

Teacher Representations of English as a Foreign Language: Case Study of Two Teachers in Turkey

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Abstract

In a developing nation like Turkey, the English language plays a significant role in educational and socioeconomic mobility. English is acquired and taught as a foreign language (EFL) primarily in the classrooms. However, the ways in which English language is represented in classroom instruction have been hardly examined and understood. With that, this paper aims to depict two teachers' representations of the English language as influenced by a university entrance English language test administered in 2008 in Turkey. The two teachers' representations of the English language are projected from a 12th grade classroom at an Anatolian Lycee located in the Mediterranean region of Turkey. Doyle's task framework is employed, specifically in order to map what content representations emerged out of the teachers' classroom practices. Data sources include biweekly teacher logs, biweekly interviews, and biweekly classroom observations. The paper highlights that the two teachers' classroom representations of English were entrenched with the idea of high-stakes test preparation for university admissions as they deemed test preparation as a major part of their classroom instruction. That is, representations of the English language were contracted to tested structures and items. The paper illustrates the teachers' representations of reading and grammar with the insight that division of labour, though not in the form of collaboration, made it possible for the teachers to cope with the contraction effect of test preparation.

Keywords: *Teacher content representations; English as a foreign language (EFL); test impact; content contraction*

Introduction

In contexts where English is taught as a foreign language (EFL), the ways in which teachers represent the English language are largely influenced by standardized tests, textbooks, students' learning needs, and teachers' own experiences learning English and communicating in the language. In most EFL settings, English is often associated with easier and prestigious access to educational and socioeconomic benefits which increases the importance of acquiring the language. However, typically in these settings, English language is not commonly acquired and/or spoken outside classroom settings as the primary language. Thus, classroom instruction has important implications for what students learn in classrooms as it is the teachers who transform and enact English language content. Yet, little is known about EFL teachers' representations of the language. This paper explores the ways in which teachers represent the English language and learners are exposed to the language in classrooms. More specifically, it seeks to understand two teachers' representation of English language, as influenced by a locally administered high stakes English language test.

In EFL settings, teachers' representations of the language might be influenced by the centralized national curriculum and the centrally administered English language test (Shohamy, 1998). This paper particularly contextualizes this issue in an EFL setting; Turkey, where there are tensions between the locally developed and administered high stakes English language test, and local instructional practice. In a developing nation like Turkey characterized with a dense young population, a high stakes English language test, also known as the Yabancı Diller Sinavi (YDS), serves college admission and placement assessment. This assessment is designed to assess English language proficiency in one skill only, reading. Yet, it functions as a gatekeeper for college admission to programs such as English language teaching, English language and literature, and American culture and literature. Since it is a high stakes test, understanding the relationships between the test and classroom practice matters. Given that, this paper specifically sought to understand two English language teachers' representation of English in one classroom as influenced by a particular contextual factor like the English language university entrance exam (YDS). The teachers' instructional practice was explored employing the 'task window' (Doyle 1986) to understanding the ways in which English language content and skills were enacted in the EFL classroom. Next, I elaborate the task window to teacher content representations.

Teacher content representations

In examining language teachers' practice, the notion of representation could carry several different interpretations; such as teachers' visual or spatial representation of structural knowledge (Kang, 2004), representation of culture (Menard-Warwick, 2009). It could also refer to representation of skills and structures; reading, listening, speaking, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. In the general teacher education literature, teachers' representations of content knowledge are viewed within the purview of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK; Shulman, 1986). In the PCK approach to teacher content representations, the focus is on the effectiveness of teachers' practices. The focus is on effectiveness because teachers' content representations are examined in terms of "the most useful forms of representation of those ideas, the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations-in a word, the ways of formulating the subject that make it comprehensible to others" (Shulman, 1986, p. 9-10). The second view of teacher content representations, on the other hand, examines the ways in which teachers enact content in the classroom without focusing on teachers' most effective representations. In this view, content representations refer to 'the ways in which the curriculum is made concrete in the classroom tasks teachers define for students' (Doyle, 1986, p. 3). With this conceptualization, Doyle emphasizes the classroom task window approach to capturing the ways in which teachers bring content to life in the classrooms.

More specifically, to Doyle (1986; 1992), the task that the teachers develop and enact in the classroom has the following components: *product*, *operations*, *resources*, and *weight*. To interpret all these components of academic tasks, one needs to think of the teachers' content representations as classroom events in which the content is laid on the classroom floor. Teachers lay the content through formulations of a goal state, actual operations to be followed, resources in hand or to be developed, and the significance of working on all these to get at the goal state. Some examples of *products* attained in the classroom are: 'words in blanks on a worksheet, answers to a set of questions, or an original essay. *Operations* could be exemplified as copying words off a list, remembering words from previous instruction followed to get at the products through the use of *resources* like consulting to a textbook' (Doyle, 1986, p. 5). *Weight of task* refers to the significance that a task holds on the overall or short term accountability system of the class (grade and the like). The weight could be exemplified with 'a warm up exercise in math might count as a daily grade whereas a unit text might account for 20 percent of the grade for a term' (Doyle, 1988, p. 169). The weight of a task could affect a number of aspects in the representation of content like mainly the

actual generation of the product, students' resilience to engage in this generation or the smooth versus bumpy flow of the classroom activity. The weight of the task might be quite significant in the accountability system of the classroom but may not be 'heard and interpreted' as significant by each student. This then changes what gets enacted and what students attain in the classroom.

