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Journal of Language Research (JLR) is a double-blind peer-reviewed international journal which aims to publish articles in the fields of language learning and teaching in general, foreign or second language learning, language and linguistics studies. The journal is published annually and accepts manuscripts in English and Turkish. Teachers and researchers are always welcome to submit unpublished, original, and full-length articles that are not under review in any other journals.

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Editorial

We are pleased to introduce the latest issue of *Journal of Language Research*, which brings together a rich collection of scholarly articles addressing various dimensions of language education, linguistic analysis, teacher development, and educational technology. This issue comprises ten original research papers and one book review, each contributing valuable insights into contemporary debates and practices in language-related disciplines.

The issue opens with the article titled "*A Contrastive Study on Turkish and Lezgian Temporal Converbs*", which conducts a morphosyntactic analysis of temporal converbs in two structurally distinct languages. Through a comparative framework, the study reveals how different linguistic systems express temporal relations and subordination, thus enriching typological discussions in theoretical linguistics.

Following this, the article "*An Investigation into EFL Students' Burnout Levels and Their Academic Motivation at the Tertiary Level*" examines the psychological dynamics influencing foreign language learners. The study establishes a significant inverse relationship between burnout and motivation, offering implications for learner-centered pedagogical interventions and emotional support mechanisms in EFL contexts.

The third contribution, "Examining Medical Students' Views on the Use of Humour", investigates the pedagogical role of humor in language instruction. Based on qualitative data, the findings suggest that humor—when used intentionally and contextually—can foster positive classroom atmospheres, reduce anxiety, and enhance learner engagement.

The article titled "*Exploring the Impact of Multimodal Language Learning Activities on Oral Skill Development: A Study of In-Class Oral Speech, PowerPoint Presentations, Video, and Blog Projects in an International Context*" explores the use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic elements in fostering oral communication skills. The study finds that multimodal instruction not only boosts learners' speaking proficiency but also supports their confidence in intercultural classroom environments.

In "*An Evaluation of Turkish Vowel Production by Arabic Native Speakers: Effects of Age, Gender, and Native Language*", the authors use acoustic phonetic tools to analyze L1-induced pronunciation errors. The findings underscore the significance of phonological awareness and provide recommendations for pronunciation-focused curriculum design for learners with Arabic L1 backgrounds.

The sixth article, "*The Perspectives of Low-Achieving Language Learners Regarding Blended Learning as Remedial Assistance*", investigates how technology-enhanced learning models can address the needs of underperforming students. The results indicate that blended learning environments promote autonomy, participation, and academic achievement among learners who struggle in traditional classroom settings.

"*Pre-Service Language Teachers and Practitioner Research: Investigating Professional Role Identity Formation*" is a qualitative study examining how engaging in small-scale research projects influences pre-service teachers' professional identity. The research highlights the transformative potential of reflective practice and suggests that practitioner inquiry can be a vital tool in teacher education.

The article "*Language Learners' Reading Comprehension Needs in the Turkish Context: A Comprehensive Needs Analysis*" evaluates a pedagogical intervention aimed at enhancing learners' capacity for planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own learning. The findings demonstrate that scenario-based instruction can foster metacognitive awareness and independent learning behaviors.

In "*Empowering Pre-Service English Language Teachers: The Impact of Scenario-Based SRL Training on Self-Regulated Learning and Teaching Self-Efficacy*", the authors explore linguistic and cognitive barriers affecting young learners' reading skills. The diagnostic approach used in the study provides important insights for curriculum planners and materials developers aiming to improve reading comprehension at the lower secondary level.

The penultimate article, "*Investigating EFL Teachers' Attitudes toward Alternative Assessment*", surveys teachers' perceptions of assessment tools beyond traditional testing methods. While the overall attitude toward alternative assessment is positive, the study identifies gaps in training and application, suggesting a need for sustained professional development in this area.

The issue concludes with a review of the book "*Classroom Research for Language Teachers*", which advocates for the integration of research into teaching practice. The review emphasizes the empowering nature of classroom-based inquiry and encourages teacher educators to embed research training into language teacher education programs.

Collectively, the contributions in this issue reflect the evolving intersections of theory, practice, and reflection in language research. We thank our contributors and peer reviewers for their commitment to academic rigor and innovation. We hope that this issue will serve as a valuable resource for researchers, practitioners, and graduate students seeking to deepen their engagement with current issues in language education and applied linguistics.

Sincerely,

Editors-in Chief

Prof. Dr. Emrah EKMEKÇİ

Assoc. Prof. Dr. İsmail YAMAN

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Research Article

Contrastive Analysis of Temporal Converb Constructions between Turkish and Lezgian

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Abstract: The aim of this contrastive study is to analyze temporal converb constructions between Turkish and Lezgian and it is a morphological analysis since it examines inflectional temporal converb constructions between two languages. The contrastive analysis involves three methodological steps: description, juxtaposition, and comparison and the analysis is based on the classifications of temporal converb constructions by Nedjalkov (1998) and Çetintaş Yıldırım (2004), namely, (i) simultaneity, (ii) anteriority and (iii) posteriority meaning relationships. The temporal converbial suffixes examined in this study are -(y)IncA (when), -DIğI zaman (when), -DIğIndA (when), -(A/I) r…-mAz (as soon as), -DIğIndAn beri (since), -DIktAn sonra (after), -mAdAn önce (before), -(y)IncAyA kadar / dek (until), -ken (while) and -DıkçA (whenever) in Turkish and -la (when), -waldi (as soon as), -namaz(di) (as soon as), -zamaz (as soon as), -daldi (before) and -daldi (until) in Lezgian. In terms of meaning relationships, the results of the study show that although Turkish and Lezgian employ same strategies in that both languages express three temporal relationships of anteriority, posteriority, and simultaneity for temporal converb constructions; the number of the suffixes and temporal meaning relationship parameters differ for these categories. In terms of morpho-syntactic relationships, the results of the study show that all converbial suffixes are added to the base verb segment in Turkish and they are attached to verb stems or participles in Lezgian. Moreover, temporal converbial suffixes may be simple and composite in both languages.

Keywords: *temporal converb clauses, contrastive morphology, syntax, Turkish, Lezgian*

INTRODUCTION

Contrastive analysis (CA) has been widely employed in both linguistics and language education (Yule, 2006; Fromkin et al., 2012). Krzeszowski (1990) states that when learning a new language, learners typically concentrate on the differences and are mostly unaware of the similarities. If they do notice any similarities, they often find them amusing and surprising, as such discoveries are generally unexpected. As well as learners, grammarians want to know what distinct language systems have in common. Krzeszowski (1990) defines contrastive linguistics "an area of linguistics in which a linguistic theory is applied to a comparative description of two or more languages, which need not be genetically or typologically related" (p.10). For instance, despite not being genetically related, Turkish and Arabic share many grammatical features, such as using an affixing system to convey different grammatical functions and having vowel harmony.

Chesterman (1998) states that all comparisons are based on the fundamental assumption that the objects being compared have some commonalities, which provide a basis for identifying differences. Krzeszowski (1990) defines this system as "*tertium comparationis*". According to this system, any two or more objects can be compared based on various features, and consequently, they may be found to be similar in some aspects while differing in others. In terms of these features, *tertium*

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comparationis suggests that every aspect of language, at every level of organization, as well as every text and its components, can be compared with corresponding elements in another language (Willems et al., 2004). Thus, different types of contrastive studies can be identified based on the standard of comparison used and the type of equivalence considered. Krzeszowski (1990) states that formal correspondence and semantic equivalence can be used as the basis for comparison in specific types of contrastive studies, such as those focusing on syntax and morphology. For example, if only formal criteria are considered, English articles cannot be compared to anything in languages that lack articles.

Turkish and Lezgian share several morphosyntactic features commonly found in both Northern and South Asia, including extensive suffixing in agglutinating morphology, a consistent head-final word order, and the use of non-finite subordination. Both Turkish and Lezgian language systems have suffixing system in conveying temporal converb functions and the suffixing systems have semantic equivalence. Thus, morphological processes are contrasted in this study.

Contrastive Morphology

Crystal (2008) defines contrastive morphology as an approach within the field of linguistics that involves comparing the morphological systems of two or more languages. Although Hüning (2009) argues that word formation does not appear to be very popular in contrastive linguistics, recent literature does include contrastive studies of morphological phenomena (Lefer & Cartoni, 2011). Willems et al. (2004), for example, examines how the relationship between the meaning of suffixal forms of derived nouns in various languages can be compared. Other researchers take a similar approach, such as Van Goethem (2007), who compares French and Dutch preverbs both in terms of morpho-syntax and semantics, and Lefer and Cartoni (2011), who suggest a contrastive method based on meaning for examining prefixation in English, French, and Italian. Their approach seems to integrate the concepts of "semantic-syntactic equivalence" and "translational equivalence", both of which are recognized forms of "*tertium comparationis*" in the established practice of CA. Gast (2008) adopts a slightly different approach by comparing verb-noun compounds in English and German, connecting the observed differences to both external language history (such as language contact) and internal linguistic factors. Gast's contrastive analysis, therefore, incorporates system equivalence, which is defined as the relationship between paradigms that are comparable due to sharing a common grammatical label. In this study, morphological processes in the formation of temporal converb constructions of two languages are dealt with.

Temporal Converb Constructions

Göksel and Kerslake (2005) define converbs as "the subordinate verb forms that occur in non-finite adverbial clauses (p. 399). An example from Turkish is given in (1):

(1)	Kalabalık	ol-duğumuz için	bir	ekmek	daha	al-mıştım.
	crowded	become-CONV	one	bread	more	buy-PERF-PST-1SG

'As there were going to be a lot of us, I had bought another bread.'

(Göksel &Kerslake, 2005, p. 400)

In example (1), converbial marker gives the meaning of reason. The clause which bears the converbial marker is subordinate clause while the clause which has the meaning of result is main clause. In his research on typological parameters of converbs, Nedjalkov (1995) identifies three primary types of converbs, with the first category being specialized converbs. These can be further divided into two categories: (i) temporal converbs and (ii) non-temporal converbs. The second category is contextual converbs, which can convey meanings like simultaneity, anteriority, posteriority, cause, concession, manner, accompanying circumstances, condition, goal, place, and more. The third type is narrative (coordinative) converbs. These converbs can describe three or more completed actions in sequence, helping to progress the narrative.

According to Banguoğlu (1995), temporal converbial endings are added to verbs in subordinate clauses to indicate a time relationship, thereby linking these clauses to the main clause. An example from Old Uyghur is given in (2):

(2) Asak-ni ber-ginca bo yem-ni ye-zün
donkey-ACC give-CONV this feed-ACC eat-3SG
'Until someone gives the donkey back it will eat this.'

(Schulz, 1978, p. 127)

In example (2), the converbial ending is attached to the verb stem, connecting the subordinate clause to the main clause by indicating time relationship. Çetintaş Yıldırım (2004) talks about three categories of temporal relations. These are: (i) simultaneity, (ii) anteriority and (iii) posteriority relationships. In simultaneity relationship, a minimum of two events occurring simultaneously on the timeline is necessary. An example from Polish is given in (3):

(3) Piszac te slowa, pryzpomniala mi sie zeszloroczna rozmowa
write-CONV these words remembered to.me self last.year conversation
'While writing these words, I recall last year's conversation.'

(Haspelmath, 1995, p. 33)

In example (3), two events, namely "writing" and "recalling", happen at the same time. In anteriority relationship, the action in the converb clause occurs prior to the action in the main clause. A related example from Lithuanian is given in (4) below:

(4) Rut-ai isej-us is misk-o patekejo saule
Ruta-DAT go.out-CONV from forest-GEN rose sun
'When Ruta went out of the forest, the sun rose.'

(Haspelmath, 1995, p. 33)

In example (4), the event in the main clause takes place right after the event in the converb clause. In anteriority relationship, the action in the converb clause occurs following the action in the main clause. An example from Nivkh is given in (5):

(5) P'i vi-nə ənke ni tə k'e ov-d' tvi-yət-nə-d'.
self go.away-FUT before I this net repair finish-PERF
'Before I go away, I will finish repairing this net."

(Nedjalkov, 1995, p. 111)

In example (5), the subordinator clause denotes temporal antecedence. In other words, first the event in the subordinator clause happens and then the event in the main clause is realized.

In this contrastive analysis, the temporal converb constructions between Turkish and Lezgian are studied based on the classification of Nedjalkov (1995) and Çetintaş Yıldırım (2004).

Previous Research

In this section, different studies that contrast languages in terms of converb construction strategies are presented. Nedjalkov (1995) contrasts Russian and Turkmenian in terms of coordinative converbs and states that coordinative function of converbs is shared by Russian converbs and Turkmenian also has suffixes that gives this coordinative function for converbs. The Russian example in (6) below can be rendered in Turkmenian by means of four converbs in "*-p*" and a clause-final finite verb.

(6) On posodel k dveri postuĉal, posmotrel, v zamoĉnucu
He go.up-PST to door knock-PST look-PST in lock-POSS
skvazinu postojal minuty dve da i tak i
hole stay-PST minute two PST and thus also
usel ni s ĉem.
leave-PST NEG with what

(Nedjalkov, 1995, p. 98)

'He went up to the door, knocked, looked through the keyhole, stood for about two minutes, and then went away without anything.'

(7) Ol gapa jakynlas-yp gapa-ny dyrkyldat-yp gulpun desegin-den
he door approach-CONV door-ACC knock-CONV lock-GEN hole-ABL
seredi-p bir iki minut tur-up xaĉ zatsyz git-di.
look-CONV one two minute stand-CONV nothing without go.away-PST

(Dimitriev, 1992, p. 401)

'He went up to the door, knocked, looked through the keyhole, stood for about two minutes, and then went away without anything.'

It is clearly observed from (6) and (7) that this function of converbs from Russian and Turkmenian is like the function of the English conjunction "and" and sometimes "but". Haspelmath (1995) contrasts Russian, Estonian and Lithuanian in terms of monofunctional or canonical converb construction and states that this type of converb is primarily represented by the Russian forms ending in "-a -v/-vsi", the Estonian forms ending in "-des", and the Lithuanian form ending in "-das". A related example from Estonian is given in (8) below:

(8) Ületa-des joge pöördus ratsanik ulati paremale.
cross-CONV river turn-PST horseman always right
'Crossing the river, the horseman always turned right."

(Haspelmath, 1995, p. 104)

It is seen in example (8) that the converbial ending is monofunctional and is not combined with another functions like participle, infinitive, gerund or finite verb as bifunctional converbs do. Bisang (1995) analyses verb serialization and converb constructions and contrasts Chinese and Yoruba in terms of functional areas and finds that coordination cannot be expressed through verb serialization in all serial languages. In Chinese, for example, verb serialization can be used to convey coordination and topicalization as can be seen in example (9) below:

(9) Zhangsan ni gui-xia-lai qui
Zhangsan you kneel-go.down-come beg
'You knelt down in order to beg Zhangsan.'

(Bisang, 1995, p. 172)

In example (9), verb serialization is used to convey topicalization. In Yoruba, however, verb serialization cannot express coordination as it is seen in example (10) below:

(10) Ayo se işu o si je e
Ayo cook yam he and eat it
'Ayo cooked yam and he ate it.'

(Bickel, 1991, p. 40)

Iefremenko et al. (2021) examine the development of adverbial subordination through converbs (verbal adverbs, adverbial participles) in Turkish as a heritage language in Germany and the

U.S. and contrast it with the use of Turkish in Turkey, where it is the majority language. The results of the study show that unlike in canonical Turkish, converbs in heritage Turkish can be multifunctional, allowing them to express both simultaneity and causality, for instance. Additionally, it is demonstrated that converbs in heritage Turkish can function as both modifying and non-modifying elements. A related example was given in (11) below.

(11) Adam top-u el-in-den kaç-ır-ıp yol-a
Man ball-ACC hand-POSS-3SG-ABL slip-CAUS-CVB road-DAT
gid-iyo top.
go-PROG-PRS(3SG) ball
'The man lets the ball slip from his hands and the ball goes on the road.'
(Iefremenko et al., 2021, p. 145)

As it is seen in example (11), although the converb construction "-*ıp*" was described as a (post) terminal, non-modifying converb in the literature, it is used in the modifying function in heritage language. The potential factors contributing to this variation include language contact, sociolinguistic differences between speaker communities in Germany and the U.S., and the age of the speakers.

The examples from different studies that contrast languages in terms of converb construction strategies show that there may be minor and major differences in terms of morpho-syntactic strategies in conveying converb constructions.

Aims of the Study

The aim of this study is to contrast Turkish and Lezgian in terms of the temporal converb constructions (by referring to simultaneity, anteriority and posteriority temporal meaning relationships) and analyze the temporal converb constructions by referring to three methodological steps of contrastive analysis, namely description, juxtaposition and comparison.

Research Questions

As it was stated earlier, languages employ various parameters for converb constructions (ranging from specialized converbs to contextual converbs and narrative converbs) and these parameters have different classifications. In this study, particular attention is paid to the specialized converbs, namely, temporal converb constructions and the research questions that guide the present study are in accordance with the purpose of the study:

1. What are the temporal converb construction strategies of Turkish and Lezgian?
2. How is the correspondence between the items being compared?

CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

Contrastive studies involve three methodological steps: *description*, *juxtaposition*, and *comparison.* The description step involves selecting the items to be compared and providing an initial characterization of these items using a language-independent theoretical framework. Juxtaposition entails searching for and identifying cross-linguistic equivalents. In the comparison phase, the degree and type of correspondence between the compared items are determined. The temporal converbial suffixes examined in this study are -(y)IncA (when), -DIğI zaman (when), -DIğIndA (when), -(A/I) r…-mAz (as soon as), -DIğIndAn beri (since), -DIktAn sonra (after), -mAdAn önce (before), -(y)IncAyA kadar / dek (until), -ken (while) and -DıkçA (whenever) in Turkish. These suffixes were taken from the classifications of Kornfilt (1997), Göksel and Kerslake (2005) and Akkuş (2019). In Lezgian, the temporal converbial suffixes -la (when), -waldi (as soon as), -namaz(di) (as soon as), -

zamaz (as soon as), -daldi (before) and -daldi (until) are examined. They were taken from the classification of Haspelmath (1995) on temporal specialized converbs.

Description

In this step, temporal converb constructions in Turkish and Lezgian are described.

As it was stated earlier, there are many classifications of temporal converb constructions. Banguoğlu (1995) classifies the temporal converbial endings into seven categories based on their meaning relationships, namely, (i) successive, (ii) temporal, (iii) simultaneity, (iv) initial, (v) limitation, (vi) anteriority and (vii) posteriority converbs. Nedjalkov (1998) divides temporal converb clauses into three categories, with the first group indicating a relationship of simultaneity, the second group indicating a relationship of anteriority and the third group indicating a relationship of posteriority. Kortmann (1998) categorizes temporal converbial constructions into seven types based on the semantic space of inter-clausal relationships. These categories are (i) simultaneity overlap, (ii) simultaneity duration, (iii) simultaneity co-extensiveness, (iv) anteriority, (v) immediate anteriority, (vi) terminus a quo and (vii) posteriority. Çetintaş Yıldırım (2004) holds the same view as Nedjalkov (1998) in classifying temporal converb constructions. She refers to three categories related to temporal relations, namely, (i) simultaneity, (ii) anteriority and (iii) posteriority relationships.

The *simultaneity* relationship requires at least two events occurring simultaneously on the timeline. In Turkish, this relationship is expressed through the converbial suffixes -ken (while), -DIğI zaman (when), -DIğIndA (when), and -DıkçA (whenever). Examples (12), (13), (14) and (15) below show the simultaneity relationship.

(12) Okul-a gider-ken arkadaş-ım-ı gör-dü-m.
school-DAT go-CONV school-POSS see-PST-1SG
'While I was going to school, I saw my friend.'

(13) Zil çal-dığı zaman öğrenci-ler dışarı çık-ıyor-du
bell ring-CONV student-PL out go-PROG-PST
'When the bell rang, the students were going out.'

(14) İş-e başla-dığında Samsun-da yaşı-yor-du.
work-DAT start-CONV Samsun-LOC live-PROG-PST
'When he/she started working, he/she was living in Samsun.'

(15) Yemek ye-dikçe kilo al-ır-ım.
food eat-CONV weight put.on-PRS-1SG
'Whenever I eat food, I put on weight.'

In examples (12), (13), (14) and (15), the events in the subordinate clause happen at the same time with the events in the main clauses.

In the *anteriority* relationship, the event in the converb clause occurs before the event in the main clause. In Turkish, this relationship is expressed through the converbial suffixes -(y)IncA (when), -DIğIndA (when), -DIğI zaman (when), -(A/I) r…-mAz (as soon as), -DIğIndAn beri (since) and -DIktAn sonra (after). Examples (16), (17), (18), (19), (20) and (21) below show the anteriority relationship.

(16) Öğrenci-ler gid-ince okul bomboş kal-dı.

Student-PL go-CONV school empty remain-PST
'When the students went, the school remained empty.'

(17) Yemek bit-tiğinde içeri gir-di-k.
Meal finish-CONV inside go-PST-1PL
'When the meal finished, we went inside.'

(18) Okul-lar kapan-dığı zaman güney-e git-ti.
School-PL close-CONV south-DAT go-PST-3SG
'When the schools were closed, he/she went to the south.'

(19) Tatil bit-er bit-mez memleket-i-ne geri dön-ecek.
holiday finish-CONV hometown-POSS-DAT back turn-FUT-3SG
'As soon as the holiday finishes, he/she will turn back to his hometown.'

(20) Ev-e gel-diğinden beri bir şey ye-mi-yor.
home-DAT come-CONV anything eat-NEG-PROG-3SG
'He/she has not been eating anything since he/she came home.'

(21) El-ler-in-i yıka-dıktan sonra yemek yi-yebilir-sin.
hand-PL-ACC wash-CONV meal eat-AUX
'You can eat meal after you wash your hands.'

Examples from (16) to (21) show that the main clause event happens after the converb clause event.

In the *posteriority* relationship, the event in the converb clause takes place after the event in the main clause. In Turkish, this relationship is expressed through the converbial constructions -DığIndA (when), -DIğI zaman (when), -mAdAn önce (before) and -(y)IncAyA kadar / dek (until). Examples (22), (23), (24) and (25) below show the posteriority relationship.

(22) Sınıf-a gir-diğimde sınav başla-mış-tı.
class-DAT enter-CONV exam start-PFV-PST
'When I entered the classroom, the exam had started.'

(23) Müdür değiş-tiği zaman o çoktan iş-ten ayrıl-mış-tı.
manager change-CONV he/she already work-ABL leave-PFV-PST
'When the manager changed, he/she had already left the job.'

(24) Araba-yı çalıştır-madan önce lastik-ler-i kontrol et-ti-m.
car-ACC start-CONV tire-PL-ACC check-PST-1SG
'Before I started the car, I had checked the tires.'

(25) Abi-m ev-e gel-inceye kadar heyecan-dan uyuya-ma-dı-m.
brother-GEN home-DAT come-CONV excitement-ABL sleep-NEG-PST-1SG
'I couldn't sleep because of excitement until my brother came.'

In examples (22), (23), (24) and (25) first the event in the main clause is realized and then the event in the subordinate clause happens.

In Lezgian, as well as in Turkish, temporal converb constructions are conveyed through suffixes. These suffixes are classified into three categories, namely, simultaneity, anteriority and posteriority.

In Lezgian, the *simultaneity* relationship is expressed through the converbial suffix -la (when). The suffix -la (when) is attached to participles rather than being directly added to the verb stem. Example (26) below shows the simultaneity relationship.

(26) Ć televizordaj GDRdikaj peredaća-jar qalur-da-j-la
We-GEN television GDR program-PL show-FUT-PTCP-CONV
zun hamiśa kilig-iz źe-da.
I always look-INF be-FUT
'When programs on the GDR are shown on our TV, I always watch.'
(Haspelmath, 1995, p. 427)

In example (26), the event in the subordinate clause happens at the same time with the event in the main clause. It should be noted that the simultaneity temporal relation of this construction depends on the tense-aspect features of the converb clause. The same converbial suffix -la (when) may convey anteriority meaning depending on the tense-aspect relationship.

The *anteriority* relationship in Lezgian is expressed through the converbial suffixes -la (when), -waldi (as soon as), -namaz(di) (as soon as) and zamaz (as soon as). Examples (27), (28), (29) and (30) below show the anteriority relationship of the temporal converb constructions in Lezgian.

(27) Nurbaladiwaj wići-n dide aku-r-la aqwaz-iz x̄a-na-ć
Nurbala self-GEN mother see-PTCP-CONV stop-INF be-AUX-AOR-NEG
'Nubala couldn't stop when he saw his mother.'
(Haspelmath, 1995, p. 427)

In example (27), the converbial suffix -la gives the meaning of anteriority because of the aspect feature of the converb clause. The event in the converb clause happens before the event in the matrix clause.

(28) A kasdi ağadik-aj laz ga-ji-waldi sa tfeng jağ-un
That man-ERG from.below dawn give-PTCP-CONV one rifle hit
lazim ja.
necessary COP
'That man must fire the rifle as soon as dawn begins in the east.'
(Haspelmath, 1995, p. 429)

In example (28), the suffix -waldi is added to the aorist participle form of the verb.

(29) Xür-aj eqeć -namaz ada-l sa sik' halt-na.
village go.out-CONV he one fox meet-AOR
'As soon as he had left the village, he met a fox.'
(Haspelmath, 1995, p. 429)

In example (29), the suffix -zamaz is added to the aorist stem form of the verb.

(30) Xalq'di sabur qap.uni-laj alax-zamaz pis insan q'u-na wići-n
People-ERG patince vessel run.over-CONV bad person hold self-GEN
aradaj gadar-da.

from.among throw-FUT
'As soon as patience runs over the vessel, the people take the bad person and expel him/her from among them.'

(Haspelmath, 1995, p. 429)

Example (30) shows that the suffix -zamaz is added to the imperfective stem form of the verb.

In examples (27), (28), (29) and (30), the action in the converb clause occurs prior to the action in the matrix clause.

The *posteriority* relationship in Lezgian is expressed through the converbial suffix -daldi (before/until). The meaning of the converb may change depending on the aspect of the main clause. When the main clause is either durative or negative, it indicates 'until' as it can be seen in example (31) below:

(31) Dide Anni-di gülü-z fi-daldi muallimwil-e k'walax-na
mother Anni-ERG husband-DAT go-PTCP-CONV teachership work-AOR
'My mother Anni worked as a teacher until she got married.'

(Haspelmath, 1995, p. 429)

When the main clause is completed, it indicates 'before' as it can be seen in examples (32) and (33) below:

(32) Siw-aj gadr-aj cük'ündi-kaj ćilel awat-daldi murk źe-daj.
mouth throw-PTCP spittle earth fall-CONV ice become-FUT-PST
'Spittle thrown out of the mouth turned into ice before falling on the ground.'

(Haspelmath, 1995, p. 429)

(33) Wun xkwe-daldi wilik-ni zun sa sumud-ra ata-j-di ja
you return-CONV before-also I one several-times come-AOR COP
'I also came several times before you returned.'

(Haspelmath, 1995, p. 429)

In examples (31), (32) and (33), the action in the converb clause occurs after the action in the matrix clause.

Juxtaposition

In this step, cross-linguistic equivalents between Turkish and Lezgian temporal converb constructions are identified. Table 1 below shows the temporal converb construction strategies in Turkish and Lezgian.

Table 1. Temporal converb construction strategies in Turkish and Lezgian

	Turkish	**Lezgian**
Simultaneity Relationship	-ken (while) -DIğI zaman (when) -DIğIndA (when) -DıkçA (whenever)	-la (when)

Anteriority Relationship	-(y)IncA (when) -DIğI zaman (when) -DIğIndA (when) -(A/I) r…-mAz (as soon as) -DIğIndAn beri (since) -DIktAn sonra (after)	-la (when) -waldi (as soon as) -namaz(di) (as soon as) -zamaz (as soon as)
Posteriority Relationship	-DIğI zaman (when) -DIğIndA (when) -mAdAn önce (before) -(y)IncAyA kadar / dek (until)	-daldi (before) -daldi (until)

It is clearly seen from Table 1 that simultaneity, anteriority and posteriority relationships for temporal converbial constructions are employed by both languages. In the next step, namely the comparison step, the detailed comparison of the table is provided.

Comparison

In this step, the *degree* and *type* of the correspondence between the items being compared are defined. The *degree* parameter indicates the number of structures to be compared, while the *type* parameter refers to the category of these structures.

In terms of *degree*, Turkish and Lezgian have same strategies in employing three temporal meaning relationships, namely, anteriority, posteriority and simultaneity. However, they significantly vary in the number of suffixes they employ in presenting these relationships. In simultaneity relationship, there are four converbial suffixes (-ken (while), -DIğI zaman (when), -DIğIndA (when), and -DıkçA (whenever)) in Turkish and just one converbial suffix (-la (when)) in Lezgian. In anteriority relationship, there are six converbial suffixes (-(y)IncA (when), -DIğIndA (when), -DIğI zaman (when), -(A/I) r…-mAz (as soon as), -DIğIndAn beri (since) and -DIktAn sonra (after)) in Turkish while there are four converbial suffixes (-la (when), -waldi (as soon as), -namaz(di) (as soon as) and zamaz (as soon as)) in Lezgian. In posteriority relationship, there are four converbial suffixes (-DığIndA (when), -DIğI zaman (when), -mAdAn önce (before) and -(y)IncAyA kadar / dek (until)) in Turkish while there are two converbial suffixes (-daldi (before) and -daldi (until)) in Lezgian.

Regarding another parameter, *type*, it can be said that Turkish and Lezgian are similar because both languages use suffixes in presenting temporal converb constructions. However, they differ in the specific types of some inflectional temporal converb constructions.

The first comparison in *type* parameter is presented in terms of meaning relationships as it was shown in Table 1. In simultaneity meaning relationship, the situation in which the main clause is or was ongoing at the time the event in the subordinate clause occurs or occurred is expressed by converbial suffixes -DIğI zaman (when) and -DIğIndA (when) in Turkish while it is expressed by -la (when) in Lezgian. The situation in which there is temporal overlap between the main clause and the subordinate clause is expressed by the suffix -ken (while) in Turkish while it is not expressed as a specialized temporal converbial suffix in Lezgian. For this temporal overlap in Lezgian, the imperfective verb, indicated by the suffix "-z" conveys a sense of temporal overlap between the subordinate clause and the main clause. (Haspelmath, 1995). The situation in which there is a repetition relationship between the main clause and the subordinate clause is expressed by the suffix -DıkçA (whenever) in Turkish while it is not expressed as a specialized temporal converbial suffix in Lezgian. For repetition relationship in Lezgian, the manner of the main clause event convey this meaning.

In anteriority meaning relationship, the situation in which the onset of the main clause coincides with the end of the subordinate clause is expressed by the converbial suffixes -(y)IncA

(when), -DIğIndA (when) and -DIğI zaman (when) in Turkish while it is expressed by converbial suffix la (when) in Lezgian. The situation in which there is immediate occurrence of the action described in the main clause is expressed by the converbial suffix -(A/I) r…-mAz (as soon as) in Turkish while it is expressed by the converbial suffixes -waldi (as soon as), -namaz(di) (as soon as) and zamaz (as soon as) in Lezgian. The situation in which there is a relationship indicating the starting point for the predicate in the main clause is expressed by the converbial suffix -DIğIndAn beri (since) in Turkish while it is not expressed as a specialized temporal converbial suffix in Lezgian. The situation which conveys pure anteriority of the converb clause is expressed by the converbial suffix -DIktAn sonra (after) in Turkish while it is not expressed as a specialized temporal converbial suffix in Lezgian.

In posteriority meaning relationship, the situation in which aspectual properties of the main clause give the meaning relationship of posteriority is expressed by the converbial suffixes -DIğIndA (when) and -DIğI zaman (when) in Turkish while such kind of aspectual properties of the main clause does not express posteriority relationship in Lezgian specialized converb constructions. The situation which conveys pure posteriority of the converb clause is expressed by the converbial suffix -mAdAn önce (before) in Turkish while it is expressed by the converbial suffix -daldi (before) in Lezgian. The situation which gives the meaning relationship of "up to the event" in the subordinate clause is expressed by the converbial suffix -daldi (before) in Lezgian while it is not expressed by a single suffix but by a morpheme and a postposition, namely, -(y)IncAyA kadar / dek (until) in Turkish.

The second comparison in *type* parameter is presented in terms of morpho-syntactic relationships. Table 2 below shows the morpho-syntactic relationships in temporal converb clauses in both languages.

Table 2. Morpho-syntactic relationships in temporal converb clauses in Turkish and Lezgian

	Turkish	**Lezgian**
Converbial suffixes that are attached to base segments	-ken (while) -DIğI zaman (when) -DIğIndA (when) -DıkçA (whenever) -(y)IncA (when) -(A/I) r…-mAz (as soon as) -DIğIndAn beri (since) -DIktAn sonra (after) -mAdAn önce (before) -(y)IncAyA kadar / dek (until)	-
Converbial suffixes that are attached to verb stems or participles	-ken (while)	-la (when) -waldi (as soon as) -namaz(di) (as soon as) -zamaz (as soon as) -daldi (before) -daldi (until)

Johanson (1995) provides an in-depth analysis of converb constructions in Turkish, noting that "the converb segment is a non-finite unit that is structurally subordinate to a base segment" (p. 313). As it is seen in Table 2, all converbial suffixes in Turkish are attached to the base verb segment which was exemplified from (12) to (25). The only converb that can be added on finite verbs is -ken (while) on positive and negative versions of the aorist. In Lezgian, however, converbial suffixes are attached to verb stems or participles (Haspelmath, 1995). The suffix -la (when) is not directly attached to the verb stem but instead is added to imperfective, future, aorist, or perfect participles. The posterior converb -daldi (before/until) is attached to the imperfective stem of a verb as it is seen in examples (31) and (32). The suffix -waldi (as soon as) is added to the verb's aorist participle form, which is

exemplified in (28). The suffix -namaz(di) (as soon as) is added to the verb's aorist stem form as it is seen in example (29). The suffix -zamaz (as soon as) is added to the verb's imperfective stem form as it is seen in example (30).

