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**ELT Research Journal**  
**Volume 12, Issue 2, December 2023**

**Dear Reader,**

We are delighted to welcome you to the latest issue of our ELT Research Journal, which contains five excellent research papers. We hope this journal will contribute to research in ELT, and we invite you to submit your studies. Our vision is to create a high-quality publication relevant to the ELT world's academic researchers, graduate students, scholars, and teachers. The current issue presents research articles addressing a number of issues in the field of English Language Teaching. The first article by Zainab Ameen and Sevinç Ergenekon aims to explore the primary demotivating factors that hinder Iraqi students from speaking English. The second paper by Tuğçenur Erdal reviews the concept of teacher wellbeing and examines English language instructors' perspectives on the concept of teacher wellbeing. The third study by Giulia Burlando discusses the use of Duolingo as a tool for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). The fourth paper by Saliha Toscu presents an overview of the research studies investigating writing assessment in English as a foreign language (EFL) context, specifically at the university level. The fifth article by Hanife Salbaş aims to shed light on the ambivalent status of incorporating literature within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy by exploring its foundational tenets and pragmatic implications. We would like to thank once more all the researchers who have contributed to the current issue of the journal with their invaluable academic works. We would also like to thank all editors, co-editors and reviewers of the ELT-RJ for their voluntary contribution to the journal by managing the review process.

Best Regards,

**Prof. Dr. Dinçay KÖKSAL**  
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## Impacts of Demotivation Factors on Speaking Skill Among EFL Learners in Iraqi Secondary Schools in Ankara

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Research Article

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to explore the primary demotivating factors that hinder Iraqi students from speaking English. In order to achieve this objective in the study, İsaoglu's (2017) Speaking Demotivation Scale was utilized after ensuring its validity. This scale consists of 48 items that are answered on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The scale embraces four sub-dimensions of demotivation, which are factors related to students, teachers, the learning materials, and attitudes towards English. The scale was responded by 111 students studying in Iraqi schools. The results of the study revealed that the most significant factors leading to students' demotivation were related to attitudes towards English and learning materials. To examine the factors of demotivation in relation to gender, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. With regard to analyzing the factors associated with students receiving private lessons, a sample t-test was utilized. The results indicated statistically significant differences among male and female students regarding gender-related demotivating factors. Additionally, students who received special training were less affected by demotivating factors compared to students who did not receive such trainings.

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**Keywords:** Demotivation; EFL; Motivation, Speaking English

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## **Introduction**

Many different elements influence how languages are taught and learned. One of these factors that has the most effects on the process of learning a language is motivation. Both teachers and researchers widely recognize that motivation is a key to determining how fast and how well foreign languages are learned. Motivation research in foreign language learning originated from social psychology since learning a new language of a distinct community is closely linked to the learners' social attitudes towards that community.

Based on multiple studies, highly motivated students tend to learn more effectively and achieve greater success (Ely, 1986). Motivated students are more likely to be interested in their course material and actively look for ways to develop their knowledge. Additionally, they tend to establish objectives for themselves and strive to achieve them. On the other hand, a decrease in motivation can lead to demotivation (Bekleyen, 2011). Dörnyei (2001) defines demotivation as external factors that can hinder or reduce an individual's willingness to act on a particular intention or goal. In other words, a person may get demotivated when their motivation for a certain purpose wane. Demotivation can arise from various factors such as a lack of clear objectives for language learning, adequate teacher feedback, support and encouragement from parents and classmates, and a motivating learning environment. According to Sakai and Kikuchi (2009), six factors that contribute to demotivation in language learning can be identified. These factors encapsulate the nature of classes, absence of interest, classroom environment, course materials, teachers, and past experiences of failure. Ahmed (2013) and Bastidas & Muñoz (2011) also highlight the prevalent issue of declining motivation in foreign language learning, particularly within current secondary education systems.

The significance of the current study is repose in its exploration of the demotivating factors that impede Iraqi students, specifically those studying in Iraqi schools outside of Iraq, from speaking English. Understanding these factors is crucial for both academia and practice in the field of language learning. By identifying the demotivating factors, educators and curriculum developers can develop targeted interventions and strategies to enhance students' motivation and promote English language proficiency.

This study addresses the existing gaps in the field of demotivation research in the Iraqi context, specifically focusing on English language speaking skills. While previous studies have examined motivation in language learning, there is a lack of research that specifically investigates the demotivating factors that hinder Iraqi students' English- speaking abilities. By

filling this gap, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the unique challenges faced by Iraqi students and provides valuable insights for designing effective educational interventions.

This study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What are the primary factors that demotivate Iraqi students from speaking English and hinder their progress in developing speaking skills?
2. To what extent do age and gender factors affect Iraqi students' reluctance to speak English?
3. Do the demotivating factors that affect students' development of speaking skills differ depending on whether they receive private English lessons or attend English language courses?

By addressing these research questions, the study aims to shed light on the demotivating factors specific to speaking English in the Iraqi context and provide evidence-based recommendations to enhance English language learning for Iraqi students.

### **Importance of Speaking in Foreign Language Learning**

In today's globalized world, communication plays a vital role in achieving success. Language acts as a medium for communication and helps people accomplish their goals and objectives. Without a common language, effective communication becomes impossible. Since English is the dominant global lingua franca and is spoken internationally, it facilitates communication among people across the world, regardless of their geographical location or origins. English serves as a bridge enabling people in diverse regions and nations, to communicate with each other. Without a common language like English, efficient communication and the pursuit of individual and collective goals on a global scale would be unfeasible. In an increasingly interconnected world, English is the thread that weaves discrete cultures, communities and countries together. It is the global social glue and conduit for the exchange of ideas.

Nowadays, the growing significance of English as a means of global communication has led to a significant surge in the demand for individuals who possess strong English-speaking abilities, according to Nazara (2011). Therefore, in order to speak English fluently and accurately, a learner needs to build a strong foundation in components of the language such

as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. These components are interrelated, and mastering each one will help improve overall proficiency. Developing these skills takes time and practice. So how can learners upgrade their English-speaking skill? One of the effective ways to improve English speaking is to immerse learners in English-speaking environments. Learners should listen to English regularly such as listening to videos, listening to music, or watching foreign films and series in English. It is also beneficial to engage in conversations with native English speakers as frequently as possible (Perez, 2022). Furthermore, listening to educational programs and radio broadcasts in English can be avail. Consistent practice and feedback can help identify areas for improvement and allow for targeted focus on specific language components (Li, 2010).

Owing to the eminence of speaking skills, Brown (2001) emphasizes the importance of communicative competence, which involves the ability to use language effectively in social contexts. Speaking is a crucial aspect of communicative competence, as it allows learners to express themselves fluently and accurately. It allows learners to communicate with other speakers and engage in meaningful conversations, which can enhance their language proficiency and cultural understanding.

Speaking a foreign language not only ameliorates the culture of the learner but also can increase job opportunities. Looking back to the pre-globalization days, knowing the English language was an additional advantage. With technological advancements and modern digital platforms, the world has become a 'small village' and there is a strong need to enhance English language learning proficiency for all individuals in the job market. In today's globalized world, companies are growingly seeking employees who are fluent in multiple languages. Speaking a foreign language reforms an individual's competitiveness in the labor market, which can lead to higher salaries and better job opportunities.

Individuals who are learning English as a second language, especially in terms of speaking, face substantial challenges. Although speaking is a crucial and demanding skill for English as a foreign language learner, there are several main reasons that make it difficult.

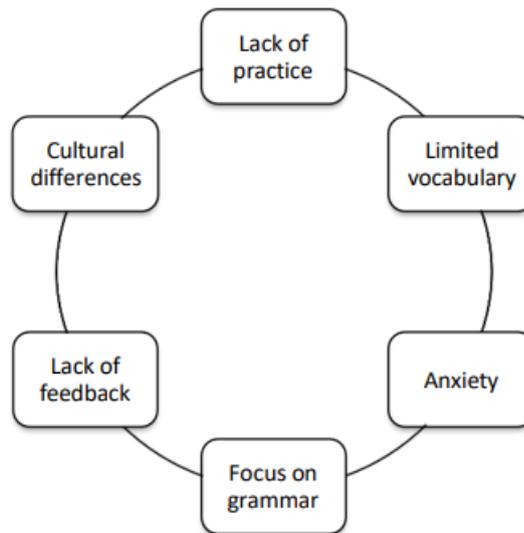


Figure 1. *Challenges Faced by EFL Learners in Developing Speaking Skills*

As illustrated in Figure 1 above, the main reasons that make speaking in English challenging include:

- **Lack of practice:** EFL learners often get limited opportunities to speak English in authentic contexts. They mostly rely on textbooks, worksheets and teaching. Speaking needs a lot of practice.
- **Limited vocabulary:** A learner's limited vocabulary can make spontaneous speaking challenging as they struggle to find the right words instantly. Speaking requires fast, on-the-spot recall of words and phrases.
- **Focus on grammar:** EFL teaching often emphasizes reading, writing and grammar. Speaking is not given enough importance, so learners do not develop strong speaking skills and confidence.
- **Lack of feedback:** Without feedback from a fluent speaker, learners do not know how well they are speaking, what needs improvement, and what good speaking skills really sound like.

Multiple research studies suggest that in order to assist EFL learners in enhancing their speaking skills, it is momentous to focus on various aspects such as providing abundant opportunities for speaking practice, addressing anxiety related to speaking, expanding

vocabulary, balancing the curriculum, providing constructive feedback, and promoting cultural awareness (Krashen, 1982; Nation, 2011; Ovando, 1994).

Teachers play a crucial role in the language learning process as they provide a conducive learning environment for the learners, and their instructional programs serve as a framework that fosters educational motivation. If teachers fail to display educational qualities such as serving as role models for students and exhibiting empathy and positivity, then these deficiencies can negatively impact the learning environment. The behavior of teachers significantly impacts students since if teachers fail to demonstrate enthusiasm for their subject matter, it becomes nearly impossible to create student interest (Karaghanh et al.,2019).

### **Concept of Demotivation in Foreign Language Learning**

Numerous studies highlight motivation as a crucial element in foreign language learning, and it is widely recognized as a significant factor that influences learners' ability to achieve proficiency in the target language (Gilakjani, Leong, & Sabouri, 2012). In describing motivation, Brown (2001) referred to it as an innate desire, drive, emotion, or ambition that motivates individuals to carry out particular actions. Hu (2011), on the other hand, explained that motivational factors contribute to success in language learning while demotivating factors demotivate the learning process.

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) define demotivation as the opposite of motivation, in that it represents a lack of drive or willingness to engage in a particular activity. Demotivation can arise due to various reasons, such as unpleasant language learning experiences, a lack of perceived advancement or success, and a lack of interest in the language being learned. Additionally, external factors such as time constraints, social pressures, a teacher who is disinterested, and material that is uninteresting, or too difficult additionally contribute to demotivation in language learning. Students may also have negative experiences in the language learning process, such as feeling embarrassed in front of their peers or struggling to understand the material. These experiences can lead to a decrease in motivation and a lack of engagement with the learning process (Çankaya, 2018). Apprehending the factors that lead to demotivation in language learning can assist teachers and learners in recognizing potential barriers and implementing measures to tackle them.

## **Role of Demotivation in Foreign Language Speaking Skills**

With respect to previous studies, acquiring speaking skills in a foreign language can be a daunting task for language learners. While motivation is crucial for learners to actively engage in speaking activities, there are several demotivating factors that can negatively impact learners' willingness to speak. These demotivating factors incorporate teacher-related factors, inadequate school facilities, low self-confidence, negative attitudes towards foreign languages, compulsory language learning, group dynamics, and the quality of textbooks used in the classroom (Dörnyei, 1998).

For some learners, acquiring a new language can be demotivating, particularly concerning speaking. In Iraq, English students often do not get many opportunities to speak in class. Most English teachers in Iraqi schools teach through a method, focusing on grammar rules rather than speaking and listening. Although teaching methods today emphasize communication and speaking, the grammar-translation approach is still predominant in the Iraqi education system. Due to the lack of focus on speech in English classes, Iraqi students frequently feel incapable of developing strong speaking skills and become unmotivated to learn English. When students are not provided with a chance to practice speaking, they lose confidence in their ability to speak and become less motivated to study the language. The skill of speaking is frequently overlooked in the context of learning a foreign language, and it is frequently seen as the most challenging and intricate ability to master (Ur, 1996)..

### **Previous Studies**

The study conducted by Alyousif & Alsuhaibani (2021) investigated the demotivating factors that hinder English language learning among Saudi high school students studying English as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. The study involved 365 students and 18 English language teachers from six public schools. The researchers employed a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to collect data from both students and teachers. The findings of the study showed that subject-related and teacher-related demotivating factors were the most commonly reported by Saudi high school EFL students. In particular, lack of interesting topics, insufficient opportunities for practicing English, excessive focus on grammar, and teacher incompetence were identified as the most significant demotivating factors.

Soureshjani and Riahipour (2012) conducted a study and they aimed at identifying the various factors that have impacts on the improvement of English-speaking skills among

learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). The study sought to explore the different factors that may demotivate speaking skills among EFL learners. The researchers discovered that learners' lack of confidence, anxiety, negative attitudes, and limited opportunities to practice speaking were the main demotivating factors. Additionally, the study examined the attitudes of English language teachers towards teaching speaking skills in the classroom. Findings represented that teachers' lack of confidence, limited knowledge of teaching speaking skills, and reliance on traditional teaching methods were among the factors that contributed to learners' lack of progress in speaking. The study highlighted the importance of addressing these demotivating factors and adopting effective teaching strategies to renovate learners' English-speaking abilities.

To investigate the demotivating factors that impact Iranian high school students' and teachers' perceptions of practising the speaking skill in English as a second language. Afrough, Rahimi, & Zarafshan (2014) conducted interviews with 312 students and 92 teachers and used thematic analysis to identify common themes. With reference to the findings and related literature, they developed a questionnaire that was administered to 150 male and 150 female EFL learners and 40 male and 40 female teachers. The researchers analyzed the data collected from the questionnaire performing a statistical technique called principal components analysis with varimax rotation. The analysis revealed that there were six factors that emerged as demotivating for Iranian high school students and teachers when practising the speaking skill in English as a second language. These factors were negative attitudes toward learning L2, inadequate teacher competence and performance, lack of technological facilities in the classroom, lack of adequate teaching materials, unfavorable classroom environment, and insufficient opportunities for speaking practice.

### **Studies in Turkey**

Upon reviewing previous studies in Turkey, it was found that there are a number of studies that have addressed the issue of demotivation in general. However, concerning demotivation specifically in speaking, there is a limited number of studies that have focused on this topic.

Han et al. (2019) investigated the factors that contribute to demotivation in EFL learning among Turkish students and the strategies they employ to overcome these challenges. The study identifies a range of demotivating factors, including negative attitudes of classmates, teacher-related issues, personal difficulties, class characteristics, test anxiety and experiences

of failure. To cope with these demotivating factors, Turkish EFL learners utilize various strategies, such as self-studying, seeking assistance, adopting a positive mindset, ignoring negative feedback, and setting achievable goals. The study's findings emphasize the importance of addressing demotivation in EFL learning to enhance student success. Another study conducted by Akay (2017) on Turkish high school students detected that several demotivating factors hindered their English language learning, comprising a lack of interest in the language, negative teacher attitudes, unsupportive classroom environments, and unappealing course materials. The findings of this study also highlighted the students' expressed need for engaging courses that utilize technological tools and incorporate more speaking activities to enhance their motivation. Furthermore, İsaoglu's (2020) study inspected factors that demotivate speaking skill development in 566 students at Anatolian High School, Ankara. Identified barriers included fear of mistakes, lack of confidence, negative teacher feedback, and limited training opportunities. To enhance motivation and speaking proficiency, the researcher suggests teachers should use motivational strategies, create supportive environments, and employ communicative teaching methods. Additionally, policymakers are expected to incorporate more communication activities in textbooks, offer interactive teacher training, and ensure the quality of speaking exercises.

### **Studies in Iraq**

The study conducted by Ali & Abed (2022) examined EFL students' demotivation and their perceptions of classroom activities. It identified factors such as lack of interest, difficulty with the subject matter, and negative classroom experiences as contributors to demotivation. Students viewed group work and interactive tasks positively, emphasizing collaboration, communication, and practical language use. Traditional activities like lectures and repetitive exercises were spotted as less engaging. It highlights the importance of promoting positive values in classroom activities to enhance student motivation and prevent negative outcomes.

In 2023, Jasim's study discovered that the most commonly mentioned demotivating issues for open educational college EFL students were related to subjects and context, including a lack of engaging subject matter, limited English practice opportunities, and an excessive focus on grammar. Teachers suggested various methods to elevate students' motivation, such as incorporating technology, offering extrinsic rewards and encouragement, and promoting competitive and collaborative work.

In line with previous studies, a study conducted in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq found that university students are discouraged from learning English in the classroom due to two main factors. The first factor is related to teachers, with students expressing dissatisfaction with inexperienced teachers who lack variety in teaching methods and fail to cater to the needs of less proficient students. The second factor is the concern about not being employed after graduation, as students observe a high number of unemployed graduates in the region (Hama, 2022).