All in all, the dimensions, explicated through Doyle's task framework, could be factored to actually analyze a task projected through teachers' content presentations. Before presenting the dimensions that are employed for the analysis in this study, I elaborate on teacher representation of English language as influenced by contextual factors like tests.

Teachers' representation of English language as influenced by tests

There are chains of interactions and influences between instruction and what the test capitalizes for the examinees and learners of English to know. This point is widely discussed (e.g., Shepard & Dougherty Cutts, 1991; Alderson & Wall, 1993; Gorsuch, 2000; Shohamy, 2001b; Au, 2007), who present research on the interface between teachers' instructional practices and the test. For instance, Shohamy (1998, 2001b) exemplifies the influence of an EFL oral proficiency test over the practice of teachers who prepare the students for the test through incorporating video cassettes, TV series, cue cards, auditory materials and so on. Examples for both the positive and negative wash-back effects of the EFL language tests on EFL teaching practices could be drawn from around the world. While Wu (2001) pointed to the constraining effect of the language tests over language teaching in China, Alderson and Wall (1993) point to both the positive and negative effects of an O-level examination over teaching practices in Sri Lanka. The effects were in that teachers paid more attention to reading at the expense of listening and speaking activities, which was simultaneously interpreted as a positive effect because teachers designed fewer grammar items. When high stakes are attached to a test, teachers make sure to facilitate students' success on the test. Gorsuch (2000) exemplifies the case of Japanese EFL teachers illustrating how the teachers choose to enact form-focused content like grammar and vocabulary, which are predominantly tested on the locally administered university entrance exams. These teachers choose to emphasize grammar and vocabulary instruction over the communicative language teaching practices that are mandated by the national educational policies. Ferman (2004) also discusses the narrowing of scope and content in the 12th grade EFL high school classrooms where students are preparing for the EFL Oral Matriculation Test administered in Israel. For this preparation, 89% (n= 16) of the teachers reported that longer texts like stories, essays, and plays were not within the scope of their instruction, as they opted to focus on easier and shorter texts geared towards test preparation.

In the English language testing situation of Turkey, the fact that the YDS test is centrally designed and implemented across the country is a point of discussion. Shohamy (1998) categorizes the implementation of the language tests within two educational systems: centralized versus decentralized systems. In a centralized educational system, central power bodies like the department of education or the ministry of education will be in control of curriculum development and nationally administered standardized tests. In these systems, the tests and curricula could play a powerful role in imposing the policies and educational processes. Thus, the way a skill area is measured in a testing situation might influence the way language content gets organized in the curriculum, acquired by the students, and represented by the teachers.

Method

The principal question and the sub-questions guiding this research were:

1. How do the two EFL teacher participants represent the English language in their instructional practices over 12 weeks?
 - a. What academic tasks did the teachers attempt to enact in their classes?
 - b. How were the tasks enacted?

Qualitative methods were employed to answer the main question of this research. Specifically, a descriptive case study was followed for two reasons. First, the study was exploratory and helped to identify patterns and themes in the two teachers' instructional practices. Second, it sought to map rich local descriptions of classroom practices of two teachers. Qualitative methods in this study included local and situated analysis of the two teachers' theories of the English language content as reflected in their interviews. Also, classroom observations and teacher logs were triangulated with the teacher interviews to understand the ways in which they represent English in the classroom in interaction with the students.

Examining how the two teachers represented the English language was grounded in classroom observations. Rowan, Camburn, and Correnti (2004) argue, however, that classroom observations alone do not suffice for research on teaching. Therefore, semi-structured teacher logs were used to supplement the observations. These logs were designed not only to provide the teachers the opportunity to choose from a list of language functions that teachers emphasize in their instructional practice, but also to write out what they chose to enact and how.

Through semi-structured interviews, this study sought to get the teachers to debrief what content they had enacted during the previous week and how. These debriefings helped to unpack teachers' theories of the particular content as well as their reflections on the enacted content. So, the content of the bi-weekly interviews mainly focused on discussion of what the teachers claimed to have enacted in their logs. Moreover, the interviews followed the researcher's classroom observations and the topics of interest and questions were specified in advance and informed to the teachers.

Context of the Study

This study took place in a large Mediterranean city in Turkey with a population of over two million people. Anadolu Lycees (Anatolian high schools) constituted the core context of this study. One reason for this was that the national English language curriculum for English majors is in effect only in screened schools like Anatolian high schools where there is intensive English language instruction. Six EFL teachers from five Anadolu Lycees consented to participate in the study by providing daily logs of their instructional practice. Using a purposive sampling strategy, one out of the nine Anadolu Lycees in the city was selected as the focal research site. At this site, classroom observations were conducted on a bi-weekly basis in a senior 12th grade English major classroom over the course of 12 weeks because the teachers' work schedules were convenient for the researcher to be a participant observer in their classrooms. This paper presents findings from the data collected at the focal Anadolu Lycee where not only daily logs were collected from the participating teachers but also classroom observations and interviews were conducted.

Data sources

Data were collected over the entire first semester of 2008-2009 academic year between September and December, 2008. The data consist of a) bi-weekly teacher logs, b) bi-weekly teacher interviews,

and c) classroom observations. The schedule for data collection consisted of a repeated pattern of (a) having the teachers keep content logs for one week during which classroom observation were conducted and (b) conducting teacher interviews during the subsequent week. It was intended that the bi-weekly design would help to reduce teacher fatigue.

