

## PRESERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS' VIEWS ON ONLINE LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT IN TURKEY

### İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ TÜRKİYE'DEKİ ÇEVİRİMİÇİ DİL DEĞERLENDİRMESİNE İLİŞKİN GÖRÜŞLERİ

Sabahattin YEŞİLÇINAR

Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi, Eğitim Fakültesi,  
İngiliz Dili Eğitimi  
[sycinar@yahoo.com](mailto:sycinar@yahoo.com)  
ORCID: 0000-0001-6457-0211

#### ABSTRACT

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#### Anahtar Kelimeler

Çevrimiçi dil  
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Online language  
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technology

Technology has rapidly accelerated the adoption of online language assessments (OLA), presenting unique opportunities and challenges. This study explores preservice English teachers' views on OLA in Turkish Turkey. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, interviews were conducted with 11 English preservice teachers from a state university in Turkey. The findings reveal both the advantages and disadvantages of OLA. On the positive side, preservice teachers highlighted the environmental and financial benefits of reducing paper use and operational efficiencies like automated grading and the flexibility of remote assessments. They also appreciated the enhanced learning experiences provided by multimedia and interactive elements and the innovative assessment opportunities offered by online platforms. However, significant challenges were identified, including technical and infrastructure barriers, varying levels of digital literacy, and concerns about assessment integrity and security. Psychological challenges were also prominent, with many preservice teachers experiencing increased stress and anxiety due to unfamiliarity with online formats and the pressures of adapting to new technologies. These insights underscore the need for comprehensive training and support to help preservice teachers navigate the complexities of OLA, ensuring both effective implementation and the well-being of future educators.

#### ÖZ

Teknoloji kullanımı, çevrimiçi dil değerlendirme (OLA) benimsenmesini hızlandırarak avantaj ve dezavantajlar ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu çalışma, öğretmen adaylarının OLA hakkındaki bakış açılarını araştırmaktadır. Nitel fenomenolojik bir yaklaşım kullanılarak, Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinden 11 İngilizce öğretmen adayı ile görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Bulgular, OLA'nın hem avantajlarını hem de dezavantajlarını ortaya koymaktadır. Olumlu yönden bakıldığında, öğretmen adayları kağıt kullanımını azaltmanın çevresel ve finansal faydalarının yanı sıra otomatik not verme ve uzaktan değerlendirme esnekliği gibi operasyonel verimliliklerin altını çizmişlerdir. Ayrıca multimedya ve interaktif unsurların sağladığı gelişmiş öğrenme deneyimlerini ve çevrimiçi platformların sunduğu yenilikçi değerlendirme fırsatlarını takdir etmişlerdir. Bununla birlikte, teknik ve altyapı engelleri, farklı dijital okuryazarlık seviyeleri ve değerlendirme bütünlüğü ve güvenliği ile ilgili endişeler de dahil olmak üzere önemli zorluklar tespit edilmiştir. Psikolojik zorluklar da öne çıkmıştır; birçok öğretmen adayı çevrimiçi formatlara aşina olmadıkları ve yeni teknolojilere uyum sağlamanın getirdiği baskılar nedeniyle stres ve kaygı yaşamıştır. Bu görüşler, öğretmen adaylarının OLA'nın karmaşıklığı içinde yollarını bulmalarına yardımcı olacak kapsamlı eğitim ve desteğe duyulan ihtiyacın altını çizmekte ve hem etkili bir uygulama hem de geleceğin eğitimcilerinin refahını sağlamaktadır.

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## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly accelerated the adoption of online teaching and assessment methods across educational institutions worldwide. This rapid transition has presented both opportunities and challenges for educators and students. Among these changes, online language assessment (OLA) has emerged as a crucial area of focus, particularly for preservice teachers who are developing their pedagogical skills and assessment literacy. The transition from in-person to online classes has dramatically altered the educational landscape, and it compiles both teachers and students to adapt to online learning environments using digital tools and technologies (Crawford et al., 2020). While technology has long been integrated into various aspects of education, its role has become increasingly critical in maintaining and enhancing educational quality in the context of online learning. Teachers, in particular, were required to develop their computer literacy to fulfil their educational responsibilities effectively, similar to traditional classroom settings (Hubbard & Levy, 2006).

Moreover, this shift to online platforms, often referred to as emergency remote teaching (ERT), presented significant challenges for teachers, who were required to assess students using digital tools without the benefit of pre-established, well-planned online education systems (Zhang et al., 2021; Henari & Ahmed, 2021). Unlike structured online learning environments, ERT was an immediate response to the crisis, leaving educators and institutions unprepared for the complexities of OLA (Gacs et al., 2020).

Online assessment, though integrated into some educational contexts before the pandemic, became a widespread necessity during ERT, and it has introduced many language teachers to this mode of assessment for the first time (Beck et al., 2020). The sudden transition required educators to quickly adapt their assessment methods to fit online platforms, often with minimal support and guidance (Czura & Dooly, 2021). This adaptation process has highlighted a variety of challenges, including the need for digital literacy, reliable technology access, and the creation of effective assessment tools that maintain fairness and accuracy (Anasse & Rhandy, 2021; Hakim, 2020).

