

☐ Completely agree

☐ Agree

☐ Undecided

☐ Disagree

☐ Completely disagree

7. I have internet access in the place I stay in.

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. I have a place where I can access the Internet apart from an internet café or university.

☐ Yes ☐ No

9. I have difficulty finding a place to go online.

☐ Yes ☐ No

10. I .... log on the internet.

☐ always ☐ usually ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely ☐ never

Part 2: Previous experience of computers and virtual learning environments

Please give an overview of your previous experience of and attitude towards computers and virtual learning environments.

11. I had used a computer before coming to university.

☐ Yes ☐ No

12. I have computer experience for .....

☐ less than a year ☐ more than a year ☐ more than 2 years

13. I had used the Internet before coming to university.

☐ Yes ☐ No

14. I have been using the Internet for .....

☐ less than a year ☐ more than a year ☐ more than 2 years

15. Which of the following statements expresses most closely your experience of the use of computers?

☐ I have plenty of experience and feel very confident using them

☐ I have some experience and feel fairly confident using them

☐ I have limited experience and am not very confident using them

☐ I have little or no experience and do not feel at all confident using them

16. Before coming to university, I had been on a course that involved learning by means of a VLE.

☐ Yes ☐ No

17. I am ..... using the Internet for language learning.

☐ very interested in

☐ interested in

☐ neutral for

☐ not interested in

☐ not interested at all in

18. I think using web-based English education will be useful.

☐ Completely agree

☐ Agree

☐ Undecided

☐ Disagree

☐ Completely disagree

APPENDIX 3

ANKET 1
Sanal Öğrenme Ortamlarının Etkililiği ve Dil Becerileri

Aşağıda yüz yüze ve Moodle'da yaptığımız derslerle ilgili birtakım sorular bulacaksınız.
Lütfen size en yakın seçeneği işaretleyin.
Bu anketi tamamlamak 5 dakika'dan fazla sürmeyecektir.
Zaman ayırdığınız ve katkınız için teşekkür ederim.

19. Yüz yüze yapılan dersler İngilizce öğrenmek için etkilidir.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

20. Online dersler İngilizce öğrenmek için etkilidir.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

21. Online dersler yüz yüze yapılan derslerden daha avantajlıdır.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

22. İngilizce dersine okul/ sınıf dışından ulaşmak faydalıdır.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

23. Online dersler motivasyonumu artırıyor.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

24. Online dersler dil öğrenme deneyimimi geliştirdi.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

25. Online derslerde yüz yüze sınıfta öğreneceğimden daha çok İngilizce dil becerisi öğrendim.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

26. Yüz yüze sınıf ortamıyla karşılaştırdığımda, Moodle'da daha fazla konuşma fırsatım var.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

27. Online derslerde İngilizce kullanma yeteneğim konusunda kendime güven kazandım.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

28. Online aktivitelerin nasıl yapılacağını öğrendikten sonra, öğretmenin yanımda olması gerekli değil.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

29. Online derslerle bereber kendi başıma çalışma kabiliyetim gelişti.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

30. ..... aktif oluyorum.

☐ Online derslerde daha ☐ Yüz yüze derslerde daha ☐ Her iki ders türünde de

31. ..... öğrenci-merkezliydi.

☐ Online dersler daha çok ☐ Yüz yüze dersler daha çok ☐ Her iki ders türü de

32. Yüz yüze yapılan dersler aşağıdaki becerilerimi geliştirdi.

Kelime	☐ Evet	☐ Kararsız	☐ Hayır
Dil bilgisi	☐ Evet	☐ Kararsız	☐ Hayır
Yazma	☐ Evet	☐ Kararsız	☐ Hayır
Dinleme	☐ Evet	☐ Kararsız	☐ Hayır
Okuma	☐ Evet	☐ Kararsız	☐ Hayır
Konuşma	☐ Evet	☐ Kararsız	☐ Hayır
İletişim becerisi	☐ Evet	☐ Kararsız	☐ Hayır

33. Online dersler aşağıdaki becerilerimi geliştirdi.

Kelime	☐ Evet	☐ Kararsız	☐ Hayır
Dil bilgisi	☐ Evet	☐ Kararsız	☐ Hayır
Yazma	☐ Evet	☐ Kararsız	☐ Hayır
Dinleme	☐ Evet	☐ Kararsız	☐ Hayır
Okuma	☐ Evet	☐ Kararsız	☐ Hayır
Konuşma	☐ Evet	☐ Kararsız	☐ Hayır
İletişim becerisi	☐ Evet	☐ Kararsız	☐ Hayır

34. Yüz yüze işlenen derslerde İngilizce konuşurken tedirgin oluyorum.

☐ Evet ☐ Bazen ☐ Hayır

35. Eğer yukarıdaki 16. soruya verdiğiniz yanıt "Evet"se, nedenini birkaç sözcükle açıklayabilir misiniz?

.....
.....

36. Moodle'da İngilizce konuşurken tedirgin oluyorum.

☐ Evet ☐ Bazen ☐ Hayır

37. Eğer yukarıdaki 18. soruya verdiğiniz yanıt "Evet"se, nedenini birkaç sözcükle açıklayabilir misiniz?

.....
.....

38. Zorunlu Yabancı Dil dersinde ..... tercih ederim.

☐ yalnızca yüz yüze yapılan dersleri
☐ yalnızca online yapılan dersleri
☐ yüz yüze derslerle Moodle'ı birlikte işlemeyi

39. Üstteki 20. soruya verdiğiniz yanıtı birkaç sözcükle açıklayabilir misiniz?

.....
.....

40. Moodle'ı yüz yüze derslerle birleştirmek faydalıdır.

☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum

41. Online derlerde daha çok eğlence vardı.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

42. Online öğrenme programından zevk aldım.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

43. Online derslerin İngilizce öğrenimi için faydalı olduğunu düşünüyorum.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

44. Moodle'ın öğrenmesi kolaydı

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

45. Moodle'ın kullanımı kolaydı.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONNAIRE 1
Speaking Skills and Effectiveness of the Virtual Learning Environment

Below are questions regarding the f2f and Moodle courses.
Please circle the best answer for each question.
This questionnaire should take no more than 5 minutes to complete.
Thank you for your time and contribution.

1. The face-to-face compulsory English courses are effective for learning English.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

2. The online courses are effective for learning English.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

3. The online courses are more advantageous than f2f courses.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

4. It was useful to reach the course outsideuniversity/classroom.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

5. The online courses increase my motivation.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

6. The online courses improved my language learning experience.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

7. I learned more language skills in the online corses than I would have learned in the f2f courses.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

8. Within Moodle I have more speaking opportunities than in face-to-face courses.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

9. I gained self-confidence in using English through the online courses.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

10. The teacher's presence is not necessary if I have learned how to do the online activities.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

11. My skill to study alone improved with the online courses.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

12. I am more active in ..... .

☐ the online courses ☐ the f2f courses ☐ both contexts

13. ..... student centred.

☐ The online courses were more ☐ The f2f courses were more ☐ Both contexts were

14. My following skills improved through the f2f courses.

Vocabulary	☐ Yes	☐ Undecided	☐ No
Structure	☐ Yes	☐ Undecided	☐ No
Writing	☐ Yes	☐ Undecided	☐ No
Listening	☐ Yes	☐ Undecided	☐ No
Reading	☐ Yes	☐ Undecided	☐ No
Speaking	☐ Yes	☐ Undecided	☐ No
Communication	☐ Yes	☐ Undecided	☐ No

15. My following skills improved through the online courses.

Vocabulary	☐ Yes	☐ Undecided	☐ No
Structure	☐ Yes	☐ Undecided	☐ No
Writing	☐ Yes	☐ Undecided	☐ No
Listening	☐ Yes	☐ Undecided	☐ No
Reading	☐ Yes	☐ Undecided	☐ No
Speaking	☐ Yes	☐ Undecided	☐ No
Communication	☐ Yes	☐ Undecided	☐ No

16. I am anxious when I speak in the f2f courses.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

17. If your answer to the question 16 is 'Yes', can you explain the reason with a few words?

.....
.....

18. I am anxious when I speak in the f2f courses.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

19. If your answer to the question 18 is 'Yes', can you explain the reason with a few words?

.....
.....

20. I prefer ..... in the compulsory English courses.

☐ having f2f courses only.
☐ having online courses only.
☐ integrating f2f and online courses.

21. Can you explain your answer to question 20 above with a few words?

.....
.....

22. Integrating Moodle courses with face-to-face courses is beneficial.

☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree

23. *There was more fun in the online courses.*

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

24. *I enjoyed the online learning program.*

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

25. *I think the online courses are useulf for learning English.*

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

26. Moodle was easy to learn.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

27. Moodle was easy to use.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

APPENDIX 5

ANKET 2
Sanal Bir Öğrenme Ortamındaki
Sosyal Yapılandırmacı Araçların Etkililiği

Aşağıda Moodle'da kullanılan iletişim ve işbirliği araçlarıyla ilgili birtakım sorular bulacaksınız.
Lütfen size en yakın seçeneği işaretleyin.
Bu anketi tamamlamak 5 dakika'dan fazla sürmeyecektir.
Zaman ayırdığınız ve katkıda bulunduğunuz için teşekkür ederim.

46. Üniversite dışında bilgisayara ulaşma imkanım .....

☐ her zaman veya s*ık sık var* ☐ bazen var ☐ yok

47. Sene başındaki bilgisayar kullanım becerim .....

☐ çok iyiydi ☐ iyiydi ☐ çok iyi değildi ☐ kötüydü ☐ çok kötüydü

48. Şimdiki bilgisayar kullanım becerim .....

☐ çok iyi ☐ iyi ☐ çok iyi değil ☐ kötü ☐ çok kötü

49. Moodle'ı ..... kullanrım.

☐ günde bir kereden fazla ☐ yaklaşık günde bir kez ☐ haftada 2-3 kez

☐ haftada bir kez ☐ haftada 1'den az

50. Moodle'ı yalnız başıma kullanırken kendimi rahat hissederim.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

51. Online derslerde yüz yüze derslerde olduğundan daha fazla işbirliği ve birbirini etkileme imkânı var.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

52. Öğretmene ve öğrencilere mesaj/e-mail göndermek.