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

This study was conducted on a group of students studying at Iraqi secondary schools in Ankara, Turkey during the academic year 2022-2023. The study sample consisted of (n= 111) male and female students from the secondary stage, whose native language is Arabic and who are studying English as a foreign language. The age range of the participating students in this study was between 15 and 18 years old. It was ensured that all students studied English during their primary and middle school stages, as in the Iraqi education system, students begin learning English from the first grade in primary school.

### **Instrument**

In order to discover the most common factors that demotivate students speaking in English, Speaking Demotivation Scale developed by İsaoglu (2020) was used. Speaking Demotivation Scale included (48) items to be answered on the four-point Likert scale, which starts with 'Strongly Agree' ends with 'Strongly Disagree'.

The questionnaire was distributed to all participants in order to explore the factors that demotivate students from speaking English. Participants agreed to participate in the study on a voluntary basis and were assured that responses should be honest. The students were informed about the research and guaranteed anonymity, with their responses being used for research purposes. Finally, the collected data underwent statistical analyses.

### **Data Collection Tools**

In the current study, the Speaking Demotivation Scale developed by İsaoglu (2020) was used. The scale was applied to students in English without being translated into Arabic. The scale aims to measure the demotivating factors that discourage students from speaking English.

It consists of 48 items that follow a four-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree), with scores given on a scale of 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. The scale is divided into four sub-dimensions: teacher-related factors, student-related factors, characteristics of the classroom and learning materials, and the nature of the course and attitudes towards the English language. The scale was developed to measure the relationship between demotivating factors and variables such as age, gender, and whether or not students received private lessons. The question corresponding to studying abroad was omitted to prevent any confusion among the students, as the study was conducted on Iraqi students who are enrolled in Iraqi schools in Turkey. It is possible that some students may misunderstand the question about travelling to foreign countries since they are already residing outside their home country of Iraq and currently living in Turkey.

The internal reliability of the scale was computed. Since the data is in a multidimensional structure, instead of the Cronbach alpha coefficient, the stratified alpha coefficient and Mc are used. Danold's Omega coefficient was calculated respectively as 0.81 and 0.82 which indicate acceptable reliability. The alpha values were computed respectively for the 'Teacher', 'Student', 'Class\_Material' and 'Nature\_Attitude' subscales as 0.80, 0.68, 0.58 and 0.40. Alpha values for 'student' and 'Nature\_Attitude' seem low. This is the limitation of this research.

### **Data Analysis**

Before the analysis, one-dimensional outlier analysis was performed and the participants 71, 80 and 86 whose standardized scale scores were outside the range of -3 and +3 were excluded from the analysis.

The assumption of normality was tested, and it was determined that the skewness and kurtosis values for all subgroups were in the range of -1 - +1. These findings show that the normality assumption is met for all subgroups. For this reason, parametric tests were used in the analyses. Moreover Homogeneity of variance was tested with Levene test for ANOVA.

Randomized block design ANOVA was calculated to compare the scores of the participants from the subscales. Randomized block designs are utilized to compare the significance of mean scores in cases where the sample is not independent but matched by a variable called a block variable (Albert, Rizzo, 2012). In the present study, the participants are

not independent because the scores of the same participants from discrete subscales are compared. Therefore, the use of randomized block design is appropriate.

The independent sample t-test was calculated to compare the mean scores obtained from the subtests according to gender, receiving private lessons. For the groups where homogeneity of variance assumption was not met Welch two sample tests were utilized. One-way ANOVA was computed to compare the mean scores obtained from the subtests according to age. Because normality assumption is violated according to age for ‘student related factors’ subscale, Kruskal Wallis test was utilized for that comparison.

With regard to data analysis, RSP package (Doğan & Aybek, 2023) in R and some other functions in R programming language were used. Moreover SPSS 21.0 version was used to compute independent sample t test.

## Findings

To answer the primary research question about primary factors that demotivate Iraqi students from speaking English and hinder their progress in developing speaking skills, the mean scores of the participants from the subscales of the scale were computed and compared. Since the number of items in each subscale is divergent, the lowest and highest scores that the participants can get from the scale differ. For this reason, scale scores were normalized (between 0 and 1) in order to make a better comparison.

Prior to the analysis, the assumption of normality was tested, and it was determined that the skewness and kurtosis values for all subgroups were in the range of -1 - +1. These findings show that the normality assumption is met. Descriptive statistics are introduced below.

*Table 1. Normalized Mean Scores for Subscales*

<b>Subscales</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Student related factors (S)	108	.28	.16
Teacher related factors (T)	108	.41	.22
Characteristics of the class and learning materials (C)	108	.52	.22
Nature of the course and attitudes towards English (N)	108	.55	.22

As seen in Table 1 mean scores are respectively 0.55, 0.52, 0.41 and 0.28 for the subscales ‘Student related factors’, ‘Teacher related factors’, ‘Characteristics of the class and learning materials’ and ‘Nature of the course and attitudes towards English’. These mean scores provide insights into the average ratings or perceptions of participants in relation to each subscale. They are indicators of the degree to which each factor influences the demotivation

and hindrance faced by Iraqi students in speaking English and their progress in developing speaking skills.

To test the significance of the discrepancy between mean scores, Randomized block design ANOVA was computed. In this study, a randomized block design was used to compare the scores of the participants on the subtests of the scale and to test the significance of the mean differences. Below is Table 2 with the results of random block designs.

Table 2. Results for randomized block design ANOVA

	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F	p	Sig. Diff	Eta Squared
<b>Subscales</b>	3	5.030	1.6767	55.06	0.000		
<b>Participants</b>	107	8.472	0.0792	2.60	0.000	S-T; S-N; S-C	0.22
<b>Residuals</b>	321	9.775	0.0305			T-C; T-N	

The analysis conducted on the mean subscale scores revealed significant differences among the groups, as indicated by the large F statistics for both treatment (subscales) ( $F(3-107) = 55.05, p < 0.01$ ) and block (participants) ( $F(3-107) = 2.60, p < 0.01$ ). These significant test results allow us to conclude that there are notable variations in the mean scores between at least two groups. To identify the specific groups with significant differences, a post-hoc test (Tukey HSD) was performed. The results of this test indicated that all groups showed significant differences, except for subscale C (Characteristics of the class and learning materials) and subscale N (Nature of the course and attitudes towards English). This implies that there are significant variations in mean scores between most of the groups, highlighting the influence of different factors on the subscale scores. Furthermore, the effect size (eta squared) was calculated for the ANOVA, yielding a value of 0.22. This finding indicates a high effect size, suggesting that the factors being examined have a substantial impact on the observed differences in mean subscale scores.

Overall, this analysis provides valuable insights into the significant differences among the groups and the notable effect size was observed in relation to the subscale scores.

### Findings on the Comparison of Subscale Scores with Respect to Gender

To investigate whether there is a significant difference in the subtest scores of the scale based on gender, an independent sample t-test was conducted. However, it is important to note that the effect size was not calculated for the hypothesis tests that did not yield significant results. For the 'Characteristics of the class and learning materials' subscale, the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not met. Therefore, a Welch two- sample t-test was employed

instead of the traditional independent sample t-test. The effect size was not calculated for the hypothesis tests whose results were not significant. Independent sample t-test results for subgroups according to gender are presented below.

*Table 3. Independent Sample t-test results according to gender*

Subscales	Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	sd	df	t	p	Effect Size
Student related factors (S)	M	60	28.7	6.52	106	-.85	.40	
	F	48	29.7	6.01				
Teacher related factors (T)	M	60	25.3	7.13	106	-2.71	.008	0.06
	F	48	28.8	5.92				
Characteristics of the class and learning materials (C)*	M	60	25.4	5.03	99.01	-1.54	.13	
	F	48	26.9	5.23				
Nature of the course and attitudes towards English (N)	M	60	20.6	3.29	106	-.50	.62	
	F	48	20.9	2.73				

As represented in Table 3, the mean scores of male and female students regarding the ‘Student related factors’ subscale are 28.7 and 29.7, respectively. However, it was determined that this difference was not statistically significant ( $t(106) = -0.85, p > 0.05$ ). In other words, the scores of the participants in this subscale do not differ in connection with gender.

When the results for the ‘Teacher related factors’, subscale are examined, it is noticed that the mean scores of male and female participants are 25.3 and 28.8, respectively. This difference is statistically significant ( $t(106) = -2.71, p < 0.05$ ). In other words, it can be said that female participants have a significantly higher score on this subscale than males. The effect size (eta squared) was calculated for independent sample t-test and the result was found to be 0.06. This finding corresponds to small effect size.

With reference to the ‘Characteristics of the class and learning materials’ subscale, it is seen that the mean scores of female and male students are 25.4 and 26.9, respectively. However, it was determined that this difference was not statistically significant ( $t(99.01) = -1.54, p > 0.05$ ). In other words, the scores of the participants in this subscale do not differ according to gender.

When the results for the ‘Nature of the course and attitudes towards English’ subscale are examined, it is realized that the mean scores of male and female participants are 20.6 and 20.9, respectively. However, there is no significant difference between the two mean scores  $t(106) = -0.50, p > 0.05$ . The effect size was not calculated for the groups that did not have statistically significant differences by gender.

### Findings on the Comparison of Subscale Scores concerning Age

In order to determine whether or not the subtest scores of the scale show a significant difference according to age, one-way ANOVA was computed. Below are the Table 4 ANOVA results according to age for the ‘Teacher related factors’, ‘Characteristics of the class and learning materials and Nature of the course and attitudes towards English’ subscales.

Table 4. One-way ANOVA results according to age

Subscales	Age	N	X	SS	df	F	p	Si g- D if.	Eta Squ ared
Teacher related factors (T)	15	32	25.43	6.48	3-104	1.14	.334		
	16	30	26.33	7.44					
	17	25	28.56	5.91					
	18	21	27.66	7.28					
Characteristics of the class and learning materials (C)	15	32	24.25	5.29	3-104	4.63	.004	15-17	0.11
	16	30	25.30	5.10					
	17	25	28.96	4.41				16-17	
	18	21	26.38	4.55					
Nature of the course and attitudes towards English (N)	15	32	20.34	3.04	3-104	1.58	.199		
	16	30	20.46	2.99					
	17	25	21.88	2.60					
	18	21	20.33	3.45					

As it is seen in Table 4 for ‘Teacher related factors’ subscale mean scores are respectively 25.43, 26.33, 28.56 and 27.66 for 15, 16, 17 and 18 years old participants. However, the difference between the mean scores was not statistically significant ( $F(3-104) = 1.14, p > 0.05$ ). In other words, the scores of the participants in this subscale do not differ according to age.

When the results for the ‘Characteristics of the class and learning materials’, subscale are examined, it is seen that the mean scores are respectively 24.25, 25.30, 28.96 and 26.38 for 15, 16, 17 and 18 years old participants. The difference between the mean scores was statistically significant ( $F(3-104) = 4.63, p > 0.05$ ). This finding shows that there is a significant difference between at least two groups. Pairwise comparisons were conducted using (performing) the Tukey HSD test. According to the results of the Tukey test, it was determined that the difference between ages 17 -15 and 17-16 was found significant. This means that 17-year-old participants have higher scores than 15- and 16- year-old participants do in this subscale. The effect size (eta squared) was calculated for ANOVA and the result was found to be 0.11. This finding corresponds to medium effect size.

Concerning the ‘Nature of the course and attitudes towards English’ subscale mean scores are respectively 20.34, 20.46, 21.88 and 20.33 for 15-, 16-, 17- and 18-years old participants. The discrepancy between the mean scores was not statistically significant ( $F(3-104) = 1.58, p > 0.05$ ). In other words, the scores of the participants in this subscale do not differ according to age.

Since the ‘student-related factors’ subscale did not illustrate normal distribution in different age groups, the Kruskal Wallis test, which is a non-parametric alternative, was calculated instead of one-way ANOVA. Kruskal Wallis test results are presented in the Table 5. below.

Table 5. Kruskal Wallis test results according to age

Subscale	Age	N	Mean Rank	df	Chi Square	p	Sig. Dif.
Student related factors (S)	15	32	48.36	3	10.11	.018	17-18
	16	30	60.17				
	17	25	43.22				
	18	21	69.19				

According to Table 5, the mean ranks for the ‘Student related factors’ subscale are as follows: 48.36 for 15-year-old participants, 60.17 for 16-year-old participants, 43.2 for 17-year-old participants, and 69.19 for 18-year-old participants. The differences between these mean ranks were found to be statistically significant (Chi-Square (3) = 10.11,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that the mean scores on this subscale vary according to age.

However, further analysis using pairwise comparisons was conducted to determine the specific differences between age groups. The pairwise comparison results revealed that the significant difference exists only between the 17-year-old and 18-year-old age groups. In other words, 18-year-old participants have a higher mean score on this subscale compared to 17-year-old participants.

This finding suggests that as participants transition from 17 to 18 years old, there is a notable increase in their scores on the ‘Student related factors’ subscale. The higher score indicates a greater perception or emphasis on student-related factors as potential motivators or hindrances in speaking English. It is momentous to note that no significant differences were found between the other age groups on this subscale.

### Findings on the Comparison of Subscale Scores in Respect of Getting Private Lessons

In order to determine whether the subtest scores of the scale show a significant difference according to receiving private lessons, independent sample t-test was calculated. Considering ‘Characteristics of the class and learning materials’ subscale Welch two Sample test was utilized because homogeneity of variance assumption was not met. The effect size was not calculated for the hypothesis tests whose results were not significant. Independent sample t-test results for subgroups according to receiving private lessons are presented below.

Table 6. Independent Sample t-test results in respect of getting private lessons.

Subscales	Prv	N	$\bar{X}$	sd	df	t	p	Effect Size
Student related factors (S)	Yes	75	27.30	5.11	106	-5.91	.000	0.25
	No	33	33.21	6.87				
Teacher related factors (T)	Yes	75	26.27	6.92	106	-1.32	.188	
	No	33	28.15	6.49				
Characteristics of the class and learning materials (C)	Yes	75	25.16	5.51	81.0	-1.66	.100	
	No	33	27.15	4.09				
Nature of the course and attitudes towards English (N)	Yes	75	20.07	2.97	106	-.33	.740	
	No	33	20.09	3.23				

When the results for the ‘Student related factors’ subscale are examined, it is seen that the mean scores of receiving private lessons and non-receiving private lessons participants are 27.3 and 33.21 respectively. This difference is statistically significant ( $t(106)=-5.91$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). In other words, it can be said that non-receiving private lessons participants have a significantly higher score on this subscale than receiving private lessons participants do. The effect size (eta squared) was calculated for independent sample t-test and the result was found to be 0.25. This finding corresponds to high effect size.

In dealing with the ‘Teacher related factors’ subscale, it is seen that the mean scores of receiving private lessons and non-receiving private lessons participants are 26.27 and 28.15, respectively. However, it was determined that this difference was not statistically significant ( $t(106) = -1.32$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). In other words, the scores of the participants in this subscale do not differ in respect of getting private lessons.

According to Table 6, the mean scores of receiving private lessons and non-receiving private lessons participants regarding the ‘Characteristics of the class and learning materials’ subscale are 25.16 and 27.15, respectively. However, it was determined that this difference was not statistically significant ( $t(81)=-1.16$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). In other words, the scores of the participants in this subscale do not differ in respect of getting private lessons.

For the ‘Nature of the course and attitudes towards English’ subscale, it is seen that the mean scores of receiving private lessons and non-receiving private lessons participants are 20.07 and 20.09, respectively. However, it was determined that this difference was not statistically significant ( $t(106) = -0.33, p > 0.05$ ). In other words, the scores of the participants in this subscale do not differ according to receiving private.

## **Discussion**

In this study, four demotivating factors were identified, including student-related factors, teacher-related factors, characteristics of the class and learning materials, and attitudes towards English. The analysis results revealed that one of the main factors influencing second language learning was the ‘Nature of the course and attitudes towards English’. This study aligns with the findings of Islam, Lamb, and Chambers (2013), which highlighted that negative attitudes or contradictions towards English-speaking Western societies were demotivating factors for some students. Trang and Baldauf (2007) found internal demotivators for Vietnamese students comprised negative attitudes towards English and lack of confidence. This study aligns with the findings of Sakai and Kikuchi (2009), which showed that the primary demotivating factors for Japanese university students in learning English were course content and materials, lack of intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, this study could be considered in line with the findings of Islam, Lamb, and Chambers (2013), which highlighted that negative attitudes towards English-speaking Western societies were demotivating factors for some students. In summary, this study's findings that attitudes towards English can demotivate learners is consistent with several previous studies regarding the negative attitude towards English.

The classroom characteristics and teaching materials used for teaching were identified as the second cause of students feeling disheartened about speaking English. This finding indicates that excessive reliance on grammar rules and textbooks, along with the absence of engaging activities, can hinder the motivation of language learners who aspire to practice communication. Traditional grammar instruction often fails to support real language development goals such as reading comprehension and speaking enhancement. Furthermore, the scarcity of visual elements in the classroom and the lack of techniques like drama and role-playing to enhance learning were identified as demotivating factors. These findings align with previous studies that linked student demotivation to educational materials and content.