Despite these challenges, some educators managed to implement online assessments successfully, while others faced significant hurdles, particularly regarding issues such as academic integrity and the prevention of cheating in an online environment (Blinova, 2022; Gamage et al., 2020). The pandemic also led to a preference for formative assessment practices, which were perceived as more adaptable to the online context compared to summative assessments. However, concerns about academic dishonesty persisted, becoming a central issue in discussions about OLA (Bjelobaba, 2021; Koris & Pal, 2021).

The transition to OLA during ERT has revealed the need to revisit and adapt traditional assessment practices to the digital age. As Sevimel-Sahin (2023) argues, this transition has compelled educational institutions to increasingly rely on online assessment methods, despite many teachers, students, and institutions being unprepared for such a shift. The ad-hoc nature of many solutions, coupled with the uncertainty surrounding the reliability and validity of online assessments, underscores the importance of developing robust guidelines and strategies for this mode of assessment (Janke et al., 2021; Muhammad & Ockey, 2021). As language assessment is integral to guiding student learning and providing feedback, these challenges have significant implications for educators and learners alike (Rogier, 2014).

Technology has thus become integral to teaching, learning, and assessment. The integration of technology in education, especially in the realm of language assessment, has been extensively discussed in recent literature. For example, the impact of OLA on student learning outcomes and teacher efficacy has become the focus of researchers (e.g., Bui, 2022; Fitriyah & Jannah, 2021). Despite these contributions, there is a notable gap in research focusing specifically on how preservice teachers, who are still in the formative stages of their careers, perceive and navigate the complexities of OLA. Given that assessment cultures vary across different countries, shaping teachers' language assessment literacy in diverse ways (Weng & Shen, 2022), it is imperative to explore preservice English teachers' views on (online) language assessment. To the author's knowledge, only one study within the Turkish context has addressed OLA (Koçer & Köksal, 2024). However, this study primarily focused on the views of English language teaching instructors regarding online language teaching and assessment. The notable lack of literature within the Turkish context on OLA underscores the significance of the present study.

## Literature Review

The literature on online language assessment (OLA) presents a diverse array of views that enhance our understanding of its implementation and impact. Bui (2022) provides an extensive review of language testing and assessment in online teaching and highlights both the benefits and challenges associated with OLA. According to Bui (*ibid.*), while OLA offers increased flexibility and accessibility, it also necessitates robust technological infrastructure and digital literacy among both teachers and students. Exploring the perceptions of OLA among students and teachers in EFL classrooms, Fitriyah and Jannah (2021) argue that students appreciate the convenience and instant feedback that OLA provides, while teachers raise concerns about its validity and reliability. These concerns are similarly reflected in the work of Sa'adah and Hentasmaka (2024), who explored student preferences for OLA in secondary schools, emphasizing the need for intuitive platforms and clear guidelines to improve the assessment experience.

Abduh's (2021) research provides insights into English teachers' views on online assessments. Accordingly, English teachers have a favorable view of online assessment and its associated methods due to the various benefits it offers. These benefits include improved technology skills, automated assessment and grading processes, precise learning outcome evaluations, and enhanced teaching effectiveness. According to Zhang et al. (2021), English teachers with a positive attitude and a readiness to embrace technological innovations in assessment often display greater creativity in implementing new assessment methods. Initially, teachers face challenges related to both technology and pedagogy. Nevertheless, they proactively sought pedagogical solutions and adapted to overcome these challenges, aligning their practices with the demands of online assessment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The sudden transition to online education during the COVID-19 pandemic has posed significant challenges, as discussed by Koçer and Köksal (2024), who examined online language teaching and assessment practices. Their research indicated that the sudden shift to online environments posed significant challenges for both teachers and students, including technical issues and a lack of familiarity with digital assessment tools. This study highlights the importance of adequate training and support for educators to effectively implement OLA.

Language assessment literacy (LAL) has emerged as a crucial concept in recent studies. Researchers such as Nayernia and Mohebbi (2023) and Weng and Shen (2022) emphasize the importance of developing LAL among teachers, enabling them to effectively design, administer, and interpret online assessments. These findings suggest that teacher education programs should include comprehensive LAL training to better prepare preservice teachers for the challenges of digital assessment environments.

In their investigation of preservice EFL teachers' attitudes towards online teaching, Taghizadeh and Basirat (2022) highlighted the challenges faced by novice teachers, including technical difficulties and a lack of confidence in using online platforms. These challenges were echoed by Ahmad et al. (2021), who critically reflected on the issues encountered in implementing OLA during the COVID-19 pandemic, calling for more supportive measures and resources for teachers.