Moodle'ı bu amaçla kullandınız mı? ☐ Evet ☐ Hayır

Eğer evetse,bunu faydalı buldunuz mu? ☐ Evet ☐ Hayır

53. Forumlar faydalıdır.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

54. Bloglar faydalıdır.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

55. Wikiler faydalıdır..

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

56. E-portfolio faydalıdır.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

57. Sesli-sohbet faydalıdır.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

58. Aşağıda verilen araçlardan (forum, blog, wiki, e-portfolio ve sesli-sohbet), en çok hangisini sevdiniz? Cevabınızı soldaki örnekte olduğu gibi 1-5 arası sıralayarak belirtin.

1 (en çok sevdiğim) – 5 (en az sevdiğim)

Örnek

Forum	***1***
Blog	***2***
Wiki	***3***
e-Portfolio	***4***
Sesli-sohbet	***5***

Sizin cevabınız

Forum	
Blog	
Wiki	
e-Portfolio	
Sesli-sohbet	

59. Moodle'daki işbirliği araçları İngilizce öğrenmek için faydalıdır (e-portfolio, wiki, vb).

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

60. Moodle'daki işbirliği araçları konuşma becerisinin gelişmesi için faydalıdır.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

61. Moodle'daki işbirliği araçları iletişim için faydalıdır.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

62. Kendi başıma çalışmamı gerektiren aktivitelerde daha çok rahatım.

☐ Evet ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Hayır

63. Diğerleriyle işbirliği yapmamı gerektiren aktivitelerde daha çok rahatım.

☐ Evet ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Hayır

64. Online derslerde diğer öğrencilerin varlığı İngilizce öğrenmeme olumlu katkıda bulundu.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

65. Kendi çalışmalarımdan ..... öğrenme imkanım oldu.

☐ yüz yüze derslerde daha fazla

☐ Moodle derslerinde daha fazla

☐ yüz yüze derslerde ve Moodle derslerinde aynı oranda

66. Başkalarının çalışmalarından ..... öğrenme imkanım oldu.

☐ yüz yüze derslerde daha fazla

☐ Moodle derslerinde daha fazla

☐ yüz yüze derslerde ve Moodle derslerinde aynı oranda

67. Arkadaşlarımdan ..... öğrenme imkanım oldu.

☐ yüz yüze derslerde daha fazla

☐ Moodle derslerinde daha fazla

☐ yüz yüze derslerde ve Moodle derslerinde aynı oranda

68. Öğretmenimden ..... öğrenme imkanım oldu.

☐ yüz yüze derslerde daha fazla

☐ Moodle derslerinde daha fazla

☐ yüz yüze derslerde ve Moodle derslerinde aynı oranda

69. Online dersler yüz yüze yapılan derslere oranla, yaptığım hataları fark etmeme daha fazla katkı sağladı.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

70. Online derslerde öğrendiğim bilgileri yüz yüze yapılan derslere oranla daha iyi hatırlama eğilimim var.

☐ Kesinlikle katılıyorum ☐ Katılıyorum ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Katılmıyorum ☐ Kesinlikle katılmıyorum

71. Yaptığım etkinlikle ilgili olarak ..... dönüt aldım.

☐ online derslerde daha çok

☐ yüz yüze derslerde daha

☐ Her iki ders türünde de eşit oranda

72. Bazı aktivitelerden aldığınız dönüt kendinize olan güvenin artmasına katkı sağladı mı?

☐ Evet ☐ Kararsızım ☐ Hayır

73. Moodle'da pek çok ders materyali bulunmakta. Aşağıdakilerden hangisi bu konuyla ilgili sizin görüşünüze daha yakındır?

☐ Online dokümanlarla çalışmak daha faydalı.

☐ Dokümanların kâğıt haliyle çalışmak daha faydalı.

74. Moodle'ın geliştirilebilmesi aklınıza gelen herhangi bir öneri varsa lütfen kutu içine yazın:

Katkınız için teşekkür ederim.

APPENDIX 6

QUESTIONNAIRE 2

Effectiveness of Social Constructivist Tools In a Virtual Learning Environment

Below are questions regarding the communication and collaboration tools within Moodle.
Please circle the best answer for each question.
This questionnaire should take no more than 5 minutes to complete.
Thank you for your time and contribution.

1. ***I ..... have access to Internet except when I am at university.***

☐ always or often ☐ sometimes ☐ don't

2. ***My computer skill at the beginning of the year was ..... .***

☐ very good ☐ good ☐ not so good ☐ bad ☐ very bad

3. **My computer skill now is ..... .**

☐ very good ☐ good ☐ not so good ☐ bad ☐ very bad

4. **I used Moodle .....**

☐ more than once a day ☐ about once a day ☐ twice or three times a week

☐ once a week ☐ less than once a week

5. **I feel comfortable using Moodle on my own.**

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

6. **There were more opportunity for cooperation and interaction in Moodle than in the f2f courses.**

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

7. **Sending messages/mails to the teacher and students.**

Did you use Moodle for this purpose? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, did you find it satisfactory? ☐ Yes ☐ No

8. ***Forums are useful.***

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

9. Blogs are useful.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

10. Wikis are useful.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

11. E-portfolio is useful.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

12. Audio-chat is useful.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

13. Of the three tools given above (forums, blogs and wikis), which ones did you like most? Rank them from 1 to 5 as in the example on the left.

1 (I like most) – 5 (I like least)

Example

Forums	***1***
Blogs	***2***
Wikis	***3***
E-portfolio	***4***
Audio-chat	***5***

Your Answer

Forums	
Blogs	
Wikis	
E-portfolio	
Audio-chat	

14. Collaboration tools in Moodle (e-portfolio, wiki, etc.) are useful for learning English.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

15. ***Collaboration tools in Moodle are useful for the development of speaking skill.***

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

16. Collaboration tools in Moodle are useful for communication.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

17. I was more comfortable in the activities that involved self-study.

☐ Yes ☐ Undecided ☐ No

18. I was more comfortable in the activities that involved collaboration with others.

☐ Yes ☐ Undecided ☐ No

19. The presence of other students in the online courses contributed positively to my learning English.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

20. I learned .... from my own work.

☐ more in the f2f courses

☐ more in the Moodle courses

☐ equally in both contexts

21. I learned .... from the others' work.

☐ more in the f2f courses

☐ more in the Moodle courses

☐ equally in both contexts

22. I learned .... from my friends..

☐ more in the f2f courses

☐ more in the Moodle courses

☐ equally in both contexts

23. I learned .... from my teacher.

☐ more in the f2f courses

☐ more in the Moodle courses

☐ equally in both contexts

24. The online courses helped me realize my mistakes more than the f2f courses did.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

25. I tend to retain the information that I learned in the online courses better than in the f2f courses.

☐ Completely Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Undecided ☐ Disagree ☐ Completely disagree

26. I received ..... .

☐ more feedback in the online courses

☐ more feedback in the f2f courses

☐ feedback equally in both contexts

27. Did the feedback you received from some activities contribute to your self-confidence?

☐ Yes ☐ Undecided ☐ No

28. There are many course materials in Moodle. Which of the following is closer to your opinion?

☐ Studying with online documents is more useful.

☐ Studying with hard-copies of the documents is more useful.

***29.* If you have any suggestions for the development of Moodle , please put them in the box:**

Thank you for your contribution.