Teacher logs were selected as a means to get at the question of what content the two teachers choose to emphasize in the classroom. Studies have shown that the ongoing logs allow teachers to reflect frequently on what content is covered and represented in the classroom before they forget (Rowan, Camburn, and Correnti, 2004, p. 11). The frame for the design of the teacher log employed in this study is taken from Rowan, Camburn and Correnti (2004). Unlike their design, the teacher log used in this study did not ask the teachers to consider a predetermined focal student and report whether or not she/he demonstrated comprehension in the particular content area that the teachers related in their content coverage report. Once the log was constructed, it was piloted on five teachers that were contacted both at and outside the participating school. This pilot aimed to validate the language of the teacher log. Since the log instructions on each section were both in Turkish and English, teachers were informally notified that with their collaboration, the researcher would be able to validate the instructions on the log and make modifications, if need be.

The observation protocol follows one of the qualitative analysis patterns suggested by Lindlof (1995). The framework that illuminates the analysis is named "expanding frame" in which the collection and analysis of the qualitative data begin with a tight focus on one element or a few elements. As the researcher collects evidence, and sees new ways to consider, she/he widens the frame of evidence in analysis. This deductive data collection and analysis procedure adapted from an 'expanding frame' allowed me to start with a tight focus on teachers' content representations without diverting the focus to teachers' classroom management, effectiveness of their content representations or interactions with the students. However, I simultaneously held a flexible mindset to let the frame of evidence widen the data analysis. In keeping up with this framework, I observed one 12th grade English major classroom. After transcribing the classroom data, I started with a tight focus on existing categorical scheme or codes, that Doyle (1985) elaborated as academic tasks to unpack the content represented in the classroom.

This research employed semi-structured interviews whereby the main topic of each interview question on the protocol was pursued while allowing for naturally evolving topics and points to emerge as the research unfolded over 12 weeks (Mishler, 1986; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Just as with the classroom observations, I followed a deductive data collection and analysis procedure circumscribed from an 'expanding frame' which allowed me to start with a tight focus on existing interview questions, particularly what teachers represent, how and why. At the same time, the flexible mindset was kept to let the frame of evidence widen the data analysis.

The interviews were conducted in Turkish in order to allow for the maximum comfort zone for self expression by the teachers. Transcriptions of the interviews were later translated by the researcher. The interviews were scheduled at the teachers' convenience on a biweekly basis.

There were a total of six teacher log data points and six follow up interviews after the collection of the teacher logs. The reason for these numbers of teacher log and interview data points resulted from the bi-weekly design of data collection. After an initial two months of building rapport in the classroom, some of the observations were audio-taped. There was a total of ten hours of classroom audio-tapings. From this pool, a total of six hours and six minutes was selected. I recognize that the inclusion of classroom observations that were audio-taped at both teachers' convenience caused the exclusion of other classroom practices that were either not audio-taped or not attended for

observation at all. This recognition constitutes the basis of the main limitation in this study which is identified to be the small sample of data.

The observed and audio-taped lessons that are selected for close analysis are called 'content episodes'. Specifically, the selection of content episodes was based on several criteria: 1) the amount of time spent on the content episode in the classroom, 2) availability of full audio recordings, 3) weight of task in the classroom. Each content episode includes segments mapped according to the observed activity taking place in the classroom.

More details about the dates of the data collection and the number of data points collected from each teacher are provided in the table below (see Table 1).

Table 1. Data Collection Schedule

Type of data	Total # of collection	Specific dates of collection		Numerical codes given to each data point	
(A) Weekly teacher logs	6	1st	September 22-26, 2008	1.1	1.1a Ayla 1.1b Bahar
		2 nd	October 13-17, 2008	1.2	1.2a Ayla 1.2b Bahar
		3 rd	October 27-31, 2008	1.3	1.3a Ayla 1.3b Bahar
		4 th	November 10-14, 2008	1.4	1.4a Ayla 1.4b Bahar
		5 th	November 24-28, 2008	1.5	1.5a Ayla 1.5b Bahar
		6 th	December 15-19, 2008	1.6	1.6a Ayla 1.6b Bahar
(B) Weekly teacher interview transcriptions	6	1 st	October 6-10, 2008	2.1	2.1a Ayla 2.1b Bahar
		2 nd	October 20-24, 2008	2.2	2.2a Ayla 2.2b Bahar
		3 rd	November 3-7, 2008	2.3	2.3a Ayla 2.3b Bahar
		4 th	November 17-21, 2008	2.4	2.4a Ayla 2.4b Bahar
		5 th	December 1-5, 2008	2.5	2.5a Ayla 2.5b Bahar
		6 th	December 22-23	2.6	2.6a Ayla 2.6b Bahar
(C) Selected Observational descriptions	5	Animal Farm Relative Clause Reduction in Relative Clauses		Prepositional Phrases Phrasal Verbs	

Participants

The current paper reports data from two non-native English teachers teaching in a senior English major classroom. In this classroom, *Ayla* and *Bahar* (pseudonyms), worked together to teach English to 20 senior students. One of the teachers, *Ayla*, had finished 16 years of teaching, 15 of which were spent in the Anadolu Lycees. Her college degree was in nutrition engineering but she got her certificate to teach English through the Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) training programs offered by the British Council abroad. During college years, she developed her English language aptitude through reading world literary classics in English. In fact, during the course of the study, she brought in that personal experience to the classroom by exposing students to such literary texts as *Pygmalion*, *1984*, *Lord of the Flies*, and *Animal Farm*. *Bahar* reported having taught for over 15 years, some of which was spent at 'cram' schools preparing students for the English university entrance exam. She was a graduate of a four year long TEFL program. As compared to *Ayla*, *Bahar* believed in improving students' reading skills through vocabulary instruction.