Furthering the discussion, Sharma and Holbah (2022) advocated for the regular inclusion of OLA to promote inclusive language learning. This aligns with Carson's (2017) exploration of innovative assessment methods such as Pecha Kucha for spoken language production, illustrating OLA's potential to transform traditional assessment practices. Moreover, research by Ghoulali and Cecilia (2021) indicated that students generally achieve comparable levels of understanding through online learning as they do in traditional classroom settings. Tools such as online meeting rooms, forums, blogs, and interactive websites were shown to enhance student interest and engagement during online learning, leading to better learning outcomes. However, Hidalgo et al. (2021) observed that some students, despite putting in extra effort in online settings, achieved similar results to those obtained in conventional face-to-face classes.

To tackle the issue of integrity in online education, Jalilzadeh et al. (2024) delved into the factors driving students to cheat in online assessments. The study uncovered several key reasons, including the lack of supervision, inadequate preparation, a strong desire for higher grades, low self-esteem, and peer pressure. These insights are essential for comprehending the root causes of academic dishonesty and for devising effective strategies to safeguard the integrity of online assessments.

Tran-Thi-Thanh (2024) examined how language teachers adapted to rapid digital changes, focusing on online assessment in Vietnam's higher education sector. The researcher interviewed with educators from Chinese, English, and Russian Linguistics departments. Based on the findings, despite the sudden shift to online assessment, educators demonstrated significant resilience and openness to new methods. The study also highlighted the need for continuous professional development and the importance of equipping students with digital skills to sustain educational progress achieved during this period.

Lastly, Yeo (2021) bridged the theory-practice gap by providing insights into the experiences of teachers undergoing online language assessment training. His study found that practical, hands-on training was crucial in building teachers' confidence and competence in OLA. Although these studies may provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of online language assessment, there is dearth of research highlighting both advantages and disadvantages that OLA poses in terms of the views of preservice teachers. To achieve this goal, the present study seeks the following research question:

- How do preservice English teachers perceive online language assessment in Turkey?

## Method

### Design of the Study

This research was conducted using a qualitative and phenomenological approach, with interviews serving as the primary method for data collection. The researcher employed interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), an inductive technique, to gather detailed examples of the phenomenon in question and expand them into broader insights based on participants' personal experiences with academic cheating (Smith & Nizza, 2022). IPA ensures that the collected data are comprehensive, first-person narratives that offer deep insights.

### Participants and Setting

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure they had direct experience with the phenomenon being studied. This method allowed for the collection of detailed, meaningful data. Although purposive sampling can introduce certain biases, such as the possibility of self-selection, measures were implemented to minimize these risks, including maintaining participant anonymity. The study involved 11 English preservice teachers from a state university in Turkey, consisting of seven females (63.64%) and four males (36.36%) aged between 20 and 22. All participants had the information technologies (IT) class. Participants were informed about the study's aims and their rights, including the option to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was ensured by anonymizing all participant data, in line with established ethical guidelines. Table 1 provides their demographic details.

**Table 1.** Demographic Information of the Participants

Preservice teachers	Age	Gender	Having IT classes	Hours spent on social media daily
PT1	20	Female	Yes	4
PT2	20	Male	Yes	5
PT3	21	Female	Yes	4
PT4	21	Female	Yes	3
PT5	21	Male	Yes	3
PT6	21	Female	Yes	6
PT7	21	Male	Yes	5
PT8	22	Male	Yes	3
PT9	22	Female	Yes	5
PT10	22	Female	Yes	5
PT11	22	Female	Yes	4

### Data Collection and Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary data collection method, which enables an in-depth exploration of participants' perceptions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This method provided the flexibility needed

to follow up on participants' responses, ensuring that the data collected was rich and detailed (Kallio et al., 2016). The researchers crafted nine interview questions following an extensive literature review. Three university instructors, each with over a decade of teaching experience, evaluated the relevance and appropriateness of these questions. Based on the experts' feedback, six items were deemed essential; thus, three questions were removed. Each interview was conducted in a quiet, private space to promote open communication, and lasted between 29 and 38 minutes. Audio recordings of the interviews were made with participants' consent, and the recordings were transcribed verbatim to ensure the accuracy of the data (Bryman, 2016).

IPA was utilized to analyze the data, focusing on capturing the participants' lived experiences and the meanings they attach to those experiences (Smith & Nizza, 2022). The analysis followed a systematic process: first, transcripts were read multiple times to become thoroughly familiar with the content; second, significant statements and themes were identified; third, emergent themes were developed from the data; fourth, connections between these themes were explored; fifth, the process was repeated for each participant's data; and finally, patterns across all cases were identified and analyzed (Smith et al., 2009).

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, an extensive triangulation process was employed. This process involved aligning the emerging themes with existing scholarly work on online language assessment (Shenton, 2004) to identify both similarities and differences. Additionally, member checking was conducted, which means that participants were actively involved in the validation process. They were given the preliminary findings and asked to review and confirm that the identified themes accurately reflected their experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Manual coding of the data was performed, and the identified themes were refined through discussions with peer researchers, which helped ensure consistency and accuracy in the interpretation of the data (Saldaña, 2016). The intercoder reliability was calculated at .96.

