The Effects of Curiosity on Second Language Learning in terms of Linguistic, Social-cultural and Pragmatic Development

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Abstract

As a concept motivating learners, curiosity has increasingly succeeded in capturing the imagination of researchers in language education especially in recent decades. Researchers have started to approach the driving force of curiosity in learning the target language from a variety of perspectives. They appreciated its positive contributions to the language development of learners stressing that curiosity serves as a motivation. Yet, there is a need for further research on curiosity and its effects on the improvement of learners' acquisition of target language in second language learning setting. Therefore, this case study aims to investigate the effects of curiosity on the second language learning process of 10 foreign learners of Turkish in second language setting. The data were collected through reflective reports. The results of the content analysis revealed that curiosity contributed to the language knowledge and language development of the participants. The areas of contribution were revealed as linguistic, social-cultural and pragmatic knowledge. The developments in these three specific aspects resulted in a holistic development in the target language.

Keywords: Curiosity, second language learning, second language learning setting, foreign learners of Turkish

Merakın Dilbilimsel, Sosyo-kültürel ve Edimbilimsel Gelişim Yönünden İkinci Dil Öğrenimine Etkisi

Öz

Öğrencilerin motivasyonunu sağlayan bir kavram olarak merak, özellikle son yıllarda artan bir şekilde dil eğitimi araştırmacılarının dikkatini çekmektedir. Araştırmacılar, merak kavramının hedef dili öğrenme üzerindeki etkisini farklı perspektiflerden araştırmışlardır. Merakın bir motivasyon kaynağı olduğunu vurgulayan araştırmacılar, onun olumlu yöndeki katkılarına dikkat çekmişlerdir. Ancak, merakın ikinci dil öğrenme ortamındaki dil edinim süreci üzerine etkisi konusunda daha fazla araştırmaya ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu durum çalışması, merakın ikinci dil öğrenme ortamında Türkçe öğrenen on yabancı uyruklu öğrencinin dil öğrenme süreçleri üzerindeki etkisini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Veriler öğrencilerin tuttukları raporlar yoluyla toplanmıştır. İçerik analizi, merakın katılımcıların dil bilgisine ve dil gelişimine katkıda bulunduğunu göstermiştir. Dilbilgisi, sosyal-kültürel bilgi ve edimbilimsel bilgideki artış katılımcıların bütünsel dil gelişimine katkı sağlamıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: merak, ikinci dik öğrenimi, ikinci dil öğrenme ortamı, yabancı uyruklu Türkçe öğrencileri

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INTRODUCTION

As a concept which is involved in human nature, curiosity can be basically defined as the desire to learn things. Reflections of acts of curiosity can be observed in almost all areas of human life. As a matter of fact, the present state of developments in all branches of science and technology may be defined as the extent that human curiosity has achieved up to now. Leaving aside coincidental inventions, almost everything invented for human use is a product of one or some curious minds.

Viewed from this perspective, curiosity may be defined as the hunger to do something. The education process is not an exception because the *hunger* in education is closely related with the eagerness and desire of learners to learn. Of course, there are a number of other essential factors to be considered for the success of education. However, what makes curiosity unique is that it plays a key role in stimulating further learning.

Since it is one of the fundamental and specific areas of education, language education can be said to have been affected by the natural human trait of curiosity. Covering a number of components ranging from the language-related to the culture-related aspects belonging to particular languages, language education is an area in which curiosity can serve for the purposes of a motive encouraging language learners to follow their language studies in the long-lasting and demanding process of language education.

This study is grounded on the Vygotskian perspective of social-constructivism which suggests that learning is a socially-constructed process which takes place through the social interaction of learners through their environment and other people (Vygotsky, 1978). Considering the context of the participants in this study, it can be inferred that the learners are learning the language in a second language learning setting where social interactions with different interlocutors involving the native speakers of the language are available. Within such a context of constant social interaction, the learner's curiosity can be said to increase and, thus, promote language development in terms of linguistic, social-cultural and pragmatic aspects. For a better presentation of the background of the study, it is helpful to introduce the definitions of the terms linguistic, social-cultural and pragmatic development. Linguistic development refers to the expansion of knowledge in terms of such language-related aspects of the language as its phonology, morphology and syntax. Socio-cultural development is about the development of language learners in terms of the social as well as cultural aspects regarding the target language through their social interactions with their environment and people around (Vygotsyk, 1978). Pragmatic development has to do with the ability to use the language appropriately in different contexts with different interlocutors (Bachmann, 1990).

