

Exploring Teachers' Perceptions Of Using Integrated Skills Approach In Efl Classes At Preparatory Schools In Istanbul

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ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Altınbaş Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'nda görev yapan İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğreten öğretmenlerin, bütünlük İngilizce dil becerilerini öğretirken karşılaştıkları farkındalık, uygulama ve zorlukları araştırmaktadır. Araştırmacı, öncelikle Altınbaş Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu'ndan basit rastgele örnekleme tekniği ile seçilen 40 öğretim üyesinden anket doldurmalarını istemiştir. Ardından, anketi tamamlayan 20 öğretmen rastgele seçilerek mülakat yapılmıştır. Verilerin analizi için nicel ve nitel yöntemler kullanılarak karma araştırma yaklaşımı benimsenmiştir. Nicel veri analizi, verilerin kategorize edilip frekans dağılımlarına ve yüzdeliklere dönüştürüldüğü SPSS 25.0 kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Yüzdelik frekans analizi, katılımcıların yaş, nitelikler, öğretim deneyimi ve anket sorularına verdikleri yanıtların dağılımını değerlendirmek için kullanılmıştır. Nitel veriler ise tematik ve betimsel olarak analiz edilerek, kapalı uçlu sorulardan elde edilen nicel bulguları tamamlamak amacıyla kullanılmıştır. Sonuçlar entegre bir şekilde sunulmuş, analizler, tartışmalar, özetler, sonuçlar ve bulgulara dayalı öneriler sağlanmıştır. Veriler, öğretmenlerin %97,6'sının tek bir konu veya görev içinde birden fazla dil becerisini bütünleştirmenin değerli ve pratik olduğunu düşündüğünü ortaya koymuştur ve bu da kapsamlı dil öğrenimini geliştirmek için uyumlu ve birbirine bağlı derslerin faydalarını vurgulamaktadır. Tüm öğretmenler, bütünlük beceri öğretiminin yüksek bağlılık gösterdiğini kabul etmiştir. Öğretmenler, öğrencilere ders hedeflerini bildirmek, dersleri önceki görevlere bağlamak ve çeşitli çiftler halinde çalışma aktiviteleri kullanmak gibi stratejiler uygulayarak birden fazla dil becerisini bütünleştirmişlerdir. Ayrıca, çalışma öğrencilere, öğretmenlere, okullara, ders kitaplarına ve ulusal sınavlara ilişkin zorlukları da belirlemiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Farkındalık, Uygulama, Engeller, İngilizce Dil Bütünlük Beceriler Öğretimi

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the awareness, implementation, and challenges EFL teachers encounter while teaching integrated English language skills at Altinbas University School of Foreign Languages in Istanbul, Turkey. The researcher initially selected 40 lecturers from the School of Foreign Languages at Altinbas University through a simple random sampling technique to complete a questionnaire. Subsequently, 20 teachers who completed the questionnaire were randomly interviewed. Quantitative and qualitative methods were employed for data analysis using a mixed research approach. The quantitative data analysis was conducted using SPSS 25.0, where data were categorized and converted into frequency distributions and percentages. Percentage frequency analysis was used to assess the distribution of participants by age, qualifications, teaching experience, and responses to survey questions. The qualitative data were analyzed thematically and descriptively to complement the quantitative findings from the close-ended questions. The results were presented integrated, with analyses, discussions, summaries, conclusions, and recommendations provided based on the findings. The data revealed that 97.6% of teachers found integrating multiple language skills within a single topic or task valuable and practical, highlighting the benefits of cohesive and interconnected lessons for enhancing comprehensive language learning. All teachers agreed that integrated skills teaching showed high commitment. They implemented various strategies, such as informing students about lesson goals, linking lessons to previous tasks, and using diverse pair work activities to integrate multiple language skills. Additionally, the study identified challenges related to students, teachers, schools, textbooks, and the national exam.

Keywords: *Awareness, Implementation, Obstacles, English Language Integrated Skills Teaching*

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

This article is based on research conducted for my thesis entitled EXPLORING TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING INTEGRATED SKILLS APPROACH IN EFL CLASSES AT PREPARATORY SCHOOLS IN ISTANBUL, completed at Istanbul Aydin University under the supervision of Asst. Prof. Dr. İlkin Başar.

Fueled by economic globalization, English has become a commonly used international language. It has become a second language for the majority of people around the world and serves as a global language across various fields (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). According to Crystal (2000), approximately 1.5 billion people globally speak English as their first, second, or foreign language. The extensive use of English has solidified its status as the present-day global lingua franca.

The integrated skills approach in teaching English, which includes listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary, is becoming increasingly popular in TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language). This approach effectively improves students' communicative competence and ability to use English in everyday situations (Amarech & Wondimu, 2019; Pardede, 2019). It is

a beneficial method for helping students develop essential communication skills in TEFL. Ostovar-Namaghi and Tajzad (2014) note that in 1978, Widdowson was one of the pioneering linguists who advocated for integrating the four language skills to enhance learners' proficiency and facilitate advanced language learning.