At the beginning of the academic year in September, *Bahar* and *Ayla* agreed upon a division of labour. The concept of division of labour (Engeström, 1987) is part of a framework that describes human activity oriented towards certain goals within a context and in relation to a community, and within the rules of the community. In the context of this study, division of labour made it possible for teachers to cope with the demands of preparing student for a high stakes test. Within the division of labour, *Ayla* would spend nine hours of classroom instruction focusing on reading and grammar, while *Bahar* emphasized vocabulary and practice tests during the remaining four hours of instruction. One of the advantages of this arrangement was that *Ayla* found the opportunity to represent her theory of reading, believing in 'exposure to text.'

Analysis

As mentioned before, in this study, Doyle's (1986, 1992) views on content representations and specifically the notion of 'task' are employed to map what work gets organized, structured and enacted in the classroom. All the classroom data including conversations and descriptions of the classroom activity were conducive to the analysis of what content gets represented in the English classroom through the task framework. Through this lens, Doyle's (1986) conceptualization of 'task' is employed in this analytical examination by coding observation and interview data for the following: 1) the task products attained in the classroom, 2) task resources employed or designed by the teacher and/or students and 3) operations followed to produce the product targeted. The language of instruction (Turkish or English) was also coded for analysis. These apriori theoretical codes were employed to elevate content representations to a level of comparative analysis across time and the two focal teachers (see appendix 3).

The findings with respect to the overall task structures was salient in teachers' log registries, interviews, and my classroom observations in that reading, grammar, and vocabulary were the most-enacted areas of content in English language instruction. The overarching pattern of enacting these areas across the two teachers' instructional practices was that both teachers conceived the senior year as a 'review' and 'test practice' year of instruction. Subsumed in this pattern was the theme that the tested content areas like reading, grammar, and vocabulary influence teachers' instructional practices. In this paper, the two teachers' representations of reading and grammar in English are discussed only, illustrating the representative tasks next. To evaluate the credibility of the findings, I member checked the general patterns with the participants and asked them to judge the reliability of the findings. In terms of transferability, it should be noted that the findings presented herein can not be generalized to the other cases of EFL teachers' representation of English language in Turkey.

Results

Overall task structures for reading

The overall task structure of enacting reading in the 12th grade classroom manifested a pattern across two different teachers. The task *product* typically involved completion of a worksheet or practice test that was linked to a paragraph-level text. The text serves as the *resource* of the task while simultaneously being the *product* of the task, as the work students are engaged in is the multiple-choice or fill-in-the-blank exercises that are bundled underneath the text. The *operations* students take under a testing situation involve silently reading the paragraph, simultaneously reading the questions, choosing or writing down answers to a set of comprehension questions, or looking up unknown words (see a student's writing on the worksheet exercise in appendix 1), and finally circling the right choice. The end *product* would then include a completed multiple-choice exercise. The texts used as a *resource* to set the task around reading were mostly at the paragraph level.

Both Ms. A and Ms. B brought in texts which would be simplified including several short paragraphs. These texts would mostly be taken from a supplementary textbook that the teacher used, or from a test preparation source in which the multiple-choice questions or vocabulary exercises would readily be available. *Bahar* explicitly debriefs the characteristics of these types of tasks in her recall of classroom activity: '*I asked questions related to family styles and parenting issues. Students read the text silently and did the exercises (multiple choice). I checked the students' reading comprehension by multiple choice questions.*' (#2.2b)

These tasks did not involve any ambiguity as students were very familiar with the procedures involved in a reading task with the product of a completed worksheet. Their familiarity was recorded in instances where the teacher would draw their attention and motivate them into the task saying:

(T)eacher: *We'll do something you like most!*
Students (Ss): *Are we going to choose among multiple options?*
Teacher sarcastically verifies: *Sure, out of 8 choices.*
Ss: *Let's do it then.* (#2.2c)

For instance, a task on a text 'Punishment Takes Many Forms' enacted in *Ayla's* class represents the general structure of reading tasks as depicted below.

Punishment takes many forms. This text, which was about the types of punishment in Britain, had seven paragraphs (see appendix 2). For the students' part, the task involved such *operations* as reading this text, following along with the teacher as she read aloud, and responding to the questions she raised about the unknown vocabulary. Students responded to these lexical questions in Turkish. After reading the text, the students were supposed to work on the worksheet which included seven sections. Some exercises in the worksheet asked students to guess the meanings of the italicized words from the text and read the given sentences to choose the correct word to fill in the blanks, as well as answer various true/false exercises. Also, they were to fill in gaps using the information in the text, find inferences for the given pronouns (e.g. *it, they, those*), and find words that were synonymous to the given phrase. The task was marked by the *product* of the completed worksheet. Further, this task did not have any immediate weight or accountability measures. All that the students were required to do as an operation of this task was to follow along the teacher's read-aloud and then, work on the exercises.