These results are consistent with previous studies that linked student demotivation to educational materials and content. As identified by the results of several studies about demotivating factors in learning English, the top factors reported were lack of speaking practice, boring classes focused on grammar, lack of fun activities, and use of textbooks. Students demotivated when classes focused too much on grammar rules and textbook content rather than on communicative activities (e.g. Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Miranda & Iragui, 2013; Muhonen, 2004; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009). Results of the current study are consistent with the findings of Krishnan and Pathan (2013) who also identified the lack of facilities and course content as major demotivating factors for students. This supports the findings of Sakai and Kikuchi (2009) as well, as their study revealed that course contents and teaching materials, particularly those focusing on grammar-based instruction, were significant sources of demotivation.

Contrary to previous findings highlighting the significant role of teachers in student demotivation, the present study found that teachers were the third influential factor in students' demotivation to speak English (Figure 2). When examining the results of the 'Teacher related factors' subscale, it was found that the mean score for male participants was 25.3, while for female participants, it was 28.8. This difference in means was statistically significant ( $t(106) = -2.71, p < 0.05$ ), indicating that female participants obtained significantly higher scores on this subscale compared to males. However, it's worth noting that this study did not align with the results of previous studies (e.g., Gorham & Christophel, 1992; Dörnyei, 2001; Sakai & Kikuchi, 2009) that emphasized the significant impact of teachers on student motivation. In previous studies, negative teacher behaviors were considered more central in student demotivation, while positive teacher behaviors were not perceived as equally central to motivation.

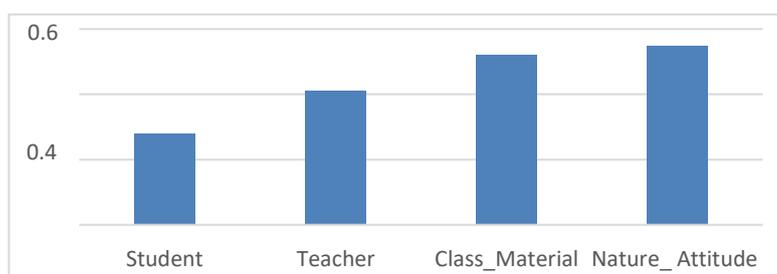


Figure 2. Demotivating Factors Affecting Students: Statistical Analysis Results

Finally, student-related factors such as anxiety, lack of vocabulary, and previous experience of failure were found to have the least impact on students. Despite student-related factors being less influential in student demotivation, the study found that students who received private lessons were less affected by demotivating factors compared to those who did not receive such lessons. When conducting pairwise comparisons to identify specific differences between age groups, the analysis revealed significant differences only between the 17-year-old and 18-year-old age groups, regarding student-related demotivating factors. In other words, 18-year-old participants had higher average scores in this specific subscale compared to 17-year-old participants. This difference could be attributed to older students' anxiety and fear of obtaining low scores grades in university entrance exams.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study identified key demotivating factors in English language learning, including attitudes towards English, classroom characteristics, teaching materials, and teacher and student-related factors, while studying their relationship with gender, age, and receiving private lessons. The findings align with previous studies that highlight the negative impact of the nature of the course and attitudes towards English-speaking. The excessive focus on grammar rules and textbooks, along with the absence of engaging activities, were identified as demotivating factors related to classroom characteristics and teaching materials. Additionally, the study revealed that teachers had a limited impact on student motivation, contrary to some previous findings that emphasized the role of teachers. Finally, student-related factors such as anxiety, lack of vocabulary, and previous experience of failure had a lesser impact on student demotivation. However, it was found that participants who were 18 years old obtained higher scores than their 17-year-old counterparts, indicating a possible change in their perceptions of student-related factors. Furthermore, the results showed that students who received private lessons were less affected by student-related demotivating factors, indicating that private lessons provide some protective effect against these demotivating factors.

These findings emphasize the importance of addressing these demotivating factors to enhance students' motivation and engagement in English language learning. Curriculum developers and teachers should work towards creating a positive learning environment, incorporating interactive and communicative activities, and providing support to address students' attitudes and confidence issues in order to promote a more motivated and successful language learning experience. Overall, understanding and addressing these demotivating

factors are crucial in designing effective strategies to encourage and support Iraqi students in their English language development and improve their speaking skills.

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## Evaluating the Perception of Turkish EFL Instructors about Teacher Wellbeing

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### Abstract

Although wellbeing has been widely discussed in the literature, it is still a relatively new concept in education. This study reviews the concept of teacher wellbeing in depth. It was also conducted to examine English language instructors' perspectives on the concept of teacher wellbeing. The study, which encapsulates two discrete data collection methods, is intended to contribute to the literature in terms of the concept of teacher wellbeing. For this purpose, a questionnaire was administered to the English language lecturers to determine their demographic characteristics and the results of the questionnaire were presented. Subsequent to the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews were carried out with the same English language lecturers in order to seek their views on the subject. The interviews were analyzed by means of content analysis method and results were presented.

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**Keywords:** Wellbeing; Teacher wellbeing; Language learning; Descriptive analysis

### Introduction

Teacher wellbeing is considered as teaching efficiently, having positive relationships with students, and commitment to schools. (Duckworth, Quinn, & Seligman, 2009). Teacher wellbeing is significant for both schools and students; the reason behind this point is that this facilitates how teachers deal with challenges while teaching subjects to others. Fredrickson (2013) mentioned the eminence of wellbeing by stating that when people are in positive situations their minds will broaden. This can be interpreted by when teachers are content with

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their position; they are in favor of communicating with others easily. Moreover, Hascher & Waber (2021) highlighted in their study that teacher wellbeing is an umbrella term that covers all theoretical considerations and research addressing any aspect of teachers' physical, social, cognitive, and emotional functioning (p.18). Therefore, it is essential to generate a study clarifying the thoughts of instructors especially those who are teaching a new language.

In the educational setting, teachers are the backbone of the process of teaching. Their psychological situation towards students, the institution where they professionalize and the curriculum they follow are also crucial since they are linked to each other. In addition, wellbeing is another point to be considered in terms of teachers' point of view.

### **Literature Review**

Generally, when the literature is analyzed, it has been noticed that even if there are related to subject of teacher wellbeing (Jian, 2021; Mercer, 2021; Parker, Martin, Colmar, & Liem, 2012; Pas, Bradshaw, & Hershfeldt, 2012; Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2013; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Spilt, Koomen, & Thijs, 2011), the majority of studies are based on stress, burnout and anxiety. With regard to wellbeing, studies are held to investigate the wellbeing of teachers, and to explore the utility of positive wellbeing indicators, such as positive emotions and cognitions; the value of teacher–teacher-studentships for the wellbeing of teachers and one of those studies also mentioned the wellbeing of English language teaching (ELT) in the private sector.

Moreover, when all the concepts of wellbeing are considered in terms of education, the relationship between the teacher and wellbeing has gained importance. Teacher, student and their relationship are the backbone of the teaching and learning process, especially as far as foreign language learning is concerned. The psychological situation of an instructor should be counted as one of the fundamental factors of the language learning process. There are dimensions of teacher wellbeing: feeling valued and cared for, and job stimulation and enjoyment (Briner & Dewberry, 2007).

McCallum and Price (2016) defined teacher wellbeing as “diverse and fluid respecting individual, family and community beliefs, values, experiences, culture, opportunities and contexts across time and change. It is something we all aim for underpinned by positive notions, yet is unique to each of us and provides us with a sense of who we are which needs to be respected” (p.17). Especially, as the word ‘wellbeing’ suggests, teacher wellbeing is

promoting wellbeing and it should be the primary aim of an institution rather than giving stress or making teachers feel burnout, . Following this point of view; Quinlan and Hone (2020) pointed out research and concluded that with higher wellbeing in workplaces, teachers tend to be more productive and engaged since they enjoy job satisfaction (Nagar,2012; Ololube, 2006; Parker & Martin, 2009). McCallum and Price (2016) additionally emphasized that investment in teacher wellbeing grants better health conditions for both teachers and their students since this positive engagement broadens their horizons and positive learning outcomes for students will be maintained.

The correspondence between teachers and wellbeing is followed by teachers' sense of effectiveness. Figure 1. illustrates the interconnectedness between teachers' professional life phases, their professional characteristics, and their wellbeing.

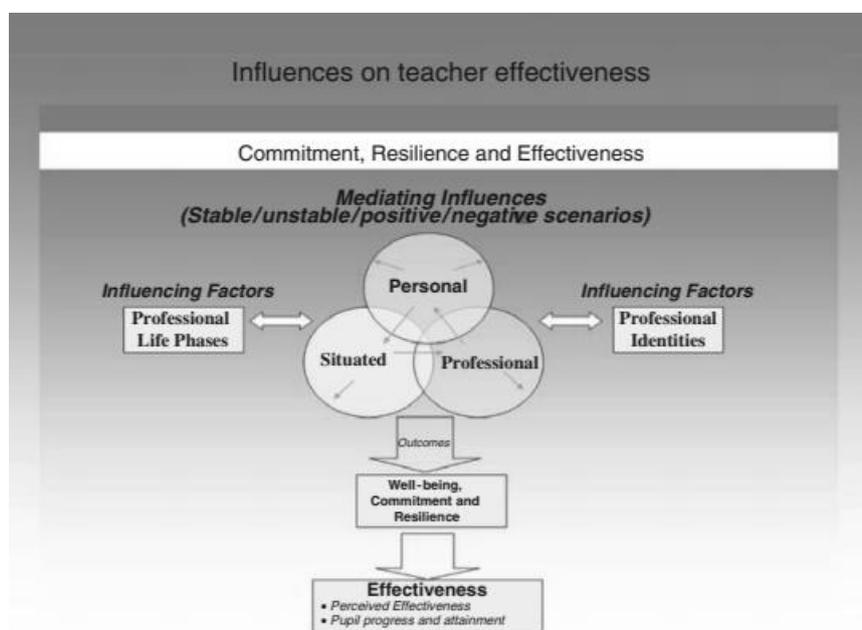


Figure 1. *Teachers' wellbeing, commitment and effectiveness* from Day, C., & Qing, G. (2009). *Teacher emotions: Well-being and effectiveness*. In *Advances in teacher emotion research* (pp. 15-31). Springer, Boston, MA.

In addition to the fact that teachers' feelings of wellbeing and effectiveness should be emphasized in all circumstances, there is a particular need to revolve more around motivation, loyalty and the ability to continue doing their best in their profession, while maintaining these positive qualities and strengths. Teacher wellbeing was also specified by Bethune (2018) in the piece of wellbeing in the primary classroom: a practical guide to teaching happiness added that

according to Health and Safety Executive (2017), teaching has become one of the most stressful careers, therefore teachers need taking care of themselves to get away from a distinct source of stress. Bethune emphasized that teacher wellbeing has been carrying a great significance in being healthy since this process results in different positive situations. First, teachers are role models for students, in other words, they observe, and watch their behaviors and they commence acting like their role models that is the main reason for being mentally positive during classes. Additionally, teachers reflect on how they feel about the classroom, students, and their teaching (p.160).

Wellbeing has taken an increasing interest in schools since it is noticed that whole school wellbeing has a positive impact and presents motivation on school administration. Quinlan and Hone (2020) put forward two reasons for supporting wellbeing. As a first element, wellbeing brings desirable outcomes; such as having better health conditions and relationships even in the societal dimension. Another point for encouraging wellbeing in schools is that as stated as an imitation of teachers' positive feelings, Quinlan and Hone (2020) added that resilience and wellbeing could be instructed and taught. Thus, positive feelings become contagious.

McCallum and Price (2015) remarked that “educator and learner wellbeing is an individual, collective and community responsibility” (p.128). On the other hand, many policymakers and education stakeholders have been emphasizing the need to foster wellbeing and enable them to adapt to changes by redesigning, applying and reviewing, repeating, and remodeling wellbeing policies in schools. There is a general belief among school administrators applying wellbeing as “whole school wellbeing” that wellbeing builds staff ownership if wellbeing is mainly centered on staff. Quinlan and Hone (2020) summarized the points as;

1. Staff need and appreciate the investment in their wellbeing.
2. Staff wellbeing influences student learning and wellbeing.
3. Equally importantly, staff knowledge of wellbeing is essential to teachers being able to implement relevant and useful strategies in their classrooms. (p.97)

These are the non-negligible items since learning takes place between teacher and student and schools are expected to care about their staff.

Wellbeing can be also coined as having enough professional learning and development while having successful wellbeing, which embraces mutual understanding. Quinlan and Hone (2020) presented wellbeing model for schools since a school wellbeing model assists in not

only informing but also educating, motivating and evaluating. Applying wellbeing to education is accepted as a significant skill for parents and educators. The benefits are giving a chance for having a mutual language of wellbeing. The second benefit can be introduced as school wellbeing supports the communication and relationship with parents, students and the school community. Additionally, being a part of supportive wellbeing serves as a framework for evaluating the progress within a model.

When teachers positively feel wellbeing, there are outcomes observed such as; belonging and connectedness, feeling safe, experiencing success, resilience, being active, student confidence in their own identity, mindfulness, and strengths-focused social and emotional learning, and refreshing practices. In other words, as an individual seeing value increases the sense of belonging, therefore, teachers especially those conducting one of the most devoted jobs are wedded to their institutions too since they feel their distinction. This also leads teachers to cherish. Thus, happy and motivated teachers create a successful learning environment and students become more participated in the courses so they become more apprehensive. Since teachers who do not have other concerns provide more efficient teaching, students flourish their success by experiencing more social and emotional education. Teachers who spend more time on teaching present different ways of teaching to students. (Quinlan and Hone, 2020, p.99).

Wellbeing models used in education are; “Te Whare Tapa Wha” (the Four-Walled House) model that has four dimensions: physical wellbeing, emotional and mental wellbeing, social wellbeing and spiritual wellbeing. Each of them represents four walls of wellbeing and strengthens integrity. The PERMA model represents Positive, Emotions, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning and Purpose and Accomplishment and a growing number of schools is adopting this model. The ‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’ are being active, giving, taking notice, connecting and keeping learning to promote wellbeing. The PROSPER wellbeing framework is the abbreviated form of positivity, relationship, outcomes, strengths, purpose, engagement and resilience which are representatives of ‘evidence-based practices’ suggested to the schools to build wellbeing for their community.

This study was conducted to examine English language instructors' perspectives on the concept of teacher wellbeing. The wellbeing of teachers is a topic that receives a lot of attention. English language teachers are interviewed employing semi-structured questions in this study to clarify their views on teacher wellbeing. The study, which includes two different data collection methods, is intended to contribute to the literature in terms of the concept of teacher wellbeing. For this purpose, a questionnaire was administered to the English language lecturers

to determine their demographic characteristics and the results of the questionnaire were presented. Various studies are conducted when the literature is analyzed, however language teachers have various viewpoints on their wellbeing since they also teach students in a different language. They value institutional assistance, just like other teachers.

When the literature is examined, it is noticed that a great deal of research focus on stress, burnout, and anxiety. There are studies on subjects like instructors in other disciplines, their institutions, or learners, but the topic of teacher wellbeing has not been examined from the perspectives of language teachers. Studies on teacher wellbeing are conducted to examine the usefulness of positive wellbeing indicators, such as positive emotions and cognitions, the significance of teacher-teacher-student relationships for teacher wellbeing, and the wellbeing of English language teaching (ELT) in the private sector. By highlighting the various circumstances teachers confront, more research on teacher well-being should be implemented.

### **Methodology**

The methodology of this study is a small-scale qualitative study; therefore, a semi-structured interview was used to collect data. The interview has four predetermined questions that focus on the definition of teacher wellbeing for EFL instructors, positive and negative circumstances that affect their wellbeing, how they deal with negative situations.

First a questionnaire had conducted to EFL instructors to evaluate their personal information. After conducting questionnaire, the semi-structured interview questions were reflected to beforehand to the EFL instructors.

A questionnaire about demographic information was distributed to online to English lecturers and the results that emerged were put forward. Online interviews were conducted with 25 lecturers who were of various ages and gender. Participants were asked questions through semi-structured interviews. After the semi-structured interview, the answers were transcribed. Transcripts of the answers were analyzed. A constant comparison method was used to analyze the answers, which combines analysis and data collection, forming categories and concepts by constantly comparing particular data points to other data points. In case study methodology, the process of coding data occurs over the entire research process. Data is coded in intrinsic case studies to determine the significance of a case in the context of a situation, as well as issues, contexts, and interpretations. A coding process aims to detect patterns of data to develop issues (Clandinin, 2005). The results were presented.

Data was collected online one by one with English language instructors on Zoom. The researcher sent the semi-structured interview questions beforehand to the English language

instructors attending the meeting. The participants answered the questions in almost thirty minutes.

### **Research Design**

To design a study as qualitative research, Creswell (2014) described qualitative researchers as examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants themselves to collect data. They may harness a protocol as an instrument for collecting data but the researchers are the ones who actually gather the information. Also as Denzin and Lincoln (1994) defined qualitative research as:

“Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.2).

Accordingly, the present study was designed as a qualitative study by meeting the requirements of the qualitative research design proposed by Creswell (2014). Moreover, the content analysis method was applied to analyze it. Köse (2006) pointed out the qualitative data analysis as the process to execute content analysis. The model is composed of the following categories: familiarization, coding/labelling, clustering, defining codes operationally, retrieving and organizing data, and looking for interrelationships between categories. On the other hand, familiarization, coding/labelling, clustering, retrieving and organizing data, and looking for interrelationships between categories were utilized (76-88).