Statement of the Problem

The integrated skills approach emphasizes that interaction is the method and primary goal of language learning. Therefore, learning activities should prioritize enabling students to convey messages based on their meaning rather than focusing solely on grammatical accuracy or perfect pronunciation. In this approach, students' proficiency in the language is assessed by their development of communicative skills and competencies. Language components and skills should be taught together to help students enhance these skills and competencies. Hinkel (2010) pointed out that although breaking a language into parts may be necessary for study purposes, effective language use requires integrating these skills and components. Similarly, Harmer (2007) stressed that receptive and productive skills are interconnected and cannot be separated, as each skill can support and enhance the other in various ways. Parlakyildiz's (1997) research, conducted during the 1996-1997 academic year in Eskisehir, Turkey, 13 English instructors participated. Data collection methods included curriculum documents, textbook activities, questionnaires, and classroom observations. The study found that while there are differences and similarities in how grammar is taught in discrete skills programs versus integrated skills programs, the critical distinction is the integration of communicative skills with grammar instruction in the latter. However, this study focuses solely on grammar. It would be better to incorporate additional skills. In contrast, the current study examines teachers' awareness, their challenges, and how they implement their teaching methods.

Aydoğan (2014) highlights the significance of integrating language skills at the tertiary education level, contrasting this approach with traditional methods that heavily emphasize translation and grammar. Through a questionnaire, the study gathered responses from 149 university students about their experiences learning English, focusing on vocabulary, grammar, reading, writing, and speaking. The findings suggest that an integrated skills approach, where all language skills are taught together, is vital for effective language learning, fostering student autonomy and the practical use of English outside the classroom. In contrast, the current study evaluates teachers' perceptions rather than students'. The researcher in the current study also extended the data collection process to include interviews, unlike Aydoğan's study.

Akmal et al. (2020) investigate the perceptions, challenges, and strategies of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. The study, involving six purposively selected teachers, utilized unstructured interviews for data collection. The integrated skills approach (ISA) is effective for fostering realistic communication in EFL teaching. Teachers can successfully implement ISA with the right strategies and support despite the challenges. Future research should examine ISA implementation in a

broader range of contexts and its effects on teachers and students. In contrast, the current study employs both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and includes a more significant number of participants.

Kalsum's (2023) study focuses on how teachers implement integrated language skills (ILS) and the challenges they encounter. Four English teachers from Makassar Muhammadiyah University were selected through purposive sampling. The study identifies time constraints, student motivation, and inadequate school facilities as barriers to effective ILS implementation. It emphasizes the need for support and training for teachers to overcome these obstacles. In contrast, the current study not only examines teachers' awareness but also considers additional factors and includes more participants than Kalsum's study.

However, the analyses reveal gaps in both the findings and the methodology. In terms of methodology, there are differences between previous and current studies concerning the qualifications of the study population and the specific factors they examined. Additionally, there is a scarcity of research on the integrated skills teaching approach in university English preparatory departments in Turkey.

Therefore, the researcher believes that further investigation is needed in this area. The current study aims to address these research gaps within the country. These gaps have led the researcher to explore and assess EFL teachers' awareness, challenges, and implementation of integrated English language skills teaching at Altinbas University School of Foreign Languages in Istanbul, Turkey. This research seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent are EFL teachers aware of the teaching of integrated English language skills?
2. How frequently do EFL teachers implement integrated English language skills in their TEFL classrooms?
3. What difficulties do EFL teachers encounter when teaching integrated English language skills in their classrooms?

Objectives of the Study

This research aims to investigate the awareness, challenges, and implementation experiences of EFL teachers in teaching integrated English language skills at Altinbas University School of Foreign Languages in Istanbul, Turkey.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are valuable for raising awareness among stakeholders about the challenges, awareness, and implementation efforts of EFL teachers in teaching integrated English language skills in Istanbul, Turkey. These insights could benefit EFL teachers by helping to address gaps in implementing integrated language skills in the classroom. Furthermore, this study can guide future researchers working on similar topics within the Department of English Language Teaching and beyond.

Limitations of the Study

If time allows, expanding the study population to include more universities would be advantageous. Future researchers should also investigate teachers' and students' perceptions and compare these viewpoints. Moreover, incorporating additional instruments, such as classroom observations, could enrich future studies.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept of English Language Integrated Skills Teaching Integrated Language Skills Teaching Approach

The integrated skills approach emphasizes that interaction is the means and the primary goal of language learning. Therefore, learning activities should focus on enabling students to convey messages meaningfully rather than merely emphasizing grammatical accuracy or pronunciation. Within this approach, students' language proficiency is measured by their progress in communicative skills and competencies. To foster the development of these skills, it is essential to integrate language components and skills rather than treat them separately. Hinkel (2010) noted that while it may be necessary to deconstruct a language for study purposes, effective use of the language requires integrating these skills and components. Similarly, Harmer (2007) emphasized that receptive and productive skills are interconnected and cannot be isolated, as each skill reinforces the other in various ways.