As well as the attachments of the temporal converbial suffixes to the segments, the verbal marking of non-finite converbial clauses varies significantly in form (Kornfilt, 1997). Table 3 below shows the verbal marking in temporal converb clauses in both languages.

Table 3. Verbal marking in temporal converb clauses in Turkish and Lezgian

	Turkish	**Lezgian**
Distinct Converbial suffixes	-ken (while) -DIğIndA (when) -DıkçA (whenever) -(y)IncA (when)	-la (when) -waldi (as soon as) -namaz(di) (as soon as) -zamaz (as soon as)
Composite Converbial suffixes	-DIğI zaman (when) -(A/I) r…-mAz (as soon as) -DIğIndAn beri (since) -DIktAn sonra (after) -mAdAn önce (before) -(y)IncAyA kadar / dek (until)	-daldi (before)

As it is seen in Table 3, in Turkish, -ken (while), -DIğIndA (when), -DıkçA (whenever) and -(y)IncA (when) are distinctively converbial suffixes and attached directly to the verb. However, in other instances, the converbial marker is a composite element composed of a multifunctional subordinator, like "-mAK" or "-DIK," followed by a case marker and/or a postposition or nominal form. In -DIğI zaman (when), the converbial marker is a composite element, comprising a subordinator followed by a postposition. (A/I)r…-mAz (as soon as) can be described as a compound structure made up of the singular aorist form of a verb directly followed by the negated version of that same verb. The converbial marker -DIğIndAn beri (since) is a composite unit, made up of a subordinator followed by a postposition. DIktAn sonra (after) is followed by the postposition "sonra (after)" compulsorily. -mAdAn önce (before) is made up of the ablative marker "-dAn" and the morpheme "-mA," and may optionally be followed by the postposition "önce (before)". -(y)IncAyA kadar / dek (until) is made up of a subordinator followed by a postposition. In Lezgian, the converbial suffixes -la (when), -waldi (as soon as), -namaz(di) (as soon as), -zamaz (as soon as) and -daldi (until) are distinctively converbial suffixes and attached directly to the segments. However, "before" meaning of the converbial suffix -daldi can be emphasized by additionally using the postposition "wilik" which means "before" (Haspelmath, 1995). This usage is exemplified in (33) above.

CONCLUSION

As mentioned above, the aim of this study is to contrast Turkish and Lezgian in terms of the temporal converb constructions. In order to achieve the aim of the study, a contrastive analysis was carried out with the steps of description, juxtaposition and comparison. Based on the findings of the study, the research questions are answered as follows.

1. *What are the temporal converb construction strategies of Turkish and Lezgian?*

In terms of simultaneous meaning relationship, Turkish has the temporal converbial suffixes; ken (while), -DIğI zaman (when), -DIğIndA (when) and -DıkçA (whenever). In anteriority meaning relationship, it has the temporal converbial suffixes; -(y)IncA (when), -DIğI zaman (when), -DIğIndA (when), -(A/I) r…-mAz (as soon as), -DIğIndAn beri (since) and -DIktAn sonra (after). In posteriority meaning relationship, it has the temporal converbial suffixes; -DIğI zaman (when), -DIğIndA (when) -mAdAn önce (before) and -(y)IncAyA kadar / dek (until). In Lezgian, simultaneous meaning relationship is conveyed through the temporal converbial suffix; -la (when). Anteriority meaning

relationship is conveyed through the temporal converbial suffixes; -la (when), -waldi (as soon as), -namaz(di) (as soon as) and -zamaz (as soon as). Posteriority meaning relationship is conveyed through the temporal converbial suffixes; -daldi (before) and -daldi (until).

2. How is the correspondence between the items being compared?

In terms of *degree*, Turkish and Lezgian employ same strategies in that both languages express three temporal relationships of anteriority, posteriority, and simultaneity. However, the number of the temporal converbial suffixes differ. In Turkish, there are four suffixes expressing simultaneity, six suffixes expressing anteriority and four suffixes expressing posteriority. In Lezgian, there is just one suffix expressing simultaneity, four suffixes expressing anteriority and two suffixes expressing posteriority. In terms of *type* in meaning relationships, temporal ongoing parameter in simultaneity meaning relationship is employed by both languages while temporal overlap and temporal repetition parameters in simultaneity meaning relationship are employed just by Turkish. Onset coinciding and immediate anteriority parameters in anteriority meaning relationship are employed by both languages while starting point parameter and pure anteriority parameter are only employed by Turkish temporal converb constructions. Pure posteriority and until parameters in posteriority meaning relationship are employed by both languages, while aspectual properties denoting posteriority is employed just by Turkish. In terms of *type* in morpho-syntactic relationships; in Turkish, all converbial suffixes are added to the base verb segment while in Lezgian, converbial suffixes are attached to verb stems or participles. Moreover, the temporal suffixes; -ken (while), -DIğIndA (when), -DıkçA (whenever), and -(y)IncA (when) in Turkish and -la (when) -waldi (as soon as), -namaz(di) (as soon as), -zamaz (as soon as), -daldi (before) and -daldi (until) are simple forms and are directly attached to the verb; -DIğI zaman (when), -(A/I)r…-mAz (as soon as), -DIğIndAn beri (since), DIktAn sonra (after) and -mAdAn önce (before) temporal converbial suffixes in Turkish and -daldi wilik (before) converbial suffix in Lezgian are composite elements composed of a multifunctional subordinator and followed by a case marker and/or a postposition or nominal form.

This study reveals that although Turkish and Lezgian belong to different language families, both Turkish and Lezgian language systems have suffixing system in conveying temporal converb functions and the suffixing systems have semantic equivalence. Comparative studies serve as valuable resources in foreign language teaching. Challenges in learning a foreign language often stem from structural differences absent in the learner's native language. Such studies, which analyze and compare languages, provide support to both educators and learners of a foreign language.

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Research Article

An Investigation into EFL Students' Burnout Levels and Their Academic Motivation at the Tertiary Level

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Abstract: While researchers have studied burnout and motivation separately, little attention has been paid to how these factors interact in language learning environments. Understanding the interplay between burnout and motivation in the EFL context is highly relevant in light of the widespread shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, this study investigates the burnout and academic motivation levels of EFL students in terms of gender and language level variables, focusing on learners' experiences during the COVID-19 process. The study took place at a foundation university and 66 students from different language levels participated in this study. Data was collected through demographic information form, Academic Motivation Scale (2012) by Karagüven and Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Form (2011) by Çapri, Gündüz, and Gökçakan. Descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, Kruskal Wallis Test, and Pearson Correlation coefficient were used to analyze the data. The findings of the study indicated that students had quite high motivation even though they felt a high level of burnout. There was a significant difference between students' academic motivation and depersonalization scores by gender variable. Kruskal-Wallis test findings on four language levels revealed that there was not a significant difference regarding academic motivation and burnout scores of the participants. Finally, there was no correlation between students' academic motivation and burnout levels.

Keywords: *Student burnout, academic motivation, online education, COVID-19*

INTRODUCTION

Burnout is a psychological reaction to the external world as a result of unsatisfied demands, emotional tears, failure, and reduced tolerance. It is a severe syndrome that results from emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment among people (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Golembiewski, Sun, Lin & Boudreau, 1995; Jackson, Schwab, & Schuler, 1986). Studies on burnout have become widespread since the 70s, including different occupational groups and students who are also the participants of this research. Due to the continuity of their academic duties and responsibilities in school life, student activities have also been considered a job in recent years and are considered within the scope of burnout (Schaufeli & Taris, 2005). Many factors make it difficult for students to fully adapt to the education process at almost every phase of education and prevent students from showing the target behaviors expected from them.

The COVID-19 period has been one of the factors that have deeply affected not only our health but also our education. The closure of schools due to the pandemic caused the entire school-family system to switch to compulsory online education, and as a result, the education system was severely affected. There have always been problems surrounding foreign language teaching prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but they have only been aggravated by the sudden shift from traditional to online learning and created new challenges. This sudden change hindered students' access to important learning opportunities including peer interactions, communicative activities, and getting

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timely feedback from their instructors (Adıyaman & Demir, 2021; Erarslan, 2021). It also remained a challenge for students to adapt to self-directed learning environments due to the absence of a dynamic classroom atmosphere that facilitates linguistic interaction among peers (Juntunen, Tuominen, Viljaranta, Hirvonen, Toom & Niemivirta, 2022; Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020). For many EFL learners, this situation not only had an impact on sustaining motivation (Aldossari & Altalhab, 2022) but also increased burnout symptoms (Andrade, Riberiero & Máté, 2023) such as feelings of detachment, diminished sense of accomplishment, and general academic dissatisfaction (Bui, Bui & Nguyen, 2022; Tran, Vo & Ho, 2023; Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020). The scenario became more complicated due to uneven access to online education, the availability of digital resources, the study atmosphere at home, and institutional readiness (Erarslan, 2021; McIntyre, Gregersen & Mercer, 2020; Mihai, Albert, Mihai & Dumitras, 2022; Aldosarri & Altalhab, 2022). These differences influenced their learning outcomes to a great extent as individuals without adequate technological assistance or appropriate home study frequently expressed greater feelings of stress and frustration (Erarslan, 2021; McIntyre, Gregersen & Mercer, 2020; Bui, Bui & Nguyen, 2022; Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020; Andrade, Riberiero & Máté, 2023). However, several studies reported that some students demonstrated flexibility and perseverance using their intrinsic motivation or existing technological skills to maintain involvement (Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020; Adıyaman & Demir, 2021; Aldossari & Altalhab, 2022; Mihai, Albert, Mihai & Dumitras, 2022). In light of this duality, it has become essential to investigate the interplay between burnout and motivation during the COVID-19 process.

As foundational pillars of foreign language education in Türkiye, preparatory schools are crucial for examining the experiences of EFL learners during COVID-19. In recent years, the transition from traditional to online instruction has been rapid and unprecedented for preparatory schools aiming to provide students with the required language skills for academic success (Balbay & Erkan, 2021; Eraeslan, 2021; Irgatlıoğlu, Sarıçoban, Özcan & Dağbaşı, 2022). As a result of this rapid transformation, established pedagogical practices were disrupted and educators and students were both placed under additional demands causing stress (Meşe & Sevilen, 2021; Yuvayapan & Yükselir, 2021). Although some research has been carried out on burnout and academic motivation in the Turkish educational context (Karataş & Tuncer, 2020; Çevik & Bekircioğlu, 2021; Koyuncuoğlu, 2021; Tüfekçi & Böke, 2021, Adıyaman & Demir, 2021), there have been few empirical investigations into their interaction in EFL context (Baş, 2024; Seis, 2023; Kurt, 2023; Irgatlıoğlu, Sarıçoban, Özcan & Dağbaşı, 2022; Yuvayapan & Yükselir, 2021). This study therefore set out to examine the interplay between burnout and academic motivation among Turkish EFL learners during the COVID-19 process by considering gender and language proficiency levels. The findings of this research may contribute to the development of curriculum, effective teaching strategies, and institutional policies intended to reduce burnout and promote motivation.

Depending on the concerns above, this study is addressed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of burnout and academic motivation among EFL learners?
2. Do EFL learners' burnout and academic motivation levels differ in terms of gender?
3. Do EFL learners' burnout and academic motivation levels differ in terms of language level?
4. Is there a correlation between EFL learners' burnout and academic motivation levels?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are two major theoretical constructs that are grounded in this study: burnout theory and self-determination theory. These theories establish the basis for comprehending the relationship between student burnout and academic motivation, particularly in the EFL learning context during the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the past four decades, burnout has been a popular topic of research not only in psychology but also in education and other related fields. The first studies on burnout were initiated by Maslach (1982) and she gave three different dimensions to burnout as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and low personal achievement. According to the Maslach burnout model, burnout syndrome begins with the tendency of individuals to show emotional exhaustion and

leads to their depersonalization. As a result of depersonalization, people begin to perceive themselves as low-achieving individuals due to the mismatch between their current positions and expectations (Leiter, Maslach & Frame, 2014). The presence of these dimensions is not limited to occupational settings, but also manifests itself clearly in academic settings as a result of inability to meet academic expectations and demands among students (Schaufeli, Martínez, Pinto, Salanova, & Bakker, 2002). In the educational setting, student burnout, often referred to as academic burnout, presents distinct features that manifest it from the phenomenon of occupational burnout. That is to say, a student's burnout or academic burnout results from the lack of resources available to the student to do his or her studies and the inconsistency between the student's expectations and the expectations of his immediate environment including his family, friends, and teachers (Kutsal & Bilge, 2012).

In the wake of the pandemic, the abrupt transition to online education caused significant burnout among EFL learners and disrupted their learning habits (He, Feng & Ding, 2024). On the one hand, emotional exhaustion was aggravated due to extended screen time and the challenges of dealing with self-directed study. On the other hand, depersonalization frequently appeared as a feeling of detachment from language learning objectives, especially due to the absence of face-to-face interaction and engagement. Consequently, low personal achievement arose as students encountered challenges in achieving language learning goals without sufficient feedback or assistance (González-Ramírez, Mulqueen, Zealand, Silverstein, & BuShell, 2021). These factors together obstruct the motivation necessary for maintaining effective language learning and create a cyclical relationship between burnout and reduced academic involvement.

The second theoretical pillar of this study is Self Determination theory by Deci and Ryan (1985) as applied to academic motivation. Self-determination theory defines motivation as a combination driven by intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic motivation entails engaging in an activity for instinctive satisfaction whereas extrinsic motivation relies on external rewards or personal value of the activity. The theory highlights that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are three essential psychological needs that must be fulfilled to maintain motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). As in other educational settings, these psychological needs were often disrupted during the pandemic in the EFL context. The rigid format of online learning environments where students had minimal control over how they learned impaired their learner autonomy (Bui, Bui & Nguyen, 2022, Meşe & Sevilen, 2021). The lack of immediate feedback and opportunities to practice language skills weakened competence whereas diminished interaction between peers and teachers hindered relatedness.(Meşen & Sevilen, 2021; Al-Samiri, 2021; Lee,2021).

A large number of existing studies in broader literature have examined student burnout and academic motivation. In a study investigating the relationship between personality, burnout, and academic motivation, David (2010) reported that personality and burnout are associated and that academic motivation mediates this association. Trigueros, Padilla, Aguilar-Parra, Mercader, López-Liria, & Rocamora (2020) examined the impact of teacher leadership on academic resilience and motivation, burnout, and academic performance. The results of the study revealed that there is a negative moderate correlation between academic motivation and burnout. A significant analysis and discussion on the subject were presented by Mohammadi, Moslemi, & Ghomi (2021). They reported a significant negative relationship between student burnout and academic motivation which indicated that the increase in the rate of academic motivation might decrease the level of student burnout. Together these studies provide important insights into the current study and shed light on the investigation of student burnout and academic motivation from different angles.

METHODOLOGY

This study aims to investigate EFL students' burnout and academic motivation in the higher education context in Türkiye by comparing different data and variables to examine whether and to what extent correlate. Therefore, this research was designed as descriptive and correlational to gain further insight into student burnout and academic motivation among EFL learners at the tertiary level.

Setting

The study was conducted at the School of Foreign Languages of a foundation university in Istanbul in the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. The School of Foreign Languages consisted of an English Preparatory Program, a Russian Preparatory Program, and English Language Support Program. This study was addressed to the English Preparatory program, which provides language education to students from various disciplines, equipping them for their departmental courses conducted in English. The English Preparatory Program adopts an 8-week modular system and there are four different levels of classes from STEP 1(A1/A2) to Proficiency. Students are subjected to the Oxford Placement Test to be placed in their classes, and they were placed in their level groups according to the results of this test. An integrated skills approach is implemented for language instruction and the curriculum highlights linguistic competence that incorporates both study skills and academic skills to prepare students for their departments. Assessments include several quizzes during the module and final exams at the end of each 8-week module. These assessments are aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the Global Scale of English (GSE) standards and are designed to evaluate overall language proficiency.

Participants

A total number of 68 participants from different levels of classes participated in this study from the English Preparatory Program. The participants were mostly young adults whose ages varied from 17 to 35. Their faculties included the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (16 participants), Faculty of Arts-Sciences (12 participants), Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences (14 participants), Faculty of Fine Arts (10 participants), Faculty of Communication (9 participants), and Vocational School (7 participants). There were 29 male participants (43%) and 39 female participants (57%) in the study.

Data Collection Tools

Data were collected using the Academic Motivation Scale (2012) by Karagüven and the Student Burnout Inventory (2011) by Çapri, Gündüz, and Gökçakan. Several factors guided the selection of these scales, including their robust theoretical foundation, validity, and reliability issues along with their particular relevance to the constructs investigated in this study: student burnout and academic motivation. Moreover, both scales are well-suited to the Turkish educational settings and helpful in examining how burnout and motivational dimensions interrelate in an online EFL context. The first part of the questionnaire was used to collect demographic information about the participants' gender, age, departments, and language level. The second part of the questionnaire included 25 statements with a 7-point Likert scale to measure academic motivation. The reliability of the academic motivation scale was measured with Cronbach alpha and the Cronbach Alpha value was obtained as .87. Confirmatory factor analysis technique was used to test its construct validity and expert opinion was taken for content validity. The scale has seven sub-scales including ''intrinsic motivation, amotivation, introjected regulation and to accomplish, external regulation, and identified regulation.''In the current study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was .90. The last part of the questionnaire consisted of 13 statements with a 5-point Likert scale to measure student burnout. The reliability analysis was measured using Cronbach Alpha and The Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficient was found to be .76 for the first sub-factor, .82 for the second sub-factor, and .61 for the third sub-factor. In the current study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was found to be 79 for the first sub-factor, .74 for the second sub-factor, and .68 for the third sub-factor. The Confirmatory factor analysis technique was used to test its construct validity. After the Confirmatory factor analysis, three subscales emerged ''exhaustion, depersonalization, and competence.'' In the scoring, three separate burnout scores are calculated for each person. High scores on the exhaustion and depersonalization subscales and low scores on the competence subscale indicate burnout.

Procedures for Data Collection

Prior to undertaking the investigation, ethical clearance was obtained from the publication ethics committee for social sciences and humanities, and consent from the participants was obtained to address ethical issues. Participants were ensured that their identities would be kept confidential and they could withdraw from the study whenever they wanted. As the researcher herself was an academic staff at the English preparatory school, she delivered the questionnaires online to the target groups and it took three weeks to collect the data. The online questionnaires were sent to nearly 500 students, and only 68 of them were returned from the participants. Two of the participants were excluded and the study was conducted with the remaining 66 participants.

Procedures for Data Analysis

Data management and analysis are performed using SPSS software (version 25). For the preliminary analysis, the test of normality was checked. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality was conducted to determine whether the data from academic motivation and burnout was normally distributed. The findings indicated that the data for motivation and burnout were normally distributed ($p > .05$). The data are analyzed by descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, Kruskal Wallis Test, and correlations. Descriptive statistics are calculated for participants' gender and language computing frequencies and percentages. To investigate participants' academic and burnout levels, mean values are computed. In addition to this, Pearson Correlation analysis is performed to investigate whether there was any correlation among the reported statements by the participants. Although the data were normally distributed, instead of ANOVA, the Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted due to the low number of participants in each proficiency level. Finally, an independent samples t-test was administered to check burnout and academic motivation levels in terms of participants' gender.

FINDINGS

The Levels of Burnout and Academic Motivation

The first research question was concerned with the main aim of the current study. The following table presents the descriptive analysis of the participants' burnout and academic motivation levels.

Table 1. Descriptive analysis of the participants' burnout and academic motivation

Scales	*M*	*SD*
Academic motivation	5.15	.91
Exhaustion	3.03	.82
Depersonalization	3.42	.85
Competence	2.50	.74

Note. N = 66

Table 1 provides the results obtained from the descriptive analysis of the students' academic motivation and burnout levels. The findings obtained from the burnout level of the students demonstrated that students usually felt exhaustion (M = 3.03, SD =.82), they were often depersonalized (M = 3.42, SD = .85), and they did not feel competent enough (M = 2.50, SD = .74). It seems possible that the sudden shift to online education created highly challenging psychological challenges for students such as frustration, emotional detachment, and diminished-self efficacy. Factors including physical fatigue due to extended screen time, lack of face-to-face interaction, and the need for self-regulated learning might have aggravated these feelings. Despite these challenges, the findings indicated that the academic motivation level of the students was quite high (M = 5.15, SD =

.91). This surprising outcome could be attributed to the capacity for resilience and flexibility among students thanks to their ability to navigate online platforms and maintain their intrinsic motivation. However, the combination of high burnout and high motivation might demonstrate that the difficulties in online learning may have affected students' emotional well-being while they remained dedicated to their studies.

The Levels of Burnout and Academic Motivation Regarding Gender

The second research question in this study was addressed to examine whether EFL learners' burnout and academic motivation levels differ in terms of gender. The findings from the independent-sample t-test are presented in the following table.

Table 2. Independent-Samples t-test results of students' burnout and academic motivation levels in terms of gender

	Gender	*N*	*M*	*SD*	*t*(66)	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Academic motivation	Female	39	5.45	.74	3.44	.001	.84
	Male	27	4.72	.98			
Exhaustion	Female	39	2.88	.78	-1.83	.07	.44
	Male	27	3.24	.84			
Depersonalization	Female	39	3.20	.91	-2.80	.007	.67
	Male	27	3.74	.66			
Competence	Female	39	2.46	.68	-.40	.69	.09
	Male	27	2.53	.83			

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare academic motivation, exhaustion, depersonalization, and competence scores for male and female participants. The findings indicated that there was a significant difference in academic motivation scores for males (M = 4.72, SD = .98) and females (M = 5.45, SD = .74; $t(66)$ = 3.44, p = .001). The magnitude of the differences in means has a large effect (eta squared = .84). The observed increase in academic motivation among females could be attributed to sociocultural factors that affect educational attitudes as female students tend to display greater effort and commitment in language learning contexts. Regarding burnout, there was not a significant difference in exhaustion scores for males (M = 3.24, SD = .84) and females (M = 2.88, SD = .78; $t(66)$ = -1.83, p = .07). The effect size between the groups had a small effect (eta squared = .44). For depersonalization, there was a significant difference for male participants (M = 3.74, SD = .66) and female participants (M = 3.20, SD = .91; $t(66)$ = -2.80, p = .007). The magnitude of the differences in means was moderate (eta squared = 67). Finally, there was not any significant difference in competence scores for males (M = 2.53, SD = .83) and females (M = 2.46, SD = .68; $t(66)$ = -.40, p = .69). The effect size between the groups had a very small effect (eta squared = .09). In terms of burnout dimensions, this difference in depersonalization results might indicate that male students struggled more to sustain a sense of connection possibly due to the lack of in-person support and structured support provided in traditional classroom setting. On the contrary, the similarity between exhaustion and competence results might indicate that the overall emotional burden of adapting to online learning was experienced equally across genders.

The Levels of Burnout and Academic Motivation Regarding Language Proficiency

The third research question in this study sought to determine whether EFL learners' burnout and academic motivation levels differ in terms of language level. The findings from the Kruskal-Wallis test are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Kruskal Wallis Test results of burnout and academic motivation in different language levels

	Level	*N*	Mean Rank	*df*	χ^2	*p*
Academic Motivation	A1	9	30.17	3	1.45	.70
	A2	20	37.28			
	B1	23	31.04			
	B2	14	34.30			
Exhaustion	A1	9	28.11	3	1.93	.59
	A2	20	32.28			
	B1	23	37.60			
	B2	14	32.00			
Depersonalization	A1	9	31.78	3	4.75	.20
	A2	20	26.35			
	B1	23	37.43			
	B2	14	38.36			
Competence	A1	9	34.44	3	.60	.90
	A2	20	30.90			
	B1	23	35.26			
	B2	14	33.71			

Kruskal-Wallis test findings on four language levels concerning academic motivation and burnout indicated that there were not any significant differences at the $p < .05$ level in academic motivation $\chi^2(3, N = 66) = 1.45$, $p = .70$, exhaustion $\chi^2(3, N = 66) = 1.93$, $p = .59$, depersonalization $\chi^2(3, N = 66) = 4.75$, $p = .20$, and competence $\chi^2(3, N = 66) = .60$, $p = .90$ for all language levels. This result may be due to the standardized format of the English preparatory program which ensured equal access to educational resources and support regardless of the language levels. The implementation of a consistent curriculum along with a modular assessment might have contributed to minimizing discrepancies and balancing the situation for students in their burnout and motivation experiences.

The Interplay between Burnout Dimensions and Academic Motivation

The last research question in this study was to examine whether there was a correlation between EFL learners' burnout and academic motivation levels using the Pearson product-momentum correlation coefficient. The following correlation matrix shows the correlations among the variables of ''academic motivation'', ''exhaustion'', ''depersonalization'' and ''competence''.

Table 4. Correlations analysis of burnout and academic motivation levels

Variable	*1*	*2*	*3*
Academic Motivation(1)			
Exhaustion (2)	-.18		
Depersonalization (3)	-.06	.70(**)	
Competence (4)	-.09	.24	.24

Note. $N = 66$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

It can be seen from the data in Table 5 that a positive high correlation was found between exhaustion and depersonalization $r(66) = .70$, $p < .001$. The correlation coefficient for the correlation between exhaustion and depersonalization explains 49% of the variance which indicates a moderate effect size. There is a weak correlation between exhaustion and depersonalization $r(66) = .24$, $p > .05$. Depersonalization and competence also indicated a weak correlation $r(66) = .24$, $p > .05$. It is interesting to note that no correlation was found between academic motivation and burnout subscales. A possible explanation for this might be that burnout might not have affected students' motivation directly within the specific context of the English preparatory program. A range of institutional factors including structured course delivery, timely assessments, and access to online resources may have diminished the negative impacts of burnout on motivation.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, EFL students' academic motivation and burnout levels were examined in terms of gender and language level variables. When discussing the findings, it should be taken into consideration that this research covered the period of COVID-19 on academic motivation and burnout levels of students at the preparatory level. The findings indicate several important patterns that have contributed to our understanding of student experiences throughout emergency online learning in the EFL context.

With respect to the first research question, it was found that students usually experience exhaustion ($M = 3.03$, $SD = .82$), were often depersonalized ($M = 3.42$, $SD = .85$), and did not feel competent enough ($M = 2.50$, $SD = .74$). These findings suggest that students experience a high level of burnout during COVID-19. These results may emphasize the considerable mental burden that the transition to emergency online learning placed on students. The lack of in-person interaction, extended screen time, and the lack of self-directed learning might have played a role in these results. This finding is consistent with Gonzalez-Ramirez, Mulqueen, Zealand, Mulqueen, and BuShell (2021) who also found that students felt more burnout in emergency online learning during COVID-19. Further supporting these findings, He, Feng, and Ding (2024) indicated that online academic burnout reduced Chinese EFL learners' engagement during the pandemic, however, teacher emotional support mediated the effect of burnout. Contrary to expectations, the findings showed that students had a quite high level of academic motivation ($M = 5.15$, $SD = .91$) even if their burnout level was high. This discrepancy could be attributed to individuals who were competent users of technology but unable to cope with responsibilities related to their education. In a study conducted by Wang, Bu, Li, Sang and Li (2021), it was found that academic burnout was meditated by academic engagement to some extent whereas Cong, Yang, and Ergün's (2024) structural equation modeling analysis revealed academic self-efficacy and learning engagement acted as protective elements against burnout. These results further support the ideas of Özer and Badem (2022) who revealed how increased autonomy and accessible online resources contributed to sustaining motivation in online classes among Turkish EFL learners.

The second research question sought to determine whether gender issue plays a role in EFL learners' burnout and academic motivation levels. Accordingly, there was a significant difference in academic motivation scores for males ($M = 4.72$, $SD = .98$) and females ($M = 5.45$, $SD = .74$; $t(66) = 3.44$, $p = .001$). This finding is in line with that of Ünal & Alır (2014) who found a difference between male and female participants' motivation. However, this outcome is contrary to previous studies which suggested that male and female participants did not reveal a significant difference regarding academic motivation (Zaccoletti, Camacho, Correia, Aguiar, Mason, Alves & Daniel, 2020; Malinauskas & Pozeriene,2020; Tang, Chen, Lav, Wu, Lav, Guan & Ho, 2021). The study conducted by Adıyaman and Demir (2021) during COVID-19 is helpful for contextualizing our findings, which suggested that female students displayed better adaptation and flexibility to remote learning environments than male students. Concerning burnout, different findings were sought in all sub-scales. For exhaustion, there was not a significant difference for males ($M = 3.24$, $SD = .84$) and females ($M = 2.88$, $SD = .78$; $t(66) = -1.83$, $p = .07$) whereas there was a significant difference in depersonalization

scores for male participants ($M = 3.74$, $SD = .66$) and female participants ($M = 3.20$, $SD = .91$; $t(66) = -2.80$, $p = .007$). Finally, competence scores for males ($M = 2.53$, $SD = .83$) and females ($M = 2.46$, $SD = .68$; $t(66) = -.40$, $p = .69$) did not reveal a significant difference. In a study conducted by Ertek, Özkan, Candansayar, and İlhan (2022), it was indicated that there were significant differences between male and female participants' burnout levels. However, several studies showed that gender did not reveal a significant difference in terms of gender (Bolatav, Seisembekov, Askarova, Baikonova, Smailove & Fabbro, 2021; Vu & Bosmans, 2021). The study conducted by Derakhshan, Eslami, Curle, and Zhaleh (2022) clarifies these two-fold findings, indicating that gender disparities in burnout might be mediated by communication preferences and methods of pursuing academic support. Taken into account the unique challenges faced by male and female students in online learning settings, these findings may illustrate the need for gender-sensitive approaches in instructional design.

With respect to the third research question, Kruskal-Wallis test findings on four language levels concerning academic motivation and burnout indicated that there were not any significant differences in academic motivation $\chi^2(3, N = 66) = 1.45$, $p = .70$, exhaustion $\chi^2(3, N = 66) = 1.93$, $p = .59$, depersonalization $\chi^2(3, N = 66) = 4.75$, $p = .20$, and competence $\chi^2(3, N = 66) = .60$, $p = .90$. A possible explanation for this result is that it might be due to accessibility to online classes and learning materials without limits during COVID-19. This outcome is contrary to that of Çapulcuoğlu and Gündüz (2001) who found that students who perceived their achievement levels as low experienced more depersonalization than students who perceived their achievement levels as medium and high; according to the competence subscale scores, students who perceived their achievement levels as high felt more competent than students who perceived their achievement levels as medium and low, respectively, and thus experienced less burnout. In another study conducted by Ghanizadeh and Jahedizadeh (2015), it was found that language achievement levels correlate significantly but negatively with burnout. Regarding the finding related to academic motivation, Chioma Jennifer (2021) showed that English language achievement and academic motivation for secondary school students had a very weak and negative correlation. These rather contradictory results might be explained by Li, Zhang, and Jiang (2021) who suggested that language learning strategies and technical competence may mediate the relationship between language proficiency and burnout.

Very little was found in the literature on the question of whether there was a correlation between EFL learners' burnout and academic motivation levels. In this study, there was no correlation between academic motivation and burnout levels. Therefore, it could be implied that students' academic motivation might not be affected by their burnout. However, the findings of the current study do not support the previous research. Karimi and Fallah reported that there was a negative strong correlation between EFL learners' intrinsic motivation and academic burnout components at $p < .05$ level. This finding was also reported by Pisarik (2009) who found that individuals with greater intrinsic motivation to attend college experience less exhaustion and cynicism, and are more likely to be professional and effective. Further, he revealed that amotivated individuals were more likely to experience exhaustion, cynicism, and a lower level of efficacy than motivated individuals. The discrepancy between the current study and previous works could be linked to specific conditions of emergency remote education during COVID-19, in which different factors such as teacher support and technological competence may have mediated the findings.

It is important to bear in mind that the results of this study should be interpreted within the wider context of Turkish higher education during COVID-19. The educational setting at foundation universities could offer various unique features that might have impacted the learning atmosphere. The institution's extensive technological infrastructure, established before the pandemic, might have enabled a fairly seamless shift to online education. The students were provided high-quality digital resources, including licensed language learning platforms and a user-friendly learning management system, which may have contributed to sustaining engagement despite their physical isolation. Moreover, the socioeconomic backgrounds of students at a foundation university might have played a critical role in shaping the educational process. The majority of the students possessed stable internet connections and personal devices appropriate for online education. This helped eliminate any technical obstacles that might have influenced motivation and participation in learning. The institution's student

support services, such as academic advising and psychological counseling, were still available online during the pandemic, which might have affected students' motivation and general well-being.

College students are challenged by numerous obstacles on their path to higher education. The ongoing demands of schoolwork, combined with the existence of stressors may result in detrimental outcomes such as burnout. To this end, this study provided an opportunity to investigate what impact college students had when they were forced to switch to another learning platform as a result of the pandemic. The results of this investigation showed that students experienced a high level of burnout and had quite high motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Turning to implications for practice, differentiated instruction, and social-emotional learning can be integrated into the teaching practice to support students. It is also beneficial to cultivate a supportive and collaborative classroom atmosphere in which students feel comfortable discussing their challenges and sharing learning experiences to help them build resilience and maintain motivation in the learning process. The psychological conditions of the students should be taken into consideration. For this purpose, the institutions could benefit from integrating support systems and might provide regular face-to-face or online counseling services. Regular access to counseling services, whether in person or online, could minimize feelings of burnout, enabling students to stay engaged and motivated in their academic life. The findings also highlight how crucial it is for the higher education system to keep up robust support networks and technology infrastructure. It might be beneficial for higher education institutions to allocate resources to strong digital learning systems that can enhance engaging language education experiences while reducing technical issues that could lead to burnout. This can be achieved by facilitating the use of online learning programs and making technical support readily available to both instructors and students.