Initially, a questionnaire with demographic questions was given among English lecturers employed at both private and public universities in Ankara for the objective of the study.

### **Results of Survey**

#### **Participants**

A questionnaire was administered to the instructors teaching English courses in order to determine their demographic characteristics. Twenty-five EFL instructors who are teaching both private and state university in Ankara participated in the study voluntarily. The results of the survey are presented below with the demographics of the participants are shown in Table 1.

*Table 1. Demographic data about the participants*

	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender		
Female	25	69.2
Male	25	30.8
Age		
30-39	25	46.2
20-29	25	15.4
40-49	25	15.4
50-59	25	15.4
60 +	25	7.7
Level of education		
Master's Degree	25	61.5
Bachelor's Degree	25	30.8
PhD	25	7.7
Work experience		
11-15	25	38.5
21+	25	38.5
1-5	25	15.4
16-20	25	7.6
Your weekly class hours		
21-25	25	38.5
16-20	25	30.8
11-15	25	23.1
0-5	25	7.7

The demographic data about the participants is given on Table 1. This table demonstrates that 69, 2 % of the participants were female while the rest were male. When the age range is considered, the majority of the participants are in the 30-39 age range; in other words, the largest age range is the 30-39 age range, with 46.2%. This indicates that the majority of the group studied was in this age range. The second largest age group is 20-29 with 15.4%. 40-59 age range is remarkable: 40-49 and 50-59 age ranges are also represented at the same rate with 15.4%. This reflects that middle-aged and older adults occupy a significant place in the group. There is also an age group of 60 years and above with a rate of 7.7%. This suggests that older adults or retirees are represented within the group.

The most common education level among participants is "Master's Degree" at 61.5% when the participants' level of education is analyzed. This indicates that a large proportion of the group had graduate level education. At 30.8%, "Bachelor's Degree" represents the second largest portion of the group. This displays that undergraduate education is also quite common.

With a rate of 7.7%, it seems that people with a "PhD" education level are less in the group. This shows that people with higher levels of education are in the minority.

11-15 years of work experience and 21+ years of work experience is in the majority. Two different work experience ranges make up the majority, both at 38.5%. This certifies that the majority of the group studied either had 11-15 years of work experience or had 21 years or more of work experience. With a rate of 15.4%, the "1-5 Years of Work Experience" range represents another segment of the group. This exhibits that people who have just started working or have less experience are also included in the group. 16-20 years of work experience is the smallest percentage with 7.6%.

The most common weekly lesson hours are "21-25 hours" with 38.5%. This shows that a large proportion of the studied group took between 21 and 25 hours of classes per week. With a rate of 30.8%, it represents the other large portion of the group of people with a "16-20 hour" course schedule. This shows that weekly class hours are frequent in this range.

There are also 11-15 Hour and 0-5 Hour Courses: There are also "11-15 hour" and "0-5 hour" course programs with rates of 23.1% and 7.7%. This reflects people taking fewer classes and the diversity of weekly class hours.

## Results

The main purpose of the study is to seek the opinions of EFL instructors about teacher wellbeing. In line with this purpose, demographic findings were firstly revealed by conducting a questionnaire with English language lecturers at universities in Ankara and then their opinions were sought through semi-structured interview questions. Demographic findings are provided in detail in Table 1.

When the definition of teacher wellbeing is asked English language instructors, defined teacher wellbeing as key terms such as the perception of job satisfaction, being supported professionally and self-efficacy, the state of being satisfied and contented without being overwhelmed before, during, and after teaching. Teacher 5 clearly indicates this:

**Teacher 5:** *As a teacher, teacher wellbeing can be described as feeling good in the classroom, outside of the classroom and while teaching even while giving feedback, you can feel this satisfaction.*

In other words, as Teacher 5 mentioned as an EFL instructor, teacher wellbeing is a feeling that brings happiness to the teacher, while teaching and even giving feedback, feeling good in the classroom, outside of the classroom, dealing with intervenes.

**Teacher 15:** *Another point for teacher wellbeing is resilience, it is a key component of teacher wellbeing.*

Moreover, another teacher believes that being resilient can be linked with teacher wellbeing since there are also challenges like students' indifference to the language or applying problematic curriculum into their courses even if teachers feel confident and happy when they are in the classroom.

**Teacher 17:** *Positive working environment is milestone for a teacher to feel free when they are teaching.*

In this way, it can be clearly observed that as EFL instructors apart from using efficient material or having voluntary students, institutions should provide positive working environment so that teachers feel well since their only concern should be these elements, students and materials, and being under pressure is another negative effect for teachers' wellbeing.

As a second question, what positively affects your wellbeing as a teacher is asked and teachers denoted their wellbeing affects positively as a teacher when there is a financial motivation and a high salary.

**Teacher 1:** *Financial motivation affects my wellbeing positively.*

Nowadays, it is one of the most disputatious topics among EFL instructors; therefore some of them stated the salary issues as financial motivation.

Additionally, teachers feel positive when there is a positive working environment; supportive administration and positive attitudes of other colleagues. When teachers feel that they are precious and are appreciated for their success and their admin tolerates their little mistakes, they feel motivated.

**Teacher 8:** *When my admin supports me for completing a task or encourage me for completing postgraduate education, I feel better and precious. Sometimes, our admins overreacted some trifling mistakes which lead demotivation.... If they empathize, I feel that I am important for them.*

**Teacher 10:** *My colleagues motivate me a lot...*

These imply that working environment is crucial for feeling positive.

**Teacher 10:** *Teaching young adults and their eagerness to learn a new language makes me feel like being sitting on cloud nine.*

As English language instructors, when students are highly motivated to learn English, when students' profile is available for learning English, when students learn and participate, when students are successful, when there are well-qualified and well-designed materials and the curriculum is also organized efficiently, their wellbeing is affected positively. Being with young people affects instructors' wellbeing positively as a teacher as they indicated. As a final remark, instructors define wellbeing as a teacher as not outside but inside the joy of teaching.

As third question reflected to English language instructors, "what negatively affects your wellbeing as a teacher?" and it can be concluded that teachers' wellbeing affects negatively when they are not supported and appreciated by the administration and institution when there are distracted, unmotivated, irresponsible, and indifferent students and students do not feel safe psychologically and emotionally. Additionally, when there is an inefficacy about technology such as technique tools; internet, projector, speaker, and power cut affect my wellbeing negatively. Teaching the same topics, again and again, affects their wellbeing negatively. As a final comment negative feeling is working under pressure. The following comments illustrate this:

**Teacher 17:** *If anything happens negative, the content of the course, news about institution (underpayment) and even repeating the same subject makes me feel negative.*

**Teacher 21:** *I feel exhausted if there is no participation and in different students.*

**Teacher 4:** *... In our curriculum, we have a new course which is based on a system and when I face problems about technical issues such as low internet connection, I believe I lose my face validity.*

The final question is "what do you do to increase your wellbeing in a positive way when your wellbeing as a teacher is affected negatively?". Teacher 1 and 8 mentions this issue as follow:

**Teacher 1:** *I find activities for myself like socializing, going out, reading a book, yoga and focusing on my personal life to increase my wellbeing in a positive way when my wellbeing as a teacher is affected negatively.*

**Teacher 8:** *I try to compensate the lack by using teaching artistry.*

Furthermore, they enumerated that they share problems with their colleagues who are older and more experienced colleagues to heighten my wellbeing in a positive way when my wellbeing as a teacher is affected negatively, they ignore the negative situation to increase their wellbeing in a positive way when my wellbeing as a teacher is affected negatively. Some of the instructors think over the negative situation and manage to strengthen their wellbeing in a

positive way when their wellbeing as a teacher is affected negatively. The following excerpts are indicators of this.

**Teacher 5:** *The best thing I can do is telling my older colleagues what I had experienced and I benefit from their knowledge and experiences and generally they handle challenges by eliminating them. ... Sometimes I find new materials for the course to make lessons more attractive for the topics that are discussed throughout the term.*

The data was collected online one by one with English language instructors on Zoom. The researcher distributed the semi-structured interview questions beforehand to the English language instructors attending the meeting. Participants responded the questions in almost thirty minutes.

## Conclusion

Given the fact that teacher wellbeing is a subject that attracts great attention, which is the main reason for materializing this study. In this study, semi-structured interview questions are prepared and asked English language instructors so that their opinion about teacher wellbeing is clarified. When the literature is analyzed, different studies are performed but language teachers have different perspectives on teacher wellbeing since they also direct students in another language. Like other instructors, they place emphasis on institutional support. However, especially the crucial point is as a language teacher they put effort while giving feedback because it is noticeable to be understood and these feedbacks shape their knowledge about the language that is also a point denoted by teachers that they feel positive while giving feedback when they are understood. In addition, financial support is a point for feeling good, which is an element stated as feeling negative. English language instructors emphasized curricula and students' attention since they are significant for feeling wellbeing while working.

Participants are reflected four different questions to express their point of view, and as the occasion demands, different questions are also asked. Generally, instructors are happy since they love teaching a different language, however, there are challenging situations at the same time, like not being appreciated and having problematic curricula, and financial problems. Even some of the institutions are obstinate in supplying stationary equipment.

Findings of this study can be employed to improve the current situation of EFL instructors. It can be observed that when instructors lack financial situation and institutional support, they are not happy. On the other hand, EFL instructors are generally happy to conduct

their courses with their eager students and qualified materials. Concisely, this study aims to contribute to the clarification of the term ‘teacher wellbeing’ and add knowledge about teacher wellbeing from the English language instructors’ point of view.

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## Duolingo in University Settings: Fostering English Language Acquisition Among Adult and Senior Learners

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### Abstract

Duolingo is a popular language-learning platform that offers a gamified and interactive approach to language acquisition. This case study discusses the use of Duolingo as a tool for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). Specifically, it describes a 40-hour course held at the University of Genoa, Italy, which relied on Duolingo as the primary teaching approach. The course was delivered to a class of adult and senior learners aged 54 to 83, with a median age of 65. The English proficiency level of the class improved from an initial average of A0 to an average of A1 on the CEFR scale. Moreover, the study found that students experienced increased motivation and engagement, with evidence of successful language acquisition. Additionally, the course established the groundwork for sustained individual language improvement, highlighting the platform's potential for fostering language learning among mature learners. The research underscores the importance of a structured learning framework when using Duolingo for EFL instruction.

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**Keywords:** EFL; Duolingo in academia; Duolingo for adult learners and seniors; Gamified language learning; Mobile learning

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## **Introduction**

Duolingo is a smartphone app and online platform that aims to make language learning 'fun, free, and effective'. After its launch in 2012, Duolingo has amassed an active user base of over 74 million (Duolingo, 2023). Its gamified approach to language learning can enhance learner motivation and engagement. As the platform continuously evolves and optimizes its features, various techniques have been introduced to enhance user satisfaction and efficacy. The user is presented with short, easily digestible lessons that follow a communicative language teaching approach, adhering to a learn-by-doing philosophy that promotes active knowledge retention and application.

This case study centers on a 40-hour English language course conducted at the University of Genoa, Italy, during the 2022/2023 academic year. The course catered to a group of adult and senior learners aged 54 to 83 with an average age of 65. Almost all these students began the course as complete beginners in English. Only two students, who had taken English courses before, possessed language skills that the researcher deemed comparable to an A1 level at the course's outset. All the students were native Italian speakers. By the end of the course, the researcher determined that, on average, the class had successfully reached an A1 level. Furthermore, the students' language acquisition process persisted beyond the course's end in May, extending into the summer months until September.

## **Literature Review**

Numerous studies have explored the effectiveness of Duolingo in teaching English to EFL learners. For instance, various studies have found that Duolingo can significantly improve learners' receptive language skills in the areas of vocabulary acquisition (Aulia, Wahjuningsih, & Andayani, 2020; Cesarini, Sulaeman, Mulyana, & Yolandri, 2021; Faradisa, Afrila, Faroh, & Choirunnisa, 2022; Nurhisyam, Usman, Agussatriana, & Rofiqoh, 2023; Vinh, 2020; Warman, 2019), reading and comprehension (Ajisoko, 2022; Jiang, Portnoff, Plonsky, & Pajak, 2022; Jiang, Rollinson, Plonsky, Gustafson, & Pajak, 2021b), and listening (Jiang & Pajak, 2022; Putri & Islamiati, 2018; Sukarya, Kamil, & Utami, 2022).

Additionally, some research also indicates improvements in learners' productive skills, such as speaking (Alfuhaid, 2021; Jiang, Rollinson, Chen, Reuveni, Gustafson, Plonsky, & Pajak, 2021a) and writing (Syahputra, 2019). A study by Vesselinov and Grego (2012)

compared Duolingo to traditional language learning methods, reporting that Duolingo can be as effective as classroom instruction.

One distinctive advantage of Duolingo is its gamified nature, which can boost learner motivation and engagement. Numerous empirical studies have revealed that Duolingo's gamification enhances motivation, enjoyment, and willingness to engage with English language learning (Almufareh, 2021; Li & O'Rourke, 2022; Skuta & Kostolanyova, 2016; Sri Redjeki & Muhajir, 2021). However, there is evidence suggesting that while Duolingo's gamification can promote learner autonomy and motivation, self-directed students may exhibit superficial levels of engagement (Hidayati & Diana, 2019), use the application minimally if not mandated for formal learning (García Botero, Questier, & Zhu, 2018), or even discontinue usage altogether (Bende, 2017; Krashen, 2014). Overall, despite the consensus on Duolingo's gamified approach as a useful application and a positive motivational tool in language learning, this may not always translate into consistent and sustained platform usage (Inayah, Yusuf, & Fibula, 2020). This seems to suggest a need for a guided approach that integrates classroom teaching with autonomous study (Bende, 2017).

For what concerns EFL learning for older adults and seniors, research has shown that learning a foreign language, or otherwise engaging in mentally stimulating activities, may reduce cognitive decline (Kroll & Dussias, 2017; Yates, Ziser, Spector, & Orrell, 2016). Furthermore, it can prove highly beneficial from a cultural point of view as it can promote cross-cultural communication and interaction, as well as increase the opportunities to socialize (Klimova, 2018; Klimova & Pickhart, 2020). Despite the naturally-occurring physical and cognitive decline experienced with age, which can hinder the effectiveness of the learning effort (Burke & Shafto, 2004; Hakuta, Bialystok, & Wiley, 2003), research has shown that there is no definite age at which people stop being able to learn (Marinova-Todd, Marshall, & Snow, 2000). As such, it has been concluded that healthy adults remain capable of learning, and, more specifically in this case, acquire an L2 (Kuklewicz & King, 2018; Marinova-Todd et al., 2000; White & Genesee, 1996).

While several studies have examined Duolingo's application in classroom settings, research regarding its use among mature EFL students, particularly seniors, is limited. In fact, the author was unable to find any relevant studies specifically focusing on the use of Duolingo to teach classes of mature and senior learners. Therefore, this paper aims to provide a case

study that sheds additional light on the specific topic of the use of Duolingo among mature EFL students, particularly for basic English levels.

### **Prior Considerations**

The 40-hour English course that is the object of this case study was conducted within the framework of the UnigeSenior program at the University of Genoa. This program offers courses tailored to mature learners aged 45 and above, and does not impose any formal academic prerequisites.

The composition of this English language course, which commenced in November 2022, was based on students' self-assessment, where they categorized themselves as 'Beginners' on a 3-point scale (Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced). No further assessment or analysis of the participants was conducted before their placement in the class, and no CEFR scale assessment or information was provided to the students upon enrollment.

In deciding the appropriate methodology for the course, the researcher based her decision on several assumptions and considerations:

- It was recognized that many students may not have prior experience with university-level classes. Therefore, there was a possibility that some learners might feel intimidated by the new academic environment.
- Some students might experience nervousness and apprehension at the prospect of being placed in a class alongside more proficient peers. This apprehension could potentially hinder their participation and interaction during classes or even lead them to consider dropping out of the course.
- Mature learners typically enroll in this category of courses at the University of Genoa with specific goals in mind, such as traveling, visiting family abroad, or gaining practical and immediately applicable knowledge in real-life situations.
- Considering their age and life stage, mature learners often have various responsibilities such as children, grandchildren, elderly parents, other family

commitments, jobs, and household chores. These responsibilities require flexible, adaptable and customizable study arrangements.

- Considering the age of the students and their background in Italian society and education, it was reasonable to assume that many had never studied a foreign language before. This implied the likelihood of the presence of significant learning challenges and mental barriers that extended beyond the English language itself.
- The class was expected to be, to some degree, rather heterogeneous in terms of language proficiency. As suggested above, the self-assessed ‘Elementary’ level, given its inherent vagueness and subjectivity, could potentially encompass a wide range of skills, from A0 to A2 on the CEFR scale.

In light of these assumptions and considerations, the researcher opted for a flexible and non-threatening approach that prioritized the practical application of knowledge and celebrated individual progress. Building upon these considerations, the researcher chose to incorporate Duolingo as the primary instructional tool in the course.