Models of English Language Integrated Skills Teaching Content-Based English Language Integrated Skills Teaching

The term 'content' varies across language teaching methods. In grammar-translation and Audio-Lingual Methods, it refers to the grammatical structures and vocabulary of the target language. In communicative language teaching and community language learning, content is defined by language functions such as greeting or requesting (Pardede, 2019). According to Richards (2006), content is the subject matter being communicated, not the language itself, facilitating the integration of language skills. In content-based language teaching, skills are organized around a topic or theme, allowing students to engage in real-world activities like listening and taking notes, reading and writing summaries, or responding verbally (Richards, 2006).

Task-Based English Language Integrated Skills Teaching

Tasks require learners to use language authentically, emphasizing meaning over form (Permata, 2018; Gautam, 2019; Pardede, 2019). The task-based model focuses on evaluating learning strategies rather than just teaching English. Tasks can incorporate various skills, such as writing a summary after reading or discussing main ideas orally, engaging learners in multiple ways. Pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities can include speaking, listening, and writing (Permata, 2018). Task-based instruction, the most common model for integrated language teaching, mirrors real-life interactions, integrating all tasks around a single topic (Ebabu, 2020). This approach aims to enhance overall language proficiency through pedagogical and real-world tasks.

EFL Teachers' Awareness of English Language Integrated Skills Teaching

Awareness of teaching integrated English skills involves combining two or more language skills within the same topic or task (Amarech & Wondimu, 2019). This approach is appreciated for facilitating realistic communication, emphasizing meaningful and authentic language, and linking the development of oral and written skills (Sanzana & Akhter, 2017). Consequently, EFL teachers should aim to enhance students' proficiency in these language skills. To do so, teachers must know how to effectively integrate and apply these skills based on the context (Akmal et al., 2020).

EFL Teachers' Implementation of English Language Integrated Skills Teaching

The approach of teaching integrated English language skills involves the combination of two or more language skills centered around a single topic or task (Alemayehu, 2008). EFL instructors employ various methods to merge speaking, listening, reading, and writing abilities. These methods include activities such as role plays, jigsaw reading, pair and group work, and the use of information technology (Ebabu, 2020; Sevy-Biloon, 2018). Teaching integrated skills has gained widespread acceptance in numerous countries due to the advantages it offers in blending all four skills within the classroom. Pardede (2019) observes that integrating language skills has become the global dominant trend in language instruction. The motivation for adopting integrated skills teaching in English and the role of EFL teachers in this integration process is briefly explored in the following sections.

Challenges EFL teachers face in Teaching English Language Integrated Skills

Implementing integrated skills teaching for the English language in the classroom can encounter various obstacles. Recognizing these barriers is essential for overcoming them and ensuring the effective and efficient application of integrated skills teaching. Desta and Getachew (2015) and Amarech and Wondimu (2019) suggest that these challenges can be examined from the viewpoints of students, teachers, schools, and the influence of national exams.

Students Related Factors

Several learner-related factors can impede the teaching of integrated skills. Oxford (2001) and Richard (2001) point out that the process can be hindered if students lack motivation, possess low language proficiency, or harbor negative attitudes toward their teachers and peers. Even with teachers' efforts, the success of the integrated approach largely relies on students' engagement, strategies, and ability to learn independently.

Teachers Related Factors

From this viewpoint, lacking adequate knowledge and skills to teach language skills in an integrated way is crucial (Desta & Getachew, 2015). Ineffective facilitation, monitoring, and organization can lead to teaching these skills in isolation. They contend that focusing on multiple skills at once is instructionally impractical. However, it's important to note that teachers' attitudes can affect the implementation of integrated English language skills teaching, as many prefer to teach writing separately from speaking or listening independently from reading.

School Related Factors

Moreover, factors related to the school environment can hinder the integration of the four macro skills. Amarech and Wondimu (2019) highlighted that poor school conditions, such as improper seating arrangements, overcrowded classrooms, lack of instructional materials and equipment (e.g., books, newspapers, magazines, photocopy machines, computers, audiocassettes, video cassettes), and inadequate support from administrators, are common barriers. In summary, teachers need to tackle these challenges and maintain a positive attitude to successfully integrate the four language skills in the classroom.

National Exam Washback Effect

Addisu (2011) defines washback as the impact of external language tests on foreign language learning, influenced by the substantial authority these tests possess and their significant effect on test takers' lives. Washback pertains to the way assessments influence both teachers' and students' learning. Positive washback happens when an exam improves teaching and learning by measuring the intended outcomes of the subject. On the other hand, negative washback occurs when an exam negatively affects the teaching and learning of a specific subject (Addisu, 2011).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The primary goal of this study is to examine EFL teachers' awareness, practices, and challenges in teaching integrated English language skills at Altınbaş University School of Foreign Languages. For this purpose, a descriptive survey research design that includes both qualitative and quantitative methods was employed.