There are several limitations of this study. The first one is its quantitative scope. This study was limited to 68 participants. Conducting a study with more participants might provide more comprehensible results and combining the quantitative findings with qualitative ones could provide in-depth perspectives to enrich quantitative findings. Another constraint was the burnout scale. The scale could be scored separately for each sub-scale. Developing another scale or finding a more appropriate one might help researchers get more accurate and reliable results. Moreover, this study investigated the academic motivation and burnout levels of EFL students with gender and language level variables. Additional variables and different student groups might provide more striking findings for future studies. Finally, this study took place at a foundation university. Comparing burnout and academic motivation levels among EFL learners across different educational contexts, such as public versus foundation universities might help identify the role of institutional factors.

Ethical Statement: This research has been conducted in compliance with the institutional regulations of Publication Ethics Committee for Social Sciences and Humanities, as outlined in the ethical permission document dated 21/05/2021.

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Research Article

Examining Medical Students' Views on the Use of Humour

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Abstract: Humour is often considered a vital component of a language classroom, as its positive effects on learning are undeniable. These effects include capturing and maintaining student interest, creating a relaxing and comfortable classroom atmosphere, and fostering bonds among class members. In other words, humour makes learning more enjoyable. Shatz and LoSchiavo (2006) state that learning is fun and should be. For that reason, humour should not be left out of the classroom and ignored as the side product of the lesson. Instead, it can help with content delivery and promote learning by making learning more effective, thanks to students' increased interest and attention. Thus, a teacher incorporating humour into their practices can offer students a more engaging and friendly learning experience. This paper examines university students' opinions about the effect of humour use on language learning. A mixed-methods research design, employing both quantitative and qualitative data, was used to provide a more comprehensive picture. The data for this study were collected through a questionnaire, and semi-structured follow-up interviews were also utilised to complement the data. The quantitative data were analysed through descriptive statistics, and the interviews were studied consecutively via thematic analysis. Two hundred sixty-four medical students at a Turkish state university volunteered to participate in the study. The study revealed that Turkish medical students stress that humour serves various pedagogical functions, such as raising student interest, reinforcing learning the lesson content, explaining complex concepts, and encouraging students to ask more questions. It also refines our understanding of humour and its relationship with language learning by allowing us to delve deeper into medical students' perceptions of teachers' humour in English classes.
Keywords: *humour, student views, medical students, language classroom.*

INTRODUCTION

Humour has numerous positive effects on learning, including holding students' attention, creating a calm and comfortable classroom environment, and fostering social bonds among students. Thus, it is always regarded as an essential part of the classroom. In other words, humour makes learning more enjoyable. According to Shatz and LoSchiavo (2006), language learning should be enjoyable, and enjoyment should not be considered a byproduct of the lesson. Instead, it can improve how the content is delivered and encourage learning because of the students' heightened interest and focus. Nevertheless, it is strongly advised that it might be a valuable tool for drawing and holding students' attention during the lesson, but it cannot be depended upon. In addition, although it can be useful for drawing and holding students' attention during a lesson, it is strongly discouraged from being the sole teaching strategy (Shatz & LoSchiavo, 2006).

There are many advantages to using humour in the classroom, such as helping the teacher break down barriers that prevent students from being motivated, self-assured, shy, hesitant, and stressed in a language classroom. Thus, a cheerful and welcoming environment is necessary for language classes. Language learners are more willing to participate in classes where they feel at ease, and teachers who use humour tend to gain more popularity with their students and consistently have high attention rates. Humour may contribute to attention-boosting in several ways. According to Davies and Apter (1980), humour helps the teacher "attract attention to himself and to what he is saying. After that, it might be helpful to keep that focus for a while" (p. 238). Therefore, a positive

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classroom environment is essential to make learning less stressful, frightening, or intimidating (Krishmanson, 2000). Incorporating instructional strategies like sharing humourous stories and anecdotes into class activities can foster an encouraging atmosphere and enhance students' learning and retention.

Additionally, learning through humour improves the retention of information in long-term memory (Casper, 1999). Humour creates the ideal environment for students to learn to the best of their abilities by lowering any negative emotions (e.g., anxiety, fear, abandonment, or boredom) that may prevent them from doing so (Walter, 1990). According to Medgeys (2002), no learning environment is more beneficial than the one in which students feel free to express their opinions and anxiety levels are low enough to allow for optimal learning. According to Schmitz (2002), teachers with skills in using humour build sincere and respectful relationships with their students (Al-Duleimi & Aziz, 2016; Gonulal, 2018). Students may find learning more enjoyable in a classroom setting like this, and potentially humour will undoubtedly support instruction.

Creating a positive environment for the students is one of the primary duties of a teacher. According to Bell (2009), the teacher is the one who will determine whether or not humour is appropriate for the setting and circumstances in the classroom. When employed skilfully, humour can support the lesson's pedagogical objectives and be a useful teaching tool. If not, employing humour may have unfavourable effects such as hurting someone's feelings, humiliation, and low self-esteem. Teachers should, therefore, get to know their students well and use humour sparingly in the classroom (Pomerantz & Bell, 2011). Besides the advantages listed above, humour without hurting anybody is a piece of art (Morrison, 2008; Wagner & Eduardo, 2011). In the classroom context, the use of humour should not cause any student to feel alienated. Humour about sensitive subjects such as gender, sex, or religion should be avoided. According to Schmitz (2002), educators should set a positive example for their students and adopt an inclusive mindset, including utilising humour to preserve community within the classroom. In addition, Sullivan (1992) cautions educators that poor classroom management practices can result in the loss of significant instructional time.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Humour in Language Classrooms

Humour is "anything that the teacher and/or students find funny or amusing" (Wanzer et al., 2006, p. 182). According to this definition, humour may originate from the teacher, the students, or even another source. Humour is also defined as "the ability to understand, enjoy, and express what is amusing" (Leung, 2004, p.1). This definition is more concerned with "humans" than "things", in contrast to Wanzer et al. (2006)'s because it concentrates on the "reception" end of the humour continuum rather than the "creation" end. However, whether or not a speaker finds a joke, pun, or other type of humour funny determines whether or not they will laugh. Defining humour as a competence suggests that a speaker can identify humorous texts and create them without necessarily knowing the rules governing humour (Attardo, 1994). Even though there are many definitions, all of them support that humour is the use of both spoken and unspoken communication to produce happiness and laughter in common.

A plethora of studies have shown that humour in the classroom is beneficial for teaching English (Bilokcuoglu & Debreli, 2018; Civikly, 1986; Gonulal, 2018; Heidari-Shahreza, 2024). A teacher can quickly get the class's attention by telling jokes or sharing something humourous at the beginning of the class (Berk, 1996; Brown & Tomlin, 1996; Bryant et al., 1980, 1997; Pollio & Humphreys, 1996; Weisi & Mohammadi, 2023; Ziv, 1988). Students value and enjoy learning from a teacher who uses humour (Bilokcuoglu & Debreli, 2018; Civikly, 1986; Gonulal, 2018; Heidari-Shahreza, 2024). Since one of a teacher's best qualities is having a good sense of humour, teachers who incorporate humour into their lessons are said to be more effective (Bilokcuoglu & Debreli, 2018; Brown & Tomlin, 1996; Kelly & Kelly, 1982; Lowman, 1994). For English language learners, jokes

create a fun and relaxing environment in the classroom. Students learn better when having fun in the classroom, and if the class can laugh together, they will probably learn better as a group (Gorham & Christopher, 1990; Loomax & Moosavi, 1998) by making students feel more at ease when learning the target language (Bilokcuoglu & Debreli, 2018; Weisi & Mohammadi, 2023). Many studies support the idea that humour helps transform a dull classroom environment into one that is vibrant and energetic, which increases students' preparedness for the lesson (Gorham & Christopher, 1990; Loomax & Moosavi, 1998). Studies have even demonstrated that a humour-rich classroom can contribute to student attendance (Bilokcuoglu, Debreli, 2018; Devadoss & Foltz, 1996; Gonulal, 2018; Romer, 1993; White, 1992).

Humour also enables students to demonstrate their community within the classroom (Provine, 2000). Students can participate in group discussions without feeling afraid or anxious because they feel part of the group (Pollio & Humphreys, 1996). This is especially crucial in language classrooms, where learning the target language depends on interaction, participation, and communication. When used as a teaching tool, humour also motivates students to learn, which boosts their motivation and aptitude for language acquisition (Dodge & Rossett, 1982). When a lesson incorporates humour, students learn it more quickly and retain it longer because the information in a humourous episode is more likely to be remembered for longer (Al-Duleimi & Aziz, 2016; Hill, 1988). According to Kher, Molstad, and Donahue (1999), using suitable humour can positively improve the impact of the lesson. To put it briefly, humour eases stress, promotes self-expression, eases humiliation, and prevents boredom.

In addition to its pedagogical advantages, psychological effects are also worth mentioning. Students' emotional environments are vital for learning (Kristmanson, 2000). Students trying to learn a new language may feel anxious and hesitant when forced to communicate in a language they are not yet proficient in. When humour is used in a positive environment, students can participate more actively in the lesson, practice the language, and gain more knowledge. Nevertheless, if not employed carefully, it functions as a two-edged sword; thus, it can have the opposite effect and ruin the classroom environment. In other words, sing humour can be tricky since it can be very contextual, subjective, and personal, and the teacher may not always know how well-received it will be. Each student may have a different sense of humour (Garner, 2003). Something that one person finds funny may seem cheesy to another. Hostile humour can cause hurt feelings and lower motivation in students. Examples of this type of humour include offensive jokes, sarcasm, mimicry, mocking, and remarks about the race, gender, colour, or religion of the students. If a teacher uses humour carelessly, it can damage the relationship between students and teachers and cause them to lose respect, popularity, and credibility. Watson and Emerson (1988) highlight that

> when humour is planned as part of the teaching strategy, a caring environment is established, there is an attitude of flexibility, and communication between student and teacher is that of freedom and openness. The tone is set allowing for human error with freedom to explore alternatives in the learning situation. This reduces the authoritarian position of the teacher, allowing the teacher to be a facilitator of the learning process. Fear and anxiety, only natural in a new and unknown situation, become less of a threat as a partnership between student and instructor develops (p. 89).

Therefore, considering the previously mentioned variables, humour in the classroom must be targeted, relevant, and specific to the material to be most effective. If these points are not considered, humour use would be ineffective in the classroom (Korobkin,1988). Consequently, the importance of humour is disregarded as it gives the impression that humour fails to address educational goals and jeopardises classroom management.

In light of this context, humour was operationalised as any spoken, written, visual, or performed action that the teacher or students find funny in class, even if it is not funny per se. This was done based on the main ideas from the definitions of humour. Thus, he current study will investigate the relationship between humour and learning, students' perceptions of the teacher's

humour, whether or not they prefer humour in the mother or target language, and the function humour serves in language learning.

Humour Types

In order to understand the educational effects of various forms of humour used by teachers, it is necessary to consider the types of humour they use (Deiter, 2000; Jeder, 2015; Weisi & Mohammadi, 2023). Several studies have investigated and classified various forms of humour teachers use (Bryant et al., 1979; Torok et al., 2004). Studies conducted relatively recently (Frymier et al., 2008; Wanzer et al., 2006) divided humour into five categories: Other- or self-disparaging, related, unrelated, and crude humour. Related and unrelated humour relate to how the material covered in class relates or not. Crude or sexual humour is offensive. Other disparaging humour is when someone makes fun of others, whereas self-disparaging humour makes fun of the speaker.

Martin and his colleagues (2003) put forth a more comprehensive and significant theory that distinguished between four humour categories about modern forms of humour: Self-enhancing, self-defeating, affiliative, and aggressive humour. Self-enhancing humour aims to maintain a lighthearted attitude in life, even in adversity, whereas self-defeating humour aims to win people over the person who is making the humour. Affiliative humour amuses others and promotes relationships. Conversely, aggressive humour is used to ridicule or manipulate others. Self-enhancing and affiliative humour are thought to have potential health benefits. Yet, self-defeating and aggressive humour are considered harmful.

Tsukawaki and his colleagues (2009) classified humour into three types by focusing on the interpersonal function of humour: Playful, self-victimising, and aggressive. First of all, playful humour, which includes puns and friendly jokes, is a type of humour that rarely uses aggression. This is consistent with the affiliative humour found in Martin et al. (2003). Self-defeating humour turns one's shortcomings and failings into a humourous narrative and is self-victimising. In contrast, sarcasm, mockery, and hostile teasing are all various types of aggressive humour. Aggressive humour is an offensive type of humour that incorporates sarcasm, derision, and hostile teasing - this lines up with the humour types of the same name as Martin et al. (2003). None of the humour types described by Tsukawaki et al. (2009), which emphasise interpersonal communication, correspond with self-enhancing humour because it is a phenomenon within an individual. As a result, there are several ways to classify teachers' humour based on its style, content, and relevance to the subject matter. This can have varying impacts on the classroom environment.

Humour Frequency and Appropriacy

Humour plays a big part in the classroom environment, which is crucial for learning a new language (Cornett, 1986; Fisher, 1997). Students talk more, learn more, contribute more, and are less afraid to make mistakes when they have a laid-back, upbeat attitude. However, too much humour or self-disclosure in a learning environment is seen as inappropriate (Downs et al., 1988). As a result, humour appropriateness is crucial (Bryant & Zillmann, 1988). Pomerantz and Bell (2011) emphasise that humour must be appropriate for the target audience's age to be valid. Sarcastic humour, in particular, according to Zillman (1983), can confuse learners who are not paying close attention, or they can misinterpret nonverbal cues. The research by Downs, Javidi, and Nussbaum (1988) revealed evidence of the potential adverse effects of excessive humour. Several studies have proved that excessive humour or self-disclosure is inappropriate because it can have unfavourable consequences (Forman, 2011; Nussbaum, 1988; Zillman, 1983). Thus, it is best to use it in moderate amounts. Forman (2011) also warns that using too much humour directed towards a specific individual may lead to misunderstanding and annoyance depending on the type of humour used. Therefore, many researchers caution against the potential drawbacks of using humour in the classroom. Thus, further investigation is necessary into the detrimental aspects of educational humour. To sum up, teachers should always refrain from using crude or derogatory humour, which involves ridiculing students,

disparaging their families or their ethnicity, and dehumanising them. Teachers must understand the importance of the respectful and prestigious teaching profession and their own status in it.

Research Gap and Research Questions

Drawing from the literature above, using humour in L2 classes has been associated with many positive outcomes. However, there is a dearth of research on humour in Turkish EFL contexts. For some reason, humour studies have gained popularity again. First, despite ELT being a significant part of the Turkish educational system, several problems occur at the instructional level, most likely due to how English is taught (Kirkgoz, 2009). Although the ELT policy has undergone a number of revisions to conform to European Union (EU) standards in light of Turkey's attempts to join (Kirkgoz 2007, 2009). The implementation of the European Language Portfolio (ELP), which aligns with the components of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Littlewood, 1981; Spada, 2007), is one of the most recent modifications to the ELT policy and still poses as a present challenge for English teachers (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011; Ozsevik, 2010). It is difficult to move from a traditional classroom environment, where the teacher is the primary authority and spends a lot of speaking time, to one that is more student-centred. According to Ozsevik (2010), students exhibit a certain amount of reluctance to engage in communicative activities, most likely as a result of becoming accustomed to teacher-centred and lecture-based classrooms.

The use of humour may have different purposes in the Turkish context given that it "has been seen as contributing to a broadening of the parameters of communicative approaches" (Forman, 2011, p. 562). For example, using humour can help to improve one-sided communication in traditional teacher-centered classrooms and facilitate the shift to more student-centered language instruction. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate how Turkish EFL learners perceive functions of humour in the university context. Thus, this study will focus on four significant issues:

1. Is there a relationship between humour and learning in the English language class?
2. What are the medical students' attitudes towards humour used by the teacher?
3. What are the medical students' language preferences in humour used in the English language class?
4. If used, what is the function of humour in English language classes?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, quantitative and qualitative data were gathered simultaneously to compare the findings and provide a more comprehensive picture. To fully explore the depth of participants' perceptions and practices, the qualitative data were given a higher weight than the quantitative data. These characteristics combined to make this study fall under the concurrent triangulation design category (Creswell, 2008; Creswell et al., 2003; Punch, 2009). The most popular mixed methods research design allows the researcher to examine the similarities and differences between the results from two or more methods (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2008; Thurmond, 2001).

Participants

Table 1 shows that two hundred and sixty-four freshman students from a Turkish state university participated in the survey. These students were of both genders, enrolled in all bachelor's degrees, and had varying backgrounds and English proficiency. Most of these students had lower-intermediate or beginner English proficiency. Learners' exposure to and production of English was highly restricted because they were primarily restricted to their English classes. Before the researchers conducted the study, participants were informed about the research aims.

Table 1. A Sampling of the Study

Programme	Surveyed students	Interviewed students
First and Emergency Aid	47	6
Medicine	37	5
Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation	22	3
Medical Laboratory	48	3
Nursing	58	5
Midwifery	52	6
Total	264	28

The information about the participants' background is collected via three questions positioned at the beginning of the questionnaire. They aim to collect data about their gender, age and grade.

Table 2. Demographic Information on Participants

Programme		F	%
Gender	Male	95	35,9
	Female	169	64,1
Age	18-24	235	89,0
	25-32	24	9,0
	33+	5	2,0
Grade	1	221	83,8
	2	43	16,2

Table 2 presents the background information on participants who study various medical programmes at a Turkish state university. While the majority of the group is female (64,1%), only 35,9% is male. Therefore, it can be inferred that female students are more likely to select these programmes in Türkiye. The majority of the students are between 18 and 24 (89,9%). The participants are primarily freshman students (83,8).

Table 3. Demographic Information on Interviewees

Department	Student & Gender (F: Female, M: Male)
First and Emergency Aid	S1 (F), S2 (M), S3 (F), S4 (F), S5(M), S6 (F)
Medical Laboratory	S7 (F,) S8(F), S9(F)
Medicine	S10 (M), S11 (M), S12(F), S13 (M), S14 (M)
Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation	S15 (F), S16 (F), S17 (F)
Nursing	S18 (M), S19 (F), S20 (F), S21 (M), S22 (F)
Midwifery	S23 (F), S24 (F), S25 (F), S26 (F), S27 (F), S28 (F)
Total	20 female and 8 male interviewees

Table 3 illustrates that about 10% of the group, or twenty-eight students, from each programme, contributed to the study by participating in the interviews. The table displays the

attributes of the interviewees. By providing their contact details in the survey's final section, these students offered to participate in the interviews. Male and female students from all six programmes in the study attended the interviews. However, there was an uneven distribution of interviewees among these groups (71% female and 29% male students) because the number of interviewees depended on the number of volunteers, some female-dominant departments, and the availability of students at the time of the interviews. The researcher's office served as the venue for the interviews.

Context

The study was conducted in various medical undergraduate programs at a state university in Türkiye. One of the main reasons the university was chosen for this kind of study was that the researcher had direct access to the research environment, which aided the study by offering a thorough data collection process.

Data Collection Tools

The study used a scale and interviews as data collection tools. Before the researcher began the project, the faculty and students provided their ethical consent. Participants were well-informed before giving their written consent. Data were handled discreetly, stored safely, and anonymized. This required renaming institutions and appointing pseudonyms.

The research scale was modified from Askildson (2005) and Morrison (2008). To check reliability, the scale was analysed using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient ($\alpha = 0.855$), which indicated a good level of reliability. It had two parts. The first part consisted of 33 statements regarding students' opinions on using humour and its effects in English classrooms for medical students (See Table 4 for the scale's item analysis).

Table 4. Item Analysis of the Scale

The Distribution of the Items	Items	Research Questions
a. The relationship between humour and learning	1, 4, 5, 6, 9, 16, 19, 26, 31	RQ1
b. Students' perceptions of teachers' humour	3, 8, 14, 17, 21-24, 28, 29, 32, 33	RQ2
c. L1 and L2 humour	11, 12, 13, 15	RQ3
d. The function of humour in English classroom	2, 7, 10, 18, 20, 25-27, 30	RQ4

The second part had ten qualities of a teacher, and students were asked to rank the importance of each trait (from 1 to 10). The validity of the study's conclusions was enhanced by the use of a scale that had already been used in earlier research. In the first part, a Likert-scale survey with four points, and four options was preferred to encourage participants to agree or disagree with the statements. Four options, "Strongly disagree", "Disagree", "Agree", and "Strongly Agree", were more practical in stopping participants from hiding their genuine opinions; thus, the middle point was eliminated. If not, participants frequently choose the "neutral" middle ground, which obscures their opinions. By choosing a point on this scale, the respondents indicated whether they (dis)agreed with a statement. This was referred to as an "attitudinal measure" by Creswell (2008, p. 161). No private information was requested. At the end of the scale, the students who consented to participate in follow-up interviews with the researcher could provide their email addresses. In the second part, students in the classes were given rating scales and had ten to fifteen minutes to complete them at the end of the class. Due to the researcher's presence during the students' scale completion, questions could be answered, and clarifications could be given immediately, ensuring a high response rate (Walliman, 2011). The

most frequently required explanations concerned the concept of humour and its varieties. It was made sure the researcher had no bearing on the answers.

The researcher got responses from students with a semi-structured interview to gather their perspectives on humour and its functions (See Appendix 1 for interview questions). Following the guidelines for coding qualitative data and category construction (Creswell, 2007; Geisler, 2018; Merriam et al., 2016), the interview data were manually transcribed and coded. The research objectives guided the multiple analysis rounds to code and classify the data. Both instruments aimed to ascertain the respondents' opinions regarding humour and how it affects learning generally and learning English in particular.

Data Analysis

The study had a concurrent triangulation design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Guest, 2013). Initially, data analyses were conducted independently for the qualitative and quantitative databases to create "a complete picture" from both datasets; the researcher combined the two datasets in a later stage (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p.136). Various methods (Descriptive statistics and thematic analysis) were used to analyse quantitative and qualitative data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) (Version 22.0) was used to enter and calculate the quantitative data, producing a distribution of percentages representing the students' answers to each item on the scale. Thematic analysis was utilised to analyse the interview data. Following the guidelines for coding qualitative data and category construction (Creswell, 2007; Geisler, 2018; Merriam et al., 2016), the interview data were manually transcribed and coded. First, themes and categories used by the interviewees were identified through thematic analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Talmy, 2011). The analysis was carried out by identifying themes and their coding (Creswell, 2008). To represent the diversity of humour-related themes, both "prefigured" and "emergent" codes (Crabtree & Miller, 1992) were used during this process. After that, similar and overlapping codes were found to lower the total number of codes. The codes were finally grouped into themes. Additionally, the themes were tallied and arranged according to how frequently they occurred (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The researchers coded and categorised transcripts separately, discussing any differences until a fair agreement on suitable categories was reached.

In this study, while quantitative data provide descriptive information such as the percentages of students' opinions who (dis)agreed with the statements regarding teachers' use of humour in the classroom, the qualitative data functions for comparing and cross-checking these two separate datasets for reliability to see if they are parallel with each other. In this way, the quantitative and qualitative findings were compared to confirm students' perceptions of humour in the classroom - a technique known as "merging the two databases" and usually carried out in concurrent mixed methods designs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 221). Thus, the study aimed to determine whether the information gathered from the student interviews supported the general pattern found in the descriptive results. It also sought to understand the underlying reasons for the students' (dis)agreement with the data results obtained through different methods.

RESULTS

This section presents the data results from the scale (Tables 5 and 6) and semi-structured interview (Table 7).

Scale Results

The findings demonstrate that students generally hold positive attitudes toward using humour in learning, highlighting its effectiveness as a pedagogical tool. Responses to items such as item 2 (M=3.45), item 16 (M= 3.40), item 18 (M= 3,40), item 20 (M= 3,38), and item 25 (M= 3,37) indicate

strong agreement with the belief that humour enhances their learning experience. In contrast, students strongly disagreed with statements reflecting negative perceptions of humour (e.g., item 5- If we are laughing and joking, we are not learning and item 6- I think a student initiating humour in class disrupts learning), as evidenced by the low mean scores on some statements (item 5, M= 1.36; item 6, M= 1,75; item 8, M= 1.73; item 9, M= 1,76 and item 19, M= 1,54). These scores demonstrate that students do not associate humour with unprofessionalism, distraction, or a lack of focus on learning. However, the responses to specific items, such as item 22 (SD= 0.94), item 27 (SD= 0.88), and item 33 (SD= 0.85), reveal more varied opinions, suggesting a lack of consensus on specific aspects of humour in the learning environment. Overall, the data indicate that students view humour as both compatible with and beneficial to effective learning, particularly in language-learning contexts. These findings support the idea that language teachers can confidently incorporate humour into their classes as students perceive it as enhancing engagement and learning without compromising professionalism or academic outcomes (For statistical analysis of the quantitative data, please see Appendix 2).

Table 5. Scale Results

Statements	Average	Value
1. "Humour is important to foreign language learning."	3,32	Agree
2. "I can learn better when my foreign language teacher uses humour."	3,45	Agree
3. "Humour is an important characteristic of a lecturer."	3,11	Agree
4. "While humour is important, learning requires a serious work environment with little time for humour."	2,20	Disagree
5. "If we are laughing and joking, we are not learning."	1,36	Strongly Disagree
6. "I think a student initiating humour in class disrupts learning."	1,75	Disagree
7. "Humour in the language class increases my interest in learning that language."	3,29	Agree
8. "If a teacher uses humour often, I will think he/ she is unprofessional."	1,73	Disagree
9. "The use of humour during a lesson is distracting."	1,70	Disagree
10. "Humour is not a measurable characteristic and, therefore, has a questionable role in language learning."	1,91	Disagree
11. "I find it difficult to understand English humour in the classroom."	2,49	Disagree
12. "I would like my lecturer to use humour only in my mother tongue."	2,25	Disagree
13. "I would like my lecturer to use humour only in English."	1,87	Disagree
14. "My teacher's use of humour makes me feel closer to him/her.	3,33	Agree
15. "I learn more about the culture of the foreign language by being exposed to the native humour of that language and culture."	3,28	Agree
16. "Humour generally improves my ability to learn a foreign language by creating a more comfortable and conducive learning environment overall."	3,40	Agree
17. "I can tell better jokes than my lecturer."	2,42	Disagree
18. "I am more likely to remember lesson content if it is presented with humour."	3,40	Agree
19. "The use of humour by a lecturer is typically a waste of classroom time."	1,54	Disagree
20. "I feel more comfortable asking a lecturer if s/he uses humour in the classroom."	3,38	Agree
21. "A lecturer's job is to teach, not entertain."	1,85	Disagree
22. "I would rather have a lecturer try to be humourous and fail rather than not try to be humourous at all."	2,45	Disagree
23. "I am sometimes offended by the use of humour by a lecturer."	1,88	Disagree
24. "A lecturer does not have to use humour to be an excellent lecturer."	2,94	Agree
25. "I am more likely to attend a class where the lecturer uses humour."	3,37	Agree
26. "I am more likely to pay attention to a lecturer if s/he uses humour in a lecture."	3,34	Agree
27. "I am more likely to skip a class where the lectures are boring."	3,27	Agree
28. "The only type of humour in the classroom that I am familiar with is the anecdotes	2,06	Disagree

told by the lecturer."		
29. "The lecturer's humour should be related or relevant to the subject matter."	2,99	Agree
30. "I feel more relaxed (less anxious) when the lecturer uses humour in the class."	3,24	Agree
31." I think using humour in the class is important to learning the subject matter overall."	3,26	Agree
32. "I can also use humour in class discussions during lectures."	2,39	Disagree
33. "I think overusing humour (more than 7-8 times) during the lectures can be counter-effective."	2,72	Agree

Adapted from Askildson (2005) and Morrison (2008).

Table 6. Ranking of Teacher Qualifications

Order	Teacher Qualifications	Item
1	"is enthusiastic about teaching."	5
2	"speaks in a clear, understandable manner."	7
3	"informs in advance as to what to expect in lectures and exams."	3
4	"writes in a clear, understandable manner (e.g. on board, handouts, etc.)."	10
5	"can explain difficult concepts."	6
6	"is readily available before and after the class to answer questions."	1
7	"uses humour to make classes more fun or interesting."	4
8	"is fair in grading."	2
9	"makes efficient use of class time."	9
10	"can relate class material to the real world."	8

Adapted from Askildson (2005) and Morrison (2008).

Here, the data presented in Tables 5 and 6 will be organised and discussed under four subtitles to answer the research questions.

a. The relationship between humour and learning (RQ1)

This section presents the findings from the statements asking students to consider the general relationship between humour and learning. Item 1 demonstrates students' general views regarding humour in English class. The majority of the students agreed that humour is crucial for learning foreign languages (M=3,32). According to item 4, most students disagreed that "learning requires a serious work environment with little time for humour" (M=2,20). However, the findings prove that they take learning a language seriously by expecting a teacher to inform them what to expect in lessons and exams (Ranked 3) (Table 6), using the lesson materials efficiently (e.g. board, handouts) (Ranked 4), answering the questions effectively (Ranked 6) and assesses exams fairly (Ranked 8). The seriousness is about the attitude teachers hold and the enthusiasm and commitment they show; language learning does not lose its seriousness when humour is included, as supported in several statements in Table 5.

In item 5, the students were questioned about the assertion, "If my class is laughing and joking, we are not learning." Most students strongly disagreed with the idea that jokes and laughter were signs that learning was lacking (M=1,36) and ranked the inclusion of humour as the seventh important trait (See Table 6). Item 6 displays students' thoughts on the statement, "A student initiating humour in class is a disruption to learning." The purpose of including this statement was to investigate how students in Türkiye perceived humour within the context of their learning. Most of the students rejected statement 9, "The use of humour during a lesson is distracting." (M=1,70). This outcome is consistent with the other statements discussed earlier.

Statement 16, "Humour generally improves my ability to learn a foreign language by creating a more comfortable and conducive learning environment overall," sought students' opinions about the learning environment. Many students agreed that a class where humour has a place is a positive learning environment (M=3,40), as humour breaks the boundaries between participants and learning. In item 19, students disagreed with the statement "Humour is a waste of precious learning time" (M=1,54), which aligns with many other statements, such as items 4 and 6. Most students disagreed that humour had no place in a serious learning environment (item 4, M=2,20) and that students' humour was not a disruption to learning (item 6, M=1,75). These students believed in the importance of using precious class time (ranked 9) but did not feel that using humour during class was a waste of time, which shows that they thought humour might be useful for learning.

With statement 26, "I am more likely to pay attention to a lecturer if s/he uses humour in a lecture", students' opinions about the potential value of humour in education were sought. It is clear that these students not only disagreed with the notion that using humour in the classroom distracts students, but they also vehemently supported the completely opposite suggestion. Most students thought that humour improved their ability to focus during class (M=3,34). The distribution of opinions is just a logical continuation of the findings in the results of other statements. In line with previous statements, in item 31, students confirmed that humour helps them learn the subject matter (M=3,26). Students value the teacher's enthusiasm about what s/he is teaching, and a teacher who strategically uses humour to get or hold students' attention can be considered enthusiastic (Ranked 1). In conclusion, students positively assessed the benefits of humour in the section discussing the interaction between learning and humour.

b. Students' perceptions of teachers' humour (RQ2)

The findings of statements ask students to score how they view their teachers' humour. Medical students' opinions on statement 3, "Humour is an important characteristic in a teacher," are displayed (M=3,11). This distribution clearly shows how much students preferred a teacher with a sense of humour. Although some teachers may have a deep-seated, unspoken fear of looking unprofessional (Morrison, 2008), in item 8, more than half of the students disagreed totally (M=1,73) with the statement, "If a teacher uses humour often, I will think he/ she is unprofessional." through their opinions. The findings imply that they appreciate the use of humour in class. They also stated clearly that they feel closer to the teacher who uses humour in the class in statement 14 (M=3,33). In statement 17, students' opinions about who makes better jokes were also investigated. Students disagreed that they make better jokes than teachers (M=2,42).

When we polled students, they did not state that they felt offended by humour (item 23, M=1,88). However, it is still a big issue that teachers must be sensitive about humiliating students. For that reason, students do not expect teachers to be comedians or class clowns (item 21, M=1,85). They expect the teacher to be an educator first, so "a lecturer does not have to use humour to be an excellent lecturer", students confirmed (item 24, M=2,94). For Turkish medical students that we surveyed, being an entertainer by using humour to make classes more interesting comes in behind six other qualities or traits of instructors in terms of importance (Table 6). However, half of the students preferred their teacher to be funny in item 22 (M=2,45). While many students prioritise professional competence, others prefer it with a humour touch.

In item 28, the students were also asked their opinions about what type of humour the teacher uses in class. Students clarified in the interviews that humour in the class is generally spontaneous, unrehearsed and unexpected. Thus, they disagreed that anecdotes are the only type of humour used by the lecturers (M=2,06). In item 29, the question of whether or not humour used in the classroom should be related to the subject matter was posed to the students. Most preferred the in-class humour to be lesson-related (M=2,99). Students were asked whether they could use humour in class discussions (in item 32 and the interview). The ones who use jokes stated that teachers never embarrassed them, and most of the time, they played along. The ones who said they do not use it

stated that they do not have a chance to use humour in traditional, lecturing-style classes. In the last statement, students were asked to express their opinions on the overuse of humour. Most of the students agreed with this item (item 33, M=2,72). Too much humour can seriously endanger what they are learning, students' attention on the lesson can go away, and they can lose the sacred space of the classroom. In conclusion, it is possible to argue that humourous teachers are more relatable to their students, but this does not damage the instructors' prestige and professionalism.

c. L1 and L2 Humour (RQ3)

The answers to the questions concerning students' perceptions of humour in two languages - their mother tongue, Turkish, and the foreign language they were studying, English - are shown in this section. Even though the students enjoy English humour, some may still find it difficult to understand. Even though they do not see any problems in understanding humour in English (item 11, M=2,49), it is clear that they do not have a sharp position in their language preference. In ranking teacher qualities, students see speaking clearly in a language class as an important teacher trait (Ranked 2 in Table 6). Most of the students responded negatively when asked if they had trouble understanding English humour. This result is not surprising, given that most respondents embrace humour in their English classes.