## **Methodology**

### **Initial assessment through standardized testing**

During the first lesson of the course, a standardized test was administered to the students. This assessment comprised a total of 50 questions and aligned with the A1-A2 proficiency levels. The rationale behind conducting this assessment stemmed from the absence of CEFR-level rankings for the students, prompting the researcher’s need to gain a clear understanding of their starting point. However, as it was later evinced, most students had never studied English before; only two students, one of whom had participated in another English course at the University of Genoa the preceding year, had a slightly higher proficiency level, approximately at the A1 range as determined by the researcher. Upon receiving the test papers, all students, with the exception of one, promptly returned them blank almost immediately after looking at the first few questions. The lone student who completed the test achieved a score of 35 out of 50. The test papers were then collected by the researcher and never mentioned again until the end of the course.

### **In-class teaching and approach**

Throughout the course, a consistent teaching approach was maintained. After introducing Duolingo (which a few students already knew about and had used before), the English-from-Italian course tree was started from zero. In each session, the researcher would start a lesson using her own Duolingo account, projecting it for the entire class to follow. The class collectively engaged in the exercises, and frequently, when encountering significant points meriting attention, the Duolingo lesson would be paused for in-depth explanation with the aid of the classroom whiteboard. The sentences and words encountered in Duolingo lessons often served as catalysts for exploring various aspects, including grammar issues, extended word usage, word collocations, etymology, and trivia.

As part of their weekly homework, students were initially tasked with independently completing the Duolingo unit that had been introduced during the class. However, during the latter half of the course, this approach was slightly modified by the researcher based on positive student feedback. In this revised approach, homework assignments required students to initiate and complete the next unit themselves, even if it had not been explained by the researcher yet. Subsequently, during the following class, the researcher would address the issues and challenges that students encountered with the new unit. Similar to earlier lessons, this served as a platform for explaining associated grammar concepts and branching into various additional teaching points.

The 40-hour course was structured into weekly 2-hour lessons over 20 weeks. From the start of the course, a total of 17 Duolingo units were completed. The class maintained a consistent pace, progressing through one unit each week. Toward the end of the course, as the lesson content began to appear more intricate, the pace experienced a slight deceleration due to some students finding the material more challenging.

### **Attitude and mindset**

As previously emphasized, the researcher believed that one of the biggest challenges in the course would not be the English language per se, but rather the attitude to the language learning process, as this could occasionally be frustrating, intricate, and disheartening. Consequently, a paramount objective of the course was to cultivate a non-judgmental environment where students would feel comfortable expressing their frustrations with the learning journey while also sharing and celebrating their achievements. The researcher endeavored to empathize with the students' struggles arising from the differences between their

native language, Italian, and the English language. Simultaneously, the researcher also sought to demonstrate how English, despite its complexities, possessed its own inherent logic and structure. This approach aimed to bridge the gap between the students' perspectives and the peculiarities of the English language.

Strong emphasis was placed on the importance of consistent, daily effort, leading to constant and gradual improvement, as opposed to overwhelming and sporadic exertions that were likely to lead to burnout. Similarly, the course emphasized the value of active learning from the students' daily surroundings outside the classroom, including exposure to advertising, social media, and television, where many English words and concepts were already familiar due to their assimilation and integration into the Italian language. Students were encouraged to look at daily life contexts with a curious eye, exploring the use of English words in Italian and sharing their findings with the rest of the class. Throughout the course, the researcher aimed to establish the groundwork for self-directed and sustained progress, extending beyond the confines of the two weekly hours of class, as well as, ideally, beyond the course itself, thereby fostering autonomous and individual growth.

### **Repeated standardized testing**

During the last lesson of the course, the researcher decided to administer the same standardized test, which had previously only been completed by one student during the first lesson of the course, and which had been returned blank by the rest of the class. The standardized test had not been mentioned throughout the course after the initial lesson, and the student who had filled it in reported not remembering doing so.

Before distributing the tests, the researcher clarified the following points to the class:

- The standardized test was designed for A1-A2 levels, which meant that, given the researcher's belief that the average classroom level was now A1, there would be many words and grammar points that had never been encountered before, so the students need not panic.

- The test was simply a standardized assessment and its contents were not aligned with the Duolingo course curriculum that had been followed during the course.
- Test results would remain private and personal, and students could choose to anonymously share them with the researcher if they wished.
- All 8 students present on that day took the test, and 7 out of the 8 students shared their results with the course researcher through the anonymous online platform 'Strawpoll'.

## **Results**

### **Standardized Test Results**

Out of the 7 students who took the test and shared their results with the researcher, the average score was 29.3 out of 50, with scores ranging from a minimum of 19 out of 50 to a maximum of 43 out of 50. The median score was 25 out of 50. The student who had initially taken the test at the beginning of the course shared that her score had improved from 35 out of 50 to 43 out of 50.

### **Attitude and Mindset**

As previously mentioned, the researcher held the belief that attitude and mindset would play a significant role in the outcome of the course. This assumption was validated by several instances throughout the course. For example, when encountering particularly challenging concepts, some students displayed signs of frustration and unease, often expressing sentiments like 'no way', 'that is impossible', or 'that doesn't make sense' - reflecting the initial stage of the learning process often characterized by resistance and discomfort.

One student, in particular, stood out for vocalizing her struggles during class, consistently proclaiming in Italian, 'I can't do this' ('non ce la posso fare') in response to new concepts or words. The researcher believed that these exclamations were more than mere comments; they represented tangible manifestations of the very challenge that the researcher had anticipated prior to the start of the course.

However, by the end of the course, this student's exclamation had evolved into a light-hearted classroom joke, and she, along with the other students, had transformed it into a positive affirmation: 'I can do this' ('ce la posso fare').

Moreover, students frequently shared pictures of themselves on vacation in the WhatsApp class chat, humorously indicating that Duolingo was their travel companion. They made jokes and comments about how Duolingo had become a part of their daily lives.

Lastly, all the students expressed their intention to continue studying English at the University of Genoa in the following academic year. They actively contacted the relevant University offices to request placement in the same group.

### **Individual Study**

Student progress was tracked and monitored with Duolingo for Schools, which enabled the researcher to create a virtual classroom for all the students and monitor their progress and various statistics and indicators.

Duolingo for Schools also sent weekly reports to the researcher, highlighting the number of experience points (XP) gained and the amount of time the students spent using Duolingo each week. On average, throughout the course, each student earned a mean score of 542 XP or a median score of 547 XP, and spent 2.5 hours per week using Duolingo outside of the classroom. Therefore, the amount of time that students dedicated to individual English learning was greater than the time spent in the classroom. In total, including the 2 weekly hours of classroom teaching, students spent an average of 4.5 hours per week learning English throughout the course.

During the final lesson of the course, the researcher suggested that, in order to maintain the achieved proficiency level and the positive learning routine established, students could choose to obtain a token amount of 100 XP (significantly less than the average XP they had been earning) each week from the end of the course until the beginning of September 2023. The researcher recommended that students achieve this amount of XP by reviewing previous lessons without attempting newer, more complex ones, and encouraged them to stop if they felt overwhelmed. The goal was to sustain the positive learning routine and English proficiency while enjoying the summer months and preventing burnout.

Over the 16 weeks from the end of the course in May 2023 until the start of September 2023, the students maintained an average weekly XP score of 184, surpassing the goal that had

been set. There were no significant fluctuations, and the weekly XP gained remained relatively consistent throughout the summer months.

### **Limitations of This Study**

This case study presents several challenges and limitations. Firstly, the sample size is very small, with only 9 students, allowing for a high level of individual fluctuations. As such, while this study may offer qualitative insights, its quantitative findings can be subject to scrutiny. Secondly, the reliability of the standardized test results may also be questioned, due to the fact that, albeit for a very limited amount of time, the question papers were provided to the students at the beginning of the course, potentially affecting the results obtained at the end of the course when the same question papers were used. The author believes that the relevance of this paper lies in its qualitative analysis in terms of attitude towards EFL learning among older adults, as opposed to its quantitative findings which were not the focus of the course.

### **Conclusion**

The existing literature on using Duolingo to teach English as a foreign language demonstrates its potential as an effective tool, offering benefits such as improved language skills, increased motivation, and learner autonomy. Furthermore, it promotes an approach that diverges from traditional grammar-focused methods while still indirectly imparting grammar rules. This case study aims to shed light on two distinct sub-categories within the broader topic of using Duolingo for EFL teaching: using Duolingo to teach English to mature and senior learners and integrating Duolingo into a university context. Overall, the 40-hour course has yielded highly positive results, successfully elevating students from an average A0 to an average A1 English proficiency level.

It is important to note that, in this case study, the adoption of Duolingo as a teaching method has gone hand in hand with the establishment of a robust learning framework that promotes resilience and consistency. There is evidence highlighting the risk of students discontinuing their use of Duolingo when they learn independently. However, the presence of a framework that supports students throughout their English language journey can reduce the likelihood of them abandoning the language learning process altogether.

From the author's perspective, the most significant result that can be evinced from this case study is the creation of a safe and positive learning environment, fostering a flexible,

curious, and resilient attitude among learners, and encouraging proactive individual learning within the structured classroom environment, laying solid foundations for sustained and enduring language improvement. In this specific context, Duolingo has proven more than capable of providing this essential framework. Further research should continue to explore the best practices and effectiveness of Duolingo as an EFL teaching tool for adults and seniors in university settings.

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## Assessing Writing in EFL Context

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### Abstract

This paper aims to present an overview of the research studies investigating writing assessment in English as a foreign language (EFL) contexts, specifically at the university level. The studies published from 2013 to 2023 were encapsulated in the review. The papers were scrutinized to display the participant and context features, methodologies adopted, and the research purposes together with their results. Findings were synthesized and discussed in the present review. The paper offers a review of the studies in the field of writing assessment and gives future researchers an understanding of what has been done in the realm.

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**Keywords:** Assessing writing; Disciplinary writing; EFL; University

### Introduction

In contexts where English is learned as a foreign language, developing writing is vital for learners since it primarily enables them to establish effective communication in academic and professional environments. Weigle (2009) specifies that as transportation and technology enable people to interact with each other, communication has also become indispensable in the globalized world. This increased the substantiality of writing skills. As a result of its increasing importance and requirement in the world as a way of communication, a search for effective and trustworthy ways to assess writing skills has emerged.

Writing is considered as an essential component of academic disciplines, and developing writing skills is essential to succeed academically. Besides academic areas,

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language users are required to possess strong writing skills in their professional areas, as English has been used as a language of business, as well. Writing embraces skills which learners need to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the information to convey their thoughts. Thus, it also helps to ameliorate critical thinking skills. Weigle (2002) denotes that there is a connection between writing and critical thinking since having a skill in writing suggests that a learner owns the cognitive skills necessary for pursuing one's education. Writing is a means to express ideas and views or to convey information in a written form so as to communicate with others. It is a cognitive ability and comprises 'comprehension, application, and synthesis of new knowledge' (Defazio, Jones, Tennant, & Hook, 2010, p. 34). It can take diverse forms, such as letters, emails, reports, research papers, essays, and poetry.

Writing is vital at all education levels, but it has a central role in higher education and fulfills various purposes. Curry and Lillis (2005) explain that one of these purposes is assessment. To master disciplinary course content, learners are assigned written exams, essays, and laboratory reports. Lecturers pay attention to the content and the writing form (Curry & Lillis, 2005). Writing assessment is crucial because it supports developing and expanding writing skills. Through writing assessment, educators can ascertain the parts where a learner is proficient and the parts which a learner needs to renovate. Thus, learners can be supported in developing the weak points by following their progress. In this way, they can get feedback on their achievement in writing skills and become more equipped with the skills they use to communicate in the written way for their future academic and professional life. Another purpose is learning (Curry & Lillis, 2005; Westhuizen, 2009). Learners write texts to describe what they have absorbed from the learning process. During university education, learners produce texts which adhere to their disciplines' conventions (Curry & Lillis, 2005). At the university level, according to Curry and Hewings (2005), writing is a tool to demonstrate disciplinary understanding at the university, and it has specific conventional structures in distinct contexts. Developing skills in disciplinary writing demands specialized word knowledge and formatting necessities for learners. Therefore, disciplinary writing can be deemed to be challenging for learners in EFL contexts, but it is essential for them to develop to succeed in their academic and professional life, so students in various disciplines are required to cultivate acceptable writing skills.

### **The Significance and Purpose of the Study**

Weigle (2014) remarks that writing has not been considered just a skill to strengthen learning other skills such as reading, listening, and grammar. It has gained importance in

language education as a natural outcome of globalization and technology. From the standpoint of effective teaching of writing, it is crucial to look at writing in a second or foreign language from cognitive and socio-cultural perspectives (Weigle, 2014). From the cognitive perspective, writing skills and language proficiency should be taken into consideration because second language writing is a combination of both. From socio-cultural perspective, a mere focus on language proficiency would not yield effective writing when the context in which writing will be used is not considered, so it is understood that “writing is done for a purpose, is directed at a specific audience, and is a part of a broader set of literacy practices that are shaped by a particular culture and setting” (Weigle, 2014, p. 224). By underscoring the significance of writing, Weigle (2014) explains that writing assessment is a vital part of writing instruction and learning. Thus, teachers can assess students’ learning effectively and obtain data to shape and improve their teaching practices, which in turn enhances learning.

Through literature, review studies have presented close scrutiny of the research involving writing. The recent reviews indicate that various authors provided data regarding writing development. When the literature on the review studies of writing skills was examined, it showed that some studies are aiming to give an overview of the topic. To illustrate, Perumal and Ajit (2020) investigated the studies published between 2010 and 2019 and reviewed them to show techniques and approaches to developing writing skills and eliminating problems with writing. In a recent paper by Damanik (2022), the author presented a literature review on peer feedback in writing skill development. The study context incorporated investigating the use of peer feedback among Indonesian adult learners to develop their writing. In a discrete study, Anna, Qianyi, Ying, and Yanli (2023) systematically reviewed experimental and quasi-experimental research studies and investigated teaching writing. Their review involved the analysis of studies published between 2010 and 2020, focusing on writing instruction, especially in kindergarten. In a different systematic review, Franco, Franco, Severo, Ferreira, and Karnieli-Miller (2022) investigated using a reflective writing style to improve medical students’ communication skills. The authors based their synthesis on thematic analysis and provided an understanding related to the effectiveness of reflective writing for medical educators and students. Patiñoa, Calixto, Chiappe, and Almenarez (2020) reviewed the research on using information and communication technologies (ICT) to upgrade children’s writing and motor skills by suggesting the positive influence of using ICT to support those skills. Ruffini, Osmani, Martini, Giera, and Pecini (2023) also provided a systematic review to analyze the connection between executive functions, for example, cognitive flexibility, attention, working memory, and children’s writing skills.

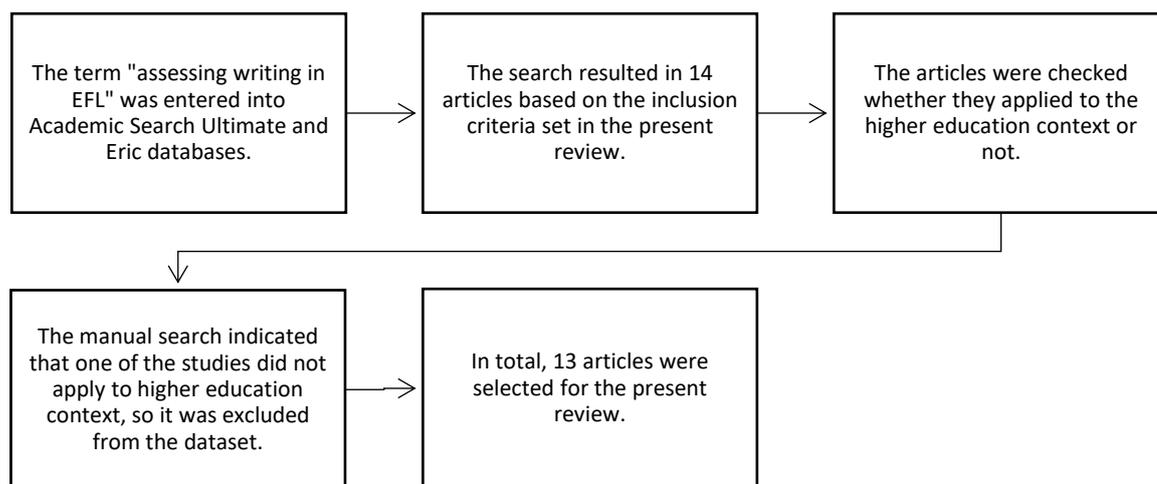
When the recent review studies are considered, it is clear that there are reviews done in the field of writing skills, and they provide data with regard to specific research domains. The studies give an understanding of the literature related to the development of writing in childhood, or they provide data in connection with writing at the university level but focus on a specific domain. Different from the previous reviews, the present one aims to give a systematic review of studies on assessing writing in EFL. The study concentrates on assessing writing skills at higher education levels and limits its scope to the EFL contexts and the research studies published from 2013 to 2023. The central questions which the study addresses are presented below.

- What are the research contexts in the selected studies?
- Who are the participants in the selected studies?
- What are the methodologies employed in the selected studies?
- What are the research purposes of the studies?

With its modest scope, the study aims to present an overview of the studies under scrutiny and help researchers to get insights to search for in further studies in the field.