With these considerations in mind, the researcher selected this design, believing it to be appropriate and pertinent for investigating real classroom implementation in the teaching-learning process. Moreover, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches enables a thorough understanding of the research problem by gathering and analyzing both types of data.

Study Population and Sampling Techniques

Data collection for this study will involve both quantitative and qualitative methods. The research will be conducted at Altınbaş University's School of Foreign Languages, where teachers prepare students for entry into their respective departments, and it will be conducted in English.

Initially, the researcher selected 40 lecturers from Altınbaş University's School of Foreign Languages to complete the questionnaire using a simple random sampling method. Subsequently, 20 teachers who completed the questionnaire were chosen for interviews, also through simple random sampling. In summary, the study focused on Altınbaş University's School of Foreign Languages and included nearly all EFL teachers at the university as the sample.

Data Collection Instruments

This study utilized two instruments to gather data on EFL teachers' awareness,

practices, and challenges in teaching integrated English language skills at Altinbas University's School of Foreign Languages. The data collection tools employed were questionnaires and interviews. These methods were selected for their effectiveness in obtaining critical data for the study and for their role in triangulating the data, thereby ensuring the validity of the findings.

Questionnaire

This instrument collected data on EFL teachers' awareness, implementation, and challenges in teaching integrated English language skills from 40 EFL teachers chosen through simple random sampling. The questionnaire featured both close-ended and open-ended questions to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues. All questions were written and answered in English.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted to verify and supplement the information gathered from the questionnaires. This method involved asking each respondent a predetermined set of questions in the same sequence and wording to minimize potential biases (Borg et al., 2014). Twenty EFL teachers from Altinbas University's School of Foreign Languages were selected for interviews using a simple random sampling technique. These interviews focused on the teachers' awareness, implementation, and challenges in teaching integrated English language skills. Both face-to-face and online interviews were employed to gather detailed information from the teachers. Generally, individuals tend to provide more detailed information orally than in writing. Consequently, the interviews generated in-depth qualitative data.

Data Collection Procedures

In this study, data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The researcher employed a sequential approach rather than administering all data collection tools simultaneously. Initially, the sample teachers completed the questionnaires, which were then collected. Following this, interviews were conducted both face-to-face and online. Using these methods, the researcher identified problems and analyzed and presented quantitative and qualitative data.

Reliability and Validity Checks

The questions for the questionnaire and interviews were inspired by Assefa (2022). The instrument was analyzed using the SPSS 25.0 statistical package program to ensure its reliability and appropriateness for this research.

Methods of Data Analysis

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods, consistent with the mixed research approach mentioned earlier in this chapter. The quantitative analysis was conducted using the SPSS 25.0 statistical package. Most data were presented in an integrated format. Initially, the quantitative data were categorized and converted into frequency distributions and percentages. Percentage frequency analysis was applied to determine the distribution of participants based on variables such as age, qualifications, and teaching experience. Similarly, percentage frequency analysis was used to analyze participants' responses to the survey questions. The

qualitative data were analyzed thematically and descriptively, complementing the quantitative data from the close-ended questions. The SPSS 25.0 statistical package program facilitated the analysis. Finally, analyses, discussions, summaries, conclusions, and recommendations were provided based on the results.

Ethical Consideration

A cooperation letter from Istanbul Aydın University's Department of English Language Teaching was provided to the relevant authorities to ensure the formality and legality of the data collection process. After receiving this letter, the researcher explained the study's objective to the director and participants at Altınbaş University's School of Foreign Languages. Once the study's purpose was clearly communicated and understood by all respondents, the school administration arranged suitable times for the researcher to collect the necessary information. All interactions with the relevant authorities were conducted with their consent, ensuring no harm or threats to personal or institutional well-being. The required information was obtained from the respondents, and the school directors issued confirmation letters verifying that the necessary data had been collected.

FINDINGS

This study investigated the awareness, implementation, and challenges EFL teachers encounter when teaching integrated English language skills at Altınbaş University's School of Foreign Languages. The researcher analyzed the data based on the research questions.

1. To what extent are EFL teachers aware of the teaching of integrated English language skills?
2. How frequently do EFL teachers implement integrated English language skills in their TEFL classrooms?
3. What difficulties do EFL teachers encounter when teaching integrated English language skills in their classrooms?

EFL Teachers' Background Information

Table 1. Distribution of Participants by Age

	f	%
Age	20-25	7,17,1
	25-30	19,46,3
	30-35	6,14,6
	35-40	9,22,0

Examining Table 1 reveals that 7 participants (17.1%) are in the 20-25 age group, 19 participants (46.3%) fall into the 25-30 age group, 6 participants (14.6%) are in the 30-35 age group, and 9 participants (22.0%) are in the 35-40 age group. This distribution indicates a higher concentration of participants in the 25-30 age range.