Literature Review

As an inherent part of humanity, the concept of curiosity has received different definitions. It has been described as the need to explain unexpected by Piaget (1969), the desire to resolve uncertainty by Kagan (1972) and the desire to receive information by Haughton (2014). A more comprehensive definition is offered by Arnone, Small, Chauncey and McKenna (2011) who suggest that curiosity is "a basic instinct, an innate mechanism that enabled intelligent species to learn about and master new things in their environments, promoting survival, use of tools, and ultimately technological advances" (p. 181).

In line with its relation to learning and, therefore, mastering novel things, curiosity has multidimensional connections with various concepts. While White (1959) relates curiosity with competence, Kashdan and Yuen (2007) point at the relationship between curiosity and academic achievement. Regarding the search for learning new things, Arnone, et al. (2011) refer to the connection between curiosity and exploratory behavior. Taking the scope of curiosity into account, Reio, Petrosko, Wiswell, and Thongsukmag (2006) propose a three-dimensional model involving cognitive curiosity, physical curiosity and social curiosity. The strong association between curiosity and learning has also attracted attention in the educational arena (Baruch, Spektor-Levy & Mashal, 2014; Kang, Hsu, Krajbick, Loewenstein, McClure, Wang & Camerer, 2009; Silvia, 2005, 2008).

Having influence on multi-faceted aspects, curiosity can also be said to exert influence on the language learning process. Language involves a number of new aspects to learn and each improvement in the process is closely related with a curious effort. However, curiosity as a specific concept has not received much attention in language literature, particularly considering its effects on second language learning.

The perusal of the literature reveals that curiosity in language education has been mostly examined in line with motivation which has relevance with curiosity. Regarding the significance of motivation in the maintenance of the desire and dedication to learn a language, Dörnyei (1998, p.117) suggested that "motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning the L2 and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process" and underlined the dynamic relationship between motivation and other factors, which is curiosity for the purposes of this study, stating "all the other factors involved in L2 acquisition presuppose motivation to some extent". The strong connection between motivation and curiosity is also stressed by Ciampa (2016) and Lin, Wong and McBride-Chang (2012).

A seminal work belonging to Spolsky (1969) can be considered as an example referring to the notion of curiosity in language education. Covering the attitudinal foundation in language learning, the researcher noted that the attitude of learners towards the language and its users is among the basic attitudinal factors influencing learner motivation. Based on this conclusion, it can be stated that the attitudes towards a particular language and its speakers have an influence on the motivation, therefore, the curiosity of language learners.

The concept of curiosity has also been examined within the context of young learners. Working with 30 first-grader children, Ciampa (2016) explored the relationship between curiosity promoted through mobile e-books and reading motivation. As a result of the case study, the researcher reported that curiosity was a stimulating factor increasing the participants' motivation for reading activities. Lin et al (2012) investigated the reading motivation and comprehension of 104 Chinese bilingual fifth-graders learning English as a foreign language. The results of the questionnaire revealed that curiosity besides self-efficacy and involvement was influential affecting the participants' reading motivation and comprehension in both languages, L1 in particular.

The relevant literature also presents some studies which had a direct focus on the notion of curiosity. With an aim to examine the continuance attention of 125 senior students at secondary level, Chang, Tseng, Liang and Yan (2013) centered their study on the Technology Acceptance Model taking curiosity and continuance intention variables into account. The results revealed that curiosity was a strong factor impacting the participants' intention to continue learning through the applied system.

Besides the studies with young learner profile, there are also examples of research conducted with adult language learners. Working with six learners of French who had a short-term study abroad experience, Allen (2010) investigated the sources of motivation for the participants to continue their French education. The researchers reported that linguistic curiosity and career motives were the factors affecting the participants' willingness to continue their learning process. Graham and Helen (2011) centered on the effectiveness of information gap designs as a tool to enhance academic curiosity in second language learning. The researchers reported that information gap designs formed the basis for inquiry-based learning and promoted academic curiosity. Designing a two-step action research, Houghton (2014) studied the indications of curiosity in a study abroad case regarding the design of teaching materials to stimulate curiosity in terms of intercultural communicative competence in an English course. The results showed that the information-gap design promoted curiosity in the participants regarding the cultural-communicative aspects of the target language.