## Findings

Based on the preservice teachers' views regarding online language assessments, two categories and eight codes emerged (please see Table 2). The first category was *advantages of online assessment*, which consists of four codes: environmental and financial benefits, operational efficiency, enhanced learning experience, and innovative assessment opportunities. The second category was *disadvantages of online assessment*, with four codes: technical and infrastructure barriers, digital literacy and transition, assessment integrity and security, and psychological challenges.

**Table 2.** Categories and Codes

Categories	Codes	f*
Advantages of online assessment	environmental and financial benefits	16
	operational efficiency	15
	enhanced learning experience	11
	innovative assessment opportunities	7
Disadvantages of online assessment	technical and infrastructure barriers	21
	digital literacy and transition	17
	assessment integrity and security	15
	psychological challenges	5

\* mentioned by participants more than once

### Advantages of Online Assessment

The positive views of preservice teachers regarding online language assessments are presented under the following codes:

#### Environmental and Financial Benefits

Preservice teachers often see OLA as a win for both the environment and the budget. They appreciate that by moving away from paper, OLAs support eco-friendly practices and help cut down on waste. This shift not only benefits the planet but also brings financial savings to schools. As one preservice teacher put it, "*Switching to*

OLAs feels like a great move for the environment. We're cutting down on paper and helping reduce waste. Plus, schools save money on printing and materials, which is a big plus" (T1). Beyond the immediate environmental benefits, the financial implications of using OLAs are also significant. The reduction in the need for physical materials means that educational institutions can allocate funds to other critical areas. This economic advantage is particularly valuable in times of tight budgets. As another preservice teacher shared, "I think OLAs are fantastic because they help us go green and save on costs. It's like a double win – less paper waste and more money staying in the school's budget" (T2). These reflections show that preservice teachers value OLAs for their environmental impact and financial benefits, recognizing the broader implications of reduced resource use and cost savings.

### **Operational Efficiency**

Moving on from the environmental and financial benefits, preservice teachers also highlight the operational efficiencies offered by OLAs. The ease of automated grading systems stands out as a major benefit, allowing for faster turnaround times and less manual effort. This efficiency is especially appreciated in busy academic settings where quick feedback can significantly impact learning. One preservice teacher noted, "Online language assessments really make things easier. The automated grading means I get feedback faster, and being able to take assessments from anywhere is super convenient" (T5). Additionally, the flexibility of OLAs provides a significant advantage in managing assessments. Students no longer need to worry about logistical issues related to location, which can be a game-changer for those balancing multiple commitments. As another preservice teacher commented, "The efficiency of online language assessments is great. They cut down on grading time and remove the hassle of location constraints. It's all about making the process smoother for everyone involved" (T3). These comments highlight how preservice teachers find OLAs to be efficient and convenient, streamlining both the assessment and feedback processes, and easing logistical challenges.

### **Enhanced Learning Experience**

Preservice teachers find that OLAs enhance their learning experience by incorporating multimedia and interactive elements. These features make assessments more engaging and provide diverse ways to demonstrate language skills. Real-time feedback is also valued for its role in personalized learning. As one preservice teacher explained, "The multimedia and interactive parts of online language assessments make assessments more engaging. It's great to get instant feedback and see how I'm doing right away" (T7). Another teacher added, "Online language assessments make learning more dynamic with interactive content. The immediate feedback helps me understand my strengths and areas to improve, making the whole process more personalized" (T9). These views reflect how preservice teachers value the engaging and personalized nature of OLAs, appreciating the immediate feedback and interactive elements.

### **Innovative Assessment Opportunities**

Preservice teachers are excited about the creative possibilities that OLAs offer. They enjoy the flexibility of online platforms for designing assessments that are interactive and go beyond traditional methods. This innovative approach makes the assessment process more relevant and engaging. As one preservice teacher noted, "Online language assessments open up so many opportunities for creative assessments. We can use multimedia and interactive elements to make tests more interesting and reflective of real-world language use" (PT11). Another teacher shared, "I'm thrilled about the chance to be innovative with online language assessments. Designing assessments that go beyond the norm makes the whole experience more engaging and relevant" (PT8). These insights show that preservice teachers are enthusiastic about the innovative potential of OLAs, appreciating the chance to create more engaging and relevant assessments.

### **Disadvantages of Online Assessment**

The negative views of preservice teachers regarding online language assessments were presented under the following codes:

### Technical and Infrastructure Barriers

Preservice teachers also encounter several challenges with OLAs, particularly related to technical issues and infrastructure. Problems such as unreliable internet connections and software malfunctions can disrupt the assessment process and cause significant stress. Moreover, differences in access to technology can affect fairness and create disparities among students. As one preservice teacher noted, *“Technical problems like bad internet or software issues can really mess things up. It’s stressful when things don’t work as they should, and not everyone has the same access to technology, which can be unfair”* (T3). Another teacher added, *“We definitely have some hurdles with technology. Internet issues and tech glitches can interfere with assessments, and the lack of equal access to tech can make things tricky”* (T7). These comments highlight the frustrations preservice teachers experience with technical and infrastructural challenges, emphasizing the need for reliable solutions and equitable access.