Table 2. Distribution of Participants by Qualification

		f	%
Qualification	B.A	20	48,8
	M.A	18	43,9
	PhD	3	7,3

Examining Table 2 shows that 20 participants (48.8%) hold a Bachelor's degree, 18 participants (43.9%) have a Master's degree, and 3 participants (7.3%) possess a Ph.D. This data indicates that the majority of participants have either undergraduate or postgraduate degrees, with a smaller proportion holding doctoral degrees.

Table 3. Distribution of Participants by Teaching Experience

		f	%
Teaching experience	1-5	21	51,2
	5-10	10	24,4
	10-15	3	7,3
	15-20	7	17,1

Examining Table 3 reveals that 21 participants (51.2%) have 1-5 years of teaching experience, 10 participants (24.4%) have 5-10 years, 3 participants (7.3%) have 10-15 years, and 7 participants (17.1%) have 15-20 years of teaching experience. This data indicates that the majority of participants have less than ten years of teaching experience.

Teachers' Perceptions of Using Integrated Skills Approach in EFL Classes Questionnaire

Table 4. Examining Teachers' Perceptions of Using Integrated Skills Approach in EFL Classes

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Have no idea (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)	M	SD
1. Integrated skills teaching connects two or more English language skills under the same topic and/or task.	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(2,4%)	23(56,1%)	17(41,5%)	4,4	0,5
2. Providing a task that connects two or more skills can lead to integrating language skills in a lesson.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	16(39%)	25(61%)	4,6	0,5

3. Providing a topic/ theme that connects two or more skills can lead to integrating language skills in a lesson.	0(0%)	2(4,9%)	0(0%)	15(36,6%)	24(58,5%)	4,5	0,7
4. Integrated skills approach has a good influence on students' academic learning.	0(0%)	1(2,4%)	2(4,9%)	18(43,9%)	20(48,8%)	4,4	0,7
5. Integrated skills approach has a good influence on students' English learning.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	17(41,5%)	24(58,5%)	4,6	0,5
6. Students learn better by linking two or more skills using the Integrated skills approach.	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(2,4%)	18(43,9%)	22(53,7%)	4,5	0,6
7. Students create positive student-to-student and teacher-to-student interactions in class.	0(0%)	1(2,4%)	3(7,3%)	22(53,7%)	15(36,6%)	4,2	0,7
8. Students improve their communicative competence using the Integrated skills approach.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	21(51,2%)	20(48,8%)	4,5	0,5
9. I inform my students about the goals of each lesson. As a result, students relate their attention and effort to the Integrated skills approach.	0(0%)	2(4,9%)	3(7,3%)	23(56,1%)	13(31,7%)	4,1	0,8
10. I want my students to connect the daily lesson to previous tasks or topics using the Integrated skills approach.	1(2,4%)	0(0%)	2(4,9%)	23(56,1%)	15(36,6%)	4,2	0,8
11. I make sure that the topics or tasks are interesting for my students or not while using the Integrated skills.	1(2,4%)	1(2,4%)	6(14,6%)	18(43,9%)	15(36,6%)	4,1	0,9

12. I use the textbook or other resources to prepare tasks and topics using the Integrated skills approach.	0(0%)	1(2,4%)	0(0%)	21(51,2%)	19(46,3%)	4,4	0,6
13. I prepare guidelines for students while reading, writing, and presenting orally to improve their language competency.	2(4,9%)	4(9,8%)	4(9,8%)	18(43,9%)	13(31,7%)	3,9	1,1
14. I motivate students to talk about their experiences with oral and written forms of the same topic.	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	19(46,3%)	22(53,7%)	4,5	0,5
15. I use different pair work activities in my class like discussion, asking and answering, summaries in writing, and presentations in class to practice language skills together.	0(0%)	1(2,4%)	1(2,4%)	13(31,7%)	26(63,4%)	4,6	0,7
16. I encourage students to read content from different subjects, write summaries, and present them orally to the class.	0(0%)	3(7,3%)	1(2,4%)	13(31,7%)	24(58,5%)	4,4	0,9
Total						4,4	0,7

Analysis of the questionnaire's data on EFL teachers' awareness of English language integrated skills (questions 1-8)

For the statement "Integrated skills teaching connects two or more English language skills under the same topic and/or task," 2.4% of teachers had no idea, 56.1% agreed, and 41.5% strongly agreed. This indicates that most teachers recognize and support the effectiveness of integrating multiple language skills within a single topic or task. The high level of agreement suggests that teachers find this approach beneficial for enhancing the learning experience through more cohesive and interconnected lessons. The mean score is 4.4, with a standard deviation of 0.5, showing strong consensus among the teachers.

Regarding the statement, "Providing a task that connects two or more skills can lead to integrating language skills in a lesson," 61% of teachers strongly agreed, and 39% agreed, with no respondents indicating disagreement or uncertainty.

This unanimous agreement highlights the perceived effectiveness of task-based approaches in integrating language skills. Teachers believe that structuring tasks to connect various skills is an effective strategy for fostering comprehensive language learning. The mean score is 4.6, with a standard deviation of 0.5, indicating substantial agreement.