APPENDIX 7. Glossary Module



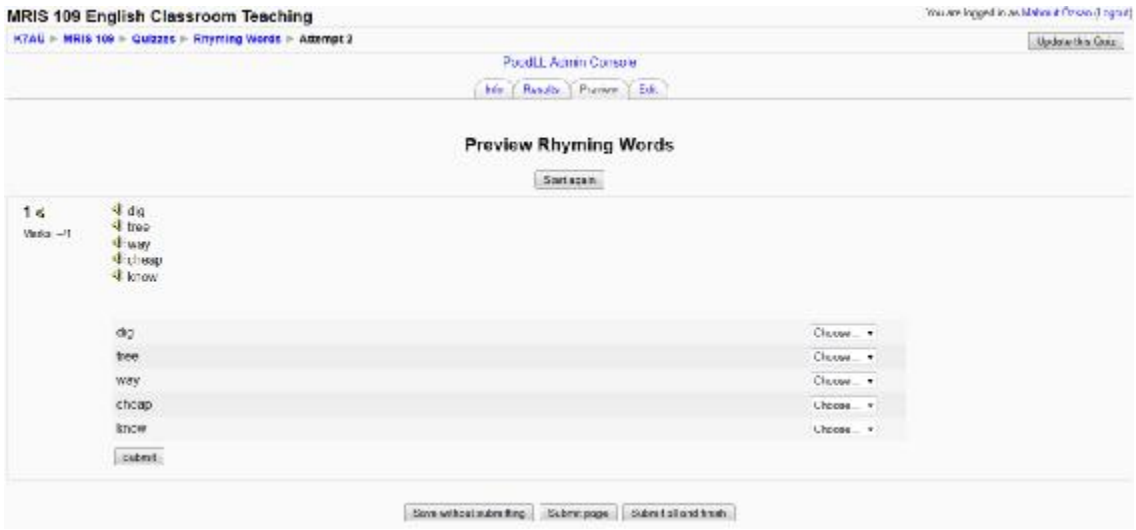
APPENDIX 8. Database Module



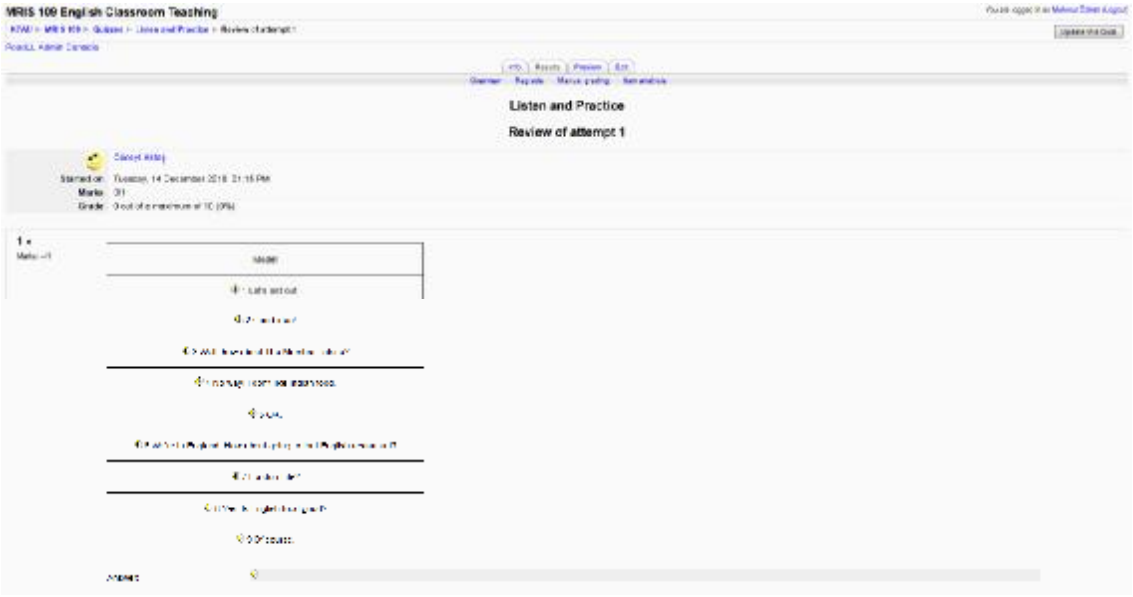
APPENDIX 9. Word Stress



APPENDIX 10. Matching Sounds



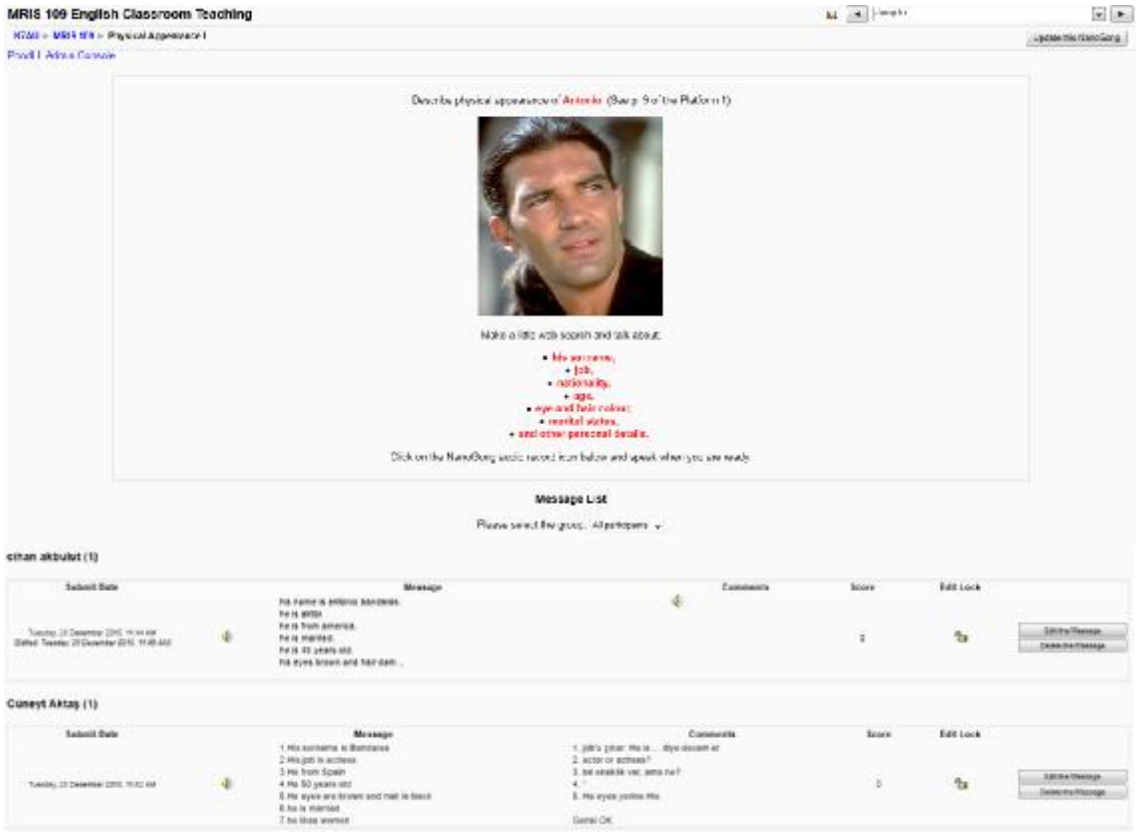
APPENDIX 11. Listen and Repeat



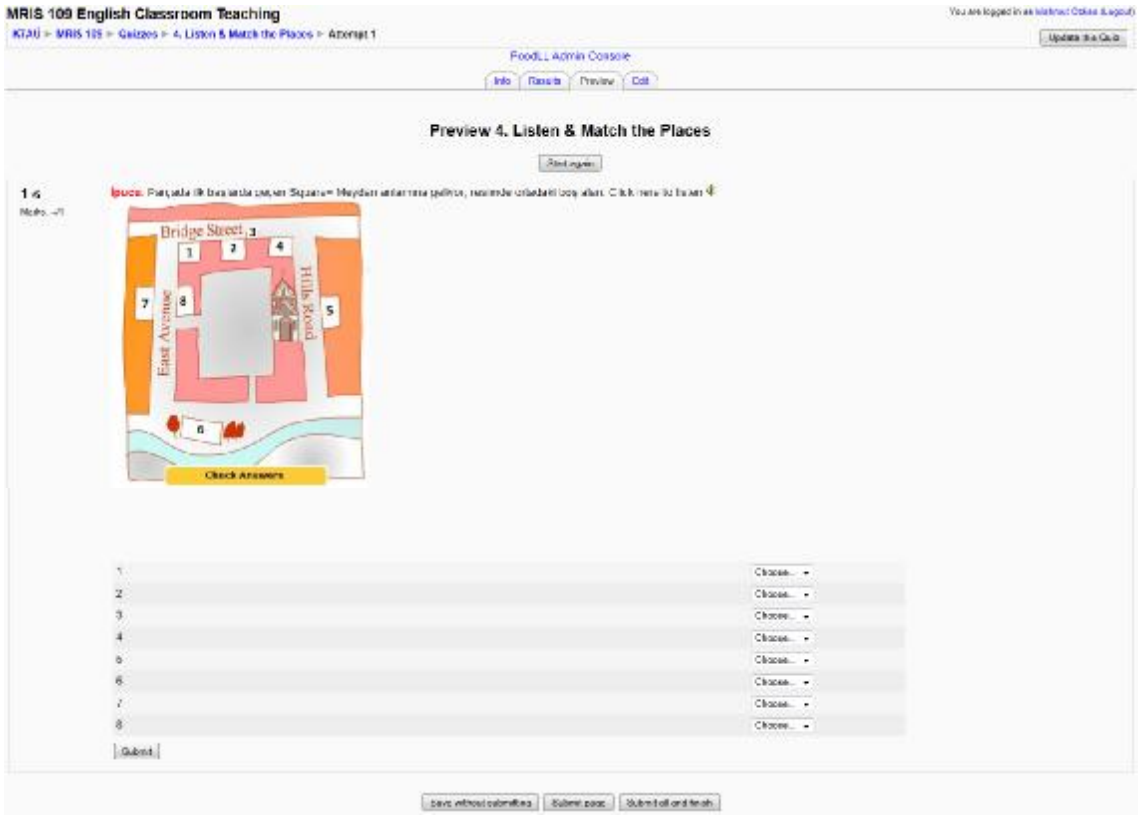
APPENDIX 12. Dialogue Minus One



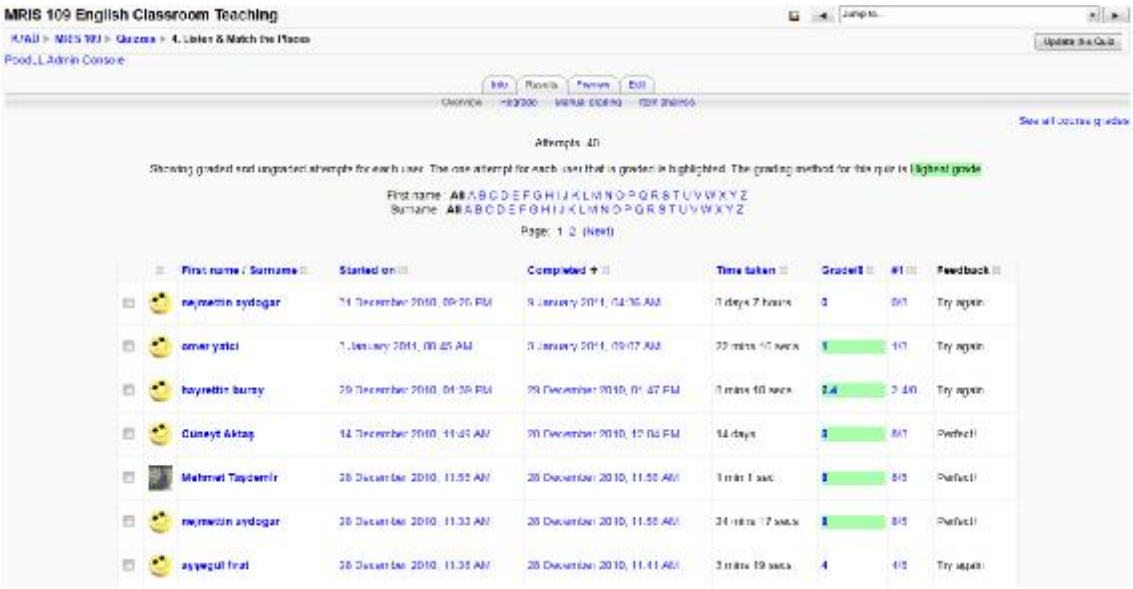
APPENDIX 13. NanoGong Module



APPENDIX 14. Listening Activities

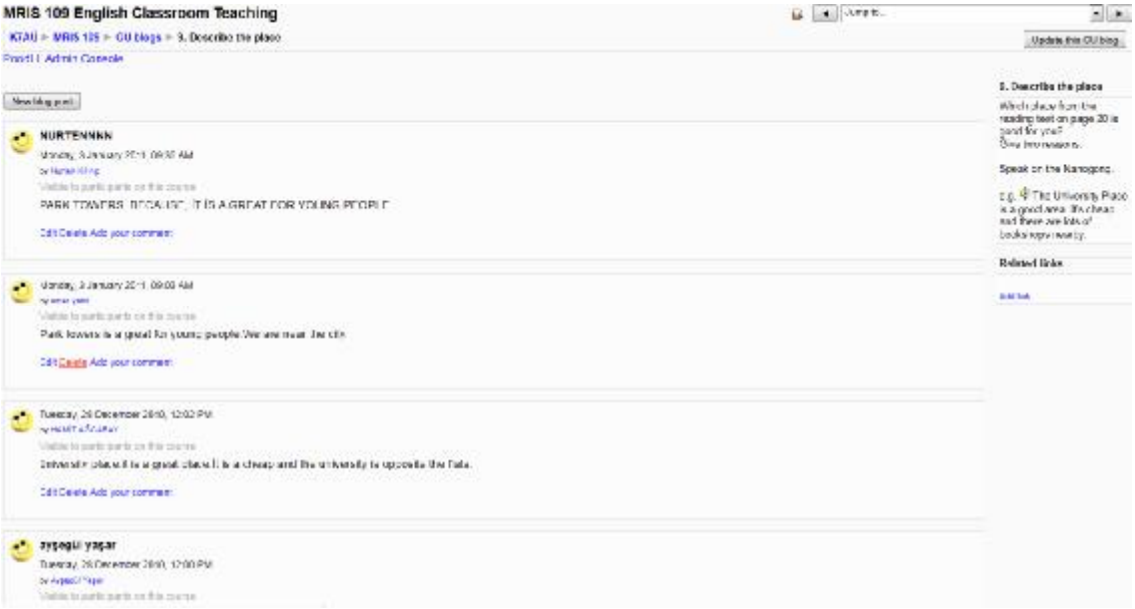





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Update this Quiz
Attempts: 41
First name : All A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
Surname : All A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
Page: 1 2 (Next)
First name / Surname