Focusing on the connection between second language learning motivation and global competence, Semaan and Yamazaki (2015) worked with 137 participants learning critical languages. The results of the survey pointed at the positive relationship between motivation and global competence. In addition, the researchers noted that curiosity towards cultural differences contributed to global competence. This result pointing at the effects of cultural curiosity echoed the results previously reported

by Shedivy (2004), who shared a similar research basis with Allen (2010) aiming to explore the reasons why some learners continue their language education after taking compulsory education. In a quasi-experimental study, Gurning and Siregar (2017) aimed to find out whether teaching strategies and curiosity influence 76 learners' success in reading comprehension. The results pointed at the positive correlation between curiosity as well as teaching strategies and success in reading comprehension.

Curiosity has also been investigated in the Turkish context. Exploring the tertiary level students' curiosity levels, Demirel and Coşkun (2009) aimed to find out whether there was a relationship between levels of curiosity and such factors as gender, faculty, university entrance scores and achievement perception. The results of the curiosity scale showed that while achievement of success was not a factor affecting the participants' curiosity levels, the other three factors had a positive relationship with curiosity. Centering on secondary school students' achievement levels in science course, Ceylan, Sağırekmekçi, Tatar and Bilgin (2016) searched whether the level of motivation, curiosity and attitudes were factors influencing the participants' achievement levels. The results of the questionnaire showed that while motivation did not have a significant connection with achievement, attitude and curiosity had direct effects on science achievement. Placing emphasis on the epistemological curiosity of 557 high school students towards mathematics lessons, Eren and Coşkun (2016) investigated the relationship among variables of boredom, strategies to cope with boredom and epistemic curiosity. The results pointed at the significant relationship among the variables. In other words, epistemic curiosity was shown to decrease boredom while promoting the boredom-coping strategies.

The concept of curiosity can be said to promote cultural and pragmatic development. In a study conducted with international students, Mikhaylov (2016) examined the effects of curiosity in enhancing cross-cultural knowledge and competence. The researcher reported that the cross-cultural exchanges stimulated the participants' curiosity to develop their cultural knowledge and this curiosity, in turn, developed their cross-cultural knowledge. This result echoed the remarks of Bennett (2009), Shively (2010) and Hassanzadeh, Silong, Asmuni and Wahat (2015) who stated that curiosity is the force keeping the minds of people open to novel things, increasing their social, cultural and pragmatic knowledge and competence.

Curiosity has become a topic of investigation from different perspectives involving its existence and effects on young learners of various ages (Towmey & Westermann, 2017; West & Roberts, 2016); its effects on reading motivation (Schiefele, Schaffner, Möller, Wigfield, Nolen & Baker, 2012); curiosity in science lessons (Ceylan, et al., 2016); curiosity in mathematics (Eren & Coşkun, 2016); curiosity and teaching strategies (Gurning & Siregar, 2017). The analysis of the existing literature on curiosity reveals that though curiosity has received increasing attention in research, there is still room for research on curiosity in language learning environments, second language learning in particular. The existing research on the effects of curiosity on language education indicates that curiosity, accompanied by motivation, is among the factors influencing the language learning process. However, considering the number of studies centering on the impact of curiosity on language learning success, future research seems needed in second language education as it provides learners with the chance to observe and experience the target language within its authentic context. Therefore, this case study is intended to investigate the effects of curiosity on second language learning success. The study is expected to present a different perspective to research on curiosity emphasizing its influence on learning success in second language learning setting which is rich in social and cultural content besides linguistic presentation.

METHODOLOGY

This study is grounded on qualitative case study design in that case study enables researchers to investigate the issue under discussion in a detailed way to gain deeper insights (Creswell, 1998; Yin, 1994). Through this case study design, the experiences of the participants can be examined in their real contexts. Since the participants in this study were the real agents experiencing language development supported by curiosity, case study design was thought to help the researcher understand the genuine experiences of the agents in their actual learning context in terms of the effects of curiosity on their language development.