### Digital Literacy and Transition

The varying levels of digital literacy among preservice teachers can make adapting to OLAs challenging. Many find that learning to use new online tools requires substantial effort and training. This transition can be a significant hurdle, particularly for those less familiar with digital technology. As one preservice teacher explained, *“Not everyone is comfortable with digital tools, and that can make using online language assessments tough. We need more training to get up to speed, and the whole transition takes a lot of effort”* (T4). Another added, *“Switching to online assessments is a big change and can be overwhelming. We need more help with learning these new tools, and it takes time to adapt”* (T10). These views reflect the difficulties preservice teachers face with digital literacy and the transition to online assessments, highlighting the need for comprehensive training and support.

### Assessment Integrity and Security

Maintaining the integrity and security of OLAs is another major concern for preservice teachers. Despite various security features, issues such as academic dishonesty and grading accuracy continue to be problematic. Ensuring that assessments are fair and reliable remains a challenge. As one preservice teacher noted, *“Keeping online assessments secure is challenging. Even with features like randomized questions, cheating is still a concern, and grading subjective work accurately is tough”* (T8). Another added, *“There are ongoing issues with assessment integrity online. While security measures help, it’s still difficult to prevent cheating and grade subjective assessments fairly”* (T3). These reflections from preservice teachers underscore ongoing concerns about maintaining the integrity and security of online assessments.

### Psychological Challenges

The shift to online assessments significantly impacts the psychological well-being of preservice teachers, as the unfamiliarity with these formats increases stress and anxiety. Adapting to new assessment methods and navigating technical aspects can be challenging. As one preservice teacher shared, *“Using online assessments can be stressful, especially when we’re not used to the format”* (T1). Many preservice teachers express concerns about the additional pressure associated with new technologies and processes. Another preservice teacher commented, *“The stress of adapting to online assessments highlights the need for better support and creative solutions”* (T6). The change in assessment format often disrupts established routines, leading to heightened anxiety. One preservice teacher noted, *“Switching to online assessments has been quite challenging. The constant worry about technical issues and the new way of being tested really adds to my anxiety”* (T8). These insights underscore the psychological challenges preservice teachers face, emphasizing the importance of supportive measures and innovative approaches to manage the transition to online assessments effectively.

### Discussion

The move to OLA has highlighted the importance of re-evaluating and refining assessment practices in the digital context. Preservice teachers' perceptions of online language assessment are vital for understanding its effectiveness and identifying areas where improvements are needed. As the educational landscape continues to shift, addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by online assessment will be key to ensuring that it

meets the evolving needs of both educators and students. This study underlined both advantages and challenges from the views of preservice teachers.

### **Advantages of Online Language Assessment**

Based on the study's findings, preservice teachers see significant value in the environmental and financial benefits of OLAs. They recognize that, by reducing the reliance on paper and other physical resources, OLAs contribute to sustainability efforts and cost savings, aligning with broader educational goals of environmental stewardship and efficient resource allocation. Additionally, the financial savings associated with not needing physical materials are significant, allowing educational institutions to allocate resources to other critical areas. This dual benefit of environmental sustainability and cost-effectiveness is highly valued by preservice teachers, who see it as a “double win” for both the planet and the budget. This perspective resonates with previous research that emphasizes the importance of integrating eco-friendly practices in educational settings (e.g., Ghouali & Cecilia, 2021). The financial savings associated with OLAs also provide an opportunity for educational institutions to reallocate funds to critical areas, thus enhancing overall educational quality. Such reallocations could potentially enhance the overall educational experience, a point that has been less emphasized in prior studies but is crucial for understanding the broader implications of OLAs.

Another notable advantage is the operational efficiency offered by OLA. Preservice teachers appreciate the automated grading systems, which allow for quicker turnaround times and less manual effort. This efficiency is particularly beneficial in busy academic settings, where timely feedback can have a significant impact on student learning. While previous research, such as that by Abduh (2021), highlighted the benefits of automated grading, this study adds depth by revealing how preservice teachers perceive this efficiency as crucial for both their learning experience and their future teaching practices. Furthermore, the flexibility of OLA in terms of location and timing is seen as a major benefit. Students can take assessments from anywhere, eliminating logistical constraints and making the assessment process more convenient and accessible. This finding corroborates Zhang et al.'s (2021) work but also suggests that the flexibility of OLAs could be further leveraged to create more inclusive assessment environments, particularly in contexts where accessibility is a significant concern. These operational efficiencies enhance the overall assessment experience for both teachers and students. This is particularly beneficial in the context of ERT, where quick adaptation to online platforms was necessary (Gacs et al., 2020). The ability to receive instant feedback further enriches the learning experience, as it allows for timely intervention and personalized learning, which aligns with the findings of studies by Fitriyah and Jannah (2021) and Yeo (2021).