## **Method**

The present study was based on a systematic analysis. Primarily, a set of criteria was specified for the selection of research to be encapsulated in the present study. The criteria comprised selecting studies in academic journals. Based on the research aims of the review, the topic assessing writing in EFL was searched in an academic search engine, EBSCOhost, and the databases Eric and Academic Search Ultimate were used to search the topic by considering the relevance of the databases to the scope of the present research. The publication year of the studies was limited to the last ten years (from 2013 to 2023). As subject, only the articles administered in higher education were selected. The articles which were theoretical, not written in English, and not in the time covering a 10-year-long-research period were not included in the review.



*Figure 1. The Flowchart of the Selection of Studies*

The search of the studies in the realm of assessing writing in EFL contexts revealed 14 records of full texts. One of the selected studies was excluded from the dataset because it investigated assessing writing in secondary or high school education contexts. The studies were analyzed based on their research purposes, participants, research contexts, methodology, and findings. Findings were presented below based on the questions addressed in the review.

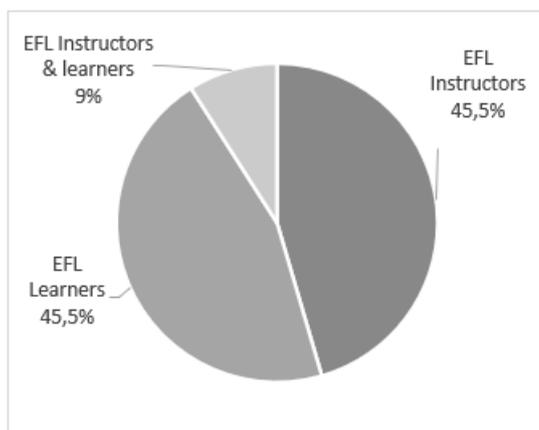
The analysis was primarily materialized based on a search of the selected studies by following the determined exclusion and inclusion criteria. Later, all the relevant studies were extracted from the databases and analyzed in detail manually. All the extracted studies were carefully read first. Then, an Excel sheet was prepared to picture the title, keywords, abstract, participants, methodologies, research purposes, and their findings clearly. The required information was entered into the Excel sheet for detailed analysis. This process was generated with two researchers. The data from the studies were coded depending on the research questions the present review aimed to reveal. Precisely, the research contexts, participants, and methodologies employed in the studies were aimed to be depicted. Later, a more detailed look for the research purposes, together with the findings were explored through coding. Two researchers (one of whom was the researcher of the present review, and the other one was a researcher holding a Ph.D. degree from the language teaching department) worked separately from each other to ensure inter-coder reliability. Later, when they compared their findings, they preferred to discuss their findings to agree if there was a contradiction between the results of the two analyses.

## **Findings**

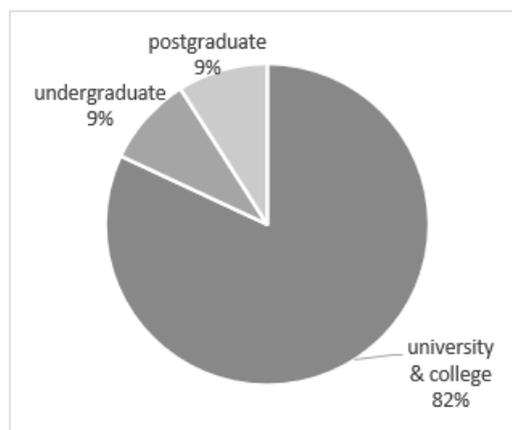
All the selected studies were analyzed in detail, and the findings were presented by the research questions aimed to be answered through the present review.

### **What are the Research Contexts and Who are the Participants in the Selected Studies?**

The selected studies were analyzed with respect to their research contexts and participants. In the selected studies, the researchers' participant groups are introduced in Figure 2 below.



*Figure 2. Participants*



*Figure 3. Education Levels*

The determined set of criteria in the review included examining the EFL context. Therefore, the participant groups were from EFL contexts. Precisely, the researchers in the selected studies recruited mostly instructors and learners with an equal percentage (45.5% each). In a small percentage (9%), the selected studies involved the research of participants both as instructors and learners. The studies in the review were selected with reference to the criteria encompassing the research in higher education. In the selected studies, the writers defined the degrees of the participants specifically as undergraduate, postgraduate, and university or college learners or instructors. Of these, Figure 3 displays that the participants were mostly at universities and colleges (82%).

All the studies were relevant to the EFL context. The detailed analysis indicated that 27% of the selected studies were performed in China, which was followed by Turkey, with a percentage of 18. The remaining contexts incorporated Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, Mexico, Korea, and Thailand (Each has a percentage of 9.). Also, in one study, the context of the university was not specified clearly. The participants' nationalities were pointed as Chinese, French, and Spanish, though.

### **What are the Methodologies Employed in the Studies?**

The procedures followed to collect and analyze the data in the selected studies have been investigated. The results specify that 23.07% of the studies (Obeid, 2017; Ölmezer-Öztürk & Aydin, 2018; Sarı & Han, 2022) involved a scale development or the use of a questionnaire to reveal participants' beliefs and attitudes towards writing. On the other hand, most (76.92%) of the studies selected for the review (Abdelrahim & Abdelrahim, 2020; Devadera, 2018; Farahian, 2015; González, Trejo, & Roux, 2017; Jeong, 2015; Li, 2022; Ma, 2013; Pu et al., 2022; Qin & Uccelli, 2020; Worathumrong, 2021) included an analysis of the writing papers assigned to the learners. The writing types assigned to the learners in these studies varied. Namely, in most of the selected studies (e.g., Devananadera, 2018; Jeong, 2015), learners were assigned to write essays, and their types were specified as argumentative, descriptive, cause and effect, and expository. In a few studies, the authors specified that the learners were assigned to write an essay, but their types were not indicated in the studies (e.g., Farahian, 2015; Ma, 2013). In the other studies, the authors specified that the writing assigned to learners involved writing paragraph-length papers (González et al., 2017; Worathumorong, 2021), sending an e-mail, and preparing academic reports (Qin & Uccelli, 2020).

The analysis of the data collection and analysis methods revealed that the authors mostly adopted mixed-methods approach and only a quantitative approach (Each is 46.15%). The studies with only a qualitative approach were 7.69%. A detailed look at the methods employed in the selected studies revealed that the authors favored qualitative methods, such as coding the patterns or structures to be investigated in students' writings or transcripts of recorded interviews held with the participants. Besides, statistical techniques such as frequencies and percentages, factor analysis, t-tests, and ANOVA were performed on the SPSS. Thus, the authors preferred the methods listed here depending on their research purposes.

### **What are the Research Purposes and Main Findings of the Selected Studies?**

The research purposes the studies served to investigate were analyzed, and the findings substantiated that the studies addressed different research purposes and scopes regarding assessing writing. The research scopes were categorized in the figure below.

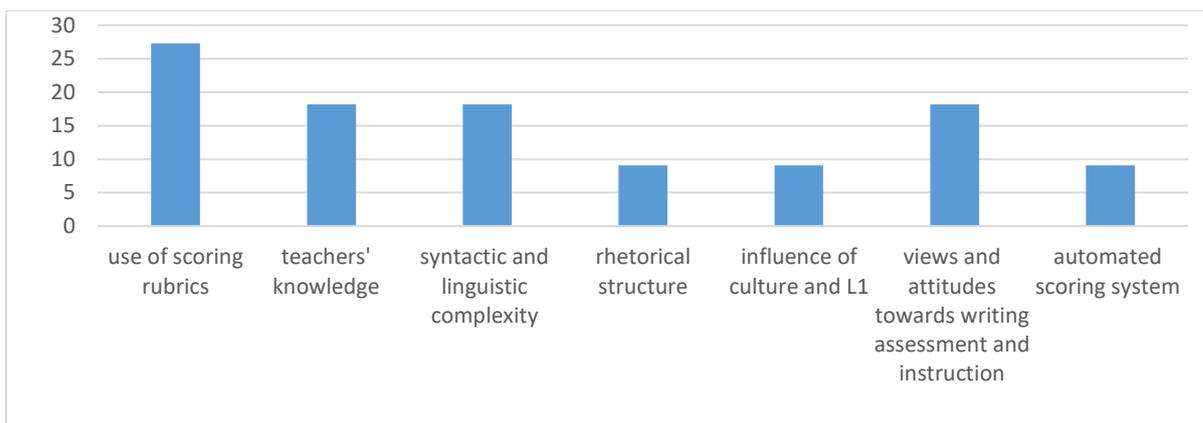


Figure 4. The Research Purposes

Figure 4 indicates that the selected studies embodied the investigation of the use of rubrics, teachers' knowledge of assessment and metadiscoursal features in writing, the syntactic complexity and linguistic complexity together with aspects such as genre and register flexibility, rhetorical structure, the influence of culture and L1 on discourse features, the views and attitudes towards writing assessment and instruction, and the use of automated scoring system in writing assessment. The details of each have been presented respectively.

### **Activities**

One of the research purposes favored by the researchers of the selected studies involved examining the use of rubrics in writing assessments. The study authored by González et al. (2017) encompassed the investigation of raters' opinions related to writing assignments and analytical scoring rubrics. González et al. (2017) examined the inter-rater reliability of scores given to writing assignments of EFL students at university. A rubric-based assessment was adopted in the study. The researchers concluded that assessing writing based on rubrics was potentially reliable. In a different study, Jeong (2015) compared essay scores given when a rubric was used and when it was not. The study investigated whether English teachers in a Korean high school utilized the rubrics while assessing students' writing. Jeong (2015) explored that there were differences when the teachers employed rubrics and when they did not. For example, the results of her study indicated that there was more focus on accuracy problems while scoring a paper without a rubric but more focus on issues based on the students' comprehension when the rubric was used to assess writing. Also, teacher interviews revealed in Jeong (2015) that the assessment criteria and the descriptors in the rubrics led to changes in writing rating. With respect to the use of rubrics, Jeong (2015) proposes that teachers be trained to use rubrics effectively. Similarly, Li (2022) used many-facet Rasch measurement, a statistical analysis technique to examine the components of an instrument, to investigate a

scoring rubric with manifold criteria for EFL writing. The study investigated the reliability and internal validity of the rubric and provided an understanding of how to develop a rubric. Li (2022) remarked that rubrics can give substantial evidence related to student writing, but they are required to be used carefully. Li (2022) articulated that validation is vital when employing a rubric to assess writing. Li (2022) explained that when the rubric is ensured to be valid, EFL teachers can assist learners in using it for self-assessing and understanding the reasons for their scores.

### ***Teachers' Knowledge***

The examination of the research purposes of the selected studies indicated that some authors aimed to reveal what the participant teachers in their studies knew about writing assessment. To exemplify, Ölmezer-Öztürk and Aydin (2018) intended to develop an instrument named Language Assessment Knowledge Scale and to validate it. Thus, they aimed to assess teachers' knowledge of assessment. They concluded that the instrument was valid and reliable for assessing language teachers' assessment knowledge. In a different study performed by Abdelrahim and Abdelrahim (2020), the authors reported on the value of a training program for professional development. The program aimed to upgrade teachers' knowledge of metadiscoursal features in argumentative writing, train teachers to assess expression, unity, and organization in writing, and reform their instruction of metadiscoursal features. The findings from the study of Abdelrahim and Abdelrahim (2020) indicated that the program improved teachers' knowledge and skills in instructing and measuring metadiscoursal features in argumentative writing. Considering the research findings, the researchers underscored the significance of professional development programs to renovate instruction and heighten students' writing performance.

### ***Syntactic and Linguistic Complexity***

Findings also revealed that in some studies, the researchers sought the extent to which learners vary grammar structures and vocabulary in their writings. Pu, Heng, and Cao (2022) investigated how genre affects the syntactic complexity of writing by analyzing Chinese EFL learners' argumentative and expository essays. As a result of their analysis, Pu et al. (2022) revealed discrepancies between the two types of essays. Accordingly, Pu et al.'s (2022) study yielded more syntactic complexity in argumentative than expository essays. The study displayed that genre impacts syntactic complexity in writing and suggested implications for educators to be more aware of genre differences in EFL writing. Besides syntactic complexity, Qin and Uccelli (2020) examined the linguistic complexity and register flexibility in writings produced by EFL learners. Qin and Uccelli (2020) controlled how linguistic features varied

when two different registers were utilized. Their study showed that EFL writing assessment should encompass criteria to evaluate learners' adaptation to diverse registers and contexts.

### ***Rhetorical Structure***

The analysis indicated that one study among the selected studies intended to reveal the effect of rhetorical structure in writing. Devanadera (2018) analyzed Vietnamese EFL learners' writings to control the rhetorical structure in narrative essays, using the framework of Labov and Waletzky. The study revealed that Vietnamese students' rhetorical structure in writing follows a pattern which is dissimilar to the standard. The Vietnamese students are disposed to overlook specific steps of a composition, such as the introduction, development of a story, and summary. Devanadera (2018) suggests assessing writing based on criteria which take the diversity in linguistics and cultures worldwide. Thus, it would be more related and appropriate to EFL students from diverse backgrounds.

### ***The Influence of Culture and L1***

A detailed look at the research purposes and scopes of the selected studies moreover displayed that researchers intended to represent the effect of learners' native language (L1) and culture on writing. To illustrate, Worathumrong (2021) sought the influence of L1 and culture on Thai EFL learners' writing, specifically the discourse features. The researcher found language and discourse features which are under the effect of L1 and native culture. Worathumrong (2021) explained that teachers can better help EFL learners develop their language when such effects on EFL writing are understood. As teachers spot learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, their instruction will be more efficient and relevant by means of a reactive approach based on culture and first language.

### ***Views and Attitudes***

The scope of some of the studies performed in assessing writing in the EFL contexts involved investigating the views and attitudes towards writing assessment (Obeid, 2017; Sari & Han, 2022). To illustrate, Obeid (2017) examined Saudi EFL teachers' and learners' perceptions and attitudes toward writing assessment. Thus, Obeid (2017) aimed to discover what the teachers and learners experienced in the Saudi EFL context with regard to writing assessment and revealed its complications and prospects from this perspective. The study findings indicated that teachers and learners pinpointed a lack of sources, support, and training, and the differences concerning linguistics and cultures as handicaps in writing assessment in the research context. Obeid (2017) stressed that the effect of writing assessment on language development and writing skills cannot be ignored; therefore, it is essential to train and provide

the required support to teachers in writing instruction and assessment. In this respect, cultural and linguistic features should be paid attention to (Obeid, 2017).

In Sarı and Han's (2022) article, the researchers investigated Turkish EFL teachers' beliefs about writing instruction and assessment. The teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards assessing and teaching writing varied. Like Obeid's study (2017), the instructors identified difficulties with a lack of resources and training. Additionally, the study findings indicated that a lack of time and difficulty encouraging students to write were the challenges the Turkish EFL instructors faced while teaching writing. Concerning the assessment, though the teachers stated to use distinct strategies while evaluating the writing, they felt a lack of self-reliance to measure writing performance effectively. In order to eliminate the problems, Sarı and Han (2022) also underscored a need for training.

### ***Automated Scoring System***

The use of online automated scoring systems in writing assessments has been revealed in Ma's (2003) article. Ma (2003) examined the extent to which an automated scoring system was influential in the assessment and could augment Chinese EFL learners' writing skills. The study findings revealed a positive impact of the automated scoring system on refurbishing writing skills, more student involvement, and fulfillment. Additionally, Ma (2003) stressed the importance of feedback to the students so that they can detect their strong and weak points in writing.

### **Discussion**

The present study aimed to display the studies concerning assessing writing at the tertiary level in the EFL context. For this purpose, the selected studies were analyzed, and their research contexts, participants, and methodologies were pictured together with a detailed analysis of their research purposes and scopes. The analysis indicated that the studies were conducted in various EFL contexts. The researchers of the selected studies based their research mostly either on learners or teachers, but there were also studies investigating both learners and teachers together. Their numbers were at a lower percentage, however. The research methodologies in the selected studies incorporated mixed-methods research or only qualitative methods, which shows that the researchers used qualitative and quantitative data triangulation methods. The researchers employed methods such as coding and surveys at the same time. Equally, assessing writing studies mostly adopted methodologies based on qualitative research. This depicted that the researchers' examination of the effects of various factors was grounded in using methods such as coding.

This study exhibited that types of writing assignments were primarily argumentative, descriptive, cause and effect, and expository essays. In some studies, researchers did not specify the type but indicated that their research involved the analysis of essays. The present review aimed to analyze the writing assignments at the tertiary level of education. Thus, the learners were university students in different departments. It is known that English has been used as a medium of instruction at the tertiary level across the world; likewise, the number of international students in universities in English-speaking countries is rising simultaneously (Basturkmen, 2017). This has given rise to academic writing courses for English as a second language or EFL students (Basturkmen, 2017). Costley and Flowerdew (2017) state that writing shows a discipline's character by explaining that writing processes and procedures in a discipline are specific to that discipline. A learner needs to be acquainted with the conventions in a particular discipline and be able to perform the genres accompanying the discipline (Costley & Flowerdew, 2017). Nesi and Gardner (2012) state that genre is significant in academic writing and maintain that academic writing concentrates on various genres, which can be exemplified as research articles, theses, student coursework, and academic textbooks. By thinking about the result here, it might be concluded that in the studies investigating writing assignments in the EFL context, essay types were preferred. Predictably, essay-type writing is an essential part of university education for specific reasons. West, Malcolm, Keyword, and Hill (2019) explain that the primary aim of essay writing encloses an organized argument that is logically supported and developed with literature. It requires 'critical, communicative, and research-based skills'; as a result, researchers and instructors favor it as a common type of assessment for learning (West et al. 2019, p. 609).