While reading aloud the text sentence by sentence, *Ayla* occasionally paused and asked questions like: '*suspended prison sentence?*'; '*embark?*'; '*proportionally?*' checking students' understanding of the phrase or word. Otherwise, *Ayla* would typically read aloud a paragraph without any interruption or pause. At the end of the paragraph, she would pause and translate the main idea of the paragraph into Turkish, asking some comprehension or analysis questions to the students. Alternatively, she would pause at intervals and summarize two or three sentences at once to give the main idea up to that point. In this particular reading activity, only one instance was noted in which (only two) students participated in the classroom talk.

This instance occurred by the time *Ayla* had been done reading aloud the text. One student jumped in and drew associations between whatever abstract meaning he had drawn from the text and a prison that he had seen in Istanbul. Simultaneously, another student intervened, giving an update from the daily news on a government-related court case ('Ergenekon') that was being interrogated at the time of the study. He said in Turkish: "*They are going to publicize the 2,000 page-long indictment soon.*" The teacher did not interrupt these interpretations, even if they had nothing to do with the text, and thus seemed like 'alternate vectors' interrupting the smooth flow of the activity. Nonetheless, the teacher just said, '*OK. We got the news for the day.*' Simultaneously, she prompted students to turn the back of the page to work on the 'inferred' exercises. On these exercises, students are asked to find the phrase within the paragraph that refers to the given pronouns [it (para. 1), they (para. 2), those (para. 7)]. Before students started to silently work on these exercises, the teacher gave hints and strategies to get these kinds of test items right. This task on completing seven sections of exercises was then completed all together.

The above task with its *operations* was a familiar one in the sense that students got to produce responses to the exercises on the worksheet. The teacher did not even have to give any instructions as they were all written out on the sheet. The most interesting part of this reading activity was that the text and exercises on the worksheet were all in English; however, all of the teacher discourse and student-teacher interactions around the text were in Turkish. As illustrated above, the meanings the two students extracted related to the daily events in Turkey. Thus, it seemed like students read a text in English to elucidate the meanings that they gathered from real-life issues in their context.

All in all, the above task represented typical task of reading enacted in this class, in that the worksheet exercises most commonly accompanied the paragraph-level texts, and the translations of words or sentences into Turkish were commonly observed.

Overall task structures for grammar

All of the grammatical and lexical tasks produced in the 12th grade English major classroom involved completion of various types of exercises geared towards the university entrance exam. There were no exceptions of representations in this area. To get at the completion of worksheets, one *operation* for students to follow was to copy down the grammatical rules that the teacher wrote on the board. Another one was to participate in the teacher's call for sentences to exemplify the particular rule. Following this procedure, there were some risks for the students as they may not exemplify a grammatically correct sentence, which then seemed to be causing embarrassment. Given this risk, it was observed in each class session that only certain students would participate in such *operations* as rule explanation and generating example sentences. All the same, the risks involved in the tasks oriented around acquisition of grammar or vocabulary were low, primarily because all the *operations* within these tasks would be followed in the native language, Turkish. Therefore, students would delineate the meanings of the structures and words or lexical phrases switching between Turkish and

English. The board would be used to keep records of all the rules, explanations, and example sentences.

To illustrate, the content episode on relative clauses is presented. More specifically, the segment *deductive instruction of the rules of relative clauses* is selected because it constitutes the bulk of the relative clause episode. First, the teacher's retrospective reflections around the grammar task are presented. Then, the selected segment is presented to illustrate the task components within this episode.

Relative clauses. The content episode on relative clauses and reduction in relative clauses involved completion of multiple-choice exercises and choosing the right word phrase to fill in the blanks. That is, the weight of task was scaled through a multiple-choice exercise.

The *operations* of the task on relative clauses were explaining the rules for the grammatical structures, and then writing down example sentences corresponding to the rules, and lastly finishing the task through completing the practice exercises. The whole episode occurred in Turkish except for giving the structural rules and their respective example sentences in English.

All the *resources* for teaching the grammatical structures and learning the vocabulary words were from test preparation sources that provided all the rules, example sentences, and lists of words that could appear on the test. With these components of the task, the ultimate goal was to get the multiple-choice exercises right. However, as *Ayla* evaluated in her follow-up interview, some students did not succeed on this task as much as she had anticipated. The 'hardship' she is referring to below actually was because the multiple-choice practice test she assigned to the students required knowledge of the structure 'reduction in relative clauses,' which students had not been taught before.

"I had thought the test was exclusively on relative clauses not on reduction while making copies...I didn't check...but it was hard for them at first..then I saw that they couldn't do much...I solved the questions altogether in class...we went over each one of them ...they completed the rest themselves..We literally went over each one, one by one...there will be this and that on this item...with the items that were really tricky, I did most of the explanations...while answering, we discussed..."

Later, *Ayla* conveys her contentment over students' success on the relative clause practice tests administered by the cram school that most students attend in the city. She was pleased to relate how well students did on the relative clause test designed by this cram school. This implies that the weight of the task on relative clauses, which is to answer and complete the multiple-choice exercises, is governed by the number of test items that the students answer correctly.

An illustration of deductive form instruction. In the segment shown below, *Ayla* first revisits the previous segment in which she go over with the students each one of the rules and give at least one example sentence to illustrate the rule. Once this illustration over each one of the rules is done, *Ayla* continues on with a summary of the rules explained up to that point. Here is how the segment unfolds.