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at an institution (AtaTömer) which provides a year-long preparatory Turkish language education for foreign learners of Turkish. This institution annually hosts foreign learners of Turkish provided scholarship by the Turkish government to receive their undergraduate/graduate studies. These learners are supposed to have C1 level of language proficiency to be able to go on their studies in their departments. For this purpose, they receive Turkish preparatory education in the institution with other foreign learners coming from different countries. The union of students with different social, religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds creates an authentic environment in which a diversity of nations come together and form a new community, increasing curiosity to learn the target language better as it was the common language for the new group.

Purposeful sampling was adopted to have a precise picture of cases (Patton, 1987). The participants of this study were 10 learners of Turkish coming from Mongolia, Zambia, Madagascar, Iran, Afghanistan and Mauritania. These learners were selected on the grounds that they reported they were curious about new things around and this enabled them to learn new things and, therefore, promoted their language development. In addition, these 10 foreign learners were reported by their language instructors to hold a more curiosity-driven language learning process compared to their friends. Therefore, on a voluntary-basis, these learners were selected as the participants of the study. They were thought to contribute to the maintenance of a glocal environment preserving and presenting their cultural and social characteristics on the one hand, and interacting with other cultures on the other.

Data Collection Tool

The data were collected through reflection reports. The participants were asked to keep reports monthly, three in total, in which they can reflect their experiences regarding the effects of curiosity in their language development. They were suggested to keep their reflection reports in line with the following questions:

1. Do you think that your curiosity towards the target culture affects your language development?
2. How do you think your curiosity towards the cultures of other students (the students in your class) affects your language development?
3. How do you think your curiosity towards the social aspects of the target culture affects your language development?
4. How do you think your curiosity towards the social aspects of other friends affects your language development?
5. How do you think your curiosity towards the people using the target language affects your language development?

These questions were prepared by the researcher in line with her observations of the participants in the learning environment considering their attitudes and relationships with other students as well as informal dialogues with the students in the institution. Proofread by two field experts of teaching Turkish to ensure instrument validity, the questions were prepared in Turkish as the participants had B2 level of language proficiency when they were asked to keep the reports.

Data Collection and Analysis Process

The data were collected in the second term of the preparatory education because, in this way, the participants could gain experience and observe the linguistic, cultural and social aspects in the learning setting. At the beginning of the second term, the participants were selected based on their voluntary participation and they were asked to keep three reports reflecting their curiosity-based experiences promoting their target language development. They were suggested to write their reports in line with the above-mentioned questions. The participants wrote one report for almost every month, three reports in total, in the 16-week period. They used Turkish in their reports.

After collecting the reports, the researcher translated them into English and a native speaker of English proofread the data. In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the data, each participant was shown the transcripts of their reflective reports and the preliminary analysis of the findings. In this way, the researcher obtained participants approval for the data to be analyzed.

Content analysis was adopted to analyze the data. The analysis process was conducted in two main phases. In the first phase, the reflective reports of individual participants were analyzed separately in order to determine the recurring aspects for each participant. In the second phase, the researcher compared the reflective reports of the participants to identify the similar and different aspects of the participants' experiences. Then, the researcher identified common codes and combined them into relevant categories reflecting on the curiosity-driven experiences affecting language development of the participants. In order to ensure trustworthiness in the analysis process, another expert on the field was consulted to content-analyze the data. The second-rater analysis also revealed similar aspects, strengthening the data analysis. The processes of peer-checking the questions, obtaining participant approval for the transcribed reports and initial analysis and second rater analysis were followed to ensure data validation.

RESULTS

The results of this case study pointed at curiosity as a factor positively contributing to the language development of the participants. The content analysis of the reflection reports indicating the curiosity-driven experiences of the participants in the process of language development in the second language learning setting can be presented under three categories: curiosity affecting linguistic development, curiosity affecting social-cultural development and curiosity affecting pragmatic development.

The results are displayed with extracts from the reflection reports of the participants. As there were four reflection reports from each participant, the extracts are presented with the report number. For example, P3-R2 refers to the example quote of the third participant in the second reflection report.