Items 12 and 13 display students' preferences for humour production in L1 or L2. Most of the students disagreed that they would enjoy humour only in their mother tongue (item 12, M=2,25) or in the target language (item 13, M=1,87). Students' statements can imply that neither English nor Turkish humour is more welcome than one another, as they stated in previous items that humour is welcome as long as it is integrated into learning. Statement 15 presents students' views on how exposure to the native language and culture increases students' understanding of that language's culture. Even though English humour may be difficult for some students, it makes sense that so many would like to see it in their English classes since studying the culture of a language is an integral part of learning that language (M=3,28).

d. The function of humour in language learning (RQ4)

The results of the statements that asked students to rank the functions and significance of humour in learning a foreign language are shown in this section. Both of these points of view substantially impact how students respond to humour used by their foreign language teachers in the classroom, significantly influencing the outcomes. Students valued their teachers' use of humour in addition to humour in general (Item 2, M=3,45). Students who thought they "could learn better when FL teachers used humour" included those who agreed as they did in other items. For example, item 7 displays students' opinions regarding the statement, "Humour in the language class increases my interest in learning that language." These opinions may explain why students believe humour is essential to learning foreign languages. Most students agreed that humour encouraged them to learn another language (M=3,29).

Students may find humour enjoyable when learning a foreign language and think humour has a function in learning (Statement 10); thus, they disagree that humour has a questionable role in language learning (M=1,91). In item 18, students were asked their opinions on humour's effect on retaining subject matter. Most agreed that humour reinforces learning the lesson content (M=3,4). The main reason for this can be that students pay more attention when humour is used in the class (item 26, M=3,34). Berk (1998) states that it is impossible to sleep while laughing in the lesson. In line with this, students ranked the trait of explaining complex concepts as fifth place (Table 5). In item 20, students were asked about the relationship between a teacher who uses humour and students' question-asking habits. Students agreed that they feel more comfortable asking questions to a humourous teacher (item 20, M=3,38). Teachers and students connect and get along through humour. As a result,

learners do not feel threatened and will be more comfortable posing questions or participating, which is also mentioned as important in the ranking of teacher qualifications (See Table 6).

There was found to be a positive relationship between student performance and attendance in class (Devadoss & Foltz, 1996; Romer, 1993; White, 1992). A lesson in which humour is used may be more promising for students as this can positively affect attention rates (item 25, M=3,37). Students revealed that they are more likely to skip boring classes (item 27, M=3,27). Humour has the potential to create a positive environment that promotes class attendance and student participation; according to the results, the classroom environment and students' psychological states appear to be the areas where humour has the most significant impact. Most students agreed that humour use lowers negative affective filters (M=3,24).

Interview Results

The data results obtained from semi-structured interviews are presented in this section. S is used to refer to students to present their quotations in the text.

Table 7. Themes Retrieved from the Interview Data

Themes	Frequency	Research Question
a. Humour should be included in language classes.	28	(RQ1 & RQ2)
b. Humour builds rapport between lecturer and students.	25	(RQ4)
c. Humour creates a positive learning environment.	25	(RQ4)
d. Humour should be used in moderation.	25	(RQ2)
e. Humour should be relevant to the lesson content in one way or anotl	20	(RQ2)
f. Humour should be appropriate to the class context.	28	(RQ2)
g. Humour can be in L1 or L2.	21	(RQ3)

Students' opinions regarding teachers' use of humour were questioned during the interview. Not one of these students objected to a teacher using humour. Every student raised the potential advantages of humour in the classroom or lesson, from the general advantages such as "support the lesson" (S10) to the more focused ones, including "create a more comfortable environment" (S5, S2, and S4), ("hold students' attention by making students feel excited and interested in the lesson" (S9), reduce anxiety and fatigue in the classroom (S17), "enhance the lesson's interest" (S19), and "make students feel more at ease" (S3, S8, S19). These students most frequently reported that humour helped them feel more at ease in a "friendly and supportive" classroom (Littlewood, 2000, p. 34). The students added that they could learn more effectively in such an atmosphere:

> "When humour is used in the classroom, my worries about my language level or the classroom environment are reduced. It contributes to my self-development and self-confidence." (S19)
> "As Turkish students, we have prejudices against learning English. Using humour in class normalises the process and helps us overcome our fear and anxiety." (S17)

Another benefit of teachers' use of humour was its positive impact on the relationship between teachers and students. "It is undeniable that teachers' sense of humour brings them closer to students," stated S4. The interview questions' responses supported the survey's findings that humoured instruction improved student learning and bonded teachers to their students. Some students did, however, caution against using humour in specific ways. According to S20, teachers should use

"better things than boring stories" to support the lesson. S21, meanwhile, stated that humour should "be appropriate." Several students (f=20) claimed that humour about politics and religion was inappropriate to use in class because they are "personal matters and divide people" (S19). These included making light of a student's appearance and ineptitude (S12 and S21) or amusing remarks that could be interpreted as offensive (S17). "That person may feel embarrassed and psychologically hurt, and they do not want to study anymore," S17 explained in elaborating on their viewpoint. Some students stressed that reactions to humour can differ and are highly related to the person's character. Thus, the teacher should know her/his students and evaluate whether or not to use such remarks. Exposing her viewpoint, some students offered a noteworthy suggestion:

> "The teacher should be the one to decide what kind of jokes are made and who is responsible for making them. It's important to have a clear line of authority in this situation. Students are all teenagers at some point, and they don't always think about the consequences of their actions" (S25)

> "There should be a sense of humour that is not mocking or bullying toward either the teacher or the student. It should be done in a way that is not disruptive to anyone. Humour is good as long as it is not offensive to anyone." (S2)

Most students indicated that they felt "comfortable and more relaxed" (S4, S5, and S7) when "the environment was not serious" (S23) and thus they "feel free to contribute to the lesson" (S5), which supports their stated perception in the scale. S11 claimed that he felt closer to the teacher and could "learn better" when asked about the impact of humour on English lesson. S24 explained that this was because "it is easier to focus on the lesson and the teacher" when they were at ease and relaxed. S10 also mentioned that humour in the classroom could "soften" teachers' criticism and help it be more convenient to students:

> "For example, when the teacher approaches the student politely or with humour, the student does not hesitate to ask questions or participate in the lesson. Even if the student's answer is wrong, I think the teacher can correct the student by softening it. No one is offended or upset." (S10)

Furthermore, S24 believed overusing humour could counteract its beneficial effects: "Playing around too much makes us feel worn, not entertained". Even more so, S13 viewed the teacher's excessive use of humour as "a waste of time" and a distraction. As a result, most students issued a warning against using humour excessively. This was consistent with the survey results. Students also raised a potential argument that might limit the benefits of teachers' use of humour: Either the humour had nothing to do with the lesson, or they struggled to find things funny effortlessly. These concepts served as a helpful reminder that humour must be relatable and transparent to be effective (Steele, 1998).

> "Humour is not a waste of time as long as we do not overuse it. When it is exceeded, students may be disengaged from the lesson or get distracted." (S20)

Students also discussed how humour might affect their understanding of the lesson content and retention of it. S19 says humour is calming and could help introduce a new topic.

> "During the lesson, the teacher can use humour related to the new topic, for example, vocabulary. It helps us learn the topic better and remember the vocabulary." (S19)

The students (S4, S8, and S18) stated that "we laughed, the lesson was fun, and we learned quicker" in an English lesson where the lecturer used humour. S19 said it was "relaxing and easier to learn and remember the words." Most students surveyed also stated that humour played a role in learning

foreign languages. The ideas that they held were that humour "supports the teaching and learning" (S6), "it is necessary" (S3), and "you can use humour in every topic" (S7).

In addition to creating a more relaxed atmosphere, teachers who used humour well may have helped their students understand the material better. Every interviewee mentioned that the humour was somewhat connected to their study lesson. This demonstrates unequivocally the necessity for humour utilised in the classroom to be relevant or to highlight the lessons. S5 confirmed that her teacher's sense of humour inspired her students, drew them in, and piqued their interest in the material. S16 and S25 provided similar accounts of teachers employing humour to make the material more accessible for students to comprehend and retain. These students favoured lesson-related humour because they stated, "When we think of the story, we will also think of the lesson." These students preferred humour that was relevant to the material (S22). During a lesson, an instructor may improvise at certain moments and catch students' attention quickly.

> "For example, 'that moment' comes to my mind during the day. Then I say yes, my teacher mentioned this subject. I remember the lesson's content. It is effective in making associations." (S20)

> "I think the use of humour in class is important in attracting attention. It pushes us to research to understand what is said in jokes. 'What did he say?' we ask, and this arouses curiosity in us. We look at the meanings of the words; if it is a phrase or something cultural, we learn it." (S5)

Most students opposed teachers making fun of any particular student in the class by critiquing them, mimicking their accent, or making remarks about their appearance or lack of skill. For example, S3 contends that "the teacher's humour is absurd and excessive, causing discomfort or confusion." More significantly, S14's experience demonstrated a fine line between being humourous and criticising students when teachers made light-hearted remarks. In short, students considered teachers' humour ineffective, or even counterproductive, when it was used to hurt somebody, overused, and about topics that students did not find appropriate.

> "It would be more appropriate if the humour is moderate, related to the course or social environment, without offending or upsetting anybody." (S14)

The students' responses to this question were diverse. Among the students surveyed, the two most common forms of humour were amusing anecdotes and clever remarks. The selections included jokes, amusing anecdotes, humourous gestures, and lighthearted remarks. Students (S3, S4, S5) also mentioned that teachers might use Turkish when telling "quite complicated stories," but in other situations, "like with synonyms and antonyms, the teacher can tell us in English." They state that English humour is preferable if the teacher provides more explanations to help students understand.

> "Having a sense of humour is important for learning about different cultures. Using humour in the classroom helps us become more aware of the language we are learning, as language learning involves understanding the culture." (S1)

In summary, students' answers showed that humour used by teachers could have both beneficial and adverse effects on a lesson. The most common comments were that it helped students relax and made the environment less stressful. The other beneficial outcomes were increasing students' sense of closeness to their teachers and improving their memory or recall of lessons. The adverse effects included the possibility that too much humour would divert students from the lesson or lose its appeal and the possibility that teachers might not find appropriate humour. However, students recommended that teachers try to comprehend their pupils, learn about their areas of interest, develop their sense of humour, and try to include humour in language classes.

DISCUSSION

This study's findings support many positive effects of pedagogical humour in language classrooms. Even impromptu or "unintentional" humour can play a significant role in fostering a favourable learning atmosphere. In particular, participants say that teachers' humour can lead to lower stress or anxiety levels, better approachability, and higher interest levels. The results of this study are parallel with several studies on many points, such as humour's positive psychological effects on language learning (Bilokcuoglu & Debreli, 2018; Cornett, 1986; Duffy & Jones, 1995; Fisher, 1997; Heidari-Shahreza, 2024; Graham & Christophel, 1990; Kher et al., 1999; Powell, 1985; Salmee & Arif, 2019; Tong & Tsung, 2020; Weisi & Mohammadi, 2023), fostering a positive attitude for better learning (Al-Duleimi, Aziz, 2016; Gonulal, 2018; Salmee & Arif, 2019; Weisi & Mohammadi, 2023), reducing anxiety (Bilokcuoglu & Debreli, 2018; Weisi & Mohammadi, 2023), promotes dialogue between educators and students (Al-Duleimi & Aziz, 2016; Gonulal, 2018; Tong & Tsung, 2020; Gonulal, 2018) and makes the classroom more interactive and open to communication (Bilokcuoglu & Debreli, 2018; Heidari-Shahreza, 2024; Weisi & Mohammadi, 2023). Similar to the previous studies (Al-Dulaimi & Aziz, 2016; Gonulal, 2018; Heidari-Shahreza, 2024; Weisi & Mohammadi, 2023), this study also revealed that humour has a positive effect on student comprehension and retention. The medical students in the present study agreed that humour used in the classroom is a good asset in sparking students' interest and making the content more straightforward and manageable for students to understand and remember. Another positive effect of humour is on the relationship between teachers and students. Humour use can connect teachers with their students by giving them opportunities to establish their real-life identities, not only the "teacher," "authority," or "knowledgeable" person roles, which strengthens the bonds between teachers and students. This study revealed that Turkish medical students prefer a teacher with a sense of humour and do not consider that humour disturbs the seriousness of the lesson. However, if not used moderately and purposefully, students' attention can be lost instead of gained, which damages the instructors' prestige and professionalism and makes classroom management highly challenging for the teacher. Regarding language preferences, Turkish medical students did not have a clearly defined choice of language that would be used for humour. They preferred both their mother tongue and the target language acceptable as long as the humour was incorporated into the lesson.

To summarise, the study demonstrated that teachers' use of humour could impact a lesson in both positive and negative ways. The most frequent remarks were that it reduced stress in the classroom and assisted students in unwinding. The other positive results were enhanced students' memory or recall of lessons and their sense of intimacy with their teachers. Among the negative consequences were the potential for teachers to not find suitable humour and the potential for excessive humour to distract students from the lesson or make it less engaging. Nonetheless, students suggested that teachers try to understand their students, discover their interests, cultivate their sense of humour, and incorporate humour into language lessons.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study aimed to investigate medical students' perceptions of teachers' humour in English language classes, focusing on the relationship between humour and learning, the function of humour in the classroom, and learners' language preferences for humour. The study revealed that humour is crucial for learning foreign languages by holding learners' attention and creating a more comfortable and conducive learning environment. It highlighted that Turkish medical students find a good sense of humour as a key teacher trait and favour their teacher's use of it moderately. Humour should be seen as a pedagogical tool that needs no preparation since it is often spontaneous, unrehearsed, and emerges unexpectedly from comments, misunderstandings, or relevant content. Students feel valued when they have the right to joke, and the teacher plays along. Medical students do not have a sharp position in their language preference for humour as long as they feel included. Also, they know that humour is an integral part of a culture, and learning a language means learning the culture. Turkish medical students stress that humour serves various pedagogical functions, such as raising student interest, reinforcing

learning the lesson content, explaining complex concepts, and encouraging students to ask more questions.

Several suggestions for successfully incorporating humour into language instruction can be derived from the study's findings. These suggestions should be discussed in the Turkish context, but they can also be used in other situations with similar conditions. The results of this study make the following suggestions: First, a good rapport between learners and language teachers should be secured. Teachers who still use an authoritarian teaching style in traditional, teacher-centred language classrooms cultivate a passive learner profile with little to no interaction between the teacher and the students. As a result, there is less communication and rapport between the teachers and students, which lowers the students' willingness and motivation (Bell, 2009; Kocaoluk & Kocaoluk, 2001; Ustunoglu, 2007). Second, humour can be considered a potential strategy in language classrooms to help build the connection between teachers and learners. In this fashion, pre-and in-service teachers should be educated about the significance of affective factors and humour used to ease this tension in language learning, which can significantly contribute to the teaching and learning foreign and second languages in the Turkish language educational system. In line with this, foreign language teachers should remember the significance of humour in foreign language learning and consider utilising it strategically and individually in their lessons. Incorporating a humour component into teacher training courses could teach pre-service and in-service teachers the techniques and strategies for using humour in English language classrooms. English teachers may also participate in workshops that cover the different approaches to using humour in the classroom. Thus, they should take note of their student profiles, interests, and needs more attentively to take advantage of opportunities to use humour more effectively in their classrooms.

In conclusion, this study significantly enhances our understanding of humour as a pedagogical tool, its association with language learning, language learners' perceptions of teacher humour, and its pedagogical roles. However, it should be noted that there are certain limitations to the current study and some suggestions for further research. This study only examines a group of medical students' perception and appreciation of classroom humour. Thus, further generalisation of the study's findings should be made with caution since the findings might not apply to other language education contexts. Future research on humour in language instruction could include other EFL students with different majors (i.e. engineering, law, tourism). A longitudinal study to examine how teachers' use of humour has changed over time and in various educational settings, such as private or high schools, or the affective and cognitive effects of humour on students over an extended period can also contribute to the field. Another study can investigate how teachers and students from various backgrounds (urban, suburban, and rural contexts in Türkiye) perceive humour in teaching practices. Finally, humour training for pre- and in-service teachers can be explored in terms of the viability of the training and its effectiveness.

Ethical Statement: This research has been conducted in compliance with the institutional regulations of Publication Ethics Committee for Social Sciences and Humanities, as outlined in the ethical permission document dated 01/03/2024.

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Appendix 1. Humour Interview Questions

Humour Interview Questions
1. What do you think about the use of humour in the classroom?
2. Is having the ability to humour an important faculty member characteristic? Why?
3. Do you think only the lecturer should be joking? Why?
4. Should the student be allowed to make jokes too? Why?
5. Should humour be used in foreign language teaching? Why?
6. Is the use of humour in the classroom confusing?
7. What kind of jokes are suitable for the classroom setting?
8. Does humour affect your emotional state while learning English? How?
9. What effect does having a lot of jokes in class have on learning? Why?
10. How do you think a good language teacher should be?

Appendix 2. Statistical Analysis of the Scale

Statements	Mean	Std. dev	Min	Max
1. Humour is important to foreign language learning.	3,28	0,68	1	4
2. I can learn better when my foreign language teacher uses humour.	3,45	0,60	1	4
3. Humour is an important characteristic of a lecturer.	3,09	0,77	1	4
4. While humour is important, learning requires a serious work environment with little time for humour.	2,20	0,71	1	4
5. If we are laughing and joking, we are not learning.	1,37	0,59	1	4
6. I think a student initiating humour in class disrupts learning.	1,76	0,64	1	4
7. Humour in the language class increases my interest in learning that language.	3,26	0,64	1	4
8. If a teacher uses humour often, I will think he/ she is unprofessional.	1,70	0,73	1	4
9. The use of humour during a lesson is distracting.	1,71	0,54	1	4
10. Humour is not a measurable characteristic and, therefore, has a questionable role in language learning.	1,94	0,65	1	4
11. I find it difficult to understand English humour in the classroom.	2,51	0,84	1	4
12. I would like my lecturer to use humour only in my mother tongue.	2,21	0,80	1	4

13. I would like my lecturer to use humour only in English.	1,85	0,60	1	4
14. My teacher's use of humour makes me feel closer to him/her.	3,28	0,64	1	4
15. I learn more about the culture of the foreign language by being exposed to the native humour of that language and culture.	3,28	0,64	1	4
16. Humour generally improves my ability to learn a foreign language by creating a more comfortable and conducive learning environment overall.	3,36	0,56	1	4
17. I can tell better jokes than my lecturer.	2,38	0,83	1	4
18. I am more likely to remember lesson content if it is presented with humour.	3,39	0,62	1	4
19. The use of humour by a lecturer is typically a waste of classroom time.	1,54	0,65	1	4
20. I feel more comfortable asking a lecturer if s/he uses humour in the classroom.	3,37	0,60	1	4
21. A lecturer's job is to teach, not entertain.	1,84	0,69	1	4
22. I would rather have a lecturer try to be humorous and fail rather than not try to be humorous at all.	2,41	0,94	1	4
23. I am sometimes offended by the use of humour by a lecturer.	1,92	0,68	1	4
24. A lecturer does not have to use humour to be an excellent lecturer.	2,97	0,66	1	4
25. I am more likely to attend a class where the lecturer uses humour.	3,32	0,65	1	4
26. I am more likely to pay attention to a lecturer if s/he uses humour in a lecture.	3,29	0,66	1	4
27. I am more likely to skip a class where the lectures are boring.	3,26	0,88	1	4
28. The only type of humour in the classroom that I am familiar with is the anecdotes told by the lecturer.	2,08	0,64	1	4
29. The lecturer's humour should be related or relevant to the subject matter.	3,00	0,83	1	4
30. I feel more relaxed (less anxious) when the lecturer uses humour in the class.	3,23	0,64	1	4
31. I think using humour in the class is important to learning the subject matter overall.	3,24	0,63	1	4
32. I can also use humour in class discussions during lectures.	2,40	0,84	1	4
33. I think overusing humour (more than 7-8 times) during the lectures can be counter-effective.	2,74	0,85	1	4

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Research Article

Exploring the Impact of Multimodal Language Learning Activities on Oral Skill Development: A Study of In-Class Oral Speech, PowerPoint Presentations, Video, and Blog Projects in an International Context

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Abstract: In recent years, the digitalization of society has sparked growing interest in multimodality, particularly within applied linguistics and second language acquisition (SLA). Research in computer-assisted language learning (CALL) has examined how both teachers and students perceive and implement multimodal activities in second language classrooms, exploring their effects on L2 comprehension, writing, and vocabulary development. However, the impact of multimodal activities on L2 oral skill development, specifically oral presentation skills, remains underexplored. This study investigates the influence of four different modes of oral presentations (oral speech, PowerPoint presentations, video projects, and blog projects) as multimodal activities on the L2 oral skills development of first-year ELT students in an international context in Northern Cyprus. Employing a mixed-method approach, including surveys and interviews, the study reveals that multimodal activities significantly enhanced integrated skills, particularly vocabulary, grammar, writing, presentation, and speaking abilities. These activities also enabled students to identify and correct linguistic errors while improving their presentation skills through the consistent use of language across various modes (e.g., classroom presentations and blog reflections). Additionally, multimodality fostered social skills by facilitating group participation, peer collaboration, feedback exchange, and the negotiation of linguistic, content, and technical knowledge. On a psychological level, the multimodal approach helped students overcome their fear of oral presentations, reduce anxiety, boost self-confidence, and increase motivation. The use of visuals, such as PowerPoint slides, videos, and blogs, presented both challenges and opportunities, underscoring the importance of training students to effectively utilize multimodal activities to enhance their speaking skills and highlighting the need to integrate such technologies into L2 education.

Keywords: *Multimodality, oral speech, PowerPoint presentation, video project, blog, perceptions*

INTRODUCTION

The recent surge in technological advancements has created numerous opportunities for language learning to transition from traditional, routine classrooms to technology-driven activities. Studies like Hubbard (2009) have confirmed the effectiveness of technologies such as computers in L2 education, enhancing both language skill development and retention. This shift in technology has also sparked a significant transformation in language studies, often referred to as the 'trans-turn.' This transformation underscores the negotiability, permeability, and fluidity of boundaries between languages and other modalities in meaning-making (Sun, Yang, & Silva, 2021).

Moreover, the 'trans-turn' emphasizes a multimodal approach, defined as “an interdisciplinary, social semiotic approach that understands communication and representation as the integration of modes for meaning-making” (Yi & Angay-Crowder, 2016, p. 990). This approach recognizes the

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legitimacy of all semiotic resources in meaning-making, positing that language is just one among many resources for communication (Sun et al., 2021).

Studies have demonstrated that multimodality can enhance communicative competence, cultural understanding, and attitudes towards language (Coccetta, 2018; Freyn, 2017; Kennedy, 2014). Mayer (2001) explains that combining words and pictures leads to deeper learning compared to using words alone, a phenomenon known as the multimedia effect. Thus, presenting materials through various modes can make learning seem easier and increase student attention, potentially improving outcomes, particularly for lower-achieving L2 learners (Chen & Fu, 2003; Moreno & Mayer, 2007). Multimodality has also been found to facilitate second language listening comprehension. (Guichon & McLornan, 2008) and writing skills by providing a diverse range of semiotic resources (Pacheco & Smith, 2015; Smith et al., 2017).

Oral presentations are considered highly effective for enhancing L2 learning and communication skills in both academic and professional contexts. They build confidence in public speaking and provide a competitive edge for future careers (Kim, 2020). Extant research on multimodality and oral language skills shows that incorporating multimodal texts makes students more proactive and autonomous (Kummin et al., 2020) and helps them achieve specific learning objectives during their presentations (Soliman, 2023). However, despite CALL's opportunities, research on multimodality's impact on L2 speaking remains limited, likely due to difficulties in collecting and interpreting speaking data. This study explores the use of four different presentation modalities —oral speech, PowerPoint Presentation, video projects, and blog project— and its impact on L2 presentation skills as well as other language-related skills of a group of 90 undergraduate students in an international setting in Northern Cyprus.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Multimodality and Multidimensionality

The foundation of multimodality lies in Halliday's (1978) social semiotic theory of communication which relates mainly to the study of language use in its social and cultural contexts. However, the concept of multimodality has been expanded to encompass the co-constructive features of language and other modes in constructing meaning (Kress, 2003; Jewitt, 2006). To be able to understand the concept of modality, we need to understand two related concepts: mode and modality. Mode is defined as "socially shaped and culturally given resource for meaning-making" such as "image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, and soundtrack" (Kress, 2017, p. 60); while modality is referred to "the integrations of two or more semiotic resources (including language) in the communication of meaning" (O'Halloran & Smith, 2012) or "linked clusters of semiotic resources used to make meaning in communication that are culturally embedded and recognizable" (Hawkins, 2018, p. 60). Thus, multimodality is a position that views "communication and representation to be more than about language, and which attend[s] to the full range of communicational forms people use—image, gesture, gaze, posture, and so on" (Jewitt, 2017, p.15). Thus, it offers individuals "not only accessing information in different formats but also establishing interactivity between these representations" (Guichon & McLornan, 2008, p. 86).

Multimodality and L2 Language Education

Modern digital technologies, such as computers, the Internet, and online tools, offer a range of representational and communicative resources—including images, color, audio, and video—in addition to linguistic elements. These technologies provide multiple modes of representation through which meaning can be negotiated, mediated, and constructed, especially for second language learners. A number of studies have highlighted the importance and affordances of multimodalities and other semiotic resources beyond language for meaning negotiation and construction in second language writing. These have been explored under various frameworks, such as multimodal approaches or

composing, digital or multimodal design, and transmodality (Belcher, 2017; Casanave, 2017; Horner et al., 2015; Shin & Cimasko, 2008; Shipka, 2016).

Several studies have explored L2 teachers' perceptions and practices regarding multimodality in language pedagogy. Hampel and Stickler (2005) examined the use of multimodal activities in online language learning environments. The study found that multimodal platforms (such as those incorporating text, audio, and video) encourage learners to collaborate more effectively, exchange feedback, and engage in meaningful communication. In another study, Yi and Choi (2015) investigated the views of 25 teachers on their use of multimodal practices, finding that the teachers were highly supportive of these methods. They considered multimodal practices to be effective tools for engaging and motivating students, offering diverse means for student expression, and providing teachers with deeper insights into their students' learning. However, the teachers also noted several challenges associated with implementing multimodal practices, including time constraints, the pressures of standardized testing, and a decreased emphasis on academic language and literacy. Further, Choi and Yi (2016) conducted a qualitative study to examine how two teachers with limited experience in teaching English Language Learners (ELLs) employed multimodal approaches. The findings showed that incorporating multimodal activities offered the teachers multiple opportunities to help the learners better understand discipline-specific content, communicate their knowledge more effectively, and experience psychological comfort. The study also reported that these practices enhanced students' sense of accomplishment and self-esteem. However, it also highlighted significant constraints on the use of technology in the classroom, primarily due to a lack of administrative support.

In addition to teaching, multimodal practices have also been demonstrated to facilitate learning of diverse L2 skills. Tardy (2005) investigated how four multilingual graduate students expressed their identities in writing. The study found that the use of multimodality in their writing significantly aided the students in both understanding and conveying their disciplinary and personal identities. Further, drawing on the concept of synaesthetic semiosis (Kress, 1999), Shin and Cimasko (2008) explored how ESL writers in a first-year writing class utilized various modes in multimodal argumentative essays posted on the World Wide Web. Their study revealed that word-dominated discourse played a central role in the selection of these modes, with non-linguistic modes primarily used to illustrate the written essays. The findings also indicated that students employed non-linguistic modes to express their cultural and national identities, as well as their emotional connections to the topics. Additionally, the study showed that students used multiple modes to construct meaning, reflecting the social practices involved in learning multimodal genres in which they were engaged. Moreover, Castañeda and Cho (2013) investigated the impact of collaborative multimodal writing activities, such as wikis, on learning Spanish grammar. Their study revealed that writing on wikis improved students' understanding of grammar and was seen as beneficial for developing writing skills and overall L2 learning. However, students expressed discomfort with editing their peers' work and had reservations about the accuracy of others' edits. Further, adopting a translingual and multimodal approach, Pacheco and Smith (2015) analyzed the digital creations of four eighth-grade ELLs. The findings indicated that the students used multiple languages and modes to convey meanings, engage their audience, and reflect on their writing experiences. The study argued that a multimodal approach can enhance teaching and learning practices by providing students with a diverse range of semiotic resources in their writing. Additionally, Smith et al. (2017) analyzed the digital products of three eighth-grade English language learners and found that their writing processes involved using various writing tools, collaborating with peers, visualizing ideas, and interacting across different times and spaces. The study concluded that technology provided students with valuable opportunities to integrate their linguistic, cultural, and other semiotic resources into their writing practices. Furthermore, a study by Guichon and McLornan (2008) on the effects of multimodality on L2 learners' comprehension found that comprehension improved when students were exposed to a text through different modalities. Additionally, L2 subtitling proved to be more effective than L1 subtitling, as it presented less lexical interference.

L2 Speaking and Multimodality

L2 speaking is a fundamental mode of communication and is central to communicative competence, especially from the Communicative Language Teaching perspective (see Savignon, 1983). Research highlights the vital role of oral communication skills in academic settings for both knowledge building and sharing (Duff, 2010), as well as for assessment purposes. Oral presentations, also known as public speaking, oratory, or oration, are integral to English as a second language classrooms and have garnered significant attention from researchers (Mak, 2019). In this regard, Kim (2020) found that oral presentations are a highly effective method for enhancing L2 learning and communication skills. The study revealed that such presentations not only improve L2 proficiency but also build confidence in public speaking and provide a competitive edge for future careers. Additionally, oral presentations were recognized as crucial for developing effective communication skills in both academic and professional contexts.

It is worth noting that oral presentations in language classrooms can take various forms, such as monologues, videotaped presentations, PowerPoint-assisted deliveries, TED Talks, Toastmasters, blended learning sessions, and Pecha Kucha. Studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of oral presentations, specifically Pecha Kucha presentations (de Armijos, 2019; Zharkynbekova et al., 2017), in EFL classrooms.

Despite the inherently multimodal nature of oral presentations, particularly PowerPoint presentations, research on the intersection of multimodality and oral presentations remains limited. Soliman (2023) conducted a study on the multimodal design of PowerPoint presentations and found that the verbal component was the most effective for teaching literature in a second language. The study also emphasized that the strategic use of verbal elements can help students achieve specific learning objectives during their oral presentations. In a mixed-method study, Lee (2019) explored the integration of multimodal technologies for teaching EFL presentations to Taiwanese university students. The findings showed that participants generally viewed technology-supported multimodal activities in their oral training course positively, even though they faced psychological and technological challenges while creating multimodal assignments. Additionally, a study by Kummin and colleagues (2020) on the use of multimodal texts in teaching English oral skills -the ability to effectively communicate using spoken language- revealed that incorporating multimodal texts encouraged students to be more proactive and autonomous. The results also indicated that the multimodality of texts provided students with opportunities to engage with the language more critically and creatively, enhancing both individual and group language learning development.

Research has also highlighted the connections between oral discourse and other modalities, such as writing, emphasizing the intermodal and intertextual links between them (Duff & Anderson, 2015). These connections are particularly significant in the context of multimodal literacy practices for L2 learners, such as digital storytelling (Kang, 2020). Payne and Whitney (2002) note that online chatting can enhance L2 learners' oral proficiency. Additionally, oral presentations can be managed more effectively when integrated with writing. Rubin and Kang (2008) recommend poster presentations as an effective way to use writing to support oral presentations and interactions.
Moreover, video technology is considered a powerful multimodal tool that significantly enhances language teaching and learning (Chuang & Rosenbusch, 2005; Godwin-Jones, 2003), particularly in presentation training (Powell, 2011). Lonnecker, Brady, McPherson, and Hawkins (1994) demonstrated that video modeling, a form of video technology, effectively identifies weaknesses in presentation abilities and helps reduce undesirable student behaviors. Additionally, Levis and Pickering (2004) found that speech visualization technology is beneficial for teaching intonation.

On the other hand, blogging is a crucial multimodal practice that can enhance both writing and speaking skills for L2 learners (Bloch, 2008). It serves as a gateway to multimodal literacy, allowing learners to express their own voice and identity (Bloch, 2008). Hsu, Wang, and Comac (2008) found that audioblogs effectively enhance the learning experience of oral presentations, while Hung and Huang (2015) demonstrated that video blogs can improve EFL students' oral presentation skills.

Oral presentations in L2 classes are also often linked with stress, anxiety, and tension, as research has shown a correlation between L2 speaking and anxiety (Amirian & Tavakoli, 2016; Arifin et al., 2023; Barber, 2023). Additionally, academic oral presentations require extensive preparation and practice, which can be challenging for students from diverse sociocultural and sociolinguistic backgrounds who may be less familiar with such activities (Duff, 2009). Effective oral presentations also necessitate thorough training in listening, reading, writing, and nonverbal communication, in addition to speaking.

This study adopts the multimodality approach as its theoretical framework. Multimodality is defined as an interdisciplinary, social semiotic approach that views communication and representation as the integration of various modes for meaning-making (Yi & Angay-Crowder, 2016). The adoption of this approach is driven by recent technological advancements that enable the combination of multiple modalities in constructing meaning. These advancements facilitate hybrid forms of communication involving diverse semiotic modes (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001).

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative inquiries (Patton, 2015) to gain a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions. The decision to adopt this approach was influenced by the complexity of the phenomenon under investigation—oral skills—which are challenging to explore and often require a multi-faceted analysis. Specifically, an explanatory sequential design was employed, in which quantitative data from surveys were collected first, followed by qualitative data from the open-ended sections of the surveys and supplemented by interviews. This design enabled a comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions, experiences, and practices related to the integration of four multimodal language learning activities into their oral presentations.