Ayla starts by asking: *"In what cases do we use non-defining clauses?"*

They all attempt to answer until one student looks in a grammar book he has and says, *"proper nouns."*

Then *Ayla* verifies that the non-defining clauses are used: *"with the proper nouns like Mrs. Smith, Jack, London, and so forth."*

The same student guesses the next one and says: "*Nouns with preceding modifiers such as my/your/our/this/that.*"

One student asks: "*Teacher, isn't 'the man' already definite or why use it like 'the man at the shop?'*"

Teacher says: "*It will depend on the situation, if the man we are talking about is really obvious then 'the man' could be just sufficient for a non-defining relative clause.*"

Teacher then moves on to the next sub-title in which unquantifiable nouns like *milk, flower, rice, and coal* are exemplified. Then, she gives an example debriefing the rules she has described so far: "*London, where I was born, has changed a lot recently,*" which is an example sentence for the first rule on the use of relative clauses with the proper nouns. The proper noun here is 'London'.

Then the teacher picks a particular student, asking for an example using one of the rules explained earlier.

Alpay (the pseudo name of the student she points at) says: "*Your coat, which you haven't worn for decades, belongs to me now.*"

Teacher puts that sentence down on the board. While she's doing that, she asks from the particular student for verification of the sentence she's putting down.

Later, *Ayla* asks the students to give examples to the other rules by using the proper pronouns, or unquantifiable nouns.

One student slowly attempts to form a sentence. In doing so, she starts with 'milk' then pauses and says, "*milk which is useful.*"

The other students try to help out but it was quite obvious that the students were struggling to situate example sentences into the given rules.

Another student offers: "*milk which is essential,*" then she says, "*milk which is essential for everyone,*" and again gets stuck there and finally utters: "*...can also be used to make a cake.*" Teacher again puts the sentence down on the board.

In the interview, *Bahar* reflected that students occasionally have problems with this particular grammatical area in English but she relates her belief in that working on practice tests and exercises will 'reinforce their understandings' and will eventually get them not to miss any items on relative clauses and reductions in relative clauses, which is implied to be the ultimate goal. Here is how *Bahar* discourses around these points:

"Except for one or two students, I see that they are mostly doing good...the most important problem which also used to be valid in the past is that they would have a hard time differentiating between active and passive voices...it is a matter of deciding whether to say 'having been' or 'having done' since both 'been' and 'done' are in their past participle forms...the number of mistakes has decreased when compared with the past...when we do more exercises, they will have acquired 'reductions' and reinforced their understanding of that."

This content episode that both *Ayla* and *Bahar* emphasized in their practice as displayed in the log and interview, was on relative clauses. In representing this grammatical content, the teacher mainly put down the rules and provided example sentences on the board. In the process, the teacher and students mainly engaged in a meta-linguistic talk about the structure, in Turkish.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, it became apparent that teachers contracted the content of the most commonly enacted skill areas; reading, vocabulary, and grammar, to discrete areas of instruction so that students could benefit from classroom practices on their test performance. Reading was represented through tasks targeting the completion of paragraph-level test practice exercises. The representation of reading as comprehension instruction with the use of test preparation materials limited reading activities to deciphering meaning at the word, sentence, and paragraph level. Since the reading activities were not expanded to products like a written text generated on the basis of textual information and students' interpretations of the text, content representations of reading could not be expanded beyond completed worksheets as products. Similarly in grammar, it should be noted that all of the grammar episodes involved the completion of a multiple choice test worksheet as a *product*. The task that emerges particularly from the classroom activity on reduction in relative clauses, involved *operations* like copying the rules and generating example sentences to attain the ultimate goal—to do well on the exercises. This rule-bound discrete grammar teaching is intended to facilitate students' performance on the test and so contracted representation of grammar to discrete rules, and using the structures in sentences. A testing situation creates its own rule of operating within the context of learning and teaching, in that certain goals are set, and those who choose to participate in the context assume assigned or individually set roles to reach the goals. Under the English language testing situation in Turkey, the two teacher participants of this study assumed the roles of preparing their 12th graders for the YDS. It became apparent that the teachers' theories of what it means to read in English and know English grammar were primarily influenced by the tested content. In practice, the teachers contracted activities of reading, vocabulary and grammar to discrete areas of instruction so that students could perform well on the test.

Content contraction versus expansion: An influence of tests

This paper pointed out that the representations of English language were narrowly 'contracted' down to tested structures and items (Au, 2007). Broadly speaking, the influence of the centralized test was broadly apparent in the language skills that the teachers emphasized, as teachers contracted English language content to 'tested' structures and items. In fact, the publicized blueprint of the centralized English language test in the context of Turkey shows that reading is the only modality through which examinees are tested on primarily because the test is paper-based. So, all four skills (reading, speaking, listening, and writing) are not included in the design of the test, except for reading. When this is the case, it was found in this study that teachers also emphasize the tested content and skill areas and narrow their instruction to reading activities, grammar, and vocabulary lessons. This finding closely relates to two of the hypotheses about the wash-back influences of the language tests laid out by Alderson and Wall (1993) stating that, "a test will influence the degree and depth of teaching," and "a test will influence attitudes to the content, method, etc. of teaching and learning" (pp. 120–121).