Preservice teachers highlighted the enhanced learning experience provided by OLA. They find that the incorporation of multimedia and interactive elements makes assessments more engaging and provides diverse ways to demonstrate language skills. The real-time feedback offered by OLA is particularly valued, as it allows for more personalized learning experiences. This observation supports findings from Fitriyah and Jannah (2021) but offers a nuanced view of how interactive features contribute not just to engagement but also to deeper learning, suggesting that OLA could be instrumental in shifting assessment paradigms towards more holistic evaluations of language competence. The integration of interactive features into assessments allows for diverse demonstrations of language skills, contributing to a more personalized learning experience. This perspective underscores the transformative potential of OLAs in language assessment, a trend that resonates with broader shifts towards digital pedagogy in higher education. The positive feedback from preservice teachers highlights the alignment with contemporary trends in educational technology, emphasizing the transformative potential of OLA in language assessment.

Preservice teachers are excited about the innovative assessment opportunities that OLA offers. The flexibility of online platforms allows for the design of assessments that go beyond traditional methods, incorporating interactive and multimedia elements that make the process more engaging and relevant. This innovative approach to assessment is seen as a way to better reflect real-world language use and to make the assessment process more meaningful for students. These findings are consistent with Carson's (2017) exploration of innovative assessment methods and Sharma and Holbah's (2022) advocacy for inclusive language learning through OLAs. Moreover, these findings challenge traditional assumptions about the limitations of OLAs,



suggesting that when designed thoughtfully, OLAs can be more effective than conventional assessments in some respects.

### **Disadvantages of Online Language Assessment**

Despite these advantages, the study also uncovers significant challenges associated with OLAs, particularly in terms of technical and infrastructure barriers. Preservice teachers express frustration with unreliable internet connections, software malfunctions, and the unequal access to technology, all of which can disrupt the assessment process and exacerbate disparities among students. This is consistent with the literature, where technical issues and the lack of adequate digital infrastructure have been identified as major obstacles to the effective implementation of OLAs (Henari & Ahmed, 2021; Koçer & Köksal, 2024; Taghizadeh & Basirat, 2022; Zhang et al., 2021). These technical difficulties can create disparities among students, particularly those with limited access to technology. Addressing these barriers is crucial for ensuring that OLA is implemented equitably and effectively.

Digital literacy and the transition to online platforms pose another significant challenge for preservice teachers. The varying levels of digital literacy among preservice teachers create additional challenges in adapting to OLA. This finding is supported by previous research, which underscores the importance of developing digital literacy among both teachers and students to navigate the complexities of online education effectively (Nayernia & Mohebbi, 2023; Sharma & Holbah, 2022; Tran-Thi-Thanh, 2024; Weng & Shen, 2022). For example, Sharma and Holbah (2022) warn about students' lack of digital literacy to take tests in online environments. The transition to online tools requires significant effort and can be overwhelming for those less familiar with digital technologies. Comprehensive training programs, therefore, are not just beneficial but essential for ensuring that both teachers and students are equipped to navigate the complexities of online education. Comprehensive training programs are essential to build competence and confidence in using online assessment tools.

Assessment integrity and security remain ongoing concerns for preservice teachers. The study reveals that despite the implementation of various security measures, issues such as academic dishonesty and the accuracy of grading, particularly for subjective assessments, persist. These challenges echo the findings of Blinova (2022) and Gamage et al. (2020), who identified similar concerns about maintaining academic integrity and the prevention of cheating in an online environment in online environments. To mitigate these challenges, Jalilzadeh et al. (2024) suggest several strategies, such as randomizing questions, using open-ended and essay-format questions, and designing different test methods. However, this study suggests that these strategies, while useful, may not fully address the deeper concerns around the perceived fairness and reliability of OLAs, indicating a need for ongoing innovation in assessment design. These strategies are crucial for enhancing the integrity of OLAs, ensuring that assessments are both fair and secure. Moreover, Sa'adah and Hentasmaka (2024) emphasized the need for intuitive platforms and clear guidelines. Thus, it can be interpreted that more robust and innovative solutions are needed to address these issues and ensuring that online assessments are fair and reliable requires ongoing attention to security features and assessment design.

Finally, the psychological challenges associated with the shift to online assessments are significant, with preservice teachers reporting increased stress and anxiety. The unfamiliarity with online formats, coupled with the technical demands of OLAs, can lead to these psychological challenges. This finding underscores the importance of providing psychological support and developing strategies to help preservice teachers manage the stress associated with online assessments. Incorporating mental health support into teacher education programs, along with providing specific assistance during assessment periods, could significantly reduce stress and anxiety. This approach could greatly enhance the overall experience of preservice teachers with OLAs.

### **Conclusion**

The integration of OLA into educational practices offers considerable advantages, including environmental and financial benefits, operational efficiencies, enhanced learning experiences, and innovative assessment opportunities. However, the challenges related to technical and infrastructure barriers, digital literacy, assessment integrity, and psychological stress must be addressed to maximize the effectiveness of OLA. The insights from preservice teachers underscore the need for targeted training, support, and technological solutions

to navigate the complexities of online assessments successfully. By addressing these challenges, educational institutions can better support preservice teachers and enhance the overall effectiveness of online language assessment.