The analysis of the research purposes indicated that the selected studies aimed to review various topics. However, the most commonly investigated topic was found to be related to the use of rubrics. The use of rubrics in writing assessments has a significant value (González & Roux, 2013). Also, in different disciplines, such as Sociology or Engineering, there are diverse types of writing, each with a different role, organization, and relation to research (Nesi & Gardner, 2012). Thus, regarding the use of rubrics, disciplinary distinctions should be also taken into consideration. The decision on the use of rubrics requires to be made based on the writing type, careful examination, and course goals (González & Roux, 2013). With respect to the use of rubrics, the findings from the selected studies suggested that training for using the rubrics is vital. This finding also aligns with the findings of other studies in the field. To illustrate, Rezaei and Lovorn (2010) stressed that it is vital to train the raters about using rubrics, which will help to assess a piece of writing reliably and accurately. However, because

of the complicated nature of the rating process, Eckes (2008) warns that training does not guarantee rating differences. While using a rubric, Weigle (2007) explains that familiarity with the type of rubric is essential. Thus, it is crucial to enable teachers to practice various rubrics in a training program, for example.

Another finding from the analysis of the selected studies suggested a positive impact of automated scoring systems. Chen and Cheng (2008) support the constructive effect of automated writing systems and say such systems are effective since they give instant feedback. Learners can focus on linguistic problems in their writing and improve it. On the other hand, Dikli (2010) expounds on the adverse effects of automated scoring systems and explains that such systems fail to spot local errors and give too detailed feedback for the learners. While technology has been integrated into all aspects of academic areas, it would be inevitable to incorporate it into writing assessments. As explained by Hamp-Lyons (2002), assessing writing has been through three waves: directly assessing the texts, multiple-choice testing, which is followed by portfolio assessment. Hamp-Lyons (2002) mentions that the goad behind portfolio assessment was a result of the teachers' dissatisfaction rather than specialists and had two main reasons: 'lack of authenticity/ validity' and 'washback' (p. 11). Even though portfolio assessment solved such problems at first, it was still problematic. Hampton-Lyons (2002) offers that computer-based writing assessment will be the future of writing assessment and underscores that it should be humanistic and technological, which means that assessing writing in that way will benefit from the technological advances. Weigle (2002) suggests that the effect of technology is inevitable and explains that technology will influence 'the nature of writing itself' and 'the scoring of writing by computer' will yield some "important social and political consequences" (p.231). Technology will make writing more speech-like as people use more e-mail services. As a result, the way writing is taught will change.

Consequently, how all the changes will affect writing assessment and its definition should be considered carefully (Weigle, 2002). Also, how to benefit from technology should be planned by considering the positive and negative aspects of technology on writing assessment and performance. As Weigle (2002) proposed, technology would impact the future of writing assessment and nature by means of computers. Instruction and knowledge to assess writing by using technology may need to be thought accordingly. As Weigle (2014, p. 234) exemplified, 'social networking sites, online discussion boards, blogs, and wikis' have expanded classroom interaction between teachers and students by presenting the opportunities of electronic media to the writing courses. Thus, teachers' training to benefit from the advantages of technology in education takes priority.

Regardless of the research purposes, one common finding mostly stressed in the selected studies was the necessity and eminence of teacher training. The analyzed studies exposed that teachers' knowledge and instruction could be improved through training programs. Thus, the studies show such training programs' positive impact on writing instruction. Similarly, the studies investigating the teachers' and learners' perceptions or attitudes towards assessing writing unveil that writing practices generally fail due to lack of experience. Thus, training has a central place for the betterment of writing instruction.

With regard to writing instruction and assessment, this review shows that training for the instruction and assessment of writing performance is an absolute necessity. Boyle (2006) explains that assessment literacy, which is defined as "an understanding of the principles and practices of testing and assessment", is crucial in educational systems (p. 18). Through assessment literacy, foreign language teachers can specify the proper assessment methods and consider experiential data to expand their instruction. Otherwise, assessment results would be considered invalid and unreliable, leading to a negative washback effect on the content and design of an academic writing course, as mentioned in Ahmad (2021). Therefore, it is particularly momentous to present professional service opportunities for in-service and preservice foreign language teachers (Boyle, 2006).

The present review also presented that the researchers sought the effects of syntactic complexity, linguistic complexity, and register variety in students' writing in the selected studies. Their findings indicated that writing assessment changes correspondingly depending on factors such as genre type, register, syntactic, and linguistic variety. This finding suggests that there are no one-fitting-all-sizes types of writing courses. Seker (2018) interprets that writing is a complex skill that encapsulates linguistic, metacognitive, and sociocultural elements. Thus, the findings show the importance of approaching writing instruction and assessment accordingly. Besides the factors differentiating based on the genre or register, the analysis of the selected studies gives insights into the effects of culture or native language on writing and suggests taking into consideration such factors in teaching writing. Without a doubt, writing is a means to communicate ideas. In order to avoid confusion while conveying our ideas, it is vital to be aware of the influence of such factors. While the effects of native language may reflect upon one's writing positively, it may also adversely impact and cause misinterpretation in different contexts. To illustrate, when an EFL learner's native language has a different rhetorical style or linguistic and syntactic structure than the ones in the target language, it may cause the learner to write incongruously and unsuccessfully in the disciplinary framework in which the learner is writing. Therefore, it is crucial to plan academic writing

courses by planning the students' background information and to train not only teachers but also learners for effective writing.

### **Conclusion**

Writing has prominence which cannot be disregarded in all aspects of life. Promoting it for effective communication is vital, especially in academic and professional life. In all universities, the departments aim to prepare their students for a competitive world where students are required to be trained in all facets. In countries where English is used as a *Lingua Franca*, learners are also expected to improve their writing skills in their first language and foreign language. With this respect, universities, as a department requirement, serve writing courses in which students are expected to write based on the conventions in their departments. Therefore, the findings from the present review indicate how EFL students and teachers at the university level are involved in practices in writing classes.

The present review investigated how writing is assessed in EFL contexts. The studies published over a 10-year-long period were searched with the title 'assessing writing in EFL context.' The studies extracted from the databases were examined in detail, and the findings were shared in the review. Thus, the paper intended to provide researchers who would like to explore the topics and their findings in the EFL context with an understanding, synthesizing the available data. With this respect, the findings from this study may depict updated information about what has been done in this context.

### **Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Studies**

The present study suffers from certain limitations. Firstly, the present review was limited to only a small number of studies. This was a result of the fact that the topic searched in the databases was limited to only assessing writing in EFL contexts, and the participant groups were limited to only university students. When the search was completed, only a small number of studies were extracted from the databases. In future studies, researchers may expand their search by varying the terms searched for data retrieval. The studies conducted at different education levels could be searched, and the findings could be compared and contrasted with each other.

The choice of databases was based on practicality and relevancy to the content. Specifically, EBSCOhost and the databases in that search engine were utilized for data extraction in the present review. Also, the publication dates of the studies were kept limited to ten years. When these factors are considered, the number of studies to include in the review

likely remains limited. There are other renowned databases which could be used in the same scope of the present review. Therefore, in future studies, researchers could investigate the same topic by entering diverse variations of terms related to the present review's topic and also in different periods of publication time. Thus, they may obtain more distinct findings than this study and compare them with each other.

The present review involved the search for writing skills only in the EFL context; hence, the results cannot be generalized to the contexts where the research on writing skills is done in ESL or L1 contexts. It can be easily predicted that in L1 contexts, applying the conventions of language would be easier for learners in distinguishable disciplines, and learners would straightforwardly use the tones and styles. However, in EFL contexts, learners may need help to use grammar and vocabulary appropriately in a particular discipline due to the language barrier. Therefore, it is without a doubt that writing performance in L1, ESL, and EFL contexts would yield divergent results. In future studies, researchers may consider conducting research to review studies on writing assessments in various contexts and compare the present study's findings with theirs.

To summarize, the present study intended to depict the research on assessing writing in EFL contexts, and the results were shared to present an overview of the research conducted over ten years. Thus, the paper aims to contribute to researchers who aspire to perform similar research insights about the purpose, methodologies, and findings of previous studies.

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## Nurturing Language Proficiency through Literary Exploration in EFL Settings: A Comprehensive Document Analysis

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### Abstract

The utilization of literary materials within English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructional contexts has exerted a profound influence within academic domains over the course of time. However, this practice has concurrently evoked contentious debates within the educational field, thereby necessitating scholarly efforts to discern strategies for its effective integration and to discern the underlying dynamics contributing to the apparent disjunction between theoretical propositions and instructional implementation. The current study, which centers its inquiry upon the foundational tenets and pragmatic implications inherent in the incorporation of literature within EFL pedagogy, endeavors to illuminate the ambivalent status of this practice. To this end, an examination of 24 distinct scholarly research is undertaken. Employing a systematic review, this research critically assesses theses and dissertations originating from Turkey over a span of three decades. The outcomes of this investigation not only affirm the favorable outcomes associated with the integration of literature within EFL classrooms but also unveil several underexplored domains warranting heightened scholarly exploration. In effect, the study underscores the pedagogical value of literature while simultaneously pinpointing unexamined dimensions that merit sustained research attention.

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## Introduction

For well over a century, English literature has been the staple of the English language curriculum in nations where the native language is not English. Despite its long-standing utilization, there remains a lack of consensus among educators and researchers over the most effective way to include literature in EFL classrooms (Lima, 2005) since this matter has been a subject of debate due to differing viewpoints on the role it plays in the process of language learning.

An enduring belief that has been widely accepted for a long time is that the intricate structure of literature is intended to mirror the challenges inherent in acquiring a new language (McKay, 2001; as cited in Krasniqi, 2019). There has been a prevalent assumption that it is especially difficult and incomprehensible to those who are not native speakers of the language (Savvidou, 2004). This viewpoint is supported by the study conducted by Khatib and Nourzadeh (2011), who argue that the use of literature in traditional classroom settings entails rote memorization of word lists culled from a variety of literary sources and the translation of well-known literary works. According to Alemi (2011), the fact that literary texts are characterized as "difficult," "hard to grasp," and "not relevant" to the EFL classrooms is yet another concern voiced by educators and those responsible for the development of curricula. Political issues, arising from teachers' and students' attitudes toward imperial culture also lead to literature integration challenges (Sell, 2005). Likewise, it is acknowledged that it is crucial to account for cultural differences. Misunderstandings may occur due to a combination of cultural differences and a lack of knowledge of the target culture, as stated by Carter and Long (1991). Furthermore, a significant issue comes from the dearth of educational understanding in this context. According to Hişmanoğlu (2005), a significant proportion of instructors may lack the necessary expertise or competency in this particular field. As a result, based on this logic, they choose to avoid including literature in their methods of teaching. Given the stated aspects as well as potential unknown elements, this scenario has led to the idea that literature may not fit with students' cognitive or vocational demands (Kay, 1982).

This perspective, however, has undergone a drastic change as new concepts and approaches have emerged from the ongoing discussion among academics and researchers over its implementation in the classroom. Literature has been regarded by a large number of academics (Carter & Long, 1991; Spack, 1985; Widdowson, 1975) as a tool that provides students with a foundation in their culture, broadens their linguistic consciousness, exposes

students to engaging content, enables them to nurture their overall personality, and develops their interpretative abilities. According to Collie and Slater (1987) Literature, with its wide range of life experiences, may serve as a dynamic mechanism that can increase a person's awareness of their own reactions as well as the world that the literary work they are reading develops. Research conducted by Brumfit and Carter (1986) provides more evidence that literature helps students enhance their language skills, including their vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, and their overall command of the language. Reading a text helps students become more comfortable with a wide range of textual structures and the various ways ideas can be connected; this, in turn, improves their writing abilities, their ability to infer meaning from linguistic clues, and propensity for deriving meaning from context (Collie & Slater, 2007). Similarly, the argument put forth by Hedge (1985) posits that students could potentially enhance their comprehension of language with regard to structure, organization, and vocabulary through the utilization of literary texts. In the study of McKay (1982), it is emphasized that literature also contributes to learning via the motivational, emotional, and experiential qualities it offers, all of which have an effect on students' reading proficiency. In a similar vein, literature, as Collie and Slater (1987) point out, is a unique, authentic resource since it fosters awareness of other cultures. This is corroborated by Bilgan (2016), who asserts that through highlighting the influence of social, political, and cultural elements, literature imparts knowledge about the culture of the target language to the learners.

As a consequence of the arguments that have been put out, the incorporation of literature into the language teaching curriculum and EFL classrooms has garnered a great deal of attention among EFL teachers. It has acquired prominence and appeal as an effective tool and authentic source of language usage in English Language Teaching (ELT) (Arboleda-Arboleda & Castro-Garcés, 2019). In particular, the fact that it improves all four of the basic English skills has contributed to its rise to prominence in recent years as a great teaching instrument.

It is of the utmost significance, with regard to this matter, to take into account the theoretical principles and practical consequences of utilizing literature in the teaching and learning process. Gaining this insight has sparked a new wave of inquiry in scholarly circles into the best strategies for incorporating literature into language-learning curricula and, by extension, classrooms, and a variety of studies have been conducted on the aforementioned topic. However, to the best of the author's knowledge and understanding, there has not been a

significant amount of research conducted using systematic review. This gap specifically pertains to the limited use of the systematic review method, particularly in the context of reviewing theses and dissertations. In light of this, the present study aims to conduct a literature review of relevant Master theses and dissertations produced in Turkey over the past three decades on the issue of integrating literature into EFL classrooms. The questions addressed in order to achieve this objective are given as:

1. What specific traits and elements pertaining to research type, methodology, and sample size can be identified within the studies?
2. What are the current tendencies in theses and dissertations on the implementation of literature in EFL classrooms?

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The research methodology employed in this study is systematic review, which entails a structured approach to reviewing and analysing various forms of documents, encompassing both written and digital content. Comparable to other qualitative research methodologies, the process of systematic review entails a thorough scrutiny and interpretation of these materials. This is done with the aim of not only extracting information but also comprehending underlying meanings, obtaining valuable insights, and constructing empirical data for scholarly investigation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The major review of literature on the studies utilized in this study was compiled within the purview of Turkey. In the first step of the process, the electronic database of CoHE was used to search for relevant master's theses and doctoral dissertations in an effort to choose the studies that would be included. The key terms used for searching were "Literature in EFL", "Integration of literature", "Literature" and "Literary texts." At first, there were a total of 2069 studies found. Due to language limitations, 1739 of these studies were excluded, leaving 330 for further consideration. The criteria for potential incorporation are depicted graphically below: a) Master's level theses and dissertations, b) research endeavours conducted within the geographical confines of Turkey, c) scholarly works originating in the English language, and d) studies centred on the utilization of Literature as a reference rather than as a central

constituent. The present investigation does not have a predefined time frame. As a result, each individual research was subjected to comprehensive scrutiny. Following the application of the outlined inclusion and exclusion criteria, as shown in Table 1, a total of 24 studies conducted from 1983 to 2021 were identified as satisfying the stipulated prerequisites for inclusion in the review. By employing a methodical refinement process, this sequence ensures that the ultimate collection of studies closely corresponds to the predetermined research criteria and objectives. When compared to the 8.3% inclusion rate of PhD dissertations in the whole comprehensive research, this refined collection reveals that Master's theses are the predominant representation, making up a considerable majority of 91.7% of the total selection.

*Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria of the Research*

<b>Total number of the studies in Turkey on the basis of title</b>	<b>Excluded studies due to the language of study</b>	<b>Total number of the studies left</b>	<b>Total number of the studies</b>	
			<b>excluded due to the focus of interest</b>	<b>Eligible studies</b>
2069	1739	330	306	24

### **Data Analysis**

As part of the process of analysing the data, the qualitative content analysis method was used to review each of the studies. An in-depth analysis of the theses was performed, with a focus on certain contextual concepts that were pertinent to the research. The key findings, as well as the descriptive features of each study were coded, and then a comprehensive content analysis was performed on the data. In the course of the content analysis, a number of different sub-categories relevant to the research questions were taken into consideration during the analysis of selected studies.

### **Limitations**

Several limitations can be identified within this study. Firstly, the research exclusively centers on the implementation of literature within Turkish EFL classrooms, potentially constraining the applicability of its findings to broader cultural and linguistic settings. Moreover, the reliance on systematic review as the primary research approach, while insightful, might inadvertently neglect the intricate subtleties and viewpoints that qualitative methods like

interviews or surveys could better capture. Additionally, although the examination of twenty-four studies contributes to a comprehensive understanding, the relatively modest sample size may compromise the breadth and depth of the analytical insights attained.

### **Findings and Discussion**

**RQ1:** What specific traits and elements pertaining to research type, methodology, and sample size can be identified within the studies?