Started on
Completed
Time taken
Grade/5
#1
Feedback
neimettin aydogar
omer yalci
bayrettin bursy
Cuneyt Aktas
Mehmet Tayyarcir
neimettin aydogar
aygegul firat
Try again
Try again
Try again
Perfect!
Perfect!
Perfect!
Try again

APPENDIX 15. Some Other Activities of the Induction Courses

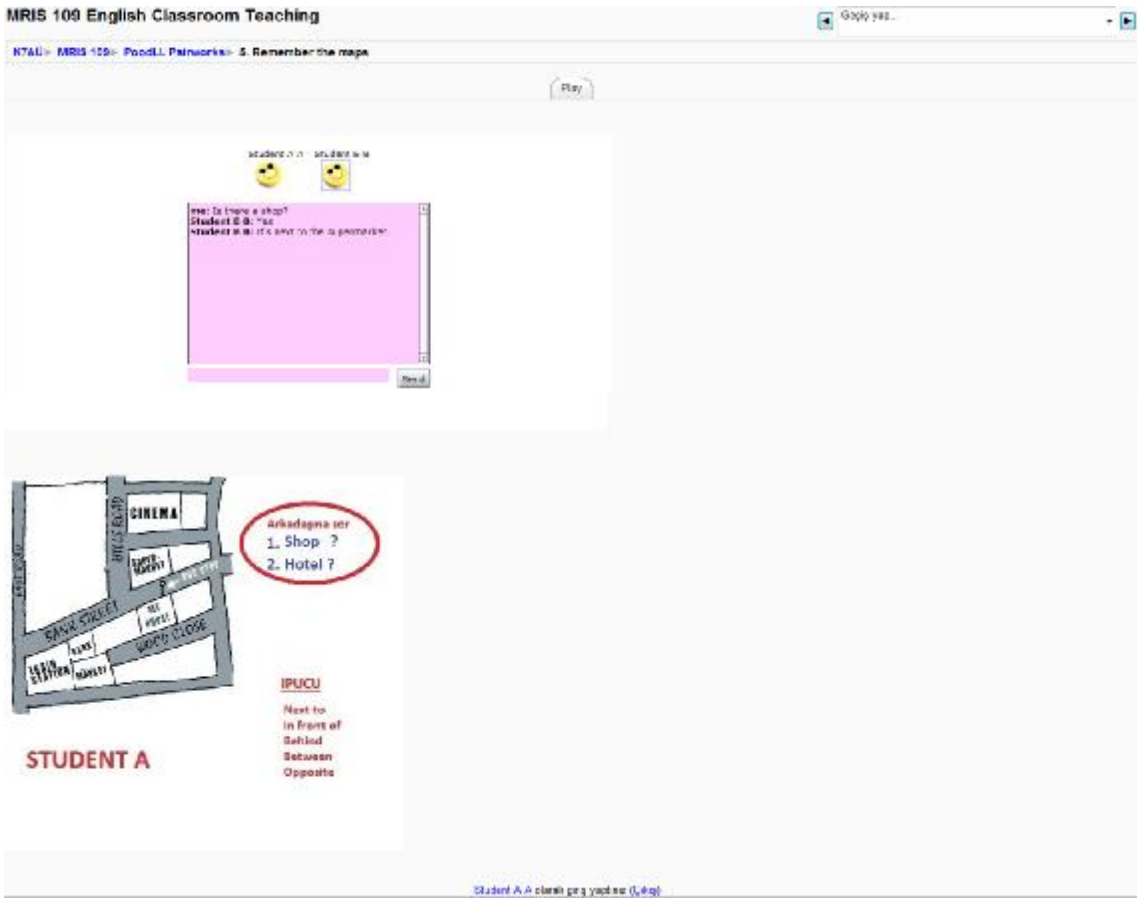




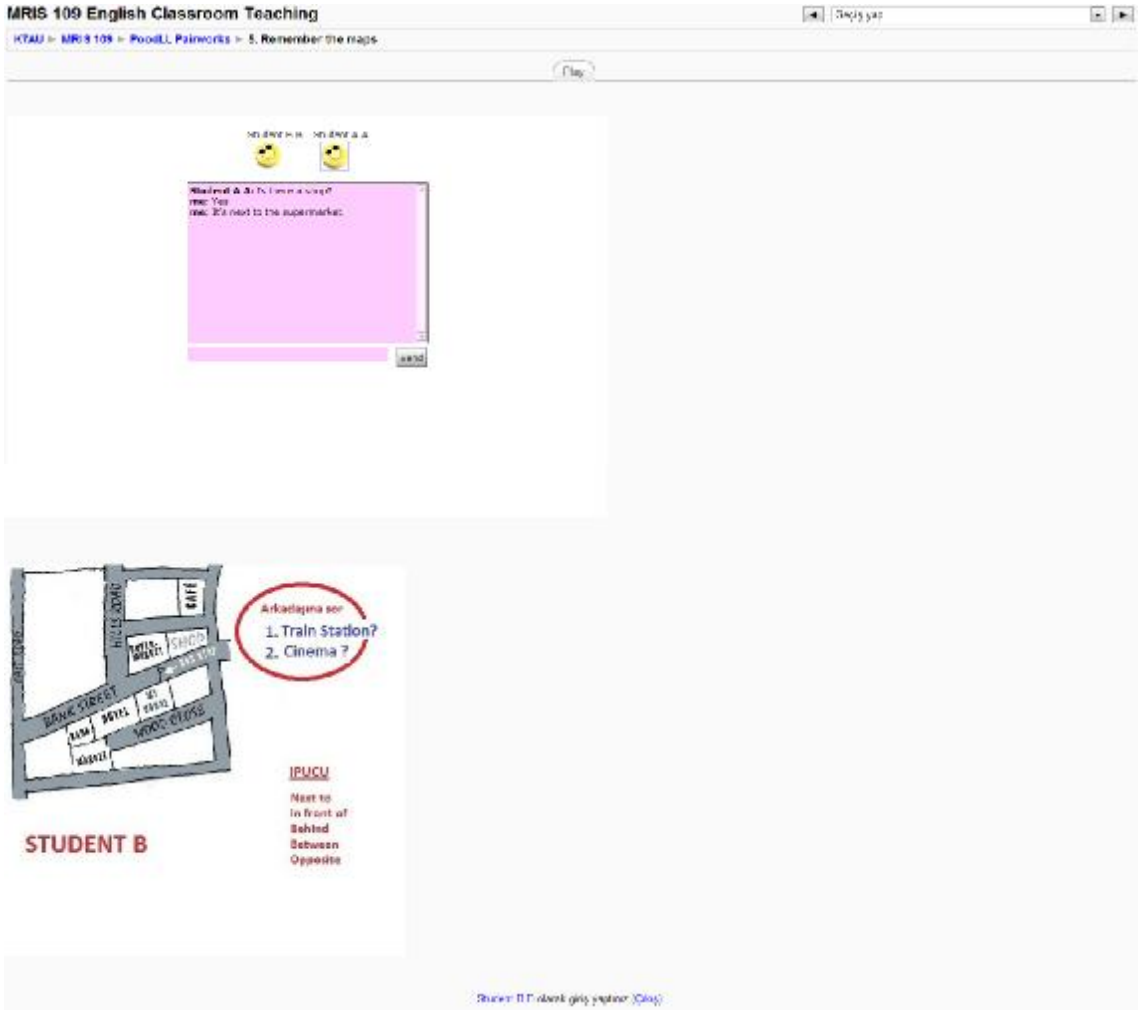

MRIS 109 English Classroom Teaching
Rewrite the following paragraph and read it out loud on Narogong.
i am henry i am twenty five years old and i am a gardener
i am tall and plump i have got short fair hair and green eyes my
wifes name is martha she is thirty years old and she is a chef our daughters
name is jessica and she is seven years old
Message List
HAMİT AĞDABAY (0)
Cüneyt Aktaş (1)