The mixed-methods approach was chosen because it offers the strength of combining the numerical breadth of surveys with the in-depth insights provided by reflections and interviews, making it particularly suitable for exploring the nuances of language learning experiences. By integrating both data types, the study provides a fuller understanding of how multimodal activities impact students' oral skills development.

The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How do students perceive the impact of oral speeches on their presentation skills?
2. How do students perceive the impact of PowerPoint presentations on their presentation skills?
3. How do students perceive the impact of video projects on their presentation skills?
4. How do students perceive the impact of blogs on their presentation skills?
5. How do these multimodal activities affect students' perceived speaking development and their perceptions of language learning?

Study Context

The study was conducted in an international setting with a student population of approximately 20,000, focusing on the English Language Teaching (ELT) Department, which included around 250 undergraduate and graduate students. Ethics approval for the study was obtained from the relevant institutional review board (EKK23-24/009/10). Students were informed about the research, and all participants consented to take part in the study. The sample consisted of first-year ELT students in their second semester at the time of the research. Out of 89 students enrolled in the Oral Communication Skills course, 43 completed the survey, with each survey number corresponding to an individual respondent (e.g., Survey 11 refers to Student 11). Seven students also voluntarily participated in follow-up interviews. The course, offered in two groups, met for two hours each week.

The participants represented 10 different nationalities, including Iran, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Russia, Korea, Türkiye, and Cyprus, with the majority being from

Türkiye. The course was offered over two academic semesters during the 2023-2024 academic year. In the first semester, students were introduced to the course requirements, presentation delivery, slide design, and the use of various multimodal technologies to enhance their presentations in English. During the fall semester of 2023-24, students were required to deliver different PowerPoint presentations. In the second semester, they engaged in four distinct multimodal assignments.

Table 1 Distribution of participants by nationality and percentage

Nationality	percentage
Turkish	70
Kazakh	2.5
Korean	7.5
Kyrgyz	2.5
Persian	7.5
Russian	7.5
Turkmen	2.5

The course under study is offered to first-year ELT students to further develop their speaking skills and introduce them to the various skills needed to deliver oral presentations in English as a second language. Most of the activities in the class revolve around listening and speaking and as part of the course grade students are required to deliver multiple presentations in the class. All the students enrolled in the course had passed a proficiency exam administered by the School of Foreign Languages to the English-medium programs before enrolling in their respective departments. Most students were at the B1 or B2 English proficiency levels at the time of the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The study took place in the spring of 2024, spanning a duration of 15 instructional weeks. At the end of the semester, students were invited to complete a survey via a link shared in the course WhatsApp group and on the Moodle page. Participation was voluntary, and 43 students completed the survey, with seven students also consenting to participate in end-of-semester interviews.

Throughout the semester, as part of the course, students completed four different oral presentation modalities. For the first presentation, they delivered an individual persuasive speech on a topic provided by the course instructor, without using slides or other visual aids. For the second presentation, students selected a topic from a list prepared by the instructor and delivered an approximately six-minute presentation using no more than seven slides. In the third presentation, students worked in groups of two to four to create a video project, which they then presented to the class along with accompanying PowerPoint presentations. Finally, for the fourth assignment, students had the option to work individually or in groups to prepare a reflective blog. This blog was to include their reflective presentations, supplemented by pictures and videos.

The study utilized a survey, prepared by the researcher, comprising approximately 30 questions divided into three sections. The first section gathered students' biographical information. The second section consisted of multiple-choice questions using a Likert scale (15 items), alongside an open-ended section (8 items). The Likert-scale questions assessed students' perceptions and practices regarding the integration of four different modalities in their presentations. In this section, students were asked about the perceived impact of the four modalities on their language learning skills, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, speaking, and self-confidence. Students were asked whether these modalities had improved their language skills and, if so, to what extent. Responses were measured on a four-point Likert scale: "Significantly improved," "Somewhat improved," "No significant improvement," and "Declined." Data for this section were reported using percentages.

The open-ended section encouraged students to reflect on their experiences with the four modalities and their impact on language learning. Additionally, interviews were conducted at the end of the semester, one week before the final exams in the spring semester of 2024, at times convenient for the students. These interviews were conducted in English, Turkish, and Persian, based on the

participants' preferred language, and each lasted approximately nine to fourteen minutes. The interviewees (see Table 2) were asked to reflect on their experiences throughout the semester, focusing on the four modalities they had engaged with. After recording the interviews, the researcher transcribed them into a Microsoft Word document. For both data sets, a theme-based analysis was employed, following Patton's (2015) qualitative data analysis technique.

Table 2. Interview participant demographics

Name	gender	age	nationality	duration of interview (MM:SS)
Interviewee 1	Female	20	Turkish	10:05
Interviewee 2	Male	20	Iranian	12:41
Interviewee 3	Female	20	Turkish	13:35
Interviewee 4	Male	20	Turkish	10:48
Interviewee 5	Male	20	Turkish	13:47
Interviewee 6	Female	19	Turkish	9:00
Interviewee 7	Female	22	Turkish	13:09

FINDINGS

The findings of this study revolved around three main themes: students' perceptions of oral speech and PowerPoint presentations, video projects, and blog projects.

Students' Perceptions of Oral Speech and PowerPoint Presentations

The first section examines the study participants' perceptions of in-class presentations (both oral speeches and PowerPoint presentations), with a focus on how these activities impact their overall presentation skills and, more specifically, their speaking abilities and other language competencies. The first item was the extent to which oral presentations in class is perceived to affect the participants' speaking. Around 67 percent of the students believed that oral presentations significantly affected their speaking skill development while 31 percent stated that they somewhat influenced their speaking skill.

Table 3. Impact of in-Class presentations on students' speaking skill development

	significantly improved	somewhat affected/ improved	no significant improvement
Speaking	66.7	31	2.3

The next set of questions asked students whether oral presentations had an impact on their learning of various linguistic elements, including vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and confidence. A total of 92.9 percent of participants believed that oral presentations enhanced their vocabulary learning. Furthermore, over 85 percent of participants agreed that oral presentations positively influenced their grammar, pronunciation, and confidence in English as a second language.

Table 4. Impact of oral presentations on students' linguistic features and confidence

	yes	no	not so sure
Vocabulary	92.9	2.4	4.8
Grammar	85.7	9.5	4.8
Boosting confidence	88.1	4.8	7.1
Pronunciation	85.7	4.8	9.5

The reflection data from the survey (referred to here as "reflection") and insights from the interviews corroborated the survey results regarding the impact of oral presentations on participants' presentation skills and, consequently, their speaking abilities. Participants highlighted several positive outcomes from engaging in oral presentations. They reported that these activities helped boost their confidence and reduce anxiety about speaking in front of others. This reduction in anxiety and fear of making mistakes led to a greater sense of accomplishment and increased motivation for some.

Additionally, students indicated improvements in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation as a result of preparing and delivering their presentations. The presentation process allowed them to learn and practice both formal and informal speech patterns, as well as to develop an increased awareness of non-verbal communication skills, such as making eye contact, which further contributed to their overall speaking development. Some representative excerpts from the data are provided below:

> *I think oral presentations improved my speaking a lot. I not only learned new words while preparing the presentation, but also learned to reduce my anxiety and stress while presenting in class, and felt more confident as I accomplished something. At the same time, I learned the correct pronunciation of the words that I had pronounced incorrectly, Survey 22*

> *I learned some vocabulary while preparing and working on slides for my presentations! I learned vocabulary such as divine, and the difference between anxious and anxiety, we used AI to prepare some slides on heritage and history, it was good for some stuff such as history but not so effective, Interview 2*

Oral speeches and presentations also played a crucial role in promoting students' noticing of their own mistakes and language weaknesses. As students engaged in more classroom presentations and interacted with and watched and observed their lecturer and peers, they became more aware of specific areas that needed improvement. This increased awareness helped them identify challenges in pronunciation and gaps in vocabulary, prompting a focused effort to refine their language skills.

> *Engaging in oral presentations highlighted several aspects of my language skills that needed improvement. As I practiced delivering my presentation, I noticed certain words and sounds that I struggled to pronounce correctly, which prompted me to focus more on these areas. Additionally, presenting to an audience revealed gaps in my vocabulary. When I stumbled over words or found myself unable to express certain ideas clearly, it became evident that my word choice was limited in certain contexts. This realization pushed me to expand my vocabulary and practice using new terms. Survey 11*

Participation in oral presentations encouraged students to improvise when speaking in front of an audience, which not only helped reduce their anxiety but also facilitated their language development. This spontaneous use of language allowed them to think quickly and creatively, enhancing their ability to communicate effectively in real-time, as described below:

> *I used to get stressed during presentations, which caused me to forget what I had planned to say. However, improvising and creating new sentences on the spot ended up improving my English. Survey 11*

> *Oral presentations without slides …. they helped improve my vocabulary because when I forget something, I have to create new sentences on the spot. Survey 11*

The feedback provided by both peers and the instructor after each presentation was highly valued by students. It allowed students to focus on key areas such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and intonation. Students appreciated the immediate corrections and guidance, which facilitated their ongoing improvement and contributed to increased confidence and reduced anxiety.

> *It reduced my shyness because it enabled me to speak in front of people, and my language improved because my mistakes were corrected. Survey 40*

> *Because when you gave feedback on a specific point and I corrected those areas I could see the development and I took you seriously, and at the same time watching those people who show great enthusiasm and work in their presentation contributed to my learning especially X's presentations and in terms of pronunciation …. was very helpful; before a presentation I*

went and asked her how to pronounce a certain word and immediately she showed me how to pronounce before the presentation and it was quite helpful. Interview 5

Moreover, the students' reflections on multimodal activities reveal challenges and benefits. Working in groups, facilitated by multimodal activities, provided opportunities for enhanced socialization, language development, and awareness of linguistic differences. However, some students encountered difficulties when working in non-compatible groups at the beginning of the semester, which were later resolved.

I also liked the group presentations very much, but they were a little challenging for me because I am a person who likes to be a leader in everything. I want everything to be the way I want and I do it that way. These group presentations taught us the power of working together and solidarity, and that our work can be easier with this cooperation. Of course, if you are giving a group presentation with your best friend, this is always a good option. Survey 22

… while I was working in a group, I saw how they were acting and performing or doing and they also saw how I was doing, we saw how presentations were prepared, from this angle, we contributed to each other's learning through new ways! ……. as I shared with you earlier, when we did not know how to pronounce a certain word, we listened to the pronunciation of the word several times together and that helped a lot. Interview 3

Finally, the data illustrate the mixed experiences students had when conducting oral presentations without visual aids, such as slides, videos, or blogs. Many students found that presenting without visuals was challenging because it required them to rely solely on their memory and engage in spontaneous speaking. For others, the absence of visual aids created anxiety and discomfort, as they felt less prepared without the structured framework that slides provide. Some students also found that visuals could be distracting, causing them to feel less comfortable during presentations. Some representative extracts are provided below:

Sometimes when I prepared the slides, I prepared an outline from the vocabulary of the main points; which helped me to remember what I wanted to say better or sometimes I wrote some of the letters bolder to remember that it was to do with something or the main point was this! Interview 2

… visuals, images, photos, slides, emoji can help with recollection! Actually while giving presentations with slides, I experienced some difficulties as shifting to different slides or seeing the slides and thinking at the same time while speaking created some sort of distractions for me. That is why I felt a bit more comfortable while giving presentations without slides! I felt more like a teacher! That is why I prefer presentations without slides. Interview 3

The one without slides makes me nervous but confident at the same time, because I am not relying on slides not reading, giving a speech actually, the second one is most easier than the others because it is like a support standing by my back. Survey 40

Students' Perceptions of Video Projects on Speaking and Language Development

In evaluating the impact of video projects on their speaking skills, participants expressed a clear preference for oral presentations. Only 63 percent of them viewed video projects as beneficial for their speaking development (see Table 5 below).

Table 5. The perceived impact of video projects on speaking skill development

	significantly improved	**somewhat affected/ improved**	**not so sure (no significant improvement or not agreed)**
Speaking	63.2	31.6	5.2

However, participants believed that video projects were beneficial for learning vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and boosting self-confidence. The highest score in this section was related to video projects helping students become more self-confident (76.9%), followed by improvements in grammar (71.8%), and then vocabulary and pronunciation (both at 69.2%).

Table 6. The perceived impact of video projects on linguistic features and confidence

	yes	no	not so sure
Vocabulary	69.2	15.4	15.4
Grammar	71.8	12.8	15.4
Boosting confidence	76.9	10.3	12.8
Pronunciation	69.2	12.8	17.9

The students' insights into their video projects provide a variety of reflections on how engaging in multimodal activities like video production influences their language learning, emotional regulation, self-confidence, and social interactions. While a few participants viewed video projects as routine activities ("Can't say anything... Just like a regular presentation" — Survey), the majority felt these projects significantly enhanced their language learning skills. The video projects acted as a mirror, enabling students to notice and correct their grammar and pronunciation mistakes. This process often required multiple recordings, which repeatedly exposed students to the same language, thereby reducing anxiety and stress when presenting in class. The repetitive nature of recording allowed students to identify and correct their errors, and the ability to stop, review, and redo segments provided valuable practice, leading to improvements in pronunciation and fluency. Additionally, the project offered students the opportunity to gain technical knowledge.

> *The video project was a very fun and informative project for me. I was able to notice the pronunciation and grammatical mistakes I made while shooting the video and corrected them. Additionally, the video presentation was a useful project as I learned new words. Survey 40*

> *I tried shooting the video, if I want to tell you the truth, just my section of the video. I tried maybe 30 times, vocabulary wise, I could not memorize certain phrases or sentences while shooting, but I remember the pronunciation of the word appreciate. … while shooting the videos, it somehow presented some difficulties for me. …. I edited them myself, while I was editing the video …technically I learned a lot of things. The video project provided me with good vocabulary and confidence. Interview 4*

The video projects were also considered beneficial for building self-confidence and reinforcing knowledge. Several students mentioned that creating a video contributed to their self-confidence and helped improve their pronunciation.

> *I looked at my videos several times, looking at the errors I made. One specific example was not to be excited or anxious when preparing our videos, because when we get anxious a lot, we start mixing up things in our mind and as a result forgot what we wanted to say. Interview 1*

> *It increased my confidence in English because I had never prepared a video in English before, and preparing this video taught me both how to prepare a video and that I can prepare a video in another language. Survey 7*

Additionally, the projects provided not only linguistic practice but also opportunities for experiential learning. Some students highlighted the educational value of the video project, noting that it facilitated learning beyond language skills, including the acquisition of new content.

> *We made our video project with four people and talked about eight historical places within the walled city. This is the first time we have done such an assignment. We shot a video and*

uploaded it to YouTube. Everyone would see the video, so we worked very carefully. We prepared our speech in advance and repeated it many times. Since our topic is historical places, we learned many words about history. We listened to the pronunciations from the translation and discussed the pronunciations we did not know. It was like a vlog video and I felt like a confident YouTuber. It was a very fun, instructive and at the same time tiring assignment. Survey 22

Some students also felt more comfortable speaking in front of a camera than delivering a live presentation, as the video format provided a safe space to experiment and improvise without fear of immediate judgment. The process of making videos, thus, served as an exercise in emotional regulation, helping them maintain composure and focus more effectively on their speech.

While we were shooting the videos, there were instances of improvisations and I liked it because I sometimes did not feel self-confident while speaking, but when we were shooting the videos, because I knew there was a camera in front of me, I felt a bit more comfortable! I also tried to improvise while shooting the video; I became a bit too anxious. While I was shooting the video, because I was interviewing another person I felt that I made some grammar mistakes but when I realized that the interviewee understood me I became more confident. I did not fully understand the person who I was interviewing because he was a native speaker but I pretended that I understood but generally I got the gist. However, after watching the video, when I watched myself I realized that I could have pronounced some of the words better, and I tried to correct them! Interview 3

Collaboration also emerged as a significant factor in the learning experience. Working together on video projects not only helped improve language skills but also fostered social connections and teamwork.

….. in the video we had to work with other people, foreigners, we went to a historical place, ….. shooting video was a fun activity, when we were shooting the video on that day, we made friends with some people from Italy and some other foreigners. Definitely working with …. helped me a lot with my English as his English, especially in terms of speaking, his proficiency is a bit better than mine and he could be quite helpful actually and could transfer the knowledge. He corrected my mistakes and was helpful in terms of vocabulary because the transcript we were going to use in the video was prepared by both of us but it was mainly his work. Interview 5

Overall, the students' reflections on their video projects reveal that engaging in multimodal activities significantly impacted their language learning, emotional regulation, and self-confidence. Additionally, the video projects fostered collaboration and experiential learning, further enhancing the students' educational experience.

Students' Perceptions of Blogging Projects and their Impact on Language Learning

In evaluating blogging projects, participants rated them the lowest among all activities for improving speaking skills, with only 47.4 percent believing that blogging significantly enhanced their speaking abilities. However, these projects were seen as having a substantial impact on grammar (81.6%) and vocabulary (71.1%) learning and improvement.

Table 7. The perceived impact of blog projects on speaking skill development

	significantly improved	**somewhat affected/ improved**	**not so sure (no significant improvement or not agreed)**
Speaking	47.4	10.5	42.1

Table 8. The perceived impact of blog projects on linguistic features and confidence

	yes	no	not so sure
Vocabulary	71.1	10.5	18.4
Grammar	81.6	7.9	10.5
Boosting confidence	62.2	10.8	27
Pronunciation	63.2	10.5	26.3

Despite the lower perceived impact on speaking skills, the reflective nature of blogging provided students with opportunities to review and reinforce their learning throughout the semester. This iterative process, involving writing and revising blog posts, was particularly beneficial for vocabulary acquisition. Students reported feeling motivated to use varied vocabulary and explore new expressions, which helped in retaining new language forms. Blogging also allowed students to track their progress, enhancing their understanding and recall of the language. Additionally, it helped students develop technical skills, becoming more digitally literate, through collaboration with their peers.

> *Because I saw my own reflection, I improved by working to complete my shortcomings. Survey 39*

> *Because we used a lot of vocabularies; these modalities helped me in improving vocabulary to some extent, since as we constantly had to use the same language over and over again, it led to new discoveries, especially in writing the blog; while I was writing I wanted to use different vocabularies which made me discover new things. Interview 1*

> *The blog assignment helped me a lot in increasing my vocabulary, and I also learned new information about blogging by exchanging ideas with my friends. Survey 43*

Moreover, blogging significantly impacted students' writing skills by providing a platform for practicing different ways of expressing their thoughts. The collaborative nature of the blog projects also played a crucial role, as students learned from peers and resources like AI tools, which helped them correct mistakes and improve their writing.

> *Blog did not influence my speaking a lot honestly, but it impacted vocabulary and grammar; first I tried to write what I was going to say in Turkish and then tried to translate it into English but there were some words I did not know and I also wanted to use some academic vocabulary and used AI. In the beginning, AI used difficult words and then I used a dictionary to understand those vocabulary, so I used words with simple pronunciations. These helped me a lot while writing the blog. … blog made me fix my grammar mistakes and grammar. Interview 4*

> *…blog project I can say, we did a lot of collaboration with friends while preparing the blog and I learned how we can write informally while talking about ourselves. Interview 7*

The blogging activity allowed students to incorporate personal experiences, which helped them learn vocabulary that was personally and emotionally relevant, thereby enhancing their language learning. Additionally, blogging prompted emotional engagement by allowing students to reflect on their language development over time, which fostered a sense of achievement and intrinsic motivation.

> *Working on a blog project has significantly enhanced my vocabulary, grammar. The need to express ideas clearly and engagingly motivated me to expand my lexicon and use synonyms and context-specific terms more effectively. I became more conscious of common grammatical errors and learned to avoid them. Survey 11*

Blog also made me quite emotional as we had to write about experiences of learning from the start of the year as I could see my development and improvement over the year while writing our reflection. Interview 1

Despite the perceived advantages by most respondents, a few expressed their dislike of the activity, finding it time-consuming and not significantly beneficial for their speaking skills.

The blog just revealed a new skill in me, making websites, but in the future I would not want to do it, as it takes up a lot of my time. Survey 11

Overall, blogging emerged as a valuable multimodal activity that facilitated language learning in a meaningful, engaging, and emotionally supportive way. Further, the students' insights into their blog projects highlighted the multifaceted impact of blogging on their language learning and emotional well-being. Many students found that blogging provided emotional support and a sense of achievement, as it allowed them to reflect on their progress over time. Writing about their experiences from the start of the year helped them see their development, which was both motivating and encouraging.

DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study suggest that multimodality has a significant impact on the development of L2 presentation skills, as well as other language-related abilities. This section outlines the four key findings: (1) the enhancement of linguistic and digital literacy skills through multimodality, (2) the psychological effects of multimodality on students, (3) the influence of multimodality on social dynamics in language learning, and (4) the benefits and challenges of using visuals as a multimodal tool in L2 presentations. Each of these findings will be discussed in detail below.

The Enhancement of Linguistic and Digital Literacy Skills through Multimodality

The multimodal activities in this study were instrumental in developing integrated language skills, including vocabulary, grammar, writing, presentation skills, and, crucially, speaking. These activities not only enhanced various language skills but also facilitated students' ability to notice gaps in their language knowledge. By engaging in diverse multimodal tasks, students were able to identify and reflect on their linguistic shortcomings, practice and refine their language use, and ultimately promote their language development. This process of noticing (Schmidt, 1990)—where learners become conscious of their language errors and areas needing improvement—was key to their progress and deeper understanding of the language.

Students reported improvements in vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation as they prepared and delivered their oral presentations. This process enabled them to practice both formal and informal speech styles, use new vocabulary, and speak spontaneously in front of an audience. Engaging in impromptu language use fostered quick thinking and effective real-time communication. Oral presentations were also crucial in helping students notice and recognize their mistakes and language gaps. Through repeated practice and by observing their lecturers and peers, students became more aware of specific areas needing improvement. This increased awareness helped them identify pronunciation difficulties and vocabulary gaps, motivating them to refine their language skills. These findings are in line with previous studies reporting the significant impact of multimodality on English language learners' acquisition of vocabulary (Galimberti, Mora, & Gilabert, 2023; Sundqvist & Wikström, 2015), mastery of writing (Jiang, Yu, & Lee, 2022), and oral comprehension (Beltrán-Palanques & Querol-Julián, 2018). Additionally, in line with the study by Morell, Beltrán-Palanques, and Norte (2022), students in this study became more conscious of non-verbal communication skills, such as maintaining eye contact, which further enhanced their speaking abilities. This aligns with the output hypothesis (Swain, 1985), as speaking through different modes provided the participants with

opportunities to notice their errors, gain multimodal awareness (Alalem, 2023), and facilitate their language development.

The use of video as a multimodal activity in oral presentations also proved effective in enhancing language learning skills, particularly L2 presentation skills. The video projects served as a reflective tool, enabling students to identify and correct their grammar and pronunciation mistakes. The process often required multiple attempts, allowing students to notice and rectify their errors. The ability to pause, review, and redo parts provided valuable practice, which enhanced pronunciation and fluency. These findings align with previous studies highlighting the significant impact of video as a multimodal tool in language learning and teaching (Chuang & Rosenbusch, 2005; Godwin-Jones, 2003), especially for presentation training (Powell, 2011). Similarly, this study, like the research by Lonnecker et al. (1994), found that video projects enable students to identify and correct their mistakes due to the flexibility provided by editing features.

Although students did not perceive the usefulness of blogs on their speaking development very favorably, they reported a notable effect on their grammar and vocabulary improvement and learning. Furthermore, the reflective aspect of blogging offered students a valuable chance to review and reinforce their learning throughout the semester. The repeated exposure to language through writing and revising blog entries was especially helpful for vocabulary development. Students were encouraged to use diverse vocabulary and experiment with new words, leading to the discovery and retention of new expressions. The blog project also enabled some students to reflect on their progress, which enhanced their comprehension and recall of the language. The blog projects also served as a reflective exercise, allowing students to think about their experiences while repeatedly using certain vocabulary and grammar, which helped them acquire specific phrases and linguistic features. This finding somewhat confirms the finding of (Alalem, 2023) that multimodality enhanced students' multimodal awareness. Additionally, students gained technical skills, and improved their digital literacy with their classmates. Furthermore, blogging had a significant impact on students' writing skills (Bloch, 2008) by offering a platform to practice various ways of articulating their ideas. The process of translating their thoughts from their native language into English, refining these translations, and utilizing AI encouraged the use of more precise language and fostered a deeper understanding of grammar.

Overall, students encounter the same text in different modes, allowing them to experience multimodality both in creating and interpreting multimodal meanings. This engagement in multimodal practices appears to heighten students' awareness of both linguistic and nonlinguistic features of language and demonstrates how meaning can be negotiated through various modes.

The Psychological Effects of Multimodality on Students

The multimodal approach also influenced students on a psychological level. Multimodality provided the students a psychological refuge through which they reduced their anxiety and boosted their self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment. The results on oral presentations (both oral speech and PowerPoint presentations) indicated that participating in such activities helped boost students' self-confidence and reduce their anxiety about speaking in front of others. As they delivered more presentations, especially the group presentations, some students experienced a significant decrease in anxiety, which for some eventually led to a stronger sense of accomplishment and increased motivation. This finding aligns with previous studies reporting that multimodal activities enhance students' sense of accomplishment and self-esteem (Choi & Yi, 2016), motivation to participate in EMI classes (Sabaté-Dalmau & Moncada-Comas, 2023) and willingness to communicate (Peng, 2019).

The video projects on the other hand served as a reflective tool exposing students to the same language repeatedly, thereby lowering their anxiety or stress when speaking in class. The video projects were also seen as beneficial for enhancing self-confidence and reinforcing language knowledge. This finding confirms Hung and Huang (2015) that found video blogs can enhance EFL students' oral presentation skills.

Engagement in video projects also not only impacted language learning, but also students' emotional regulation, and self-confidence. Many students highlighted that the process of creating videos allowed them to control their emotions better, as they could practice and refine their speaking without the pressure of immediate audience feedback. They felt more comfortable speaking in front of a camera than a live audience, which reduced anxiety and encouraged more confident self-expression. This iterative process not only helped them become more aware of their language use but also provided opportunities to practice new vocabulary and pronunciation in a low-pressure environment.

The blogging activity on the other hand provided students with opportunities to revisit and expand their vocabulary in a personal and iterative manner, thereby strengthening their language skills and boosting their confidence. These projects served as reflective exercises, allowing students to integrate their personal experiences and learn vocabulary that was both meaningful and emotionally significant. This approach somewhat aligns with Tardy's (2005) findings, which highlight the effectiveness of multimodality in helping students express their disciplinary and personal identities.

Additionally, the informal nature of blogging created a relaxed environment that reduced anxiety and increased motivation for language use, particularly in speaking. Many students appreciated that blogging offered a unique and enjoyable way to practice English by incorporating everyday experiences and a conversational tone. Furthermore, blogging fostered emotional engagement by providing students with opportunities to reflect on their language development over time, which contributed to a sense of accomplishment and intrinsic motivation. These findings support Bloch's (2008) research, which identifies blogging as a valuable multimodal practice that enhances both writing and speaking skills for L2 learners while providing a platform for students to express their unique voices and identities.

The Influence of Multimodality on Social Dynamics in Language Learning

Additionally, multimodal activities enhanced students' social skills by providing a platform for active participation in group activities. In these settings, students collaborated with peers and instructors, exchanged feedback, and negotiated their linguistic, content, and technical knowledge. This collaborative environment was instrumental in advancing language learning, as it allowed students to engage in meaningful social interactions that fostered both linguistic development and social competence. This finding aligns with Li's (2020) study, which reported that multimodality enhances students' content and collaborative learning. It also supports Lantolf and Thorne's (2009) sociocultural theory of second language development, which suggests that social activities such as group projects and presentations offer authentic contexts for interaction, thereby promoting both linguistic growth and social skills.

Feedback from instructors and peers, provided before, during, and after presentations, as well as throughout video and blog projects, was perceived by students as highly influential. This feedback played a crucial role in helping them identify and correct language errors, refine their presentation techniques, and grasp the key elements of effective communication. It guided students to focus on critical aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and intonation. Moreover, the feedback was reported to significantly enhance language development, boost confidence, and reduce anxiety. These findings align with Hampel and Stickler (2005), who noted that multimodal platforms encourage learners to collaborate more effectively, exchange feedback, and engage in meaningful communication.

Working in groups provided valuable opportunities for social interaction, language development, and a deeper understanding of linguistic diversity. Through group work, students were able to exchange ideas, offer and receive feedback on grammar and pronunciation, and observe various presentation styles. Many students found that collaborating with peers allowed them to receive immediate, constructive feedback, which was essential for their development. This feedback exchange was reciprocal; students not only benefited from corrections but also offered valuable suggestions to

their peers, such as recommending that a friend internalize the text before speaking for more effective delivery. This is consistent with Kress's (2003) idea that multimodal activities can support L2 learners by offering diverse ways to express and negotiate language, thereby fostering social skills through collaboration.

While some students initially felt uncomfortable in group settings—especially those who preferred to work independently or take on a leadership role—most gradually adapted by joining more compatible groups or forming smaller, supportive sub-groups. This adaptation resulted in increased confidence and reduced stress during presentations. Furthermore, collaboration enabled students to learn from each other's strengths, practice new skills together, and develop social networks that extended beyond the classroom, enhancing their overall language learning experience. Additionally, collaboration fostered a deeper understanding of content and language through shared practice and observation. Students noted that working in groups helped them observe different presentation styles and techniques, contributing to their learning of effective communication strategies. Peer collaboration also extended to technical aspects, such as correct pronunciation, where students would practice together and learn from one another's mistakes. Watching enthusiastic peers and engaging in collective learning activities, like practicing pronunciations or preparing group presentations, further reinforced their learning. These collaborative experiences were not limited to classroom interactions; some students even sought assistance from foreign friends online, which enriched their learning and broadened their social networks. Overall, collaboration emerged as a vital component of the learning process, enhancing both linguistic competence and social skills.

Additionally, the video projects fostered collaboration and experiential learning, further enriching the students' educational experience. Creating videos often required peer cooperation, which helped build social connections and improve language skills through mutual support and feedback. These projects also encouraged students to explore new content, such as visiting museums or researching historical sites, enriching their knowledge and providing authentic contexts for language use. This approach aligns with content-based language learning, where language is acquired in the context of engaging, meaningful content. These findings are consistent with those of Kummin et al. (2020), who found that incorporating multimodal texts enhances students' autonomy and provides opportunities for more critical and creative language engagement, thereby improving both individual and group language learning.

The collaborative aspect of the blog projects was also significant, as students learned from each other and used resources like AI tools to identify and correct errors, thereby enhancing their writing. Overall, the blog projects offered valuable experiences for language development, self-reflection, and collaboration, fostering both linguistic growth and personal insights. This finding aligns with Castañeda and Cho's (2013) research, which found that writing on wikis improves students' understanding of grammar and is beneficial for developing writing skills and overall L2 learning.

The Benefits and Challenges of Using Visuals as a Multimodal Tool in L2 Presentations

The data reveal that students had mixed experiences when delivering oral presentations without visual aids like slides, videos, or blogs. Many students found presenting without visuals particularly challenging, as it required them to rely entirely on memory and engage in spontaneous speaking. Despite these challenges, some students noted that this method enhanced their improvisation skills, encouraged the use of more natural language, and built self-confidence by pushing them to express their ideas independently.

Visual aids, on the other hand, were perceived as highly beneficial for helping students recall linguistic items. Many students found that associating visuals with language elements improved their memory, particularly when they were anxious about performing in front of peers and instructors. This aligns with findings from Shin and Cimasko (2008), who observed that students employed non-linguistic modes to express their identities and emotional connections to topics. In this study, the use of multimodal visuals facilitated most participants' presentations, echoing the findings of Guichon and

McLornan (2008) that multimodality aids in listening comprehension, and of other studies that show diverse semiotic resources enhance students' writing skills (Pacheco & Smith, 2015; Smith et al., 2017).

Additionally, some students experienced increased anxiety and discomfort when presenting without visual aids, as they missed the structured support that slides typically provide. Visual aids were valued for their role in aiding speech planning, reinforcing grammar and writing skills, and supporting memory recall. This contrasts with Mayer's (2001) concept of the multimedia effect, which suggests that combining words and images leads to deeper learning than using words alone. However, it aligns with other studies suggesting that presenting material through various modes can make learning more accessible and increase student engagement, potentially improving outcomes, particularly for lower-achieving L2 learners (Chen & Fu, 2003; Moreno & Mayer, 2007). This finding also somewhat echoes Rubin and Kang's (2008) study, which suggested that oral performance can be more manageable with the aid of writing.

Conversely, some students felt that visuals could be distracting, making them less comfortable during presentations. The data suggest that while visual aids provide valuable linguistic and cognitive support, presenting without them can foster greater confidence and spontaneity in speaking, though it may also increase stress. The effectiveness of each approach often depended on individual student preferences, learning styles, and the specific topic being presented. Therefore, language teachers should consider these factors when assigning oral presentations to their L2 students. Overall, the findings indicate that visuals can both facilitate and hinder oral presentations, depending on various contextual and individual factors.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that multimodal activities provided a multifaceted learning experience, combining language practice with emotional regulation, confidence building, experiential learning, and collaboration. The insights underscore the value of multimodal activities in developing various competencies that are essential for language learners.

A key finding of this study is the significant improvement in self-confidence among students. The study reveals that multimodal activities greatly enhance self-confidence, which is linked to increased participation in meaning-making and negotiations through various modes. Although this research did not specifically investigate student motivation, the results suggest that the confidence gained from using diverse modes likely contributed to greater motivation and engagement in oral presentations.