The findings of this study have important implications for the future of language assessment in online environments. While OLAs offer numerous benefits, addressing the challenges identified by preservice teachers is crucial to ensuring their effective implementation. Educational institutions must invest in robust technological infrastructure and provide comprehensive training to enhance digital literacy among educators and students. Additionally, innovative solutions are needed to address concerns about assessment integrity and security, and to support the psychological well-being of teachers and students.

It is important to recognize the limitations of this study to provide a fuller understanding of the results. The small sample size may limit the extent to which these findings can be generalized to other educational settings. Furthermore, the reliance on interviews as the primary source of data may have introduced certain biases, such as social desirability bias, where participants might have responded in ways they believed to be more favorable. Future research should address these limitations by investigating the long-term effects of OLAs on student learning outcomes and teacher effectiveness across varied educational contexts. To enhance the robustness of future studies, employing larger, more diverse samples and a mixed-methods approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative data would be beneficial. Additionally, further research is needed to evaluate the impact of different training programs on improving digital and assessment literacy among preservice teachers. By filling these gaps, the educational community can work toward developing more effective and equitable online language assessment practices that align with the needs of both educators and students in the digital age.

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## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

COVID-19 pandemisi, dünya genelinde eğitim sistemlerini köklü bir şekilde değiştirerek çevrimiçi öğretim ve değerlendirme yöntemlerinin yaygın olarak kullanılmasına neden olmuştur. Bu süreç, birçok eğitim kurumunu geleneksel yüz yüze eğitim modellerinden uzaklaştırarak, dijital platformlar üzerinden eğitime zorunlu bir geçiş yapmalarını gerektirmiştir. Bu zorunlu geçiş, özellikle dil eğitimi bağlamında öğretmen adayları için birçok yeni fırsat ve zorluk ortaya çıkarmıştır. Eğitimciler, dijital platformlara uyum sağlarken, eğitim kalitesini ve değerlendirme süreçlerinin doğruluğunu korumak adına çeşitli engellerle karşı karşıya kalmıştır (Crawford ve ark., 2020). Teknoloji, uzun süredir eğitimde çeşitli yönere entegre edilmiş olsa da, çevrimiçi öğrenme ve değerlendirme bağlamında eğitim kalitesini sürdürmek ve artırmak için kritik bir rol oynamaya başlamıştır. Özellikle öğretmen adayları, bu yeni ortamda başarılı olabilmek için dijital becerilerini geliştirme ihtiyacı hissetmiştir (Hubbard & Levy, 2006).

Bu çalışmada nitel araştırma desenlerinden fenomenolojik yaklaşımı kullanılmıştır. Bu yaklaşım, katılımcıların belirli bir olguyu nasıl deneyimlediklerini ve bu deneyimlere nasıl anlam verdiklerini derinlemesine incelemeye olanak tanır (Smith & Nizza, 2022). Araştırmanın örneklemi, Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinin İngilizce öğretmenliği bölümünde öğrenin gören 11 öğretmen adayından (7 kadın, 4 erkek) oluşmaktadır. Katılımcılar, araştırmaya gönüllü olarak katılmış ve tüm veriler gizlilik ilkesine uygun olarak toplanmıştır.

Veri toplama sürecinde yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler kullanılmıştır. Bu yöntem, katılımcıların deneyimlerini ve algılarını ayrıntılı bir şekilde ortaya koymak için uygun bir yöntem olarak değerlendirilmiştir (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Görüşme soruları, 10 yılı aşkın öğretim deneyimine sahip üç üniversite öğretim üyesi değerlendirilmiş ve geri bildirimler doğrultusunda nihai hale getirilmiştir. Görüşmeler, sessiz bir ortamda gerçekleştirilmiş ve her bir görüşme 29 ile 38 dakika arasında sürmüştür. Görüşmelerin ses kayıtları katılımcıların izniyle alınmış ve ardından veriler kelimesi kelimesine yazıya dökülerek analiz edilmiştir (Bryman, 2016).

Verilerin analizi, Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz yöntemiyle yapılmıştır. Bu yöntem, katılımcıların bireysel deneyimlerini derinlemesine anlamayı ve bu deneyimlere atfettikleri anlamları keşfetmeyi amaçlar (Smith & Nizza, 2022). Veri analizi süreci, önce transkriptlerin defalarca okunması, ardından önemli ifadelerin ve temaların belirlenmesi ve nihayetinde tüm vakalar arasında ortak desenlerin ortaya çıkarılması şeklinde sistematik bir şekilde yürütülmüştür (Smith ve ark., 2009). Analiz sürecinde üçgenleme ve member checking teknikleri kullanılarak bulguların geçerliliği artırılmıştır (Shenton, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Kodlama süreci manuel olarak yürütülmüş ve analiz sırasında meslektaşlarla yapılan tartışmalar sonucunda temalar yenilenmiştir (Saldaña, 2016).