APPENDIX 16. PoodLL Module

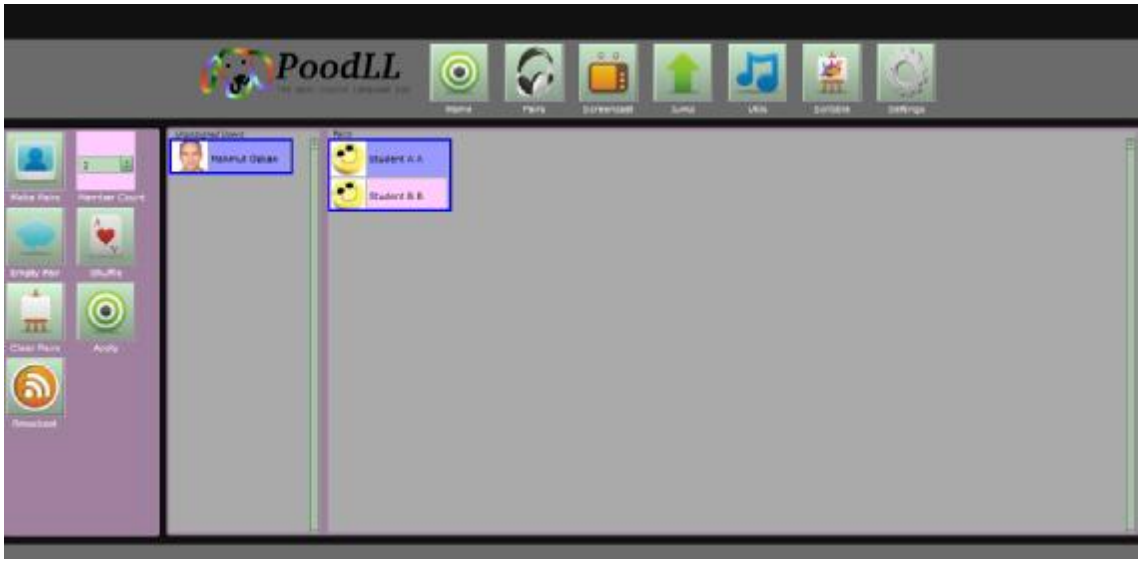
Student A's Screen



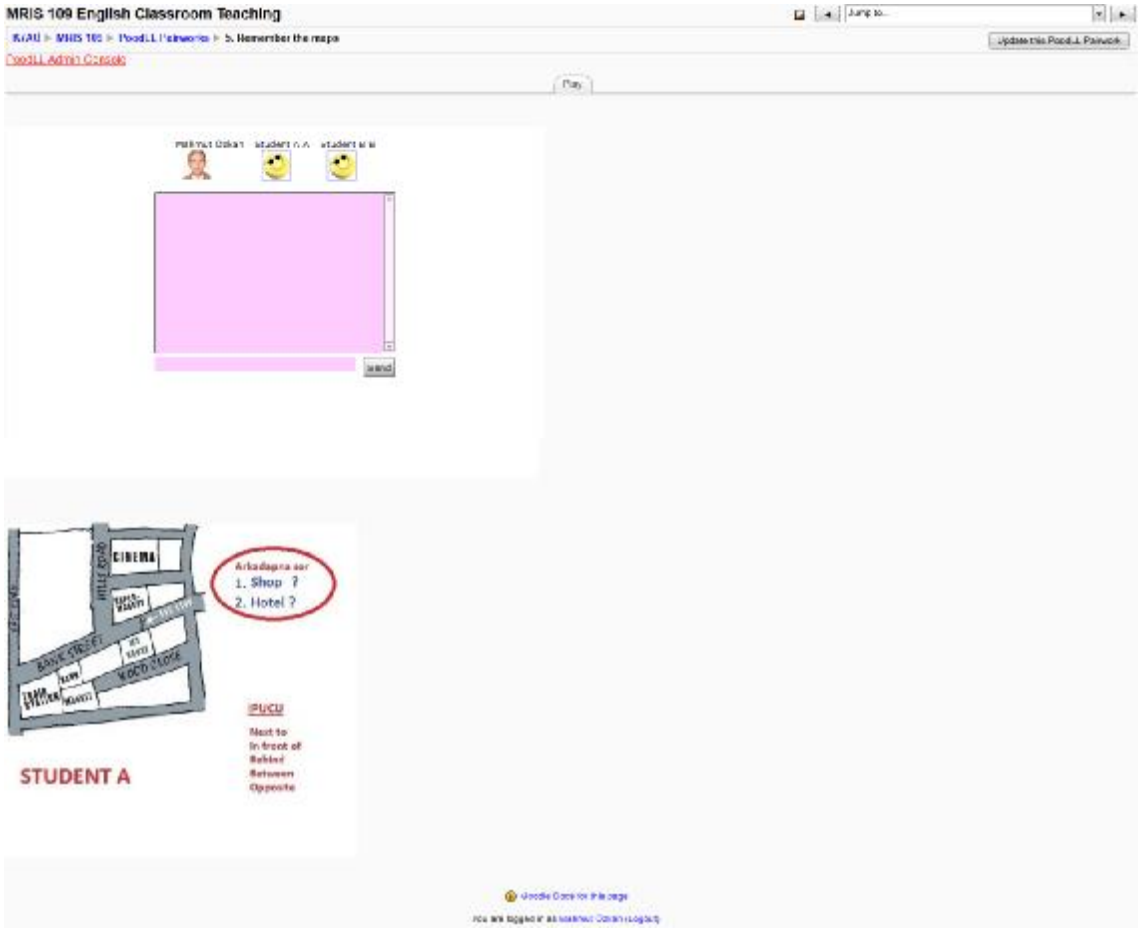
Student B's Screen



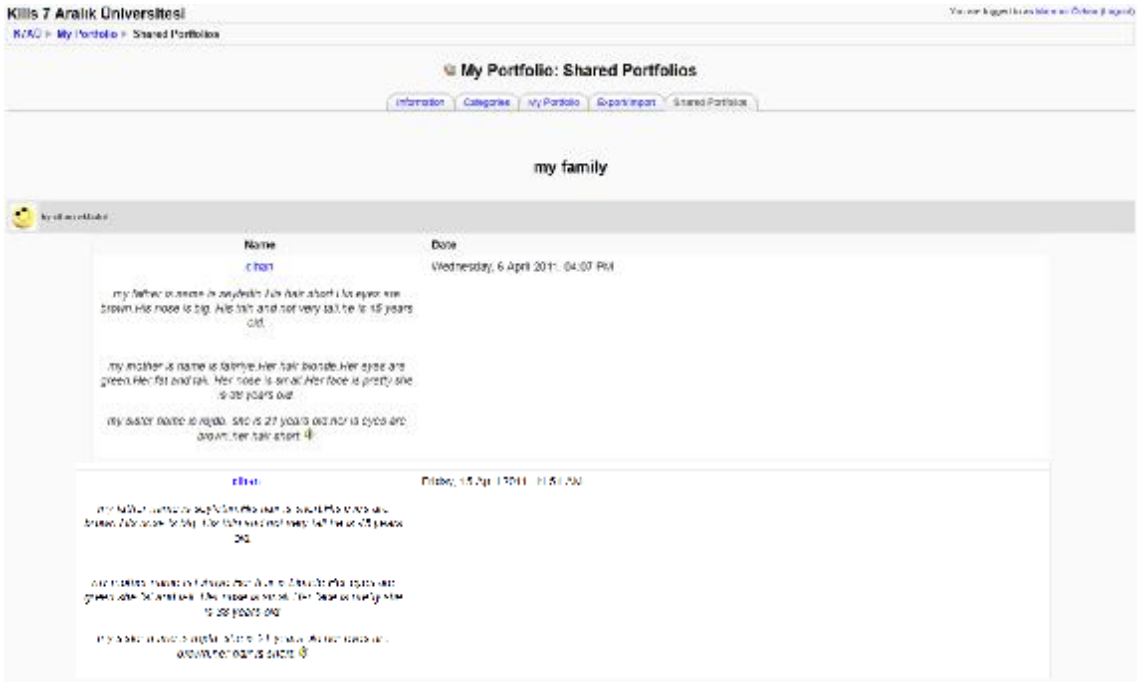
APPENDIX 17. PoodLL Admin Console