The study has several implications for language learners and teachers. One significant implication is the scaffolding role of video projects in enhancing oral presentations. These projects provide learners with opportunities to view their performance independently and make repeated edits, which can improve their speaking skills. Another implication is the effectiveness of visuals in supporting language recall. Visual aids help students remember words and phrases more effectively, reducing the anxiety that often leads students to avoid oral presentations. Teachers should consider learners' individual learning styles when assigning multimodal activities, as this study found that students have varying preferences for different multimodal approaches. By incorporating multimodal methods, students can engage with learning materials that align with their preferred learning styles. Additionally, ESL teachers should integrate diverse digital literacy practices into their classes. School administrators should support ESL teachers by providing professional development and resources to effectively use these technologies.

This study has some limitations. Some students may have presented biased responses to please the researcher, who was also the course instructor. Additionally, students' international backgrounds might have influenced their perceptions of multimodality, though this variable was not examined in the study. The researcher's dual role could have affected students' perceptions and interpretations of

the data. Finally, while the study analyzed students' perceptions of each mode separately, it is important to recognize that modes are often interconnected, and language is inherently integrated with other modes to convey meaning (Hawkins, 2018).

Ethical Statement: This research has been conducted in compliance with the institutional regulations of Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee, as outlined in the ethical permission document dated 06/05/2024 (EKK23-24/009/10).

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Research Article

Arap Öğrenicilerin Türkçe Ünlü Üretimlerinin Yaş, Cinsiyet ve Ana Dili Bağlamında Değerlendirilmesi*

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Öz: Bu çalışmada ana dili Arapça olan konuşurların Türkçenin parçalı birimlerinde yapmış oldukları sesletim hatalarını tespit etmek; bu hataları ana dili, cinsiyet ve yaş değişkenleri ekseninde incelemek amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmanın katılımcılarını benzeşik örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilen, Azez ve Afrin Yunus Emre Türk Kültür Merkezlerindeki temel düzey Türkçe öğrenicileri oluşturmaktadır. Veriler, ana dili, yaş ve cinsiyet etkisi dikkate alınarak inceleneceğinden araştırmanın katılımcılarını 58 yetişkin (32 erkek-26 kadın) ve 33 çocuk (18 erkek-15 kız) olmak üzere 91 öğrenici oluşturmuştur. Öğrenicilerin sesletmekte güçlük yaşadığı parçalı birimleri karşılaştırmalı bir şekilde analiz edebilmek için okuma metinleri, hedef dil konuşurları (6 yetişkin-6 çocuk) tarafından da sesletilmiştir. Yabancı dil öğrenicilerinin hedef dilde iletişime geçmesinin yolu; anlaşılır, akıcı ve doğru konuşma becerisinden geçer. Bu nedenle Diller İçin Avrupa Ortak Başvuru Metni'nde (D-AOBM), sesletim becerisine yönelik kazanımlar, konuşma dilinin nitel özellikleri ve sesbilimsel denetim ölçeği başlığı altında sunulmuştur. Bu ölçeğe göre bireyler temel düzeyden itibaren hedef dilin parçalı-parçalarüstü özelliklerini sınırlı da olsa kullanabilmektedir. Söz konusu sesletim kazanımlarının öğrenici tarafından elde edilip edilmediğinin anlaşılması; geçerli ve güvenilir araştırmalarla mümkündür. Bu doğrultuda temel düzey Türkçe öğretimi setlerinden seçilen 12 okuma metni ve 4 bağımsız konuşma sorusu öğrenicilere sunulmuş, öğrenicilerin sesli okuma ve konuşma performansları kayıt altına alınmıştır. Öğreniciler tarafından okumak için en çok tercih edilen metinler incelendiğinde 550 sözcük 1377 parçalı birime ulaşılmıştır. Bu birimlerin formant değerleri, Praat ses analizi programı aracılığıyla alınmış; Python programlama dili kullanılarak grafikleştirilmiş; nitel araştırma desenlerinden yararlanılarak betimlenmiştir. Araştırma bulguları kritik dönem hipotezini destekleyecek niteliktedir. Buna göre çocuklar, Türkçenin parçalı birimlerini sesletmekte yetişkinlerden daha başarılıdır. Veriler yetişkinlerde erkeklerin, çocuklarda ise kızların sesletim performanslarının daha iyi olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca öğrenicilerin, ana dillerinin fonetik envanterinde bulunmayan Türkçe sesleri oluşturmakta daha çok güçlük yaşadıkları görülmüştür.
Anahtar kelimeler: *yabancı dil olarak Türkçe, sesletim becerisi, ana dili etkisi, yaş etkisi, cinsiyet etkisi*

An Evaluation of Turkish Vowel Production by Arabic Native Speakers: Effects of Age, Gender, and Native Language

Abstract: This study aims to identify the pronunciation errors made by native Arabic speakers in Turkish segmental units and to examine these errors in relation to the influence of native language, gender, and age. Participants were selected using purposive sampling and consisted of beginner-level Turkish learners at the Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centers in Azez and Afrin. A total of 91 learners—58 adults (32 males, 26 females) and 33 children (18 males, 15 females)—participated in the study. To enable a comparative analysis of problematic segmental units, the reading texts were also recorded by native Turkish speakers (6 adults and

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6 children). Effective communication in a foreign language depends on clear, fluent, and accurate speech. Therefore, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) includes pronunciation objectives under the phonological control scale and speech quality. According to this scale, even basic-level learners are expected to use both segmental and suprasegmental features of the target language to some extent. The assessment of whether learners have achieved these pronunciation outcomes requires valid and reliable research. For this purpose, 12 reading texts and 4 independent speaking questions from beginner-level Turkish teaching materials were presented to the learners, and their oral reading and speaking performances were recorded.

The most frequently selected texts included 550 words and 1,377 segmental units. These units were acoustically analyzed using the Praat software; visualized with Python; and interpreted through qualitative research methods. The findings support the critical period hypothesis, indicating that children outperform adults in pronouncing Turkish segmental units. Among adults, males performed better, while among children, females showed higher pronunciation performance. Learners had more difficulty producing sounds that do not exist in their native language's phonetic inventory.

Keywords: *Turkish as a foreign language, pronunciation, native language influence, age effect, gender effect*

GİRİŞ

Bireyler iletişim kurabilmek için fonolojik bilgilerini kullanarak zihinlerindeki tasarılarını alıcılarına iletirler. Sosyal olarak anlaşılır düzeyde bir sesletim için zihinsel ve fizyolojik süreçlerin doğru şekilde ilerlemesi gerekir. Zihinsel süreçte bireyler fonolojik algı, işleme, erişim, kodlama ve farkındalık görevlerinin tamamını doğru bir şekilde yürütebildiğinde fonolojik işlemlemeyi yapabilir ve sesletim becerisinde başarılı bir düzeye erişebilir. Bunun sonucunda öğreniciler hedef dilde okuduklarını ve dinlediklerini daha kolay anlayabilir, doğru ve anlaşılır üretim performansları sergileyebilir.

Dil; içerisinde birçok sosyokültürel, fizyolojik ve psikolojik etmeni barındırır. Fonetik gerçekleşimler de tıpkı dil gibi çeşitli faktörlere bağlı olarak değişiklik gösterir. Sesbilimsel özelliklerin yaş, cinsiyet, etnisite, bireysel farklılıklar gibi faktörlerden nasıl etkilendiği sosyofonetiğin inceleme alanındadır. Yabancı dil öğreniminde özellikle ana dili ile hedefi dilin çatışma alanlarının temelinde sesletim becerisinin yer aldığını söylemek mümkündür. Sesletim becerisindeki çatışma alanlarını asgari düzeye indirmek için öğreticilerin hedef kitlesini sosyofonetik ve tipolojik açıdan analiz etmesi; öğretimlerini bu yönde yapılandırması gerekir. Öğrenicilerin ana dilleri, yaşları, cinsiyetleri sesletim becerisinde avantajlar sağlayabilir veya dezavantajları beraberinde getirebilir. Araştırmada yabancı dil olarak Türkçe öğrenen Arapça konuşurlarının Türkçenin parçalı birimlerinde karşılaştığı güçlükleri tespit etmek amaçlanmıştır. Bu güçlükleri sosyofonetik açıdan yorumlamak hedefiyle araştırma soruları "Ana dili Arapça olan öğrenicilerin Türkçenin parçalı birimlerinde yaşadığı güçlüklerde ana dilinin, yaşın ve cinsiyetin etkisi nedir?" şeklinde oluşturulmuştur.

Yabancı Dil Öğreniminde Yaş Etkisi

Yabancı dil öğrenicilerinin karşılaştığı en büyük zorluklardan biri olan sesletim becerisi, bireylerin yaşına ve maruz kaldıkları dil girdisine bağlı olarak gelişebilen bir beceridir. Yapılan araştırmalar, yaş faktörünün sesletim becerisinde belirleyici bir parametre olduğunu; dil öğrenmeye kritik yaş döneminden sonra başlayanların yabancı aksan fosilleşmesiyle karşı karşıya kaldığını göstermektedir. Kritik yaş kavramı, ilk önce 1959 yılında Penfield ve Roberts tarafından ortaya atılmış, ardından biyodilbilim alanındaki çalışmalarıyla tanınan Lenneberg tarafından da savunulmuştur (1967, s. 176). Chomsky de bireylerin "Dil Edinim Cihazı" adı verilen bir yetiyle dünyaya geldiğini, sistematik dil kodlarını barındıran bu cihazın dile maruz kalma sonucu devreye girdiğini ve ergenlik döneminden sonra işlevsiz hâle geldiğini belirtmiştir (1998, s. 521-522). Bireylerin beyin gelişimi doğumdan ergenlik dönemine kadar devam eder. Özellikle 6 yaşına kadar maruz kalınan girdilerin içeriklerine bağlı olarak beyin sinaptik bağlantılar oluşturur. Bu dönemde öğrenme yeteneği en yüksek düzeydedir ve dil edinimi hızla gelişir. Akademik becerilerin hızla geliştiği 7-12 yaş arası dil öğrenimi ve sesletim becerileri için en verimli zamandır. Ergenlikten sonra sinaptik budama sürecine gidilir, beyin plastisitesi azalır ve bu durum yabancı dilde belirgin bir aksanı beraberinde getirir. Dil edinimiyle ilgili pek çok araştırma yapılmış olsa da bunun en belirgin örneği

Genie vakasıdır. Curtiss, 13 yaşına kadar tüm dil girişim ve etkileşim ortamından izole edilmiş olan Genie'nin yoğun çabalara rağmen erken çocuklukta edinime başlayan konuşucuların bilgi ve becerilerine benzer dil bilgisine sahip olamadığını belirtir (1977, s. 88). Yani nörofonksiyonel özelleşme döneminde olan bireyler, yeterli ve anlamlı girdiye maruz kalmazsa ana dilinde bile iletişimsel yeterliğe sahip olmayabilir. Ana dili edinimi ile yabancı dil öğrenimi belirli bir yaşa kadar benzer alanlarda gelişim gösterir. Buna Kim ve diğerlerinin birden fazla dilin insan beyninde nasıl temsil edildiğine dair yaptığı çalışma örnek gösterilebilir. Araştırmada ana dilinin ve yabancı dillerin insan korteksindeki mekânsal ilişkisini belirlemek için fonksiyonel manyetik rezonans görüntüleme (fMRI) yöntemi uygulanmıştır. Bu yöntemle ikinci dil erken dönemde öğrenildiyse dille ilişkili bölgelerden Broca alanında ana diliyle ortak frontal kortikal bölgelerde, yetişkinlik döneminde öğrenildiyse farklı bölgelerde temsil edildiği tespit edilmiştir (1997, s. 171). Yaşa bağlı olarak beyin plastisitesinde meydana gelen değişiklikler, yeni dil bilgisel bilgiyi temsil etmede zorluklara neden olabilir. Ayrıca ana dilinin işlenmesini hızlandırırken ikinci dilin işlenmesini yavaşlatabilir (Birdsong, 2009, s. 405) çünkü özellikle yetişkinlikte sözcüklerin ve cümlelerin biçimini değiştiren, düzelten bir monitör vardır (Krashen, 1982, s. 15). Bu monitör özellikle sesletim becerisinde kendini göstermektedir. Bazı araştırmacılar tarafından makro değişken olarak kabul edilen yaş faktörü, yabancı dil öğrenimini etkileyen etmenlerden yalnızca biridir. Yetişkinlikte dil öğrenmekle çocuklukta dil öğrenmek bazı açılardan belirgin şekilde ayrılmaktadır. Yetişkinler, öğrenme hızı konusunda daha deneyimlidir ve dünya bilgileri sayesinde sunulan girdileri çocuklara göre daha kolay anlayabilirler. Ayrıca öğrenmelerini yönetme ve bilgi eksikliğiyle başa çıkma konusunda yetişkinler, çocuklara göre daha başarılıdır. Yetişkinler gelişmiş bir metalinguistik farkındalıkla karşılaştıkları problemleri çözebilir, çeşitli stratejiler geliştirebilir, dile daha analitik yaklaşabilirler (Dörnyei, 2009; Elsner & Wedewer, 2007; Harley, 1986; Özüdoğru & Dilman, 2014). Ancak yabancı dil öğrenmeye çocukken başlayanlarla daha uzun süre hedef dil girdisine maruz kalanlar, başta sesletim becerisi olmak üzere dilsel ve iletişimsel esneklikte yetişkinlere oranla daha başarılıdır (Elsner & Wedewer, 2007; Flege, vd., 2010; Göktaş, 2024b; Klein, 1996; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 2014; Munro, vd., 1996). Nöral gelişim döneminde yani erken yaşlarda dil öğrenmeye başlamak, özellikle sesletim becerisi açısından bir avantaj olarak görülse de yabancı dil öğrenmek üzerinde pek çok faktörün etkili olduğunu unutmamak gerekir.

Yabancı Dil Öğreniminde Cinsiyet Etkisi

Kadınlarla erkekler arasındaki nörolojik, biyolojik, sosyal ve kültürel farklılıklar yabancı dil öğrenmeleri üzerinde etkilidir. Nörodilbilimsel araştırmalara göre beynin sağ ve sol yarı kürelerini birbirine bağlayan Corpus Callosum, kadın beyninde erkek beynine göre daha enli olduğu için daha fazla sinir hücresi içerir. Bu nedenle kadınlar, beyninin iki yarı küresini de etkin ve koordineli bir biçimde kullanır. Bunun sonucunda dil bilgisi ve sözcük üretiminden sorumlu Broca, düşünceden sorumlu Wernicke ile iş birliği içerisinde çalışarak iletişim becerisinde avantaj sağlar (Burman, vd., 2008; Ergenç, 2012; Özyurt, 2006). Shaywitz ve meslektaşları, araştırmalarında fonolojik görevler sırasında erkeklerde beyin aktivasyonunun sol inferior frontal girusta laterize olduğunu, kadınlarda ise hem sol hem sağ inferior frontal girusu içeren sinir sistemlerinin etkilendiğini; fonolojik işlemler düzeyindeki bu farklılığın açık bir şekilde cinsiyet farklılığından kaynaklandığını ortaya koymuştur (1995, s. 607). Cinsiyet farkının bilişsel performans üzerindeki etkisine yönelik yapılan çalışmalar, kadınların sözel görevlerde, erkeklerin ise mekanik görevlerde daha iyi performans sergilediğini belgelemektedir. Lewin, ve diğerleri epizodik bellekle ilgili araştırmalarında kadınların sözlü ve sözsüz; erkeklerin ise görsel-uzamsal ve epizodik bellekte daha yüksek performans sergilediğini tespit etmiştir (2001, s. 172). Kız öğrenciler başarısızlık korkusunu ve olumsuz geri bildirimlere yönelik endişeyi daha güçlü bir şekilde yaşadıkları için öğrenmeye yönelik motivasyonları daha yüksektir bu nedenle öğrenmelerini yönetme ve öğrenme stratejilerini kullanma bakımından daha başarılıdırlar. Nitekim Ehrman ve Oxford'un araştırması bu durumu destekleyen bulgulara sahiptir. Filoloji Fakültesinden 78 katılımcıyla yaptıkları çalışmanın sonucunda kadın katılımcıların öğrenme ve iletişim stratejilerini daha sık kullandığını belgelemişlerdir (1989, s. 11). Akın ve Çetin'in araştırmasında da cinsiyetin dil öğrenim stratejilerinde etkili bir değişken olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bulgulara göre kız öğrenciler, telafi stratejileri ve sosyal stratejiler hariç dört (bilişüstü, bilişsel, duyuşsal ve bellek) stratejide erkek öğrencilerden daha öndedir (2016, s. 1031). Kadınların bilişsel

farklılıkları nedeniyle iletişimsel becerilerinin farklı olmasının yanı sıra hedef dil konuşurlarına ve kültürlerine yönelik olumlu tutumlar sergiledikleri de bilinmektedir. Bunun en temel nedeni iletişim stratejilerini iyi kullanmaları ve hedef dil konuşurlarıyla daha rahat etkileşime geçmeleridir. Kadın ve erkekler arasındaki hormonal farklılıkların da becerilerle ilişkili olabileceği öne sürülmektedir. Yüksek östrojen sözel (anlamsal/yorumlama) becerilerle ilişkilidir ve adet döngüsü sırasında östrojen seviyelerinin artması ile konuşma seviyesinin ve artikülasyon performanslarının yükseldiği bildirilmiştir (Kimura, 1992, s. 125). Kadınların erkeklere oranla yabancı dil öğreniminde ve konuşma becerisinde daha iyi olduğu araştırmalarla desteklense de toplumsal normlar ve kültürel faktörler cinsiyet rollerini ve dil öğrenme eğilimini etkilemektedir. Sosyal olarak daha kapalı bir kültürden gelen kadınlar, sosyolojik sebeplerle yabancı dil öğrenme imkânı bulamayabilir ancak toplumsal rollerin daha eşit olduğu toplumlarda beyinlerindeki Corpus Callosum'un görece gelişkinliğinin, motivasyon yüksekliğinin ve dil öğrenme stratejilerini kullanım sıklığının yabancı dil öğrenmede kadınlara avantaj sağladığını söylemek mümkündür.

Yabancı Dil Öğreniminde Ana Dili Etkisi

Bireyler toplumsal deneyimle ve maruz kalma etkisiyle ana dilini dolayısıyla ana dilinin fonolojik özelliklerini edinir. Akbulut, dillerin kendi içinde birtakım sesletim ayrıntıları içerdiğini, bu durumun yabancı dil öğrenimi sırasında belirleyici bir rol üstlendiğini dile getirir (2021, s. 42). Öğrenicilerden hedef dilin fonolojik özelliklerini bilmesi beklenir ancak ana dilinin fonetik envanterinde bulunmayan sesbirimleriyle ilk kez karşılaşan öğrenici, bu birimleri algılamada ve üretmede sorun yaşar. Bunun sonucunda ise belirgin bir yabancı aksanı ortaya çıkar. Öğreniciler, hedef dilin fonolojisine yönelik bir farkındalık kazansa bile üretimleri sırasında ana dilinin fonetik filtresine takılabilir. Bu durumu Krashen, monitör teorisi olarak adlandırır. Buna göre birey, bilinçaltı yoluyla ikinci dili yeteri kadar edinmiş olsa bile konuşma esnasında monitör devreye girer ve bireyin konuşmasını kontrol eder (1982, s. 15). Bu monitörün beslendiği kaynak yani hedef dili denetleyen mekanizma ana dilidir. Hayes'e göre hedeflenen ile öğrenilen arasındaki sistematik sapmalar genellikle ana dilinin fonolojisini ikinci dile aktarmaya çalışmaktan kaynaklanır (2009, s. 52). İnsanların konuşma organları, ana dillerinin düzenine alışkın olduğundan yabancı dili de bu düzene göre sesletmek eğilimindedir; böylece "yerli" ve "yabancı" olmak üzere iki türlü konuşma ortaya çıkar (Başkan, 2006, s. 95). Diller arası karşılaşma ve çatışma alanları, kaynak dilden hedef dile olumlu veya olumsuz aktarımları beraberinde getirir; aktarımlar ise çoğunlukla ses bilgisi düzeyinde gerçekleşir. Yabancı dil olarak Türkçe öğretimine yönelik yapılan birçok araştırma da öğrencilerin çoğunlukla fonolojik bilgiden kaynaklı sorunlar yaşadığını desteklemektedir (Akbulut & Erdem Nas, 2021; Bawer, 2022; Bölükbaş, 2011; Demirci, 2019; Erdem Nas & Yalçınkaya, 2021; Göktaş & Karataş, 2022; Şengül, 2014).

Sondan eklemeli dillerin en tipiği olan Türkçe ve bükümlü dillerin karakteristiğini en iyi şekilde yansıtan Arapça (Yüceol Özezen, 2021, s. 124), dilbilimsel açıdan incelendiğinde çok farklı tipolojilere sahiptir. Bu dillerin alfabesi farklı olmakla birlikte kendine özgü sesbirimleri vardır. Ayrıca dil yapıları nedeniyle seslerin fonotaktik özellikleri de farklılık göstermektedir (Göktaş, 2024a, s. 41). Dünya Dil Yapıları Atlası'na (WALS) göre Modern Arapça 5-6 ünlüsü olan 287 dilden biridir. Türkçe ise 8 ünlüsü olan ve ünlü bakımından zengin sayılan dillerdendir. Arapçada 28 ünsüz, Türkçede ise 21 ünsüz bulunur (Dryer & Haspelmath, 2013). Dünya dillerindeki sesbirimleri ve bunların özellikleri hakkında kapsamlı bir veritabanı sunan Phoible'ye göre ise Arapçada 8'i ünlü 29'u ünsüz olmak üzere 37 sesbirim; Türkçede ise 15'i ünlü 23'ü ünsüz olmak üzere 38 sesbirim bulunmaktadır (Moran & McCloy, 2019). Buradaki sesbirimlerle kastedilen hece birlikleri sırasında oluşturulan ses çevreleridir ve yapılan araştırmalar Arap öğrenicilerin bu sesbirimlerden en çok /ı/, /ö/, /ü/, /p/, /g/, /ğ/, /v/, /ç/, /j/ seslerinde sorun yaşadığını göstermektedir (Göktaş, 2024b; Göktaş & Karataş, 2022; Kan & Yarol Özgür, 2023; Polat, 2021; Şahin, 2020).

YÖNTEM

Arap öğrenicilerin Türkçe sesletim hatalarını yaş, cinsiyet ve ana dili bağlamında değerlendirmeyi amaçlayan bu çalışma, nitel araştırma desenleriyle yürütülmüştür. Öğrenicilerin sesli okuma ve konuşma performansları sırasında alınan ses kayıtları, Türkçenin parçalı birimlerinde karşılaşılan güçlükleri tespit etmeye yönelik olarak analiz edilmiştir. Ses kayıtlarının analizi sırasında elde edilen formant değerleri sayısal (nicel) değerler olsa da bu değerler, konuyla ilgili betimsel ve gerçekçi bir resim sunmak amacıyla kullanılmıştır. Betimsel araştırmalar, bir durumu olabildiğince tam ve dikkatli tanımlar. Bunun için çoğunlukla hipotez yerine araştırma soruları tercih edilir (Büyüköztürk vd., 2020). Seslerin tınlama sıklıklarının, frekans değerlerinin kodlanması için içerik analizi kullanılmıştır. İçerik analizinin amacı, hacimli veri setinin tutarlılıklarını ve anlamlarını belirlemeye yönelik kodlamalar yapılması, verilerin kategorize edilmesi, etiketlenmesi ve özetlenmesidir (Güler vd., 2015; Patton, 2018). Bu çalışmada da ses kayıtları, parçalı birimlerdeki performansların ortaya çıkarılması amacıyla sistematik bir şekilde kodlanmış ve analiz edilmiştir. Verilerin anlaşılır hâle getirilmesi ve yorumlanabilmesi için grafiklerden yararlanılmıştır. Akabinde bulgular, alanyazın taraması sırasında elde edilen bilgilerden yararlanılarak tümevarımsal bir yaklaşımla betimlenmiştir.

Çalışma Grubu

Araştırma grubunu Azez ve Afrin'deki Yunus Emre Türk Kültür Merkezlerinin temel düzey kurslarındaki 91 öğrenici oluşturmaktadır. Çalışmada cinsiyet ve yaş değişkeninin Türkçe sesletim becerisi üzerindeki etkisi incelendiğinden katılımcılar, amaçlı örnekleme yönteminden benzeşik (homojen) örnekleme göre belirlenmiştir. Benzeşik örneklemede amaç küçük, benzeşik bir örneklem oluşturma yoluyla belirgin bir alt grubu tanımlamaktır (Creswell, 2020, s. 269). Ana dili, yaş ve cinsiyet etkisinin tespit edilebilmesi amacıyla temel düzeyde öğrenim gören 20-45 yaş arası 32 yetişkin erkek; 18-44 yaş arası 26 kadın; 7-13 yaş arası 18 erkek çocuk; 8-13 yaş arası 15 kız çocuk olmak üzere toplamda 91 öğrenici araştırmanın katılımcılarını oluşturmuştur. Katılımcıların tamamının ana dili Arapçadır ve katılım gönüllülük esasına dayalıdır. Araştırma grubunun Suriye'den seçilmesinin nedeni Yunus Emre Türk Kültür Merkezlerinin bulunduğu birçok Arap ülkesinin aksine sistematik bir şekilde hem çocuklara hem de yetişkinlere yabancı dil olarak Türkçe öğretiminin yapıldığı ülke olmasıdır. Arapça konuşurlarının Türkçenin parçalı birimlerinde karşılaştığı güçlükleri karşılaştırabilmek için okuma metinleri, ana dili Türkçe olan 25-35 yaş arası üçer yetişkin kadın ve erkek ile 8-12 yaş arası üçer kız-erkek çocuk tarafından da sesletilmiştir. Yetişkinler, yabancılara Türkçe öğreten ölçünlü ana dili konuşurları içerisinden; çocuklar ise ilkokulda okuma yarışmalarına katılan ölçünlü Türkçe konuşurları arasından seçilmiştir.

Verilerin Toplanması

Verilerin toplanması için gerekli okuma metinleriyle bağımsız konuşma sorularının belirlenmesi için doküman taraması yapılmıştır. Diller İçin Avrupa Ortak Başvuru Metni'ndeki (D-AOBM) temel düzey kazanımlarına uygun olarak hazırlanmış Yedi İklim Türkçe, Yeni Hitit, Gazi TÖMER ve İstanbul DİLMER setlerinin temel düzey ders kitaplarındaki metinlerle sorular taranmış; Arapça konuşurlarının sıklıkla sorun yaşadığı sesbirimleri içeren metinler seçilmiş; iki alan uzmanının görüşüne başvurularak 12 metin ve 4 bağımsız konuşma sorusu belirlenmiştir. Bu metinlerin tamamı 550 sözcükten oluşmaktadır.

Öğrenicilerden metinlerin en az birini sesli bir şekilde okumaları ve bağımsız konuşma sorularından da en az birini seçerek konu hakkında konuşmaları istenmiştir. Katılımcıların performansları, stereo ses kayıt cihazı ile kayıt altına alınmıştır. Kayıtların mümkün olduğunca sessiz bir ortamda alınmasına dikkat edilmiş; kayıtlar, analiz edilmek üzere cinsiyet ve yaş değişkenleri dikkate alınarak depolanmıştır.

Verilerin Analizi

Katılımcılardan elde edilen 240 ses kaydı, kategorize edilerek depolanmasının ardından çözümlemek amacıyla WAV formatına dönüştürülmüştür. Daha sonra ses kayıtları, Praat (Boersma & Weenink, 2024) aracılığıyla parazit seslerden ve hecelerden arındırılarak yeniden kaydedilmiştir. 33 ila 317 saniye arasında değişen ses kayıtlarının formant değerlerinin kayıt altına alınması için Excel dosyaları oluşturulmuş; öğreniciler tarafından en çok tercih edilen altı okuma metni parçalara ayrılmıştır. Bu işlem Suriyeli yetişkin erkek-kadın; erkek-kız çocuk; Türk yetişkin erkek-kadın; Türk erkek-kız çocuk olmak üzere sekiz değişkende .xlsx formatında kategorize edilmiştir. Altı okuma metninde 1377 heceye ulaşılmış; ünlülerin ötümlü-ötümsüz ünsüzlerle olan birleşimleri göz önünde bulundurularak veri seti oluşturulmuştur. Her bir ses kaydı, Praat ses analizi programına yüklenerek excel dosyalarında olduğu gibi hecelerine ayrılmış ve hecelerin formant (F1, F2, F3) değerleri alınmıştır. Praat, akustik sinyallerin incelenmesi, analizi ve yeniden yapılandırılması amacıyla Amsterdam Üniversitesi Beşeri Bilimler Fakültesi Fonetik Bilimi alanında geliştirilmiş bir ses analizi programıdır. Ses kayıtlarını düzenlemek, kayıtlardan veri elde etmek, verileri grafikleştirmek gibi birçok özelliği bulunan; ortam seslerinden minimum düzeyde etkilenerek doğru veriler sunan program, dil bilimi alanında çalışan uzmanlar tarafından hayli tercih edilmektedir. Hece birliklerinden elde edilen sayısal veriler, yaş ve cinsiyet değişkenlerini içeren kapsamlı bir setten oluştuğu için kapsamlı kütüphanesi sayesinde verilerin özet bilgi şekilde sunulmasına ve yorumlanmasına imkân tanıyan Python programlama diline aktarılarak grafikleştirilmiştir.

BULGULAR

Araştırmanın bu kısmında, Suriye'deki Yunus Emre Türk Kültür Merkezlerinin temel düzey kurslarında Türkçe öğrenen çocuklarla yetişkinlerin sesletimde yaşadığı güçlükleri temsilen birkaç grafiğe yer verilmiştir. Parçalı birimlere yönelik bulguların daha kapsamlı ve detaylı açıklamaları "Arapça konuşurlarının erken ve geç dil öğrenim süreçlerinde sesletim becerileri" başlıklı doktora tezinde sunulmuştur. Parçalı birimler; öğrenicilerin çoğunlukla okumayı tercih ettiği Ailem, Çevre Kirliliği, Trafik Psikolojisi, Kapadokya Yolu, Anneler Günü ve Eşeğin Sözü metinlerinden elde edilmiştir. Bağımsız konuşma sorularından elde edilen verileri ana dili konuşurlarından elde edilenlerle karşılaştırmak mümkün olmadığından çalışmanın bu kısmına konuşma sorularına verilen yanıtlar dâhil edilmemiştir. Okuma metinlerinden ise 550 sözcük, 78 cümle ve 1377 hece birliğine ulaşılmıştır. Her bireyin sesli okuma performansları PRAAT aracılığıyla hecelere ayrılmış; her bir parçalı birimin F1, F2, F3 değerleri excel dosyasına aktarılmıştır. Ses yolundaki titreşimler, formant değerlerini oluşturur ve bu değerler sınırsız sayıdadır ancak araştırmalarda genellikle 0-5000 Hz arasında değişen dört temel formant değeri baz alınır. F1 dilin yükseklik alçaklık durumuyla (geniş-dar ünlüler); F2 ise dilin ön-arka (ince-kalın ünlüler) konumuyla ilgilidir. Bu çalışmada kullanılan diğer frekans değeri F3 ise cinsiyete dayalı değişimleri belirler. Python aracılığıyla elde edilen grafiklerde F1 (dilin yükseklik alçaklık durumu) dikey düzlemde; F2 (dilin önlük-arkalık konumu) yatay düzlemde; F3 ise grafik içerisinde cinsiyete dayalı üretimlerin yapıldığı noktada gösterilmektedir.

Dillerde gerçek konuşma birimleri sesler değil, anlam ayırıcı işlevleri olan fonemlerdir. Ancak birkaç ünlem veya onomatopoetik ses dışında sesler tek başına anlam ifade etmezler. Sesler, fonotaktik özelliklerine göre bir araya gelerek anlamlı birlikler oluştururlar ve bu birliklere parçalı birimler denir. Parçalı birimler ünlülerden bağımsız düşünülemez. Formant değerleri de artikülasyonları sırasında hiçbir engele takılmayan ünlülerin titreşim sıklıklarından elde edilir. Bu nedenle bu araştırmada /a/, /e/, /ı/, /i/, /o/, /ö/, /u/ ve /ü/ ünlülerinin okuma metinlerinde tek başına ve ötümlü-ötümsüz ünsüzlerle oluşturdukları parçalı birimler tasnif edilmiş; akabinde bu parçalı birimlerden örneklere yer verilmiştir. Bu örnekler Uluslararası Fonetik Alfabe (IPA) aracılığıyla sunulmuştur.

/a/ ünlüsü, Türkçede damağın arka konumda olmasıyla üretilen, geniş ve düz bir sestir. Türkçenin ünlü dörtgeninde de arkada ve altta yer almaktadır. /e/ ünlüsü, Türkçenin ünlü dörtgeni incelendiğinde damağın ön konumunda üretilen geniş bir sestir. Arapçada ünlüleri gösteren ve hareke olarak adlandırılan sistemin yanı sıra med harfleriyle de uzun ünlüler karşılanmaktadır. Türkçedeki /a/

ve /e/ sesleri Arapçada fetha olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Arapçadaki /a/ ve /a:/ yani kısa ve uzun /a/, ağzın orta noktasında /a/ ile /e/ arasında bir yerde üretilmektedir. Bu ünlüyü içeren parçalı birimlere yönelik öğrenici performansları Şekil 1'de yer almaktadır.