Embarking on an extensive analysis of the tabulated data featured within Table 2, this section endeavours to provide a comprehensive exposition of the primary findings that emerge from the studies included in the evaluation, encompassing a time span from 1993 to 2021. As evidenced by the data presented in Table 2, a total of 24 research studies have been conducted, spanning a diverse range of years: with one conducted each in 1993, 1994, 2005, 2006, 2011, 2014, and 2015; two in 2004, 2013, 2016, and 2020; and three in 2018, 2019, and 2021. These studies showcase a wide array of methodological frameworks. Notably, eight studies employ a case study design, delving deeply into specific events or occurrences within their natural context. In one instance, correlational statistics are employed to examine variable relationships, while in three instances, a descriptive design is adopted to provide a comprehensive portrayal of phenomena. In addition, eight studies utilize a convergent mixed design, skillfully integrating quantitative and qualitative data to facilitate comparative analysis. Moreover, two studies employ experimental designs to assess the impact of interventions, whereas one study utilizes the "Exploratory Sequential Mixed Design," beginning with qualitative exploration followed by quantitative testing. Further, a single study employs triangulation, effectively combining data from diverse sources to enhance the validity of the research. Among the aggregated studies, two embrace a quantitative approach, nine embrace a qualitative approach, and three incorporate mixed-methods designs. Collectively, the cumulative sample sizes across these studies amount to 2, 287 participants, spanning from a minimum of six to a maximum of 970 participants within a single study.

Table 2. Descriptive features of the research studies

ID	Publication Year	Research Type	Methodology	Sample size
26496	1993	Case	-	-
37238	1994	Correlational	Quantitative	270
145666	2004	Case	-	-
147680	2004	Case	Qualitative	-
160816	2005	Case	Qualitative	-
191666	2006	Convergent Mixed Design	Mixed	6
286080	2011	Descriptive	Quantitative	56
327420	2013	Convergent Mixed Design	Mixed	30
370498	2013	Convergent Mixed Design	Mixed	287
377641	2014	Convergent Mixed Design	Mixed	50
381115	2015	Descriptive	Qualitative	15
443076	2016	Convergent Mixed Design	Mixed	60
450072	2016	Convergent Mixed Design	Mixed	166
516281	2018	Case	Qualitative	-
527660	2018	Experimental	Quantitative	61
527780	2018	Convergent Mixed Design	Mixed	60
556429	2019	Descriptive	Qualitative	18
571063	2019	Experimental	Quantitative	129
584978	2019	Case	Qualitative	18
628491	2020	Exploratory Sequential Design	Mixed	970
638175	2020	Case	Qualitative	8
667200	2021	Convergent Mixed Design	Mixed	46
669867	2021	Triangulation	Mixed	28
697700	2021	Case	Qualitative	9

A wide range of research methodologies, including case studies, correlational analyses, experimental designs, and descriptive and mixed-methods studies, are included in these studies.

The methodological approaches adopted range from qualitative inquiries to quantitative

examinations to hybrid mixed-methods frameworks, demonstrating a thorough and nuanced investigation of literary integration in the EFL classroom environment. The data presented in Table 2 demonstrates that recent years have seen a discernible shift toward the use of mixed methods approaches (convergent mixed design, exploratory sequential design, and triangulation), which may reflect a desire for thorough insights with the integration of qualitative and quantitative data. This variance might suggest different research scopes, contexts, or objectives. A thorough investigation of the many facets involved in integrating literature into EFL courses is made possible by this diversified approach. Moreover, the sample sizes employed vary significantly, ranging from small, intensely focused groups to large cohorts, incorporating both microcosmic and macrocosmic viewpoints. While bigger samples may strive for statistical significance or greater generalizability, smaller samples may focus on in-depth, context-specific analyses. This variance suggests that the range of knowledge necessary to comprehend the intricacies of literary integration in various EFL settings has been carefully considered.

**RQ2:** What are the current tendencies in theses and dissertations on the implementation of literature in EFL classrooms?

Following the examination of the aforementioned descriptive characteristics of the research investigations, this study proceeds to expand upon the tendencies toward the use of literature in EFL classrooms that are categorized as either affordances or challenges based on the context, thereby addressing the second research question. These trends are systematically categorized as either affordances or challenges, contingent upon their contextual implications. Under the heading of "affordances" are sub-themes encompassing the positive impact of literature on language skills and competency, motivation and class participation, creativity and critical thinking skills, cross-cultural awareness, sense of personal intellectual and emotional development, authentic and rich material and learner autonomy. Conversely, there also exist certain challenges that are not conducive to low-proficient students and take up a lot of time.

### ***Language Skills and Competency***

The findings of this research consistently illustrate that incorporating literary elements into EFL lessons has a favorable impact on students' language abilities and competency. The findings underline the reciprocal relationship between language use and skill acquisition, indicating that active utilization of language contributes to the refinement of language skills.

Moreover, the exposure to various models of language through literary texts emerges as a catalyst for successful language development and overall competency. The role of these texts in fostering grammar and lexical knowledge is highlighted, underscoring their vital role in enhancing language skills with a specific focus on effective communication. The efficacy of literary texts in enriching vocabulary becomes evident, and the integration of reading skills directly impacting speaking and writing aptitude underscores their interdependence. Furthermore, literature circles are showcased as a powerful tool that not only bolsters reading comprehension skills but also positively influences self-efficacy across multiple language domains. Collectively, the findings assert that studying literary texts not only contributes to language learning but also stimulates comprehensive linguistic growth, facilitating an enriched and multifaceted language education experience.

*Table 3. Language Skills and Competency*

<b>ID</b>	<b>Language Skills and Competency</b>
26496	Through literary texts students can develop their communicative competence
37238	The use of language contributes to the use of language skills
147680	Learners are introduced to various models of language leading to successful development and competence in language.
286080	Develop grammar and lexical knowledge of students. Using literary texts plays a vital role in developing language skills for communicative purposes.
377641	Through literary texts, learners had a chance to learn new lexical items and language use
381115	Literature stimulates the development of language learning skills such as speaking, listening, reading and writing
443076	Literary texts are effective in learning vocabulary
516281	It directly develops reading skills and thus helps learners improve speaking, and writing skills.
667200	Engaging in literature circles has been shown to enhance one's proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing.
669867	Studying literary texts improves students' language learning.

### ***Motivation and Class Participation***

The findings also highlight the potential for motivation that comes with using literary texts for language learning. Literature is depicted as a source of interest, reinforcing motivation and providing engaging language content. The reported enjoyment of reading short stories and positive effects on reading habits indicate that literature serves as a motivational tool, stimulating students' interest in English learning. Moreover, the motivational impact of the instructors' positive attitude development is further amplified, demonstrating that the employment of literary texts has effects on instructional methods in addition to the benefits for students. This, in turn, encourages active participation and a more dynamic learning atmosphere. Taken together, these findings underscore the profound worth of integrating literary texts as an instructional strategy to promote motivation and active participation in language learning contexts.

*Table 4. Motivation and Class Participation*

<b>ID</b>	<b>Motivation &amp; Class Participation</b>
26496	Literary texts can be motivating for students.
37238	It increases the interest.
145666	It reinforces the motivation.
147680	It presents motivating language.
160816	Motivation of the students increased with literary texts.
327420	Inclusion of literary text increased class participation.
370498	Plots positively affected the motivation of students' reading habits.
377641	They enjoyed reading short stories, and this motivated them to learn English.
381115	Teachers have developed a positive attitude.
443076	Lessons with literary texts are more enjoyable.
638175	Integration of short stories is effective in promoting learners' motivation and participation in the language classes.
667200	Participants stated that they found the literature circles entertaining.
669867	Using literature improves learning motivation.
697700	It motivates learners more.

### ***Creativity and Critical Thinking Skills***

The findings provided in Table 5 demonstrated that the use of literature had a positive impact on students' abilities to think creatively as well as critically. It is clear that reading literary texts while learning a language directly promotes the growth of certain cognitive abilities. The platform that is offered to students allows them to investigate, assess, and evaluate intricate narratives and concepts, encouraging them to think about the text's numerous facets critically. As students carefully analyze and understand the literary material, this practice promotes the development of analytical abilities. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the interrelation between literature and creativity, highlighting that literature acts as a trigger that encourages learners to immerse themselves imaginatively in narratives, characters, and themes. This immersion, in turn, fosters the cultivation of inventive viewpoints and interpretations. In conclusion, students gain both creative and critical thinking skills through the use of literature since they are given the opportunity to utilize methods like analysis, evaluation, and production to deepen their comprehension. The findings also specify that reading has a transforming impact on teachers' critical-thinking abilities. By incorporating literature into their lessons, pre-service teachers demonstrate increases in their analytical, critical thinking, and creative abilities. This conclusion emphasizes the reciprocal characteristic of the process and suggests that using literary texts to develop critical thinking skills benefits both students and teachers.

*Table 5. Creativity and Critical Thinking Skills*

<b>ID</b>	<b>Creativity &amp; Critical Thinking Skills</b>
145666	It develops learners' creativity and critical thinking.
191666	Both teachers' and students' level of knowledge and awareness of using critical thinking skills.
377641	Literature helped learners use creativity and critical thinking skills.
571063	By using literature in class, pre-service teacher's analysing, evaluating, and creating skills improved.
669867	Using literature in their English classes advantages in terms of improving their critical thinking skills.

### ***Cross-Cultural Awareness***

The findings displayed in Table 6 provide insight into how important literary texts are in fostering cross-cultural awareness among language learners. The target country's social and cultural history may be explored via literature, which may help learners get a deeper comprehension of the country's political, social, and cultural background. This suggests that literature acts as a bridge that enables students to cross cultural boundaries and gain an understanding of the traditions, customs, and social norms of many countries. As it provides language learning with a wider sociocultural framework, this transcultural engagement is appreciated favorably by both educators and students. Literature's role in the classroom ultimately enables learners to become more open-minded and interculturally competent.

*Table 6. Cross-Cultural Awareness*

<b>ID</b>	<b>Cross-Cultural Awareness</b>
37238	The subjects learn about the social and cultural history of the target country.
286080	Inclusion of literature provides understanding of other cultures.
381115	Teachers think that literature helps learners learn socio-cultural information about the target language.
516281	Literary texts positively affect the cultural awareness of students.
556429	Using literature helps learners become aware of different cultures.
669867	Using literature helps students know the target culture.

### ***Sense of Intellectual and Emotional Development***

The findings concerning the Sense of Personal Intellectual and Emotional Development collectively highlight the multi-faceted impact of integrating literary texts. Engaging learners emotionally, these texts create connections beyond conventional learning boundaries. Moreover, the literature-driven process of personal interpretation empowers learners to construct unique understandings of ideas and experiences. This, in turn, fosters personal expression, providing a platform to communicate thoughts coherently and creatively. Additionally, learners adopting a deep approach personalize their learning by connecting fragments of knowledge and interpreting information comprehensively. The utilization of authentic literary materials further amplifies this impact by enhancing learners' emotional attitudes. Thus, the integration of literary texts not only enriches language learning but also

significantly influences personal, intellectual, and emotional development through a seamless interplay of emotional resonance, individualized interpretation, personal expression, deep engagement, and authentic materials.

*Table 7. Sense of Intellectual and Emotional Development*

ID	Sense of Personal Intellectual and Emotional Development
26496	It affects learners emotionally
145666	It helps learners to create personal interpretation of ideas and experiences
286080	Develops personal expression
450072	Learners adopt a deep approach (personalising the learning, relating the bits of knowledge interpreting the information etc.) when learning literature.
527660	Using authentic literary materials enhances learners' attitudes emotionally.

### ***Authentic and Rich Material***

Literary texts have a significant relevance as valuable educational resources, evidenced by the findings of the use of authentic and rich material in language learning. A strong emphasis is placed on the concept of authenticity, wherein literature acts as a conduit for genuine language usage, closely mirroring real-life communication scenarios. Through exposure to genuine language, students gain knowledge of linguistic nuances as well as practical language skills that are applicable to real-world language interactions. Furthermore, literary texts are celebrated as abundant reservoirs for language instruction, encompassing a multifaceted platform that encapsulates linguistic, cultural, and contextual dimensions. This inherent richness within literary works emanates from their intricate composition, offering learners a plethora of language nuances and cultural insights. Importantly, pre-service instructors' perspectives align with these findings, as they acknowledge the significant usefulness of literary texts as pedagogical instruments for foreign language learning. The alignment between educators' perceptions and the scientifically proven benefits of utilizing rich and authentic resources emphasizes the crucial part that literary texts play in enhancing language teaching approaches. Thus, the findings collectively underscore that literary texts not only facilitate an authentic language experience but also immerse learners in the intricate tapestry of cultural understanding, thereby enhancing language learning endeavors with the multi-layered depth that literature uniquely offers.

*Table 8. Authentic and Rich Material*

<b>ID</b>	<b>Authentic &amp; Rich Material</b>
145666	Literature provides authentic language.
327420	Literary texts are rich sources for language teaching.
628491	It is concluded that the pre-service teachers perceive literary texts as valuable foreign language teaching resources.

### ***Negative Perspectives***

Regarding unfavorable attitudes towards the utilization of literature, a study with the identification number 381115 highlights notable factors that deter instructors from incorporating literary texts into their teaching practices. This research underscores that educators encounter constraints driven by the curriculum mandates they are expected to fulfil. As a result, the inclusion of literary texts may be perceived as challenging due to time limitations and curricular obligations, leading to hesitance in integrating such materials. Additionally, the study reveals that teachers often voice concerns related to learners' proficiency levels. Specifically, instructors observe that learners with limited language proficiency might encounter difficulties when engaging with literary texts. This is attributed to the intricacies of literary language, including sophisticated vocabulary, complex sentence structures, and nuanced cultural references. The combination of these factors contributes to a reticence among educators to integrate literary texts into their teaching methodologies, thus shedding light on the complexities and challenges associated with the adoption of literature in language instruction.

### **Conclusion**

Traditional conceptions of literature as an undesirable and difficult language instruction resource have increasingly shifted in a positive direction for English language teachers. The incorporation of literature into the curriculum of language instruction has garnered the attention of English language teachers for a number of reasons. As a result, literature has developed as a recognized instrument and source of authentic language usage within the realm of ELT, which has increased its significance and popularity within this field. However, the incorporation of literature into the instructional material, and therefore the atmosphere of the classroom, has produced significant problems, which in turn has prompted academics to study the subject. In

spite of the fact that a huge number of studies have been undertaken on the use of literature in EFL classrooms, very little research has been carried out using systematic review methods specifically focused on dissertations and theses. In this regard, the current study aimed to systematically review how literature is utilized in Turkish EFL classrooms. As a direct consequence of this, twenty-four studies that met the inclusion and exclusion criteria were subjected to an in-depth analysis, and the findings of this analysis were provided in accordance with the particular research objectives.

In response to the first research question on the studies' characteristics, the present research found that there has been a significant rise in the number of graduate-level studies on the use of literature in EFL classes since the turn of the century. Furthermore, this study revealed that case studies and convergent mixed designs are the most widely utilized research types, while triangulation is the least employed, followed by correlational, experimental, and descriptive. The findings of the sample groups make it abundantly clear that the biggest number of participants is less than one thousand and that the number of studies with more than two hundred participants is quite low. This suggests that a great number of further research with large sample groups is required in order to make the results of these studies get extrapolated to the general population.

In accordance with the second research question, the findings of the theme analysis indicate that utilizing literature is useful since it enhances language skills and competency, raises enthusiasm in class participation, develops creativity and thinking abilities, provides cultural awareness, and offers both intellectual and emotional development. On the other hand, the findings of the research shed light on the factors such as curriculum and low proficiency level that are at the root of the unfavorable views about the use of literature. In view of the substantial role that teachers and other authorities play in the process of education, it is of the utmost significance to take into account the students' current levels of competence in addition to the curriculum.

On the other hand, considering the number of studies on the use of literature in EFL classrooms is low, it is possible to draw the conclusion that there is a disparity between the theory and practice, despite the fact that graduate-level research strongly suggests that incorporating literature into EFL classrooms has a significant deal of positive impact on students' language acquisition. This provides support for the suggestion that more research could be conducted to explore the factors that exist behind avoiding the use of literature.

## Recommendations

For the diverse spectrum of stakeholders engaged in the discourse surrounding the integration of literature within EFL classrooms, a series of discerning recommendations emerges to enrich this pedagogical endeavor. It is suggested that people who have the power to influence educational policies think about increasing curricular flexibility. Policymakers can shed light on the routes leading to multidisciplinary synthesis by allowing opportunities for the incorporation of literary works.

Prioritizing the improvement of pedagogical training programs for aspiring teachers is additionally recommended. These programs ought to be designed as dynamic platforms that are equipped with cutting-edge methods for subtly incorporating literary aspects into the field of EFL instruction. By cultivating the capacity to meticulously select texts that resonate profoundly with students' linguistic competencies, cultural sensitivities, and cognitive predispositions, educators assume the role of pedagogical architects.

Furthermore, even though dissertations and theses, by virtue of their greater scope and depth, are universally held to a higher level, the findings of this study show that researchers should not only focus their attention on the positive aspects of incorporating literature in EFL classrooms; rather, they should also spend their attention on the underlying issues that contribute to the insufficient utilization of literature in EFL classrooms. In a similar vein, it is very necessary, in order for research to be credible and generalizable, that any restrictions, such as sample size, be handled.

It is also important to note that most studies only include instructors' viewpoints in their findings. Given the interconnected nature of teacher-student interactions and the critical importance of student perspectives, further study into the students' perceptions is also required.

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