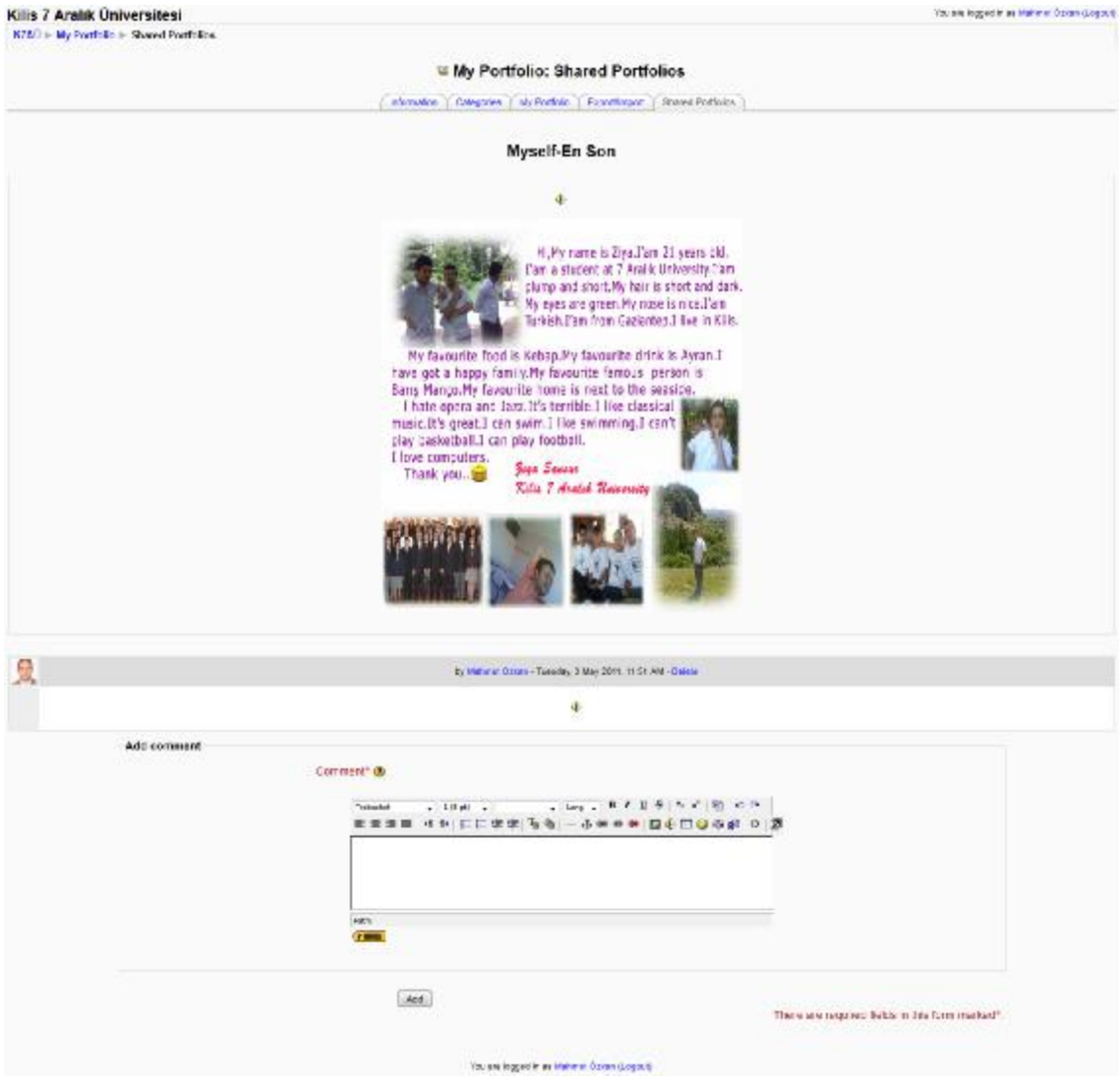


The Teacher's Screen

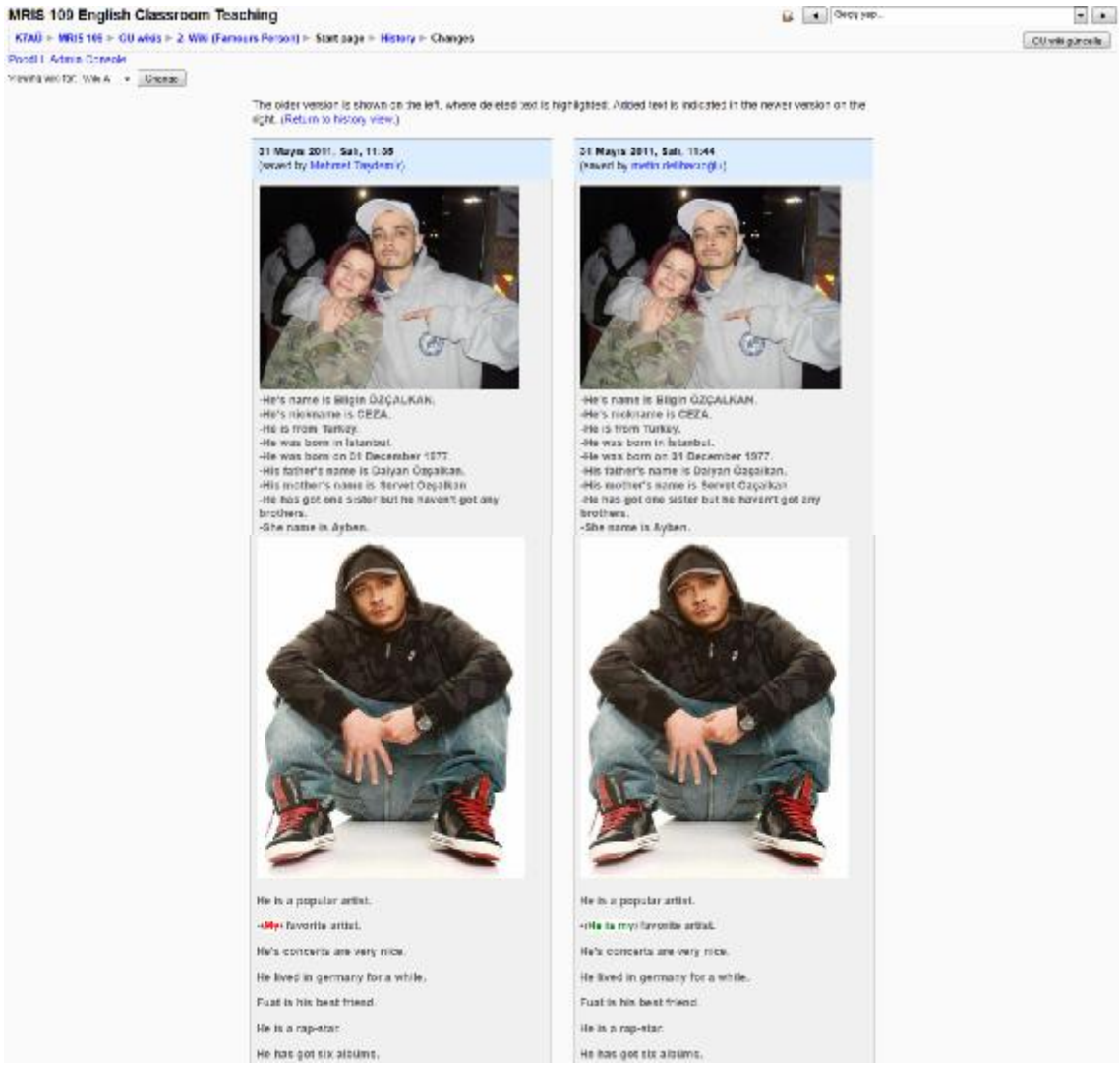


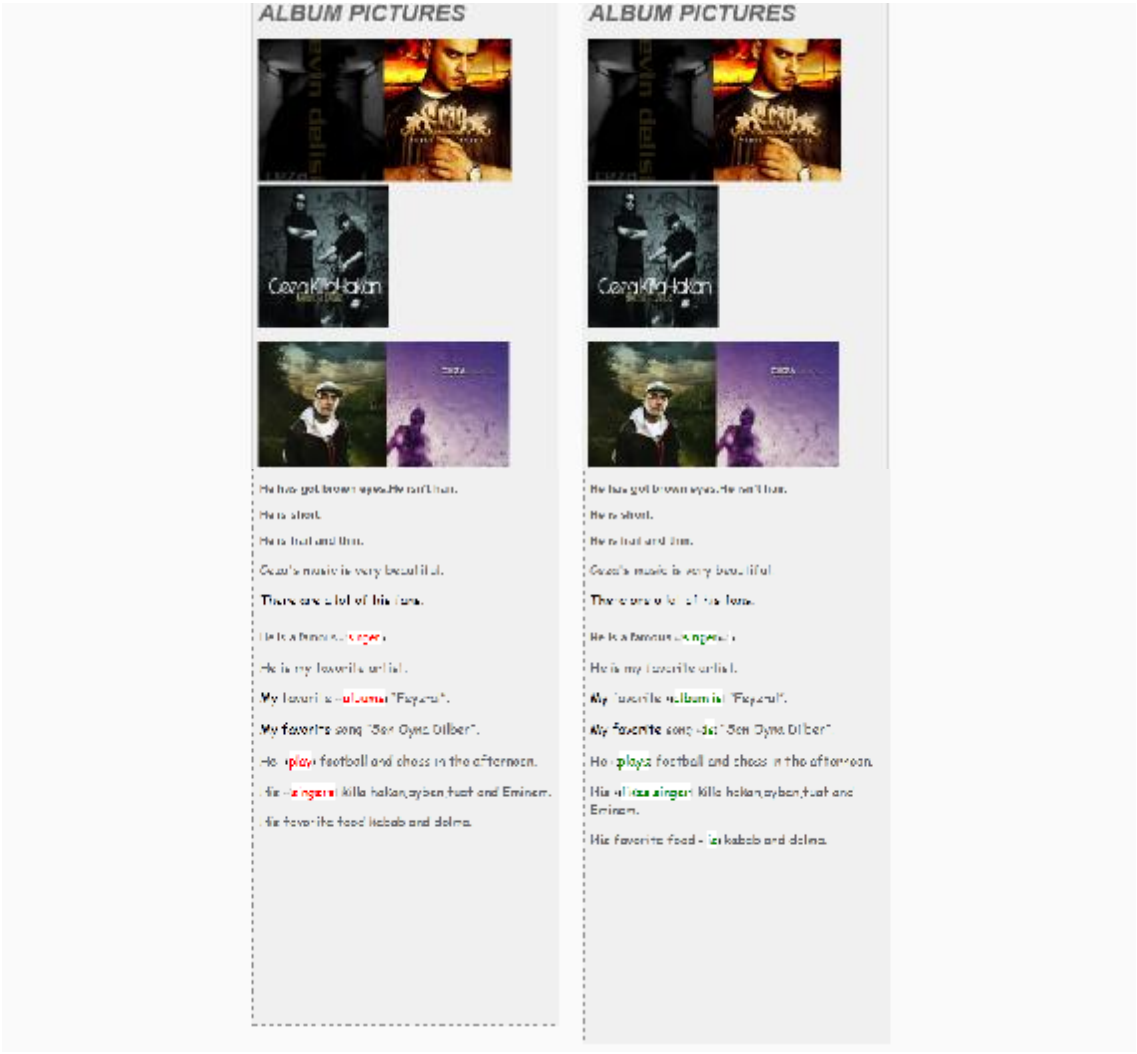
APPENDIX 18. Exabis E-Portfolio Module Examples