Curiosity Affecting Linguistic Development

In the second language learning process, the participants, as they stated in their reflection reports, were exposed to a great amount of language content. They had the chance to observe the way the target language was used inside and outside the classroom setting. This offered them the opportunity to encounter a number of new language usages to learn. This content-rich environment naturally raised the curiosity of the participants to learn more about the target language. This experience is reflected by one of the participants who pointed out the availability of the target language everywhere in the target community:

"Here, language is everywhere. It doesn't matter whether you are inside or outside the class. You can hear Turkish wherever you go. Constantly hearing the language means that there are always new things to learn. So, when I hear something new, I immediately wonder what it is. I believe this really improves my language knowledge." (P7-R3)

Referring to the availability of the target language everywhere, the same participant also appreciated the chances of learning the language peripherally increasing his curiosity:

"I live in a city in which the language is everywhere even on the signboards in the streets. So, I realize learning new words from those signboards. When I don't understand, I immediately check the item on the Internet and learn what it is." (P7-R1)

The participants also mentioned some cases in which they were engaging themselves in a process of comparing the linguistic aspects of their native languages with those of the target language. Upon hearing a new linguistic aspect in the target language, the participants stated they were getting curious whether there is a similar rule in their native language. Going through a process of comparing and contrasting the two languages, the participants reported to learn some linguistic aspects better as

they established associations between the new information and the existing one, as explained in the below extract:

> "When I learn a new linguistic rule in Turkish, I try to search for something similar to it in my own language. Sometimes, there are similar and sometimes there are different rules between the two languages. I realize that I can learn the new rules better and use them more effectively by identifying the similarities and differences." (P1-R2)

The reflections of the participants revealed that constantly being exposed to new forms of the target language inside and outside the language classroom was a factor increasing their curiosity to learn more about the language. Either by searching for novel things or going through a process of comparing and contrasting their native language and the target language, the participants expressed being motivated, out of curiosity, to develop their language knowledge in terms of the linguistic aspects.

Curiosity Affecting Social-cultural Development

As any language is related with the social and cultural aspects belonging to its community, the process of language learning naturally involves a social-cultural side to master. Being aware of this reality, the participants reported their experiences that while learning the target language, they were also obtaining information about the social and cultural structure of the target language.

The participants referred to several specific cases in which they developed their language knowledge wondering the social and cultural characteristics of the target society. One of these cases was related to the traditions of the target culture. As they were learning the target language in its authentic setting, the participants were in constant interaction with the target culture and the cultures of their friends. This created an atmosphere in which there were different examples reflecting the characteristics of the society. Narrating an experience in which she had the chance to attend a henna night, one of the participants offered the below comment also reflecting the reason for language development:

> "I am happy to learn Turkish in Turkey because I can live the language here. For example, one evening, one of my roommates in the dormitory invited me to a henna night. Then, I really became curious because I wondered the similar and different aspects of our henna night and the Turkish henna night. Before going there and while attending the henna night, I asked a lot of questions to my roommate. At that night, I learned many new words about a specific cultural event." (P8-R3)

Considering the inseparable connection between language and culture, another participant referred to his curiosity about the Turkish cuisine. The participant revealed his thought that food is a reflection of a culture and there are peculiar aspects in each and every cuisine, as mirrored in the following comment:

> "I am really interested in the Turkish cuisine. When I have some free time, I try to search for different recipes. I compare the ingredients we mostly use in my county and the ones Turks mostly use in their food. In this way, I can say I have learned a number of new vocabulary items including chunks presented in recipes." (P5-R1)

The history of the target culture was also a source of curiosity for some of the participants. While trying to learn about the historical background of the target society, one of the participants explained that he learned some new historical concepts and some titles particularly belonging to the target culture:

> "I believe history is a great part of language and I desire to learn about the history of the target society. While reading its history, I found myself encountering and searching for new concepts like geographical place names or title names given to specific positions. In addition, while reading in the target language, I am also exposed to the target language. I can say that, through my curiosity about history, I have developed my language knowledge and competence." (P9-R2)

The social side of the living community also became a source of curiosity for the participants. The way relationships were established and maintained in the target society or the way some events were organized raised the curiosity of the participants and motivated them to learn about these context-specific aspects in the target society. This social curiosity was a motive helping the participants develop their language knowledge:

> "A new community means new rules and styles followed in social life. Starting from the day I came here, I try to pay attention to the lifestyle in the target community. Sometimes, I ask questions to my native friends; sometimes I search for further information on the Internet. This process has made two main contributions to me: while learning more about the target culture, I can develop my language knowledge as well." (P4-R3)

The curiosity experienced by the participants as regards the novel social and cultural dimensions in the target community was reported as a source of motivation stimulating language development of the participants. In order to satisfy their curiosity, the participants asked questions to native people, searched through the web sources or read books. All these practices helped the participants develop their language knowledge and competences.