In response to "Providing a topic/theme that connects two or more skills can lead to integrating language skills in a lesson," 4.9% of teachers disagreed, 36.6% agreed, and 58.5% strongly agreed, with no respondents expressing uncertainty. The high levels of agreement suggest that teachers view thematic connections as a powerful tool for skill integration. The minimal disagreement indicates that only a small fraction of teachers might need further convincing or clarification on this approach. The mean score is 4.5, with a standard deviation of 0.7.

For the statement "Integrated skills approach has a good influence on students' academic learning," 2.4% of teachers disagreed, 4.9% had no idea, 43.9% agreed, and 48.8% strongly agreed. This data indicates a strong belief among teachers that the integrated skills approach positively impacts students' academic performance. The minor levels of disagreement and uncertainty suggest that while the approach is largely supported, there may still be a need for further evidence of its academic benefits. The mean score is 4.4, with a standard deviation of 0.7.

For the "Integrated skills approach has a good influence on students' English learning," 41.5% of teachers agreed, and 58.5% strongly agreed, with no respondents disagreeing or expressing uncertainty. This unanimity reflects a robust consensus on the positive impact of the integrated skills approach on English language learning. Teachers are confident in the effectiveness of the approach in enhancing students' language proficiency. The mean score is 4.6, with a standard deviation of 0.5.

In response to "Students learn better by linking two or more skills using the integrated skills approach," 2.4% of teachers had no idea, 43.9% agreed, and 53.7% strongly agreed, with no disagreement. The strong agreement suggests that teachers believe in the pedagogical value of linking multiple skills for better student learning outcomes. This underscores the importance of integrated teaching strategies in fostering more effective learning environments. The mean score is 4.5, with a standard deviation of 0.6.

Regarding "Students create positive student-to-student and teacher-to-student interactions in class," 2.4% of teachers disagreed, 7.3% had no idea, 53.7% agreed, and 36.6% strongly agreed. While most teachers see the integrated skills approach as promoting positive interactions, some uncertainty and disagreement suggest variability in its implementation or effectiveness across different classroom settings. The mean score is 4.2, with a standard deviation of 0.7.

For "Students improve their communicative competence using the integrated skills approach," 51.2% of teachers agreed, and 48.8% strongly agreed, with no respondents expressing disagreement or uncertainty. This near-unanimous

agreement underscores teachers' strong belief in the approach's ability to enhance communicative competence, a critical aspect of language learning. The mean score is 4.5, with a standard deviation of 0.5.

Analysis of the questionnaire's data on the EFL teachers' implementation of English language integrated skills (9-16)

In response to "I inform my students about the goals of each lesson. As a result, students relate their attention and effort to the Integrated skills approach," 4.9% of teachers disagreed, 7.3% were unsure, 56.1% agreed, and 31.7% strongly agreed. Most teachers believe informing students about lesson goals helps align their efforts with the integrated skills approach. However, some disagreement and uncertainty indicate that not all teachers may effectively communicate these goals or perceive their benefits. The mean score is 4.1, with a standard deviation of 0.8.

For "I want my students to connect the daily lesson to previous tasks or topics using the Integrated skills approach," 2.4% of teachers strongly disagreed, 4.9% were unsure, 56.1% agreed, and 36.6% strongly agreed. Most teachers see value in linking daily lessons to previous tasks, although the small percentage of solid disagreement suggests that some teachers might face challenges in implementing this connection. The mean score is 4.2, with a standard deviation of 0.8.

Regarding "I make sure that the topics or tasks are interesting for my students while using the Integrated skills," 2.4% of teachers strongly disagreed, 2.4% disagreed, 14.6% were unsure, 43.9% agreed, and 36.6% strongly agreed. While most teachers strive to ensure interesting topics, the noticeable percentage of uncertainty and disagreement points to varying levels of success or confidence in this effort. The mean score is 4.1, with a standard deviation of 0.9.

For "I use the textbook or other resources to prepare tasks and topics using the Integrated skills approach," 2.4% disagreed, none strongly disagreed or were unsure, 51.2% agreed, and 46.3% strongly agreed. This suggests that nearly all teachers use textbooks and other resources to prepare for integrated skills teaching, showing widespread reliance on available materials for lesson planning. The mean score is 4.4, with a standard deviation of 0.6.

Regarding "I prepare guidelines for students while reading, writing, and presenting orally to improve their language competency," 4.9% of teachers strongly disagreed, 9.8% disagreed, 9.8% were unsure, 43.9% agreed, and 31.7% strongly agreed. The mixed responses indicate significant variability in practice, with some teachers not engaging in this activity as frequently or effectively. The mean score is 3.9, with a standard deviation of 1.1.

In response to "I motivate students to talk about their experiences with oral and written forms of the same topic," 53.7% of teachers strongly agreed, and 46.3% agreed, with no disagreement or uncertainty. This unanimous agreement suggests that teachers firmly believe in motivating students to express their experiences both orally and in writing, reinforcing integrated skills learning. The mean score is 4.5, with a standard deviation of 0.5.