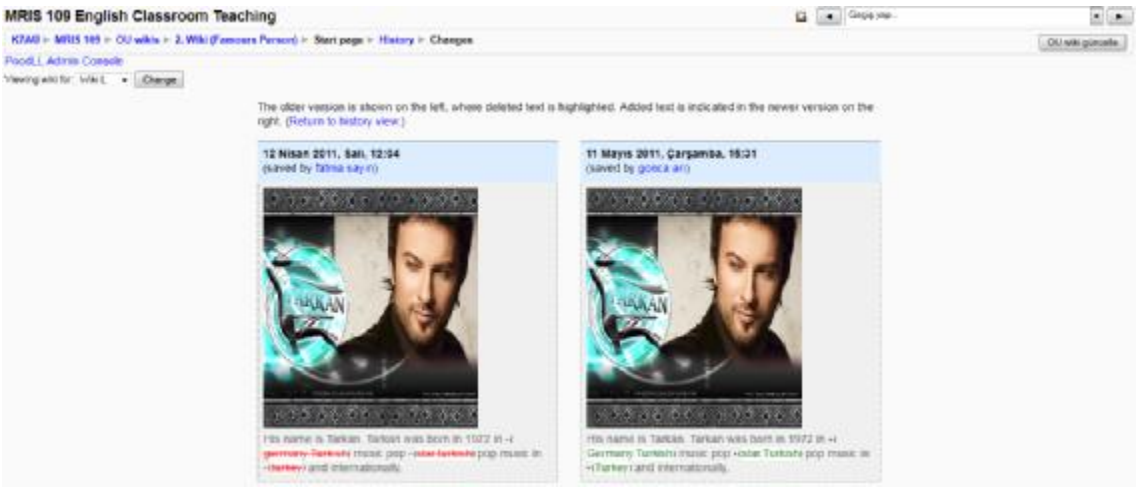


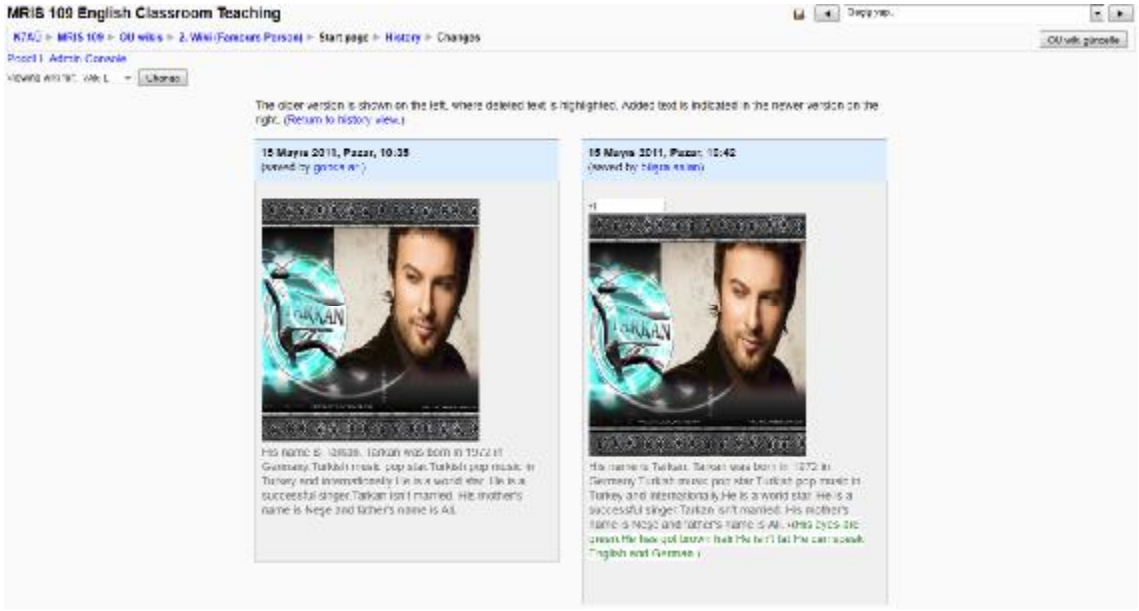


APPENDIX 19. Examples from the Wiki Module



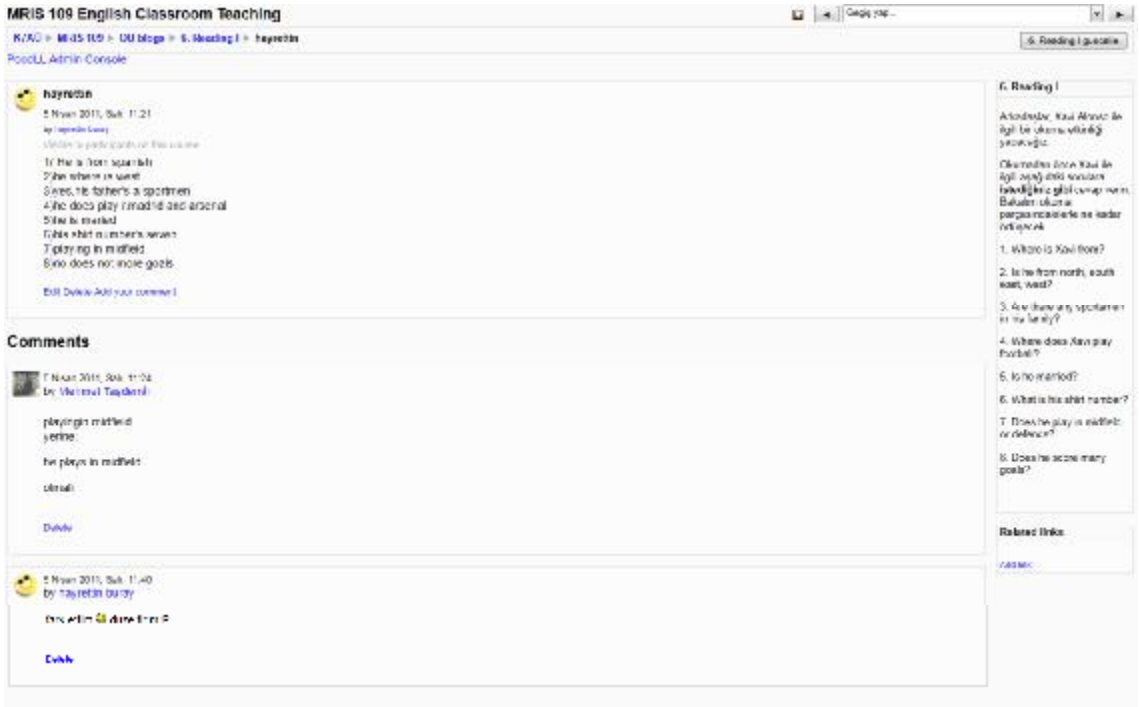

ALBUM PICTURES
ALBUM PICTURES
He has got brown eyes.He isn't fat.
He is short.
He is fast and thin.
Ozan's music is very beautiful.
He is my favorite artist.
My favorite song "Sen Oyna Dilber".
He plays football and chess in the afternoon.
His favorite food - is kebab and dolma.

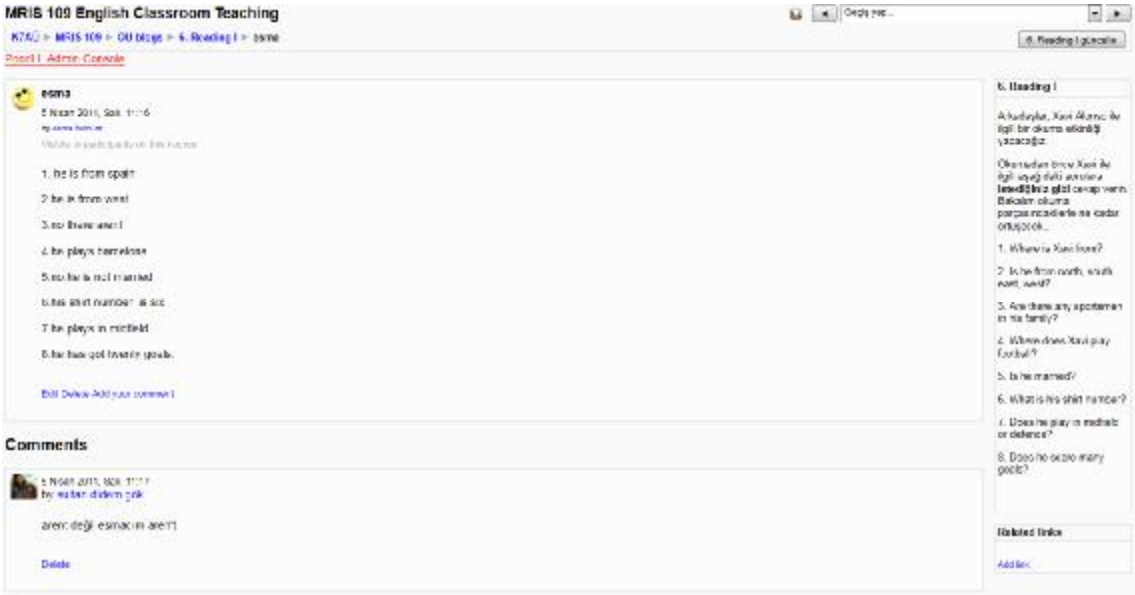

MRIS 109 English Classroom Teaching
The older version is shown on the left, where deleted text is highlighted. Added text is indicated in the newer version on the right. (Return to history view.)
12 Nisan 2011, Salı, 12:04
11 Mayıs 2011, Çarşamba, 16:31