Likewise, Au's (2007) findings from the meta-analysis of forty nine qualitative studies have direct bearing upon the discussion of the findings in the current study. Au synthesizes how high-stakes testing influences or controls curriculum taught on the classroom floor in terms of subject matter content, pedagogy, and structure of knowledge. Au points to two dominant effects of the high-stakes testing over the curriculum and instruction: *Subject matter content expansion* and *subject matter content contraction*. Subject matter content expansion refers to teachers' instructional practices that go above and beyond the tested content. Content contraction, on the other hand, refers to "reducing the amount of instructional time and course offerings in either tested or non-tested subject areas" (Au, 2007, p. 260). For instance, the participating teachers in the study by Shepard and Dougherty

(1991), generally reported that they do not emphasize content that is not tested, which would be interpreted through Au's lenses as *content contraction* or *fragmentation of content* into isolated test-size pieces like formulas and rules drilled with examples. Other researchers (see, e.g., Amrein and Berliner, 2002; Lipman, 2004; McNeil, 2000; McNeil and Valenzuela, 2001; Nichols and Berliner, 2005, 2007; Watanabe, 2007) also claim that high-stakes testing narrows curriculum, among the other negative influences mentioned.

To reiterate, the influence of the centralized test was broadly apparent in the areas of skills that the two teachers emphasized. These teachers' cooperative practices not only made it possible to pursue individual teaching styles (particularly in reading) but also helped to move instruction forward with a focus on test preparation. Overall, the division of labour and each teacher's specialization helped them be more focused on different aspects of the test preparation task. Further, through the division of labour and cooperation, the two teachers, whether consciously or unconsciously, were able to mitigate the constraints of the testing situation when enacting reading tasks. This might afford the implication that teachers' autonomy could effectively change the circumstances that they may not have the power to change.

Future Directions for Research

This research employed a variety of methods to address the research questions. To map teachers' content representations, especially in foreign or second language classrooms, a triangulation of classroom audio-tapings, teacher logs, and interviews could be replicated from this study. In order to understand the significant contribution of the teacher logs to rich depiction of teacher content representations, this triangulation could be compared with the research design that excludes the use of teacher logs. However, if the focus of the research is on teacher content representations on a longitudinal basis, the observations could be intensified to take place every week as long as the teacher participants find the scheduling of the classroom visits convenient. While analyzing instruction interactions in a foreign or second language classroom, Doyle's task framework situated in a theory of teacher content representations could be extended to include task-based research on language pedagogy which would add the component of 'real-world relationship' into the task framework (Skehan, 1998a; Ellis, 2009). That is, in addition to describing EFL teacher content representations in terms of the task elements (product, operations, resource, and weight of task), the content represented in the classroom could be described with respect to its relevance to the interpersonal or communicative real-world use of English.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Multiple-Choice Reading Exercise

5. Check What You Know

Stories of Flags

The Flag of Turkey



The current flag of the Turkish Republic has a complex (1) because it is an ancient design. Before the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople

in 1453, a crescent moon (2) on the city's flag for over 1,000 years. The five-pointed star had also been in occasional use on Byzantine flags since the time of Constantine I. The Ottoman Empire adopted the flag, (3) green as a background colour. In 1793, Sultan Selim III changed the background colour to red; about 50 years (4) Sultan Abd-ul-Mejid added the star beside the crescent. By the time of the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the flag had changed a little, and featured three crescents on either a green or a red background. When the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923, an older version of the Ottoman Empire's standard flag was selected (5) the new nation.

1. A) version B) incident
C) origin D) preference
E) pride
2. A) features B) has featured
C) had been featuring D) is featuring
E) has been featuring
3. A) use B) using
C) having used D) to use
E) used
4. A) later B) then
C) since D) then
E) before
5. A) to represent B) representing
C) represent D) having represented
E) represented

The Flag of Ireland



Inspired by the French tricolour flag, the flag of the Republic of Ireland was first used by Irish nationalists (6) the 1848 'Young Irelanders' rebellion (7) British rule on the island. The flag has three vertical bands, from left to right: green, white, and orange. It was designed to symbolize the Catholic majority (green) and the Protestant minority (orange) joined together in peace (white). Of course, (8) anyone familiar (9) the history of Ireland knows, this idealistic vision (10) a constant reality so far.

6. A) when B) while
C) as soon as D) since
E) during
7. A) with B) towards
C) within D) against
E) upon
8. A) when B) while
C) as D) like
E) so that
9. A) at B) with
C) on D) for
E) from
10. A) hasn't been B) wasn't
C) hadn't been D) won't be
E) isn't

The Flag of the United States

When the US flag was first approved in 1777, there was no special symbolism attached to the colours red, white, and blue. And so, five years later, the secretary of Congress presented a report in (11) he simply made up meanings for the colours: red meant strength and bravery; white, purity and innocence; and blue, justice. But the stars and stripes on the flag (12) a less improvised meaning since then: they stand for the individual divisions of the union. According to the original plan, each time a new state came into the union, one star and one stripe (13) As the country grew at an astonishing pace, though, people realized that this wasn't going to work. (14) the Flag Act of 1818, the number of stripes at 13 came to represent the original 13 colonies, and the number of stars corresponded (15) the number of states.