For "I use different pair work activities in my class like discussion, asking and answering, summaries in writing, and presentations in class to practice language skills together," 2.4% disagreed, 2.4% were unsure, 31.7% agreed, and 63.4% strongly agreed. The high levels of agreement indicate strong support for using varied pair work activities to integrate language skills. However, a small percentage of uncertainty and disagreement highlights some variability in implementation. The mean score is 4.6, with a standard deviation of 0.7.

Regarding "I encourage students to read content from different subjects, write summaries, and present them orally to the class," 7.3% of teachers disagreed, 2.4% were unsure, 31.7% agreed, and 58.5% strongly agreed. While most teachers promote this integrative activity, a small fraction may not, indicating room for further encouragement or support.

Challenges that hinder the implementation of teaching Integrated Skills Approach Questionnaire

Factors related to students

Teachers identified students' reluctance and participation as significant barriers. For instance, some teachers noted that students often pay little attention to writing tasks, which affects their ability to integrate skills.

The compatibility of students' learning styles with the integrated skills approach was highlighted, along with challenges such as limited vocabulary and inadequate school facilities.

Factors related to teachers

Effective time management was a common concern when implementing the integrated skills approach.

Teachers emphasized the need for professional training to effectively use integrated skills in teaching. Some pointed out that a lack of training or experience might lead teachers to skip essential skills like listening.

Teachers' attitudes and perceptions were noted as influencing factors, with some needing to adjust their approach to fully embrace integrated skills teaching.

Factors related to school

The curriculum was frequently cited as a limiting factor, with concerns about its alignment with integrated skills teaching.

The size of the class and the available facilities were mentioned as factors influencing the effectiveness of integrated skills approaches.

There is a challenge in having enough time within the school schedule to comprehensively address all skills.

The physical and psychological learning environments in schools can impact the success of integrated skills teaching.

Factors related to textbooks

Textbooks were often criticized for not being appropriate or engaging enough, which can demotivate students.

The content, design, and textbook exercises should align with the integrated skills approach. Some teachers noted that specific textbooks do not effectively integrate all skills.

The relevance of content, its cultural appropriateness, and the balance of skills covered in textbooks were highlighted as essential factors.

Factors related to national examinations

The diversity in classrooms due to multicultural backgrounds was considered a factor. There is a perception that national examinations do not comprehensively support the integrated skills approach, which can hinder its implementation in classrooms.

Some national exams do not assess all language skills, which impacts how teachers prioritize different skills in their teaching.

The pressure to prepare students for national exams can detract from the focus on integrated skills teaching, leading to a more traditional, exam-focused approach.

Teachers' Perceptions of Using Integrated Skills Approach in EFL Classes Interview

Analysis of interview data on EFL teachers' Awareness of English Language integrated skills

Pre-Service and In-Service Training

The interview data reveal varied experiences among EFL teachers regarding pre-service and in-service training related to integrated skills teaching. While many teachers reported receiving some form of training, it was often part of broader English teaching programs and not explicitly labeled as "integrated skills." Specific training experiences, such as CELTA, Cambridge courses, and British Council CPD courses, were mentioned as valuable. However, a significant number of teachers indicated a lack of adequate training in integrated skills, highlighting the need for more targeted and comprehensive programs. The distinction between theoretical training and practical classroom experience suggests that more hands-on, practical training opportunities would be beneficial. Overall, there is room for improvement to ensure all teachers are well-prepared to teach integrated skills effectively.

Teaching Multiple Language Skills

The interview data indicate that most EFL teachers are aware of and actively engage in integrating multiple language skills into their teaching practices. This approach is seen as beneficial, offering a holistic and motivating learning experience. Teachers often organize lessons around a central topic or theme, addressing various skills simultaneously. However, implementation varies due to constraints such as curriculum demands, strict pacing, and student readiness. While some teachers have the flexibility to be creative, others are restricted by institutional requirements.

Despite these challenges, teachers generally agree that integrating multiple language skills is valuable and effective for comprehensive language development.

Benefits of Integrated Skills Teaching

The interview data suggest that EFL teachers recognize the significant benefits of integrated skills teaching. This approach aligns with the interconnected nature of language skills and offers practical, real-world applications that enhance student engagement and motivation. Teachers believe that integrating multiple skills simultaneously helps students develop a comprehensive understanding of the language, supports their learning processes, and enables effective language use in various contexts. Despite challenges such as careful planning and the risk of overwhelming students, the consensus is that the advantages far outweigh the drawbacks. Integrated skills teaching fosters a more authentic and holistic language learning experience, leading to better student outcomes.

Analysis of Interview data on EFL teachers' Implementation of English Language integrated skills

Listening Lessons

EFL teachers use pre-listening activities like discussions and warm-up questions to activate students' prior knowledge, facilitating speaking and critical thinking. This approach helps students connect the listening material to broader contexts. Teachers also incorporate skills such as speaking, writing, and reading into listening lessons to provide a well-rounded learning experience, enhancing engagement and understanding.