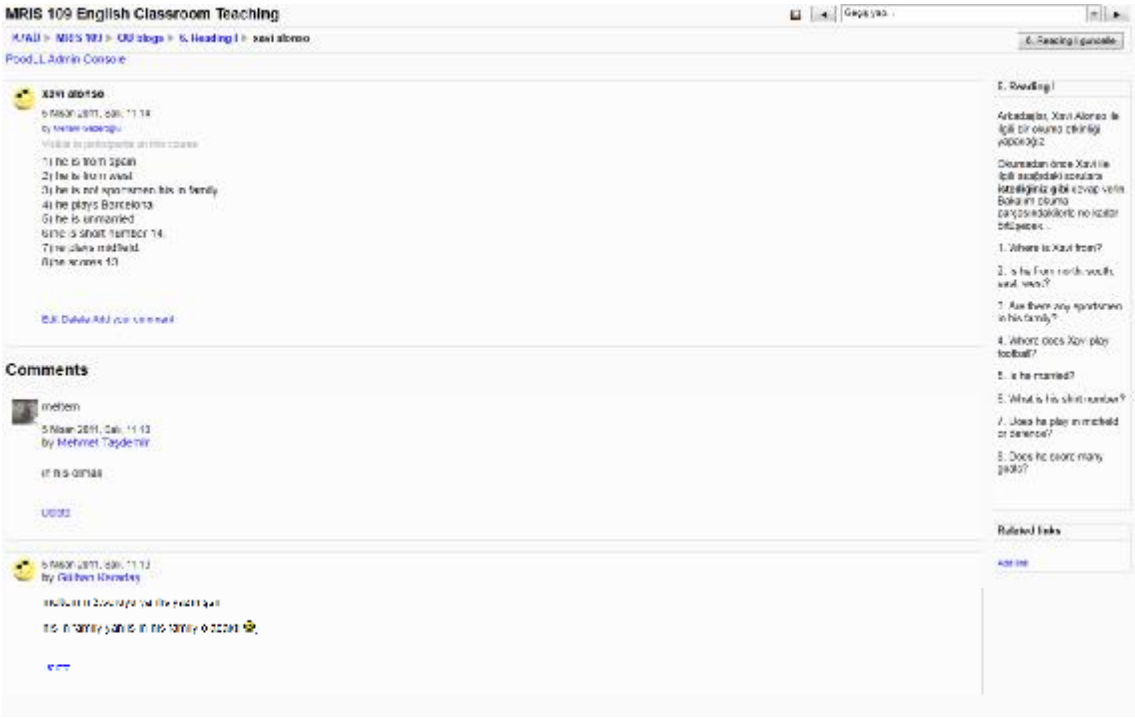

MRIB 109 English Classroom Teaching
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15 Mayıs 2011, Pazar, 10:35
15 Mayıs 2011, Pazar, 10:42

APPENDIX 20. Examples from the Blog Module

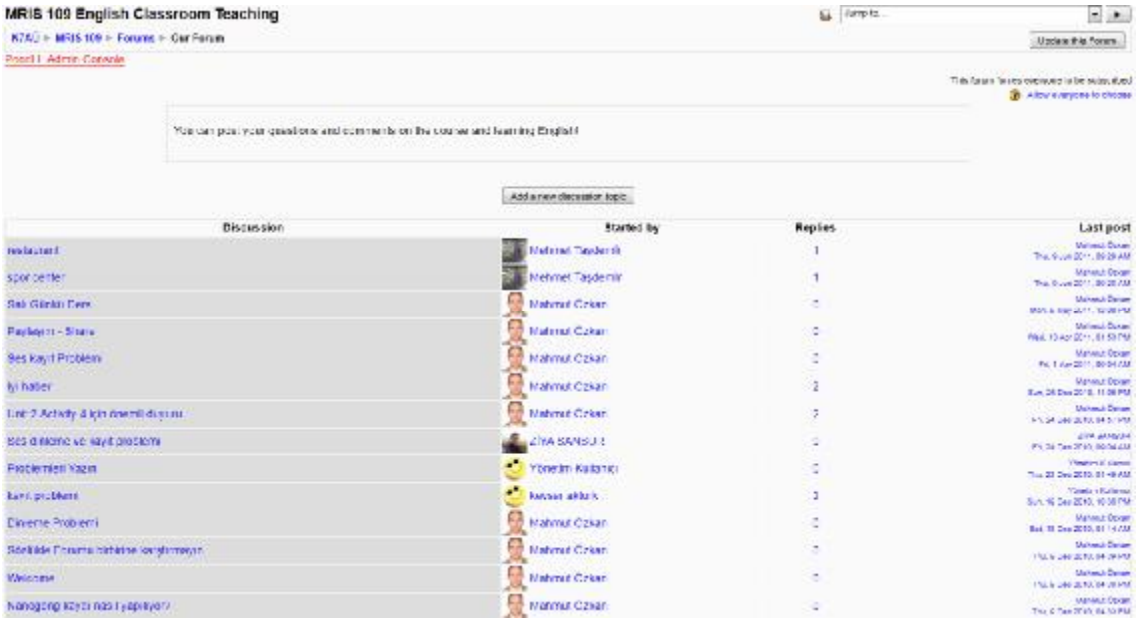





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esma
1. he is from spain
2. he is from west
3. no there aren't
4. he plays barcelona
5. no he is not married
6. his shirt number is six
7. he plays in midfield
8. he has got twenty goals.
Comments
aren değil esma:in aren't
Delete
6. Reading I
Related links

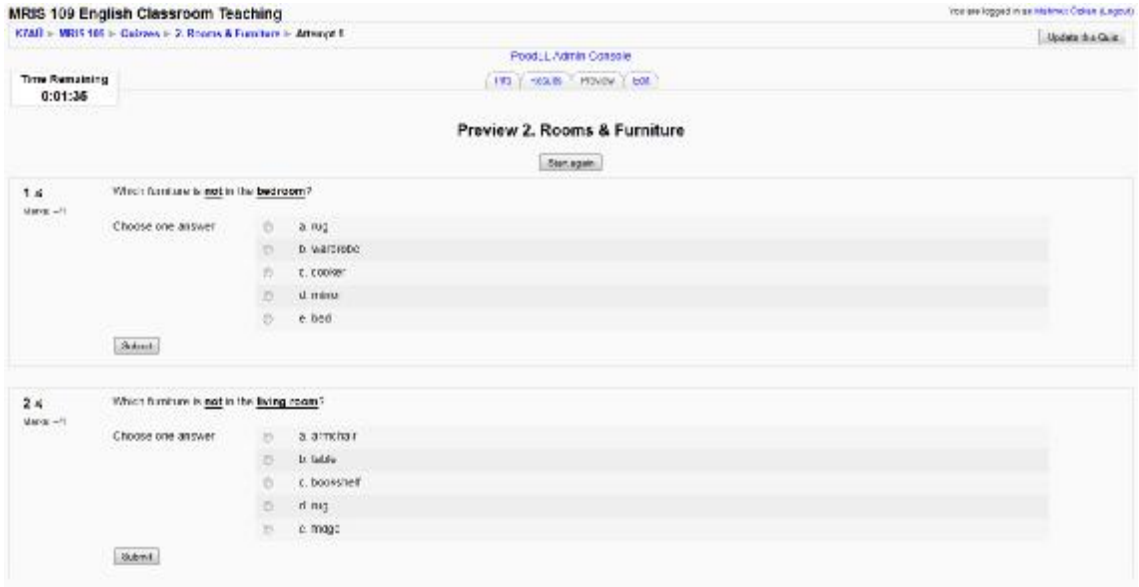

MRIS 109 English Classroom Teaching
xavi alonso
1) he is from spain
2) he is from west
3) he is not sportsmen his in family
4) he plays Barcelona
5) he is unmarried
6)his s short number 14
7) he plays midfield
8)he scores 10
Comments
meltem
6 Nisan 2011, Çar, 11:13
by Mehmet Taydemir
it his oman
Update
6. Reading I
Related links

APPENDIX 21. Forum Module

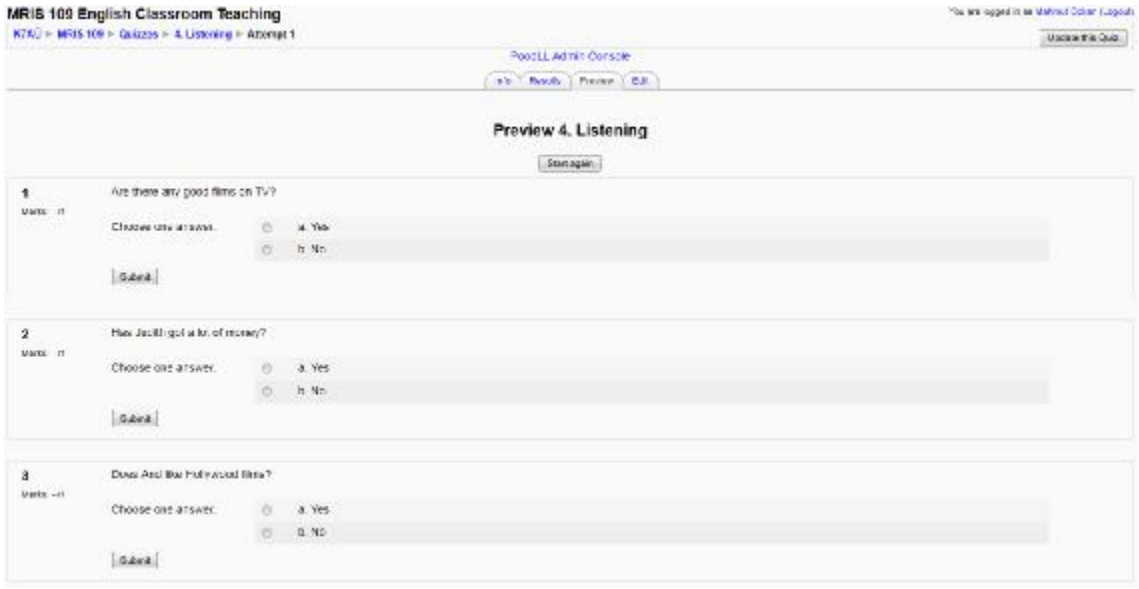


APPENDIX 22. Some Other Activities in Moodle








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Preview 4. Listening
Are there any good films on TV?
Choose one answer.
a. Yes
b. No
Submit
Choose one answer.
a. Yes
b. No
Submit
Choose one answer.
a. Yes
b. No
Submit


MRIS 109 English Classroom Teaching
Read the text.
New Words
Cevaplari asagidaki sekilde gönderebilirsiniz;
1. Martha plays video games
2
3. .....
4. .....
5. .....
6. .....

CURRICULUM VITAE

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1991 – 1994: Atatürk Lisesi, Düziçi/Osmaniye

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2006 – 2009: Anatolian Technical High School, Osmaniye (English Teacher)

2005 – 2006: Yavuz Selim Primary School, Osmaniye (English Teacher)

2000 – 2005: İstiklal Primary School, Düziçi/Osmaniye (English Teacher)

1999 – 2000: Private Bahçeli College (English Teacher)