Çalışmanın bulguları, öğretmen adaylarının çevrimiçi dil değerlendirmelerine ilişkin algıları doğrultusunda iki ana kategori ve sekiz alt kod ortaya koymuştur. İlk kategori, çevrimiçi değerlendirmenin avantajlarını içermekte olup dört temel koddan oluşmaktadır: çevresel ve finansal faydalar, operasyonel verimlilik, geliştirilmiş öğrenme deneyimi ve yenilikçi değerlendirme fırsatları. İkinci kategori ise çevrimiçi değerlendirmenin dezavantajlarını ele almakta olup dört ana koddan oluşmaktadır: teknik ve altyapı ile ilgili sıkıntılar, dijital okuryazarlık ve geçiş süreci, değerlendirme bütünlüğü ve güvenliği ile psikolojik zorluklar.

Çevrimiçi dil değerlendirmelerinin çevresel ve finansal faydaları, öğretmen adayları tarafından büyük ölçüde takdir edilmiştir. Fiziksel kaynaklara olan bağımlılığın azalması, sürdürülebilirlik çabalarına katkıda bulunmakta ve maliyet tasarrufu sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca, çevrimiçi dil değerlendirmelerin sunduğu operasyonel verimlilik, öğrencilerin öğrenme süreçlerine yönelik olumlu etkiler yaratmaktadır. Otomatik notlandırma sistemleri, öğretmenlerin geri bildirim sürecini hızlandırarak, öğrencilere zamanında ve kişiselleştirilmiş geribildirim sağlama imkânı sunmaktadır. Bu durum, öğrenme deneyiminin kalitesini artırmakta ve öğrencilerin ders içi ve ders dışı performanslarını daha etkili bir şekilde izlemeye olanak tanımaktadır. Ek olarak, yenilikçi değerlendirme fırsatları, çevrimiçi dil değerlendirmelerin öğretmen adayları tarafından pedagojik olarak zenginleştirici ve motive edici olarak algılanmasını sağlamaktadır.

Çevrimiçi dil değerlendirmeleri ile ilgili en belirgin zorluklardan biri, teknik ve altyapı sorunlarıdır. Öğretmen adayları, güvenilir olmayan internet bağlantıları, yazılım sorunları ve teknolojik erişimdeki eşitsizlikler nedeniyle sıklıkla hayal kırıklığına uğramaktadır. Bu sorunlar, çevrimiçi değerlendirme süreçlerinin aksamasına ve öğrencilerin başarılarının adil bir şekilde ölçülmesini zorlaştırmaktadır. Dijital okuryazarlık ve çevrimiçi platformlara geçiş süreci de öğretmen adayları için önemli bir zorluk teşkil etmektedir. Katılımcılar, dijital

okuryazarlık düzeylerinin düşük olması nedeniyle bu yeni ortama uyum sağlamakta zorlandıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Değerlendirme bütünlüğü ve güvenliği konuları, çevrimiçi dil değerlendirmelerin en kritik dezavantajları arasında yer almakta olup, öğretmen adayları bu konularda sürekli endişe duymaktadır. Ayrıca, çevrimiçi ortamda yapılan değerlendirmelerde öğrencilerin etik dışı davranışlarda bulunma olasılığının artması, değerlendirme sonuçlarının güvenilirliğini tehlikeye atmaktadır. Son olarak, psikolojik zorluklar, çevrimiçi değerlendirmenin öğretmen adayları üzerinde yarattığı stres ve kaygı düzeyinin artmasına neden olmaktadır. Bu durum hem öğretmen adaylarının hem de öğrencilerin motivasyonunu olumsuz yönde etkilemekte ve öğrenme süreçlerinin verimliliğini azaltmaktadır.

Bu çalışma, öğretmen adaylarının çevrimiçi dil değerlendirmeleri hakkındaki görüşlerine dayalı olarak, çevrimiçi dil değerlendirmelerin avantajları ve dezavantajları hakkında kapsamlı bir analiz sunmaktadır. Bulgular, çevrimiçi dil değerlendirmelerin çevresel ve finansal faydalar, operasyonel verimlilik ve yenilikçi değerlendirme fırsatları gibi önemli avantajlar sağladığını, ancak teknik zorluklar, dijital okuryazarlık eksiklikleri ve değerlendirme bütünlüğü gibi önemli dezavantajların da bulunduğunu göstermektedir. Eğitim kurumlarının, bu zorlukların üstesinden gelmek ve çevrimiçi dil değerlendirmelerin etkinliğini artırmak için gerekli önlemleri alması gerekmektedir. Ayrıca, öğretmen adaylarının dijital okuryazarlık becerilerini geliştirmek, teknik altyapıyı iyileştirmek ve çevrimiçi değerlendirme süreçlerinde etik standartları korumak için daha fazla destek sağlanması gerekmektedir. Çevrimiçi dil değerlendirmelerinin gelecekteki uygulamalarında bu faktörlerin dikkate alınması, hem öğretmen adaylarının hem de öğrencilerin çevrimiçi öğrenme ve değerlendirme süreçlerinden daha fazla fayda sağlamalarına olanak tanıyacaktır.