Curiosity Affecting Pragmatic Development

The pragmatic norms of a language which are about the appropriate ways of maintaining interaction between interlocutors in different contexts are also involved in the process of language learning. While sharing life in the target community, the participants were exposed to these abstract norms inside and outside the classroom setting. One of the participants appreciated the available chances to observe the way Turkish was used appropriately by its native speakers and commented as such:

> "Since there are native speakers everywhere, I am lucky to observe the way the target language should be used appropriately. I participate in different contexts and I hear different examples of proper language use. This is a great opportunity to develop my language competence and particularly my pragmatic knowledge." (P1-R1)

Another participant referred to the interactions among the target people as a source of language development. She stated that being curious about, and thus, observing how the target people initiate, continue or finalize conversations contributed to her understanding of maintaining interaction in the target language. She also added that observing the same person using the language differently in different contexts raised her awareness of the right way to use Turkish:

> "I have a roommate who is a native speaker of Turkish. I try to carefully listen to her while she is talking to someone in Turkish. I realized that the language she was using was not the same in every place. This situation increased my curiosity and I paid more attention to her speech each and every time she spoke with other people. After some time, I realized that this enhanced my language knowledge in terms of what to say where." (P10-R3)

Taking the results related to the effects of curiosity in second language learning into account, it can be inferred that curiosity served as a factor which motivated the participants to search for further chances to develop their language knowledge. The more they were curious about different aspects of the target language, the newer things they learned. Their curiosity paved the way for them to develop their linguistic, social-cultural and pragmatic knowledge while contributing to their language knowledge and competence in the glocal second language setting.

DISCUSSION

The results of this case study showed that the curiosity-driven experiences of the participants contributed to their language development in the process of language learning in the second language setting in three dimensions: linguistic development, socio-cultural development and pragmatic development promoted by curiosity. In the light of these dimensions, some conclusions can be presented as follows.

The results obtained from this study can be said to be in parallel with those reported in previous research in some particular dimensions. The first dimension is related with the linguistic development promoted by curiosity noted by the participants in this study. Being language learners in the second language learning context, the participants reported taking advantage of the constant exposure to the target language inside and outside the classroom. The availability of great amounts of language exposure to the target language in terms of its linguistic features in the second language learning environments was also underlined in the studies of Yang and Lyster (2010) and Takkaç Tulgar (2018) who maintained that exposure to language forms in the target context contributes to learners' linguistic development. Setting out from the conclusions of this study and related previous research, it can be discussed that the availability of the target language in different authentic contexts is a valuable opportunity for language learners to hear the language in its natural environments produced by its native speakers. In this way, learners who are exposed to the target language in actual use can develop an understanding of the way the target language works in terms of its linguistic aspects.

Considering the scope of the present research examining the curiosity factor, one can also infer that the awareness increased through exposure can increase the participants' curiosity to learn more about the novel aspects of the language. New exposures raise curiosity and curiosity stimulates a desire to learn more about novel things as also suggested by Towmey and Westermann (2017). In this sense, curiosity can be regarded as the dynamic behind the linguistic development of the participants in this study.

The second dimension echoing the conclusions in previous research is about the language development regarding the social-cultural aspects of the target language stimulated by curiosity. While they were learning the target language, the participants also formed a new community in which they had social and cultural sharing maintained through the common language. Since the participants were receiving their language education in the second language setting, there were a huge number of possibilities to observe and experience different social and cultural events. In other words, there was an atmosphere of social relationships grounded on linguistic and cultural interactions among different nations as well as the target culture. Some researchers considered this social environment formed for educational purposes as participatory cultures (Csizer & Dörnyei, 2005; Jenkins, Purushotma, Clinton, Weigel & Robison, 2006).

Taking the presence of social interaction in second language learning environments into account, Shedivy (2004) and Engel (2011) underlined that this social interaction may increase the cultural interest and curiosity of the participants. Upon evaluating the case experienced by the participants in this study, one can also observe a similar case in which the participants' curiosity raised by the interactions through the social environment created in the second language learning context. It can be concluded that the sense of curiosity increased when the participants observed different cultures; therefore, they felt the need to develop their target language knowledge and skills as it was the common means of communication with the other members of the community. In addition, the participants also needed to develop their target language proficiency at the desired level in order to present their cultural values to other people in the glocal community. Therefore, since the target language was the common language in this setting, the curiosity to better understand others and introduce their unique characteristics to other interlocutors can be considered to have stimulated their language development.