Speaking Lessons

Teachers integrate multiple skills into speaking lessons using supporting materials like videos, reading texts, and vocabulary exercises. By combining speaking with reading, writing, and listening, they create a more holistic learning experience. Pre-speaking activities help students feel prepared and confident, fostering practical applications and critical thinking.

Reading Lessons

In reading lessons, teachers integrate skills like writing, assigning tasks related to the reading material to reinforce understanding and encourage critical thinking. Pre-reading activities, such as discussions and vocabulary work, prepare students and activate prior knowledge. Speaking activities before and after reading facilitate engagement and comprehension. Vocabulary and grammar teaching, along with contextual materials like pictures or music, make the reading experience more engaging.

Writing Lessons

Teachers recognize the importance of integrating multiple skills into writing lessons to enhance performance and comprehension. Pre-writing activities, such as discussions, brainstorming, and speaking exercises, help students generate and organize ideas. Reading is used to provide models of good writing and teach

grammar and vocabulary in context. Speaking activities prepare students for writing by helping them articulate their thoughts. Organizational skills, taught separately from grammar and vocabulary, and sample texts illustrate good writing practices.

Analysis of Interview Data on EFL teachers' obstacles to English language Integrated skills

The interview data reveal several challenges EFL teachers face in implementing integrated skills teaching. Key issues include sourcing suitable materials, addressing students' varying proficiency levels and motivations, and managing time constraints within rigid lesson plans. Large class sizes and diverse classroom dynamics further complicate skill integration.

Teachers also note that student reluctance, especially with speaking, and interference from their first language can impede the effectiveness of integrated skills teaching. Overcoming these challenges requires well-trained educators, flexible curricula, and the willingness and ability of teachers to adapt.

DISCUSSION

The study aimed to examine EFL teachers' awareness, implementation, and obstacles regarding integrated skills teaching at Altinbas University School of Foreign Languages in Istanbul, Turkey. The findings, derived from questionnaires and interviews, addressed the research questions and were interpreted in the context of the study's objectives and literature review.

The first research question explored EFL teachers' awareness of integrated skills teaching. In line with Akmal et al. (2020), questionnaire and interview data analysis revealed a solid foundational awareness and positive perception among teachers. However, there is a need for more targeted and comprehensive training programs to bridge the gap between theory and practice, ensuring all teachers are well-equipped to implement integrated skills teaching strategies effectively.

The second research question investigated the frequency of integrated skills teaching in EFL classrooms. Data indicated that while teachers value integrating multiple skills, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, most do not implement all four skills comprehensively. Challenges include curriculum demands, strict pacing, and student readiness. Despite these obstacles, teachers generally prefer the integrated skills approach and recognize its benefits for student engagement and language proficiency as Kalsum et al. (2023) mentioned.

The third research question focused on the challenges EFL teachers face when teaching integrated skills. Key issues were categorized into factors related to students, teachers, schools, and national exams:

In line with Akmal et al. (2020), Challenges included reluctance to participate, varying learning styles, lack of vocabulary, and inadequate school facilities.

Factors related to teachers: Effective time management, the need for professional training, and attitudes towards integrated skills teaching were significant concerns.

Factors related to schools: Curriculum constraints, limited time allocation, unsuitable learning environments, large class sizes, and inadequate facilities hindered effective teaching.

Factors related to textbooks: Issues with appropriateness, content alignment, and cultural relevance were highlighted.

Factors related to national exams: Multicultural classrooms, lack of support for integrated skills, incomplete skill assessment, and exam preparation pressures were noted as barriers.

CONCLUSIONS

The data shows that most EFL teachers recognize the value and effectiveness of integrating multiple language skills within a topic or task, with 97.6% agreeing or strongly agreeing on its benefits. Teachers believe that this approach fosters comprehensive language learning by creating cohesive and interconnected lessons.

Teachers demonstrate a high level of commitment to implementing integrated skills teaching, with 100% agreeing that tasks or themes connecting multiple skills enhance lessons. Methods used include informing students about lesson goals, connecting lessons to previous tasks, and employing pair work activities. However, practical constraints such as time management, curriculum constraints, class sizes, and varying student proficiency levels present significant challenges.

Interviews reveal that teachers commonly integrate speaking, writing, and reading skills within listening lessons to boost engagement and understanding. Pre-listening activities, videos, reading texts, and vocabulary exercises are used in speaking lessons. Discussions, brainstorming, and pre-writing activities help students in reading and writing lessons.

Critical barriers to effective integrated skills teaching include:

Difficulty covering all materials within the allocated time.

Curriculum Constraints: Misalignment of the curriculum with the integrated skills approach.

Class Size and Facilities: Large classes and inadequate facilities hinder integration.

Student Proficiency Levels and Motivation: Varying proficiency levels and reluctance to engage, especially in speaking activities.

Teacher Training and Preparation: Insufficient training impacts teachers' confidence and effectiveness.

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