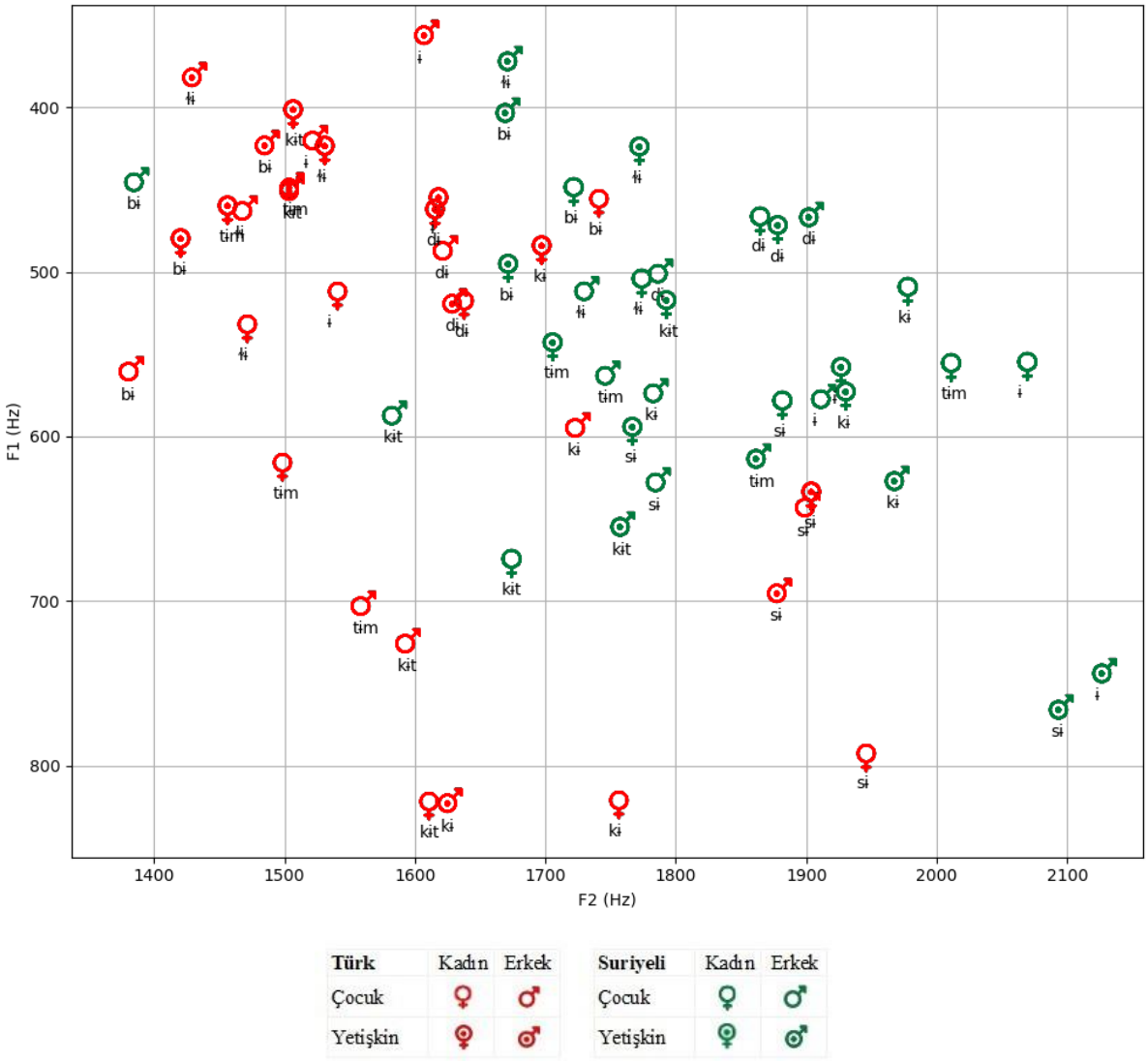
Şekil 1. /a/ ünlüsüne yönelik karşılaştırmalı formant grafiği

Yukarıda bahsedilen 1377 heceden tekrar eden hece birlikleri düşüldüğünde metinlerde 367 farklı hece birliğine ulaşılmıştır. Şekil 1'de örnekleri verilen /a/ ünlüsü, okuma metinlerinde 77 farklı şekilde dizgelenmiştir. /a/ ünlüsüyle oluşturulan hecelerin sesletiminde çocuklar, yetişkinlerden daha başarılıdır. Bu sesbirimde kadınların diğer gruplara göre daha fazla güçlük yaşadığı tespit edilmiştir. Kız ve erkek çocukları, 77 hecenin yalnızca birini ana dili konuşurlarından farklı bir noktada oluşturmuştur. Kadınların /a/ ünlüsü çevresinde ana dili konuşurlarına benzer ürettiği hece sayısı 54, yetişkin erkeklerin 55, kız ve erkek çocuklarının ise 76'dır. Bu sesbirimin üretiminde karşılaşılan güçlüğün nedeni Arapçada /a/ ve /e/ sesbiriminin aynı grafemle karşılanması ve üretim noktasının damağın orta konumunda bulunmasıdır. Şekil 2'de /e/ ünlüsü çevresinde kurulan hece birliklerinden örnekler karşılaştırmalı olarak sunulmuştur.

Şekil 2. /e/ ünlüsüne yönelik karşılaştırmalı formant grafiği

Arapça konuşurlarının sesletmeyi tercih ettiği metinlerdeki hecelerden 68'i /e/ ünlüsü çevresinde oluşturulmuştur. Şekil 2'de örnekleri sunulan sesbirim, metinlerde 13 kez tek başına yer alırken en çok ötümlü ünsüzler olmak üzere farklı sözcükler içerisinde 295 kez hece birlikleri kurmuştur. Öğrenici performansları detaylı bir şekilde incelendiğinde sırasıyla kadınların %29,41; erkeklerin %22,05; erkek çocukların %11,76; kız çocukların ise %10,29 oranında /e/ ünlüsüyle kurulan parçalı birimlerin üretiminde güçlük yaşadığı görülmüştür. Kadın öğreniciler 68 hecenin 48'ini ana dili konuşurlarına yakın noktalarda boğumlarken kız çocuklarında bu sayı 61'e çıkmıştır. Erkek çocuklarının hece birliklerinden 8'ini, yetişkin erkeklerin ise 15'ini ana dili konuşurlarından geride /e/ ve /a/ arası bir alofonla ürettiği tespit edilmiştir.

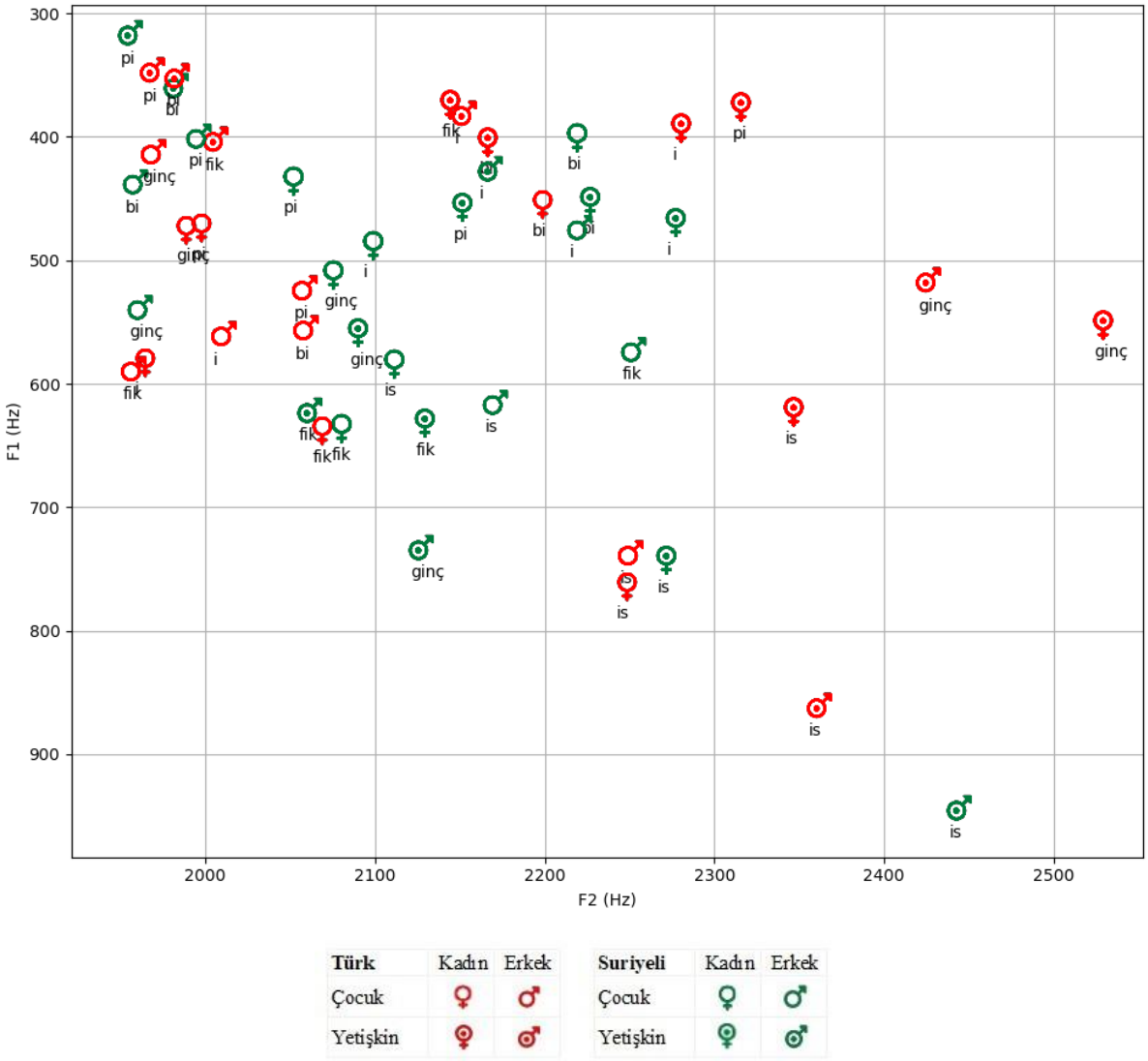
Arapçanın fonetik envanterinde bulunmayan /ı/ ünlüsü, Türkçenin arkadil ünlüleri arasındadır. Çıkış yeri itibarıyla ortadil ünlüsü olarak da sayılabilen düz ve dar bir birimdir. Ünlü dörtgeni de bu durumu desteklemektedir. Şekil 3'te /ı/ ünlüsüne yönelik performanslardan örnekler sunulmaktadır.



Şekil 3. /ı/ ünlüsüne yönelik karşılaştırmalı formant grafiği

Okuma metinlerinde bu sesbirim sadece 2 hecede yalnız başınadır. Ötümlü-ötümsüz ünsüzlerin /ı/ ünlüsünün başında, sonunda ve/veya iki yanında bulunması sonucu toplamda 120 hecede bu ses biriminin artikülasyonuyla karşı karşıya kalınmıştır. Farklı cümlelerde tekrar eden heceler düşüldüğünde /ı/ sesi çevresinde 43 parçalı birime ulaşılmıştır. Kadınlar bu ünlüyle oluşturulan birliklerden 21'ini, yetişkin erkekler 25'ini, kız çocukları 8'ini, erkek çocukları ise 3'ünü üretirken ana dili engeliyle karşılaşmıştır. Bu sesbirim Türkçenin tipik seslerinden sayılmaktadır ve Arapçanın fonetik envanterinde yoktur. Dolayısıyla öğreniciler, okuma performansları sırasında bu sesbirimi /i/'ye yakın noktalarda yani ağzın ön konumunda üretmiştir.

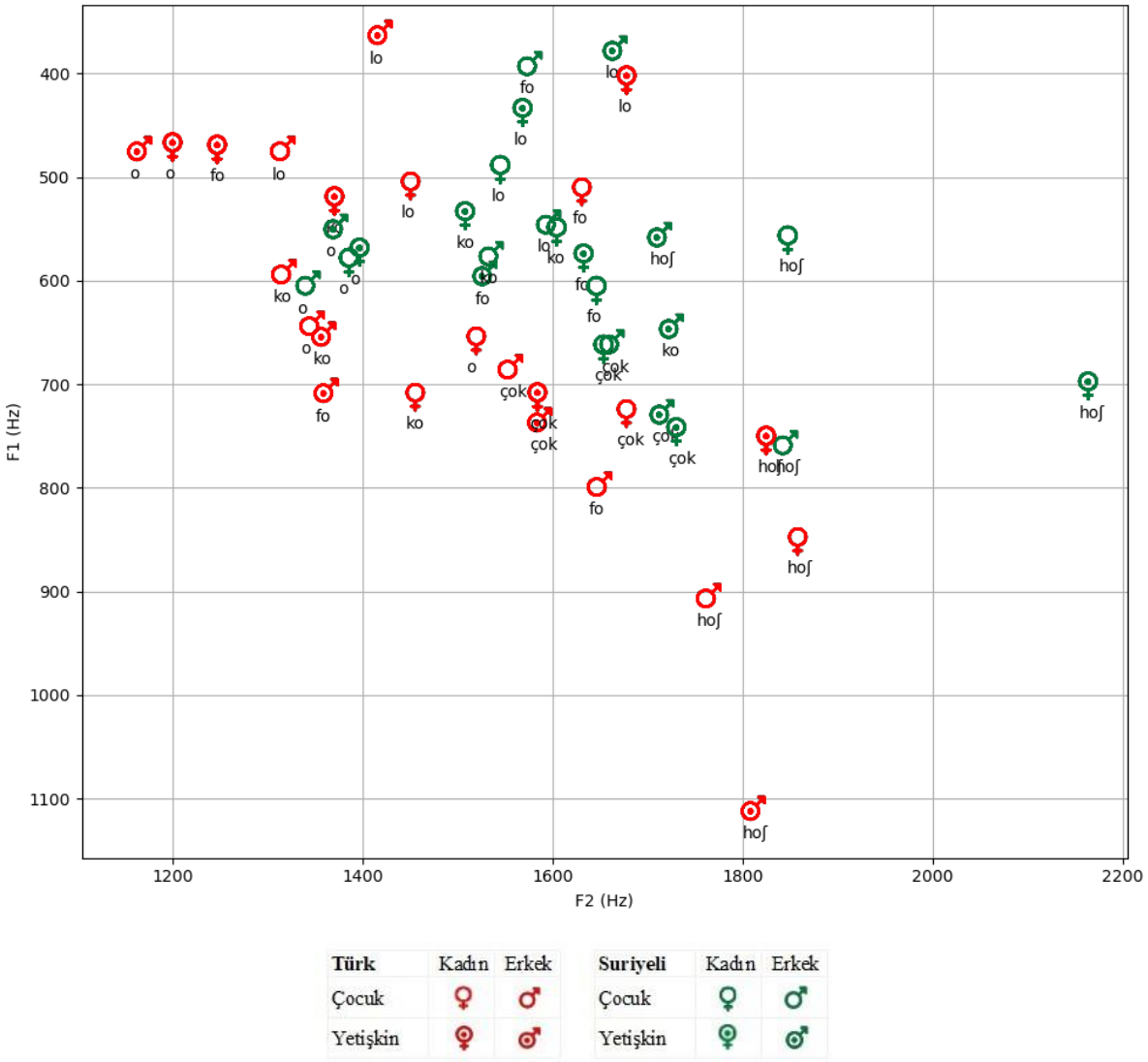
/i/ ünlüsü özellikleri itibarıyla düz, dar bir öndil ünlüsüdür yani ağzın ön kısmında ve dil yukardayken dar bir çevrede üretilmektedir. Bu sesbirim Arapçada kesre olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Uzun /i:/ ise Arapçadaki "y" grafemiyle karşılanmaktadır. Arapçanın /i/ ve /i:/ ünlüleri Türkçedeki gibi ağzın ön konumunda ve yüksekte oluşturulmaktadır. Şekil 4'te bu sesbirime yönelik öğrenici performanslarından örneklere yer verilmiştir.



Şekil 4. /i/ ünlüsüne yönelik karşılaştırmalı formant grafiği

Metinlerde 313 hecede boğumlanan /i/ ünlüsü, /a/ ünlüsünden sonra en çok hece birliği kuran sesbirim olmuştur. Şekil 4'e örnekleri sunulan öndil ünlüsü; tekrar eden hece sayısı düşüldüğünde toplam 69 farklı ötümlü-ötümsüz ünsüzle birlik kurmuştur. Bu ünlü, Arapçada da damağın önünde konumlanmaktadır. Bu sebeple öğrenicilerin artikülasyonunda en az sorun yaşadığı sesbirim olmuştur. Kadınlar /i/ çevresinde oluşturulan hecelerin %10,14'ünü, yetişkin erkekler %7,24'ünü farklı noktalarda boğumlasa da bunlar anlaşılırlığı etkileyecek düzeyde değildir. Çocuklardan ise hem kızların hem de erkeklerin öndil ünlüsüyle oluşturulan birliklerin tamamını ana dili konuşurlarına yakın noktalarda ürettiği tespit edilmiştir.

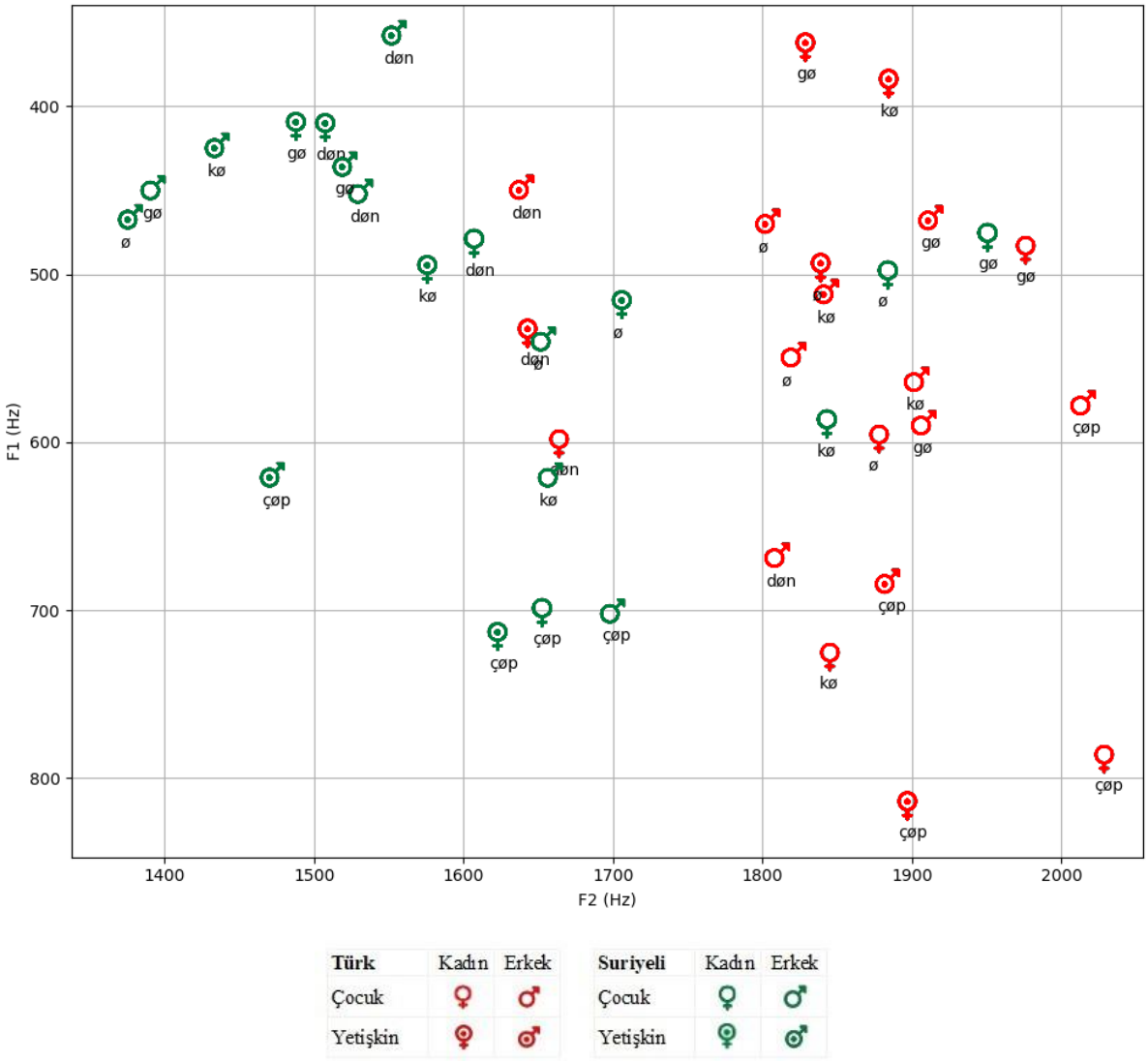
Dudakların yuvarlak bir şekil almasıyla oluşturulan /o/, damağın arka kısmında üretilen geniş bir ünlüdür. Şekil 5'te Arapçanın fonetik envanterinde bulunmayan sesbirime yönelik örnekler vardır.



Şekil 5. /o/ ünlüsüne yönelik karşılaştırmalı formant grafiği

Bu sesbirim, okuma metinlerinde 3 kez tek başına, 33 kez ötümlü ünsüzle, 15 kez ötümsüz ünsüzle, 43 kez iki ötümlü ünsüzle, 25 kez bir ötümlü bir ötümsüzle, 3 kez 2 ötümsüzle, 1 kez iki ötümlü bir ötümsüzle hece birliği kurmuştur. 123 hecenin 32'si farklı birliklerden oluşmaktadır. Öğrenicilerin performansları detaylı bir şekilde incelendiğinde kadınlarla yetişkin erkeklerin 32 hecenin 4'ünü; erkek çocukların 3'ünü, kız çocukların ise 2'sini ana dili konuşurlarından farklı noktalarda ürettiği bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu ünlüyle kurulan heceler, yetişkinlerin en az sorun yaşadığı ikinci ünlü birlikleri olmuştur.

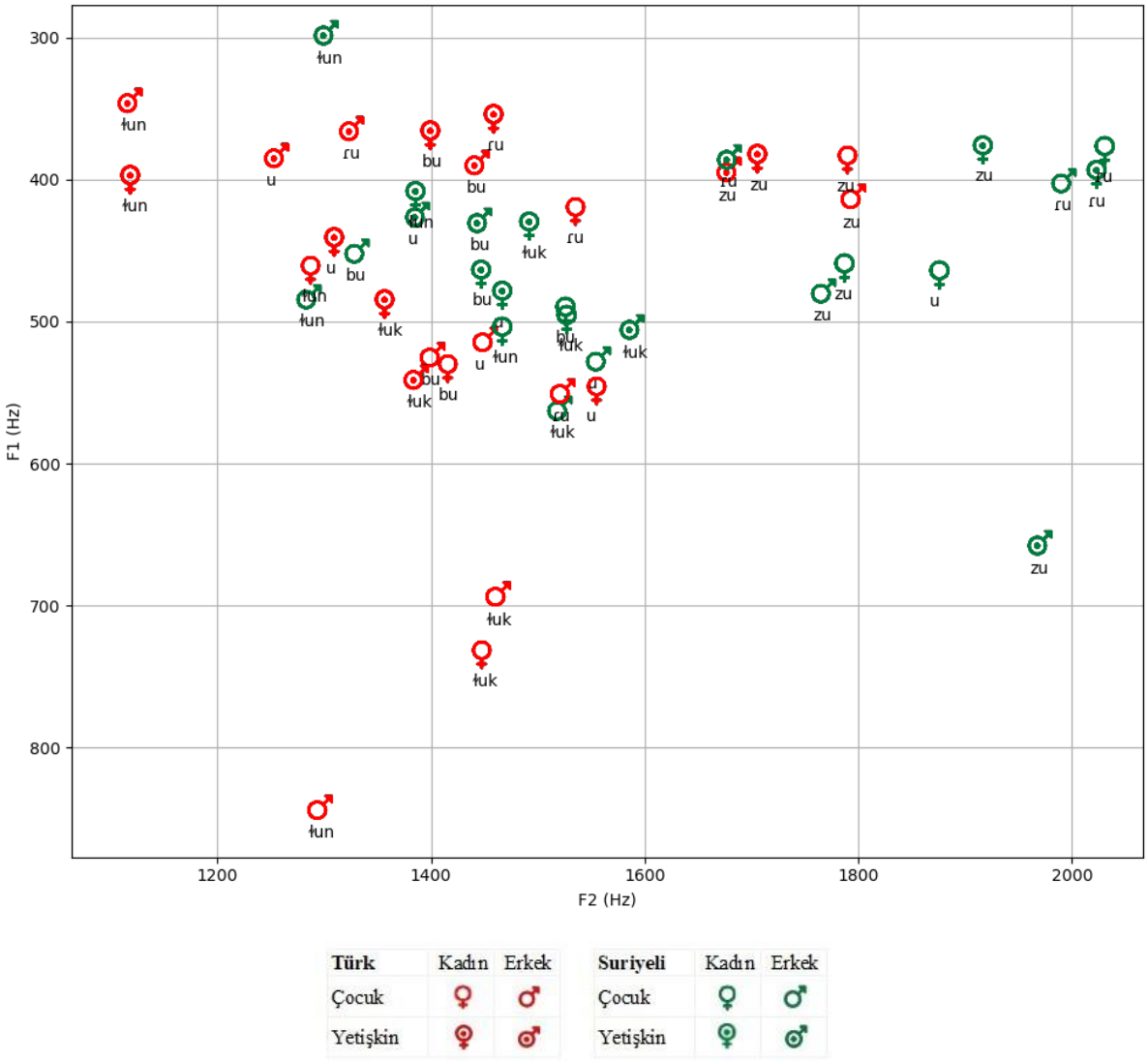
/ö/ sesbirimi, geniş ve yuvarlak bir öndil ünlüsüdür. Yani bu sesin artikülasyonu sırasında dil, damağın ön ve alt kısmındadır. Bu ünlü Türkçenin tipik ünlülerindendir ve Arapçada karşılığı yoktur.



Şekil 6. /ö/ ünlüsüne yönelik karşılaştırmalı formant grafiği

Şekil 6'da örneklerine yer verilen öndil ünlüsü, metinlerde üç hecede yalnız başına olmak üzere 19 hecede bulunmaktadır. Ötümlü ve ötümsüz ünsüzlerle kurduğu hece birliklerinden tekrar edenlerin sayısı çıkarıldığında 13 parçalı birime ulaşılmıştır. Bu sesbirimin üretiminde en çok güçlük çeken grup erkek çocuklarıdır. Erkek çocukları 13 hecenin 10'unu, yetişkinler 8'ini, kız çocukları ise 5'ini ana dili konuşurlarından geride yani damağın arka noktasında konumlandırmıştır.

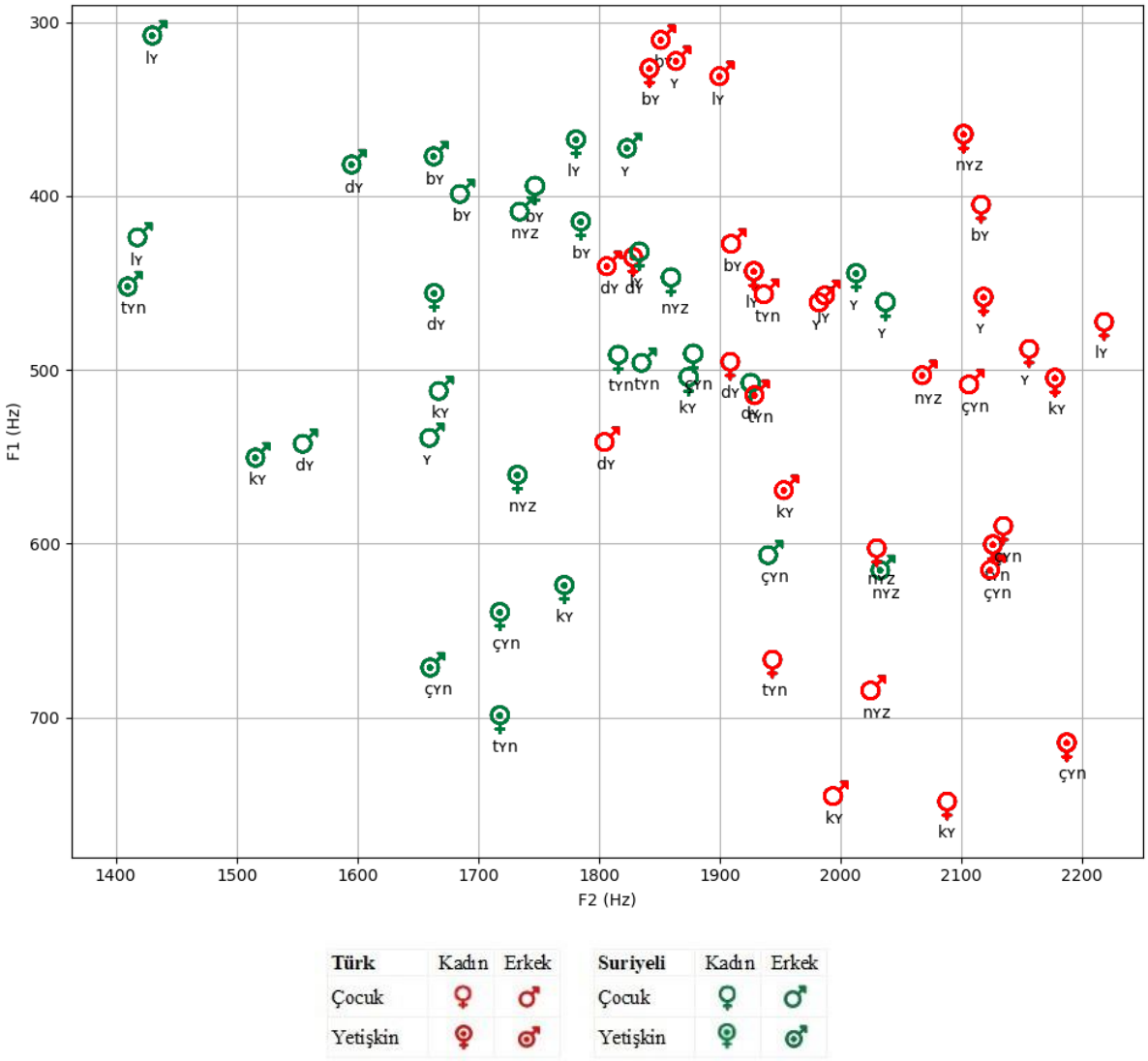
/u/ sesbirimi Türkçenin dar ve yuvarlak bir arkadil ünlüsüdür. Yani bu ses, damağın arka kısmında ve dil yukarıdayken üretilmektedir. Arapçada kısa /u/ ve uzun /u:/ olmak üzere iki şekilde boğumlanan bu sesbirime damme adı verilmektedir. Arapçadaki "w" grafemiyle karşılanan bu sesbirim Türkçedeki gibi arkadil ünlülerindendir.



Şekil 7. /u/ ünlüsüne yönelik karşılaştırmalı formant grafiği

Şekil 7'de örneklerine yer verilen bu ünlü, okuma metinlerinde dört hecede yalnız başına bulunmaktadır. Ötümlü ve ötümsüz ünsüzlerle kurduğu hece birliği sayısı ise 94'tür. Sözcüklerdeki tekrar eden hece sayısı çıkarıldığında /u/ ile kurulmuş 37 farklı parçalı birime ulaşılmıştır. Arapçada da yer alan arkadil ünlüsünün sesletimine yönelik öğrenici performansları incelendiğinde kadınların 37 parçalı birimin 7'sini, yetişkin erkeklerin 8'ini, erkek çocukların 3'ünü, kız çocukların ise 2'sini ana dili konuşurlarından farklı noktalarda oluşturduğu bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır**.**

/ü/ sesbirimi, Türkçenin dar ve yuvarlak bir öndil ünlüsüdür. Bu ses damağın ön kısmında dil yukarıdayken boğumlanmaktadır. Bu ünlü de Türkçenin tipik seslerindendir yani Arapçada bir karşılığı yoktur. Şekil 8'de /ü/ ile oluşturulan parçalı birim örneklerine yer verilmiştir.



Şekil 8. /ü/ ünlüsüne yönelik karşılaştırmalı formant grafiği

Bu ünlü okuma metinlerinde iki kez yalnız başına, 73 kez ünsüzlerle birlikte bulunmaktadır. Tekrar eden hece birlikleri bu sayıdan çıkarıldığında ulaşılan parçalı birim sayısı 28 olmuştur. Arapça konuşurlarının üretmekte en çok güçlük çektiği sesbirim Şekil 8'de de örnekleri sunulan /ü/ olmuştur. Kadın öğreniciler bu ünlü çevresinde oluşturulan parçalı birimlerden 17'sini, yetişkin erkekler 19'unu, kız çocuklar 19'unu, erkek çocuklar ise 21'ini ana dili konuşurlarından geride boğumlamaya çalışmıştır. Kız çocuklar bu ünlüyü %75, erkekler %67,86, kadınlar ise %60,71 oranında arkadil ünlüsü olan /u/'ya benzer noktalarda üretmeye çalışmıştır. Yaş açısından karşılaştırıldığında çocuklar, cinsiyet açısından incelendiğinde ise yetişkinlerde erkekler, çocuklarda kızlar bu ünlünün üretiminde hayli sorun yaşamaktadır.

SONUÇ, TARTIŞMA VE ÖNERİLER

Belirli bir amaç veya ihtiyaç doğrultusunda yabancı dil öğrenenler, dildeki yetkinliklerini üretim becerilerinde gösterirler. Üretim becerilerinden konuşma; söz varlığını, dil yapılarını, sesletim bilgisini kullanarak hedef dilde doğru akıcı ve anlaşılır performans sergileme becerisidir. Yabancı dil öğrenicilerinin hedef dil konuşurlarıyla sosyal olarak anlaşılır düzeyde iletişim kurabilmesi için hedef dilin sesletim özelliklerini doğru yapılandırması gerekir. Hedef dilin parçalı ve parçalarüstü birimlerinin öğrenilmesi ise girdi miktarı, motivasyon, tutum, ana dili, yaş, cinsiyet gibi birçok faktörden etkilenebilir. Farklı parametrelerin etkili olduğu sesletim becerisinde belirli yetkinliğe erişemeyen öğreniciler, okuduklarını ve dinlediklerini doğru anlayamayabilir; iletinin mesajını doğru

şekilde çözümleyemeyen öğreniciler, hataları/yanılmaları sonucu üretim becerilerinde yanlış performans sergileyebilir.