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11. A) that B) what
C) where D) which
E) when
12. A) developed B) develop
C) will develop D) were developing
E) have developed
13. A) had added B) is added
C) would be added D) has been added
E) will have added
14. A) Since B) After
C) While D) When
E) Because
15. A) around B) from
C) at D) to
E) between

Appendix 2. Reading Exercise

3 PUNISHMENT TAKES MANY FORMS

- 1 Once again, a rising crime rate and the workings of the penal system are back in the news. The British Home Office has been criticized over the rising prison population and overcrowding. Forced to deal with a *steady* increase in convictions for violent crime, it has launched an extensive prison-building program. Providing more jails, however, merely *tackles* the symptoms, because the size of the prison population is affected by two factors: the number of offenders, and the sentencing policy of the courts. Therefore, the government has also had to consider ways to reduce the prison population through the use of non-custodial alternatives.
- 2 The most widely-used device for reducing the number of prisoners in jail is the remission and parole system. This enables prisoners who have behaved well to have the right to be released before their original sentence has been completed. Some theorists believe that the over-use of this system has encouraged the British courts to impose sentences of up to a third longer than they might have previously, in order for offenders to compensate, or repay, for potential early release.
- 3 The courts also have the power to *impose* a suspended sentence. Thus, if a suspended sentence of, for example, two years is imposed, the offender will not have to go to prison; but if he or she is *convicted* of another crime within these two years, then the new sentence will have the original sentence added to it. There is some evidence that the suspended sentence is used too frequently, with the result that the number of prisoners actually increases.
- 4 Another option is the Community Service Order. The judge can sentence a criminal to a maximum of 240 hours of community-based practical work. This serves both as a way of *making amends to* society and of avoiding the potentially harmful consequences of a period in prison.
- 5 The most common alternative to jail is a fine. Although appropriate for minor offenses, the public thinks that fines are too lenient forms of punishment for those guilty of violent crime. Judges who impose fines are frequently the target of bitter criticism in the press, and are therefore *reluctant* to use this cost-effective and straightforward form of punishment.
- 6 One or two ideas have surfaced in the last few years. The most *revolutionary* one is the use of electronic tagging. Ministers have decided to introduce a pilot scheme whereby British offenders will be forced to wear an electronic device while they are on probation, enabling their whereabouts to be *monitored* by police. There are also plans to *extend* the Community Service Order to include help for the aged and sick.
- 7 However, all these initiatives illustrate a difficulty: by building new prisons and by encouraging the courts to impose alternative punishments, the government is trying to pursue two *contradictory* policies at once. The problem with increasing the number of prisons is that more places tend to result in more prison sentences. Research recently published in the United States indicates that those states which embarked on prison-building program ended up increasing their prison populations, while those which closed down a number of prisons actually reduced the number of people in jail to proportionally lower levels.

A. What do the following refer to?

1. it (para. 1) : _____
2. they (para. 2) : _____
3. they (para. 6) : _____
4. those (para. 7) : those _____

B. Find words in the text that mean the following. Write only ONE word on each line, and do not change the form of the word.

1. introduced (v.) (para. 1) : _____
2. found guilty (v.) (para. 3) : _____
3. not strict, tolerant (adj.) (para. 5) : _____
4. follow (v.) (para.7) : _____

C. Mark the following statements True (T) or False (F).

T F 1. The sentencing policy of the courts has no effect on the number of prisoners in Britain.

T F 2. In the parole system, prisoners are set free before their actual imprisonment period is finished.

T F 3. If they are sentenced to community work, prisoners have to do at least 240 hours of community service.

D. Fill in each gap using the information in the text.

- * The British government has initiated a prison-building program because of (1)_____
- * If a person commits a crime when s/he is on a suspended sentence, s/he'll receive (2)_____
- * The police can easily (3)_____ British offenders with the help of electronic tagging.
- * The contradictory policies of the British government create a difficult situation because, on the one hand, the government (4)_____ and, on the other hand, it is encouraging alternative punishments to be imposed by the courts.

Appendix 3. Codes for Data Analysis

Code 1: Task products in a language classroom

Definition: Task product is any requirement or academic work expectation that is put forth for the student to demonstrate understanding/comprehension/application of the content taught in class.

When to use this code: when the teacher describes what she/he expects the students to carry out/complete (if this code is used, provide narrative records of the expected task product). For instance, a task product in a language classroom might entail task outcomes like responding to a set of questions by listening to an audio tape or file; filling in words/structures in blanks on a worksheet or textbook; writing an original essay; discussing with the peer on an assigned topic and so on.

When not to use this code: do not use when the expected task product is just to do silent reading without responding to any set of comprehension check questions or writing about the text read or discussing about the text.

Code 2: Operations in a language classroom

Definition: Operations followed to produce the task product refer to cognitive, communicative operations involved in assembling and using resources to reach the goal state and/or the product.

When to use this code: when the teacher gives directions/instructions and walks the students through the steps that they will need to take or follow to get to (or produce) the task outcome or task product. (if this code is used, provide narrative records of the operations described and taken).

When not to use this code: when the teacher reads the instructions/directions verbatim from the textbook without providing her/his interpretation of the operations students are asked to take.

Code 3: Resources

Definition: Resources refer to any linguistic, visual, auditory, written input or realia and peer interaction that is provided by the teacher and/or is available as immediate to the classroom context.

When to use this code: when the teacher tells the students that they can interact to carry out the task operations or to produce their own resources AND when she/he provides manipulatives, visual/auditory and/or written input or realia for the students to utilize in order to carry out the task operations. (if this code is used, provide narrative records of the resources provided and used).

When not use this code: when the teacher does not provide any resources to facilitate the task operations and instructs the students to stand alone and finish the task within an allotted time.