The third dimension supporting the previous research is related with the language development stimulated by curiosity-directed experiences regarding the pragmatic aspects. Pragmatic competence is an integrated component of any language as it involves the abstract norms regulating human communication in a particular society (Takkaç Tulgar, 2016). The essential nature of pragmatic competence in language learning is also underlined by the prominent figures in the field of pragmatics and pragmatic competence (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; Taguchi, 2014). Observing the native speakers using the target language in different settings, the participants in this study appreciated the rich content of the language learning environment in terms of pragmatic content.

From the curiosity-driven experiences of the participants in this study, it can be concluded that, these pragmatic observations, while enabling the participants to figure out the abstract rules of the language, also increased their curiosity in learning more about the target language and making comparisons between their mother tongue and the target language.

Some concluding discussions based on the curiosity-driven language learning experiences of the participants can be presented as follows. The second language learning setting in the present study offered a linguistically, socially and pragmatically rich environment for the participants, which is thought to raise the curiosity of the participants in learning more novel aspects in the target language. The learning experiences of the participants were grounded on a curiosity-stimulated basis and their curiosity, accompanied with the availability of the target language in its natural context, enabled the participants to develop their language knowledge and abilities in terms of linguistic, social and pragmatic dimensions of the language.

What actually motivated the participants was their curiosity to engage themselves more in the language with the help of the language available around. They had the sense of inquisitiveness proposed by Mendelhall (2001), which can be regarded as a synonym for curiosity, encouraging them to take an active and curiosity-directed role in language learning. The more they participated in language-rich environments, the more their curiosity increased. In an atmosphere of linguistic, social-cultural and pragmatic sharing, the curiosity, social curiosity in particular, of the participants naturally increased helping them expand their knowledge, a case which was also reported by Reio et al (2006) and Lasagabaster (2017).

Given these viewpoints, one can infer that the curiosity of the participants in this study influenced their social and cultural curiosity, that the language learning experiences of the participants in this study affected their forms of thinking by increasing their curiosity, that the learning context had influence on their curiosity from social and cognitive aspects and that the attitude, curiosity in this case, influenced the practices of the participants since they were searching for ways of developing their language knowledge to satisfy their social and cultural curiosity in the glocal second language learning environment. The combination of curiosity in different forms resulted in the development of language knowledge and competence of the participants. As suggested by Litman, Hutchins and Russon (2005) and Schmitt and Lahroodi (2008), curiosity served as a central factor in learning in this study modifying the behaviors of the participants. In conclusion, curiosity motivated the participants, regulated their language learning experiences and helped them improve their language competence in linguistic, social and pragmatic terms.

CONCLUSION

In this case study, the participants reported to develop their language knowledge and competence in terms of the linguistic, social and pragmatic aspects of the target language in the second language learning environment through their curiosity-driven experiences.

The main reason behind this development was the desire to learn more about the target culture and the different cultures introduced by the other students in the institution. As a result, the more they were curious about novelty, the more they improved their target language. They improved their linguistic knowledge by adding new items into their language repertoire. They advanced their social and cultural basis by observing the target culture as well as other cultures. In addition, they enhanced their pragmatic competence by learning the norms of different cultures and languages including the target language. Moreover, the participants contributed to the maintenance of a new social and cultural atmosphere by introducing local cultures into the learning community reflecting their peculiar linguistic, social and cultural characteristics. In conclusion, the participants benefitted from the sense of curiosity in developing their knowledge and competence in the target language in terms of linguistic, social-cultural and pragmatic aspects. Therefore, as also suggested by Phillips (2013), spaces for curiosity should be created for language learners to encourage them to learn the language more effectively and enjoyable.

In this sense, the unbreakable cycle between social and cultural interactions and curiosity should be benefitted from in the process of second language education.

Though it aimed to contribute to research on curiosity, this study is not out of limitations. The main limitation is the number of the participants. In addition, the data were collected through a single instrument. In addition, the study was conducted in a single setting. therefore, future research can be carried out with more participants whose perspectives will be examined with the help of data collected through different instruments. Future research can also compare cross cases in which the experiences of second language learners participating in different glocal settings can be investigated.

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