Dört temel dil becerisinin gelişiminde kritik bir rol oynayan sesletim becerisinin gelişimi bu kadar önemli olmasına rağmen ders kitaplarında ve dil öğretim ortamlarında öğrenicilerin fonolojik farkındalıklarını geliştirmeye yönelik müstakil etkinlikler sunulmamakta; öğrenicilerin hedef dilin sesletim özelliklerini diğer becerilere yönelik etkinlikler içerisinde kendiliğinden edinmesi beklenmektedir. Yapılan araştırmalar da yabancı dil olarak Türkçe öğretimi setlerinde hem parçalı hem de parçalarüstü birimlerin öğretimi üzerine ayrı bir bölüme yer verilmediğini göstermektedir (Gülay & Çelebi, 2024; Toraman Ünal, 2020). Bu sebeple sesletim becerisinin geliştirilmesi için öğreticilere önemli görevler düşmektedir. Öğreticiler, hedef kitlesini iyi analiz etmeli ve öğrenicilerin hatalarının kararlılıkla sürmesinin önüne geçecek etkinlikler oluşturmalıdır.

Arapça konuşurları, Türkçeyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenenler arasında hatırı sayılır bir konumda yer alır. Ana dilleri tipolojik olarak Türkçeden çok farklı olan öğrenicilerin yetkin düzeye gelse bile sesletimde bazı hatalarının fosilleşmiş bir şekilde sürdüğü görülmektedir. Sesletim becerisinde ana dilinin yanı sıra yaş ve cinsiyetin de önemli bir değişken olduğu yönünde pek çok araştırma vardır. Bundan hareketle bu çalışmada Türkçeyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen temel düzeydeki Arapça konuşurlarının sesletim becerisinde karşılaştıkları güçlükleri tespit etmek, bu güçlükleri ana dili, yaş ve cinsiyet ekseninde değerlendirmek amaçlanmıştır. Bu nedenle araştırmanın katılımcılarını benzeşik örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilen 20-45 yaş arası 32 yetişkin erkek, 18-44 yaş arası 26 kadın, 7-13 yaş arası 18 erkek çocuk, 8-13 yaş arası 15 kız çocuk oluşturmuştur. Belirlenen okuma metinleri ve bağımsız konuşma soruları aracılığıyla katılımcılardan 240 ses kaydı elde edilmiştir. Bu kayıtlar PRAAT kullanılarak parçalarına ayrılmış; parçalardan elde edilen formant değerleri ise Python programlama dili aracılığıyla grafikleştirilmiştir. Parçalar Uluslararası Fonetik Alfabe (IPA) ile sunulmuştur. Grafikte Türk yetişkin erkek-kadın, Suriyeli yetişkin erkek-kadın, Türk erkek-kız çocuk, Suriyeli erkek-kız çocuk olmak üzere sekiz değişkene ait değerler vardır. Katılımcıların parçalı birimlere yönelik çıktılarının gösterildiği grafikler, dikey düzlemde F1 (yükseklik-alçaklık), yatay düzlemde F2 (önlük-arkalık), içeride ise cinsiyet farklılıkları için F3 değerlerini içermektedir.

Öğrenicilerin parçalı birimlerdeki hataları incelendiğinde Türkçenin sesletiminde sırasıyla en çok kadınların (%29,16), ardından yetişkin erkeklerin (%28,88), daha sonra erkek çocukların (%13,62) en az ise kız çocukların (%11,99) güçlük yaşadığı bulgusuna ulaşılmıştır. Noble (1996), araştırmasında ilkokul düzeyindeki yetenekli öğrencilerin en az yarısının kızlar olduğunu ancak ilerleyen dönemlerde kadınların yetenekli öğrencilere oranının dörtte bire düştüğünü tespit etmiştir. Kheder ve Rouabhia (2023, s. 107), dil öğrenmede cinsiyetler arasındaki potansiyel farkları, sosyokültürel etkileşimlere ve öğrenme ortamına dayandırır. Yani her iki cinsiyete fırsat eşitliği sunulduğunda araştırmanın bulguları tersine çevrilebilir. Bu araştırmada da öğrenicilerin kültürel kodlarının (sosyal hayatta kabul görmek için hedef dil konuşurlarıyla erkekler kadar rahat iletişime geçememek gibi) sesletim becerilerini etkilediğini görülmektedir. Çünkü kız çocuklar, erkek çocuklara oranla sesletim becerisinde daha başarılı performans sergilemiştir. Ancak yetişkinlikte bu durum tersine evrilmiştir.

Araştırmanın bulguları, yabancı dil öğrenimi üzerinde özellikle sesletim becerisinde nöral olgunlaşma durumunun etkilerini desteklemektedir. Flege ve diğerleri (2010, s.66), ses bilgisi kategorilerindeki gelişim için dili öğrenmeye başlama yaşının ve girdi miktarının makro değişkenler olduğunu belirtmiştir. Onlara göre ergenlikten sonra yabancı dil öğrenmeye başlayanlarda belirgin bir yabancı aksanı bulunur. Bu çalışmada da sinaptik budama sürecini tamamlayan bireylerin Türkçenin sesbirimlerini oluşturmakta çocuklardan daha çok güçlük çektiği görülmüştür.

Arapça ve Türkçenin tipolojik farklılıkları, öğrenici performansları üzerinde kendisini gösteren diğer etkendir. İki dilin alfabelerindeki farklılık; Arapçanın sağdan sola, Türkçenin soldan sağa yazılma ve okunma durumu; Arapçanın bükümlü, Türkçenin sondan eklemeli bir dil olması; bu dillerin sesdizimsel özellikleri (ünlü-ünsüz dizilimi) Arapça konuşurlarının Türkçenin sesletimindeki hatalarını artırabilir. Türkçe ünlü sayısı bakımından zengin diller arasındadır. Nitekim Johanson, /ö/,

/ü/ ve /ı/ ünlülerinin Türkçenin ilişkili olduğu dillerin çoğunda kullanılmayan tipik ünlüler olduğunu ifade etmiştir (2014, s. 43). Arapçada bulunmayan /ı/, /o/, /ö/, /ü/, /ç/, /p/, /g/, /ğ/, /j/, /v/ gibi sesbirimlerin artikülasyonu, öğreniciler için oldukça zorlayıcıdır. Araştırmalar, Arapça konuşurlarının Türkçeyi öğrenirken en çok ses bilgisinde sorun yaşadığını göstermektedir (Gani & Kuruoğlu, 2021; Kan & Yarol Özgür, 2023; Kardaş, 2020; Şahin, 2020). Türkçede hece birlikleri ünlüler çevresinde kurulmaktadır; ünlü-ünsüz nitelikleri, hecelerin oluşturulma noktalarını ve frekans değerlerini etkileyebilmektedir. Bu nedenle bazı ünlüler, Arapçanın fonetik envanterinde olmasa bile ünsüzle kurduğu birliktelik sonucu ana dili konuşuruna yakın noktalarda üretilebilmektedir. Arapçada bulunan sesler, Türkçedekinden farklı bir üretim noktasına sahip olabilmekte ve öğrenici bellekten bu sesbirimi çağırırken yine benzerlik nedeniyle de ana dili engeliyle karşılaşabilmektedir. Bu durum hecenin sesletimini daha öne veya arkaya taşıyabilmektedir. Ünlüler çevresinde oluşturulan tüm hece birlikleri incelendiğinde Arapça konuşurlarının öndil ünlüsü olan ve Türkçenin tipik seslerinden sayılan /ü/ ve /ö/'yü ana dili konuşurlarından geride; /ı/ ünlüsünü ise önde yani /i/'ye yakın bir alofonla üretme eğiliminde oldukları tespit edilmiştir. Öğreniciler sırasıyla en çok /ü/, daha sonra /ö/, akabinde /ı/, sonra /a/ ve /e/, en az ise /u/, /o/ ve /i/ seslerinin üretiminde sorun yaşamışlardır. Bulgular, sesletim becerisinin gelişimi açısından ana dilinin ve yaşın önemli bir değişken olduğunu, cinsiyetin ise kültürel kodlara bağlı olarak sesletim becerisinin gelişimini etkileyebildiğini göstermiştir.

Araştırma, Arapça konuşurlarının Türkçedeki hangi sesbirimleri üretirken sorun yaşadığını fonetik analiz programı PRAAT aracılığıyla belgelemesi ve Arapça konuşurlarına öğretim yapanların yararlanabilmesi açısından oldukça önemlidir. Öğreticiler, hedef kitlesini iyi analiz etmeli; hedef dil ile ana dilinin çatışma ve karşılaşma alanlarını dikkate alarak sesletim öğretimini yapılandırmalıdır. Program yapıcılar ve materyal geliştiriciler, farklı kitleler üzerine yapılan sesletim araştırmalarının bulgularından yararlanarak fonolojik farkındalık geliştirmeye yönelik içerikler oluşturmalıdır. Bu araştırma temel düzeydeki Arapça konuşuru öğrenicilerle sınırlı tutulmuştur. Arapça konuşurlarına ve farklı milletlerden Türkçe öğrenenlere yönelik sesletim araştırmalarına daha çok yer verilmeli, bu araştırmalara boylamsal açıdan da bakılmalı ve hangi sesbirimlerde hataların fosilleştiği belgelenmelidir.

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Research Article

The Perspectives of Low-Achieving Language Learners Regarding Blended Learning as Remedial Assistance

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to determine how blended learning (BL) might be used as remedial assistance for low-achieving students, who are repeating at the beginning level of English as a foreign language (EFL). In order to make recommendations that will best promote students' success, this qualitative study looks at how students reflect on their experiences with BL. The sample setting was selected from a repeat A1 class of prospective engineering students enrolled in a preparatory program that teaches intense English courses at a Turkish university. The researcher's nine years of teaching and research expertise in the same setting, previous formal and informal feedback from low-achieving students, and the most recent literature were the main sources of shaping the BL design. It was carried out over a period of twelve weeks. Weekly forms, semi-structured interviews, and class discussions were used to collect data on students' reflections, which were then subjected to content analysis. The findings were revealed under the parameters used to define BL, such as mode, sequences of modes, level of integration, and so on. The results showed that students preferred contextualized design that was primarily supported by face-to-face contacts, traditional procedures, and teacher attention and was assisted by the online portion. These results would improve implementation techniques and advance our understanding of low-achieving EFL learners in BL.

Keywords: *blended learning, low-achieving students, perceptions of learners, English as a Foreign Language, productive skills*

INTRODUCTION

Blended learning (BL) creates a hybrid that includes both formal and informal educational activities by combining in-person instruction with online learning components (Hrastinski, 2019; Saliba & Rankine, 2010). These benefits are increased flexibility, autonomy, and interaction (Feng, 2022). Today, an increasing number of universities are emphasizing the use of online tools in conjunction with in-person instruction (Porter et al., 2016; Castro, 2019), as well as teaching with intellectual technological tools (Prasojo et al., 2019). In fact, with the emergence of the Corona-19 pandemic in 2020, blending is no longer a novelty and has become a global obligation. On the other hand, blended instruction poses some challenges and barriers for students. For example, students who lack autonomy, self-regulation, and time management abilities may struggle in online and blended courses due to a mismatch between their learning style and the nature of online instruction (Owston et al., 2013). In addition to that, according to Shimkovich et al. (2022), students miss the opportunity for direct observation and assessment in the classroom setting. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students, in particular, face difficulties such as language transfer (Bulqiyah et al., 2021), feelings of

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embarrassment (Abdelaziz & Kashinathan, 2021), reluctance to communicate, and poor pronunciation in productive skills (Amoah & Yeboah, 2021).

BL can be challenging, especially for low-achieving students in EFL settings as well. Reis and McCoach (2000, p. 157) define low-achieving as "a severe discrepancy between expected achievement (as measured by standardized achievement test scores or cognitive or intellectual ability assessments) and actual achievement (as measured by class grades and teacher evaluations)." These students may struggle with English language skills. As a result, they may receive low grades, participate in fewer class activities, and show little interest in the learning process (DiCerbo et al., 2014). In addition to their difficulties with EFL, these students may have to deal with BL, which does not address their preferences. There are studies related to BL that show low-achieving students may have lower academic achievement and less satisfaction than their normal or high-achieving peers (Owston et al., 2013). More research is needed to understand how students learn EFL through blended instruction, as this could help better understand dropout in higher education (Njenga & Fourie, 2010).

Few studies have examined low-achieving learners' perspectives on their experiences studying productive skills with BL (Aggun, 2022; El-Bassuony, 2016). The purpose of this study was to investigate their perspectives on their experiences, difficulties, and recommendations when applying BL to productive skills in which they need to express themselves. The study's findings could help us better understand them, potentially leading to better use of BL in EFL and saving time and effort from using the incorrect blended instruction. Given the previously mentioned information, the study aims to achieve the following objective:

What are the perspectives of the low-achieving language learners regarding blended learning (BL) as remedial assistance?

LITERATURE REVIEW

BL has garnered significant attention in the field of EFL. Researchers have found that BL contributes to reduced classroom overcrowding, well-designed instruction, an efficient EFL environment, and student satisfaction (Kumar et al., 2021). Further benefits of BL are as follows: individual feedback (Rahman et al., 2020), vast opportunities for writing practice (Liu et al., 2021), increased vocabulary and comprehension (Sari et al., 2021), increasing participation (Isda et al., 2021), and enhanced speaking performance (Wang, 2021). To illustrate, some studies demonstrated that remedial assistance with technology could improve vocabulary (Hu, 2020; Pasicolan, 2021), reading (Zainudin, 2019), productive skills (El-Bassuony, 2016; Aggun, 2022), and grammar skills (Abdelaziz, 2021). There have also been some studies that have aimed specifically to assist low-achieving language learners with the online remediation and have succeeded in leading to improvement (Mori, 2019; Chou et al., 2021; Armana, 2011).

However, for BL to be considered "traditional education" in EFL, it should undergo at least as much research as face-to-face education. Scholars have proposed various frameworks and designs to identify the optimal mode combination, participant role, methodology, content delivery, and more (Banados, 2006; Neumeier, 2005; Picciano, 2009; Goertler, 2012). As a result, educators have limitless opportunities and a wide variety of blends to choose from. Another problem is that some learners, such as underachievers, may resist complex and innovative instruction. While intervention with BL might have a positive effect on students' general performance, it may not help with every aspect of learning, such as self-regulation (Augustine, 2023). Similarly, there is a need to further explore the impact of BL on low-achieving students (Makhoul & Olshtain, 2024).

Indeed, several pertinent studies (Barr et al., 2005; Kobayashi & Little's, 2011) have demonstrated that students' academic performance did not improve, and they expressed dissatisfaction with the technology they were using (Chenoweth et al., 2006). Students face various challenges such as loneliness, silence, identity formation issues (Harrington, 2010), poor reading skills, time management issues (Parmar, 2023), incompatibility with online instruction (Kuama, 2016), and rejection of computers (Stracke, 2007). One more study (Mori, 2019) mentioned that, compared to

overachievers, underachievers did not participate much because some characteristics of the online task hindered them from doing so. It can be concluded the belief that students can learn easier on computers would be a myth (Gregori, 2015; Kleiman, 2000). Designing blended and online instruction to suit the students' needs is crucial for its success. Therefore, the current study aims to address the needs of low-achieving EFL in BL.

METHODOLOGY

Research Setting

The researcher conducted the research in a classroom within a preparatory program at Gaziantep University's Department of Foreign Languages. The reason for choosing this setting was that it was convenient for the researcher, had a huge population of students (approximately 1000 students), and had an intense English schedule. The program prepares students for English entrance exams into engineering departments, where English is the medium of instruction. Students have to take the exam to determine their placement in courses based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The students are placed into modules according to their level. Each module lasts eight weeks, and students must earn a passing grade of at least sixty points to move to the next module. Grades are determined through student evaluation, online assignments, quizzes, portfolios, and exit exams. Lastly, the students have to be at an intermediate level in order to start their engineering program.

Traditional face-to-face instruction for low-achieving EFL

Students who fail a module or fail the final exam must repeat the same level using the same learning materials and curriculum. They are referred to as "repeats" and have the opportunity to revisit the same materials and retry using the same process. The school did not treat low-achieving language learners who failed the A1 elementary course, differently from normally achieving students.

Participants

There were twelve classrooms at the elementary level. The majority of the students passed the module exit exam and started A2. The students who could not succeed at the module exit exam were placed randomly in three classes. They were called “repeat elementary classes”. One of these classes was chosen randomly for the aim of the study.

Eleven of the twelve participants in that class were male, and one was female. All were prospective engineering students. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 22 on average. Most of the learners possessed Turkish nationality, except for one Syrian learner. In addition to the administration, all participants consented to their participation and data collection in the blended design, which took place during the entire A1 module (8 weeks) and the first phase of the A2 module (4 weeks). Participants were told their identities would be kept secret and the results would only be used for this study. In addition, ethical approval was taken from the university.

Blended Designs in the Study

The design was conducted over a twelve-week period in 2019. The design was layered into three levels, each with varying content and duration, as outlined below. At the same time, the goal of all three levels was to give the participants more learning opportunities. The goal of recombining the main blended instruction parameters on a weekly or daily basis was to provide learners with alternative learning contexts in which they could succeed. The additional mini-designs were also intended to gather more comprehensive and reliable student feedback by assessing their preferences for different parameter combinations. Writing and speaking classes were chosen to experiment with

BL since these were the skills in which students struggled the most while expressing themselves in English.

Neumeier's parameters (2005)

The current study used Neumeier's parameters (2005) in four ways. The first one was to define BL throughout the study. The second one was to design the feature of BL as remedial assistance for the participants and apply it. The third one was to prepare data collection tools like semi-structured interview questions. The last one was to present the results under relevant parameters for a clear presentation. The following table presents the details of the parameters.

Table 1. The parameters in the framework for designing blends (Neumeier, 2005)

	The Parameters	The Options within the Parameters
1.	Mode	a) Face-to-face- 10 b) Online-2
2.	Distribution of Modes	a) 75 % face-to-face in class and 25% online b) 50 % face-to-face in class and 50% online c) 25 % face-to-face in class and 75% online
3.	Sequencing of Modes	a) Isolation b) Parallel Instruction c) Overlapping
4.	Level of Integration	a) Optional b) Obligatory
5.	Distribution of Learning Content	a) Traditional Instruction b) Online Instruction c) Flipped Instruction d) Introduction of the Content in Class and Practice Online
6.	Type of interaction Online	a) Synchronous Interaction b) Synchronous Interaction
7.	Involvement of Learning Subjects	a) Studying Alone b) Studying with an Instructor c) Studying with one Partner d) Studying with a Larger Group

The feature of blended instruction as remedial assistance

The researcher determined the parameters and methodology based on previous formal and informal feedback from low-achieving EFL students in the same setting, a review of relevant literature, and her nine-year teaching and research experience in a foreign language school. The results indicated that these language learners need to study the language, break down the units into smaller parts (Efrat, 2019), receive consistent motivation from their teacher, and utilize rich online resources. Furthermore, these students must study the language in a communicative manner, supported by five senses (Avni, 2023).

Based on these conclusions, BL had features to support the students specifically. For example, the design divided the "introduction of yourself" paragraph into smaller components, including "topic, supporting, and concluding sentences", as well as "connectors", "punctuation", and "grammar". Moreover, multimedia presented the content in repetitive ways. For instance, the topic of "introduction of self" in speaking skills was accessible both in person and online. Additionally, the teacher presented the content through texts, pictures, videos, slides, audio recordings, and useful links. One last example of the teacher's close attention was also available. The teachers motivated the students to follow their interests online and interact with the content in speaking and writing forms.

Primary design

The main and static designs were prepared in accordance with the primary schedule of the institution over a period of twelve weeks. The goal is to replicate the main course content online, utilizing a variety of online tools, and surpass the traditional face-to-face methodology.

1. In the classroom, in-person instruction predominated.

2. The teacher went over all of the material in class and reviewed it online.

3. The online component was taught concurrently with in-person teaching.

4. While the online component was optional, in-person attendance was required.

5. The online course was taught asynchronously.

6. Online conversation took place between the students and the instructor as well as between the students and the online information.

7. Production, practice, and presentation were the approaches used.

8. In-person training took place on the university campus, while online instruction could take place at any time and from any location.

9. The online resources included social media apps, Gmail components, online platforms and tools related to the textbooks, and websites for writing and speaking.

Additional mini-designs

In addition to this main design, the researcher added weekly mini-designs by combining the parameters of the core design in different fashions. For example, although the online component of the main design took place asynchronously between learners and online content, in one of the additional mini-designs, the learners and the instructor met on videoconferencing to practise speaking before the final speaking exam. The purpose of re-combining the main blended instruction parameters on a weekly basis was to offer learners alternative learning contexts in which they could succeed**.**

Extended design component

The researcher encouraged students to write and communicate in English online in addition to the prescribed course material. This section served as a comprehensive overview of various language skills covered in the main course book. For example, the students searched for an influencer online based on their interest topic, found their introduction video in their series, and left a comment under the video.

The students' participation in the implementation

The students had free accounts on a variety of platforms, including mobile phone applications, Wix.com, Gmail, WhatsApp, and course platforms like Longman Press. They were used according to the aim of and content of the course. The number of hours the student spent was not calculated formally because the online tools wanted to be utilised were dynamic and varied. Conversely, quantitatively, the number of tasks, homework, and mini-projects completed were recorded. At the end of 12 weeks, the percentage of homework completed during the blended learning period was 57. The teacher formally graded these parts, accounting for 5% of the overall assessment. The students' online participation was not obligatory or graded during the extended design. The teacher motivated the students by having individual sessions in the classroom.

Collecting Data

Semi-structured interviews

Both before and after implementation, semi-structured interviews were carried out. The second series of interviews aimed to collect additional information about students' experiences, while the first set of interviews tried to understand students' opinions on blended instruction. Structured questions like "What has been your experience with each component of blended instruction?" and "Would you compare the parameters with each other?" were asked at the start of the interviews. They then moved on to less structured questions designed to elicit more information about their decisions as well as the rationale behind them.

Reflection forms

On forms created utilizing Gibbs's (1988) reflective cycle, students were also invited to write down their reflections once a week. These forms were always returned to the researcher the same day they were completed, giving students the opportunity to comment on the many parameter combinations in the mini-designs before they forgot their original concepts. For example, the form included this question:

- *Taking into account the material introduction, practice, and feedback, how have you applied blended instruction this week to improve your writing abilities? How did you feel as you finished the writing exercises? What caused you to experience these emotions?*

Classroom discussion

Each month, three classroom discussions were facilitated related to the parameters to triangulate the data. During these three discussions, driven by semi-structured interview questions and reflective forms, learners commented on the combination of online and face-to-face instruction they had been receiving.

- What *do you think of the implementation in general? If you were the designer, how would you modify the implementation in a way that would suit you?*

Analysis of the Data

During each interview segment and class discussion, participants' answers were audibly recorded via a mobile phone application, and the transcription was done by hand. Seven parameters involved in the BL, including mode, sequence of mode, and others, were the focus of the content-based data analysis methodologies (see Table 1). The participants thoroughly described nearly all of these factors, delving into great detail about their advantages and disadvantages. To determine when, for how long, in what way, why, and with whom each option connected to a parameter had been

useful, the researcher presented the parameters in a more neutral manner rather than using terms like "weak", "unpopular", "better", or "poor". Thematic analysis was used for reflective forms. The findings of all reflections on each parameter are shown in the results part of this paper so that the usefulness of the parameters may be understood from the viewpoint of the learners. Each student may struggle differently than the others, and some of the issues were particular to each person. Under the pertinent sections are direct quotes from the students who offer a comprehensive analysis of their experience.

The Role of the Researcher

The researcher also served as a mentor for the implementation process. Several methods to prevent the researchers' bias were followed to guarantee the validity and reliability of the study. Firstly, two other researchers were invited, who were also teachers in the same setting, to observe the entire process. Prior to implementation, these two researchers provided feedback on the design and checked the content analysis of the qualitative data to provide an objective external perspective. Secondly, during the implementation process, the teacher did not participate in the assessment of productive skills. The school employed a double-blind marking process, using a set of specific criteria that the student received in advance. The teacher could only grade 5% of the total assessment, which was a teacher-only assessment. Lastly, the teacher conducted the second phase of the semi-structured interview at the end of the term, when she was no longer teaching. Consequently, the teacher gathered part of the qualitative data when she had no authority over the students.

RESULTS

Under the relevant parameters, the students' justifications, remarks, examples, and specifics about their experiences were documented. The results have been revealed in accordance with the parameters in the framework for designing blends (Neumeier, 2005), presented in Table 1.

1. Mode

10 preferred face-to-face while 2 out of 12 students preferred online writing instruction.

The students were asked to assess the online and in-person modalities from their point of view and to justify their preference for one over the other. The following table summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of both in-person and online instruction:

Table 2. The summary of the findings related to the first parameter, Mode

Mode	Strengths	Weaknesses
1.Face-to-Face	The Need for a Building The Familiar and Usual Way of Instruction Professionals Hands Here and Now Learning Strong Network	Occupation of Excessive Space Source of Complicated Feelings

2.Online	Pace Regulation	Too Many Simultaneous Problems
	Connecting with the World	Disadvantages of Being Limitless
	Preparing for the Future	Locked at Home

Analysis of face-to-face instruction

The majority of learners preferred face-to-face training. Below is a discussion of the face-to-face mode's stated advantages, which are followed by a list of its alleged drawbacks.

The Necessity of a Physical Space: Seven students think that the need for a real location to write and speak English is what makes in-person training so effective. They viewed this necessity as a benefit, since it often ensures a silent, comfortable place that is far away from the distractions of home life. One of the students gave an example for that saying *"In our house, there is always a ringing doorbell, an unexpected guest, an invitation to drink coffee, or the responsibility to cook food."* With the aid of a board, chairs, supplies, and a projector, the physical space of the school acts as a haven for students who are unable to concentrate on writing and vocabulary study while on the go.

The Familiar and Usual Way of Instruction: Three students achieved their dream of attending university by private tutoring or attending university themselves, feeling confident in their ability to learn face-to-face. They prefer to experience important information in a classroom setting, with the guidance of an experienced instructor, rather than relying on tedious online instructions. One student asked a question to explain that "*Imagine you want to try a different exotic food for the first time. Would you prefer to read it from somewhere on your own or have somebody with you in the kitchen who can demonstrate how to blend the ingredients in the best way and give you the tips?*

Professionals Hands: One of the students underlined the importance of the school's quality and the English instructor's experience, which determined the most effective methods of instruction, schedule, materials, and activities. Another student emphasized *"I am not an expert, but the teachers and the school are experts. They know what to do better than me."* One more student expressed concerns about their ability to function independently without the school's close physical connection, as this was their first exposure to a foreign language, and felt it was unnecessary to waste time on whether online instruction would help them speak or write.

Here and Now Learning: All of the students preferred being at the center of instruction, focusing on acquiring and practicing new language knowledge. They appreciated the social environment provided by schools. Even small interactions, such as tardiness, apology, and being corrected by instructors were give as examples. This face-to-face and real-time learning was more exciting, memorable, and useful for them compared to watching online videos. One student told an anecdote about that: *"One day my friend was late for class, attempt to apologize in English, he could not remember the words, but the teacher looked into his eyes and sighted. It was funny and we all laughed."*

Strong Networks: Two students think that studying with people who share their goal of learning a language will help them learn it more easily. They show an interest in joining a support group that will enable them to communicate, grow, and learn. Relationships between students are stronger in the classroom setting than in online forums because it enables them to share experiences, moments, and atmospheres. For instance, one student mentioned "*I became friends with a student from the other class who was planning to participate in the work and travel cultural exchange program. He explained all of the details about going to the USA. I want to do it next year. But first I need to learn English"*

Occupation of Excessive Space: In addition to the strengths, students reported some weaknesses in their face-to-face English learning environment. They struggled with listening to lectures, completing self-access, studying for exams, writing fluent paragraphs, and so on. One of the students criticized that, saying, "Every day *school, school, school…I do not have time for hobbies or extra online time*." The students highlight the need to cut on the intensive classroom time and extend their study beyond class time.

Source of Complicated Feelings: One student had different feelings related to face-to-face class. Some felt ashamed when he was seen by their previous classmates repeating their course while their classmates advanced. In addition to that some hardworking students were often forced to complete activities with uninteresting students, leading to increased anxiety during quizzes and exams. One of them complained that "*I am not fond of my new classmates. They do not want to learn at all."* Lastly, boredom was also a negative feeling among students. Overall, the learning materials were just "repeating *themselves*".

Evaluating online instruction

The study found that online instruction was less popular among students than face-to-face instruction. The study analyzed students' perceived strengths and weaknesses of this mode, starting with strengths and ending with weaknesses.

A Rich Way of Delivery: Online instruction offers students an alternative way to engage with learning content. These allows them to choose from various materials. As one of the students put it "*Of course pictures, slides, videos, voice recordings, Microsoft Word documents, PDF documents, discussion forums, and websites are much better than the board".*

Pace Regulation: Repeat students often require repetitive information and longer learning periods for grammar and vocabulary. For three students, online instruction meant less pressure on understanding and skill development within limited time. One of the students observed that "*I cannot repeat the pronunciation of a new word for five times in the classroom, but I can do it at home online*." Another student described himself as a "*slow writer"* and preferred to "*go online"*.

Connecting with the World: Five students reported that they were curious about other countries, cultures, and people from around the world. They felt that face-to-face instruction was insufficient for creating an environment in which they could learn correct pronunciation and authentic language use. In this regard, they felt that online instruction—especially via tools such as Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, Gmail, discussion forums, and other online communities—enabled them to extend their communications beyond the limited classroom space and feel like a world citizen. One student asked "*What is your chance of meeting a Spanish at school?".*

Preparing for the Future: Five students connoted technology-supported instruction with innovation and quality instruction. Moreover, most of them expressed that they wanted to earn well-paid and competitive jobs at international companies which utilize advanced technology. As one of the students stated "using *a pencil on a piece of paper will not prepare me for responding to an email."*

Too Many Simultaneous Problems: Online learning has its strengths, but students with an A1 level find it challenging to achieve proficiency in English within it. Although they felt that it could significantly benefit them, they also felt that learning to operate with online components could be overwhelming. For instance, they must understand how a computer functions, how to avoid or eliminate a virus, how to change the language of a word, how to convert a file on Apple into Windows, how to organize the files for videos, and how to deal with weak internet connection. While these all may seem like minor problems, when students experience them simultaneously, with limited help, patience, or backgrounds of online instruction, these problems may influence students to dismiss the foreign language learning content. One student explained why he once dropped learning; "*I was*

trying to watch a video sent by the teacher. I needed to download a program to open it. Then I thought I needed to sleep instead of working on that."

Disadvantages of Being Limitless: Three students preferred a schedule with less flexibility in terms of time, place, and activities. They desired to be "*pushed or motivated daily by an instructor or classmates"*. In this case, online instruction may not work for them as efficiently as it would for hard-working, highly-motivated students.

Locked at Home: While one student praised online instruction for saving them time, money, and energy as they would not need to travel to the university, another student argued that "*face-to-face instruction was a reason to wake up early"*, leave their homes, and enlarge their zones. These students did not prefer to remain in their home or at their university residences, as these environments lacked the stimulants necessary for improving their English.

2. Distribution of Modes

The percentage of online instruction preferred by learners was 27.08 while it was 72.92 for face-to-face.

The learners did not give reasons for their choice with the distribution of the modes. They underlined that they did not wish to study productive skills by staring at a computer screen for a long period of time. As a result, they did not prefer online to be a high percentage. However, there was one student who did not wish to attend face-to-face class at all.

3. Sequencing of Modes

4 students preferred that face-to-face delivery be parallel to online delivery. 5 preferred that face-to-face delivery be complementary to online delivery while 3 preferred that face-to-face instruction be isolated from online instruction.

Parallel instruction: The first reason why four students preferred that the delivery of face-to-face and online instruction be parallel to one another is that these learners wanted all of the content to be delivered in class and supported online in order that they could learn more efficiently and in more detail without missing any points. They expressed that this type of delivery would give them space and time to review what they had learned during school on a given day. A final advantage was that if learners were to miss the content for some reasons such as lack of attendance or difficulty level of the content, they could access the material online.

Complementary instruction: Five learners preferred the introduction of content in class so they may become more easily engaged. Later, they would be able to continue their studies in their own space and relate the content to more extensive related information online. Thus, they preferred to reserve face-to-face instruction for more complicated topics and continue practicing online with relatively more ease.

Isolated instruction: Three learners did not see the advantage of engaging with the same content both in class and online. These learners felt that they should "*get what they need"* during class through quality instruction. Rather, they preferred to explore interesting and different content which would be more motivational, such as the extended component of the BL in the current study.

4. Level of Integration

8 students preferred online instruction to be optional, and 4 preferred it to be obligatory.

Obligatory choice*:* The first reason for that choice was lack of self-regulation. Four learners preferred mandatory tasks like attendance, exam passing, and homework to ensure they could effectively learn

English, as they did not trust themselves to regulate their studies independently. The second reason was developing connection. They grew closer to their teacher, who was able to watch them more intently and learn more about their learning preferences and habits or develop closer relationships with their classmates. The final reason was being afraid of going off track. Some students discovered that going to class or doing online exercises helped them stay on course and adhere to the syllabus. They would miss school every day for trivial reasons if it weren't required, which would make it harder for them to follow the lessons when they returned.

Evaluating optional choice: On the other hand, eight learners thought that obligatory instruction would not contribute to their levels of understanding or productive language skills. They complained that commuting to school was a waste of time. They believed that if they were not going to learn from certain methods, obligations could not help them. One of the learners mentioned that obligatory attendance was an outdated concept. He argued that "*In today's world, learners should not be forced during class time to complete activities against their will."*

5. Distribution of Learning Content

8 students preferred traditional face-to-face instruction, 3 students preferred topics to be introduced in class but practiced online, and 1 preferred flipped instruction. None of the students preferred that course content be introduced and practiced entirely online.

Traditional instruction: Eight learners stated that the best way to learn was the way with which they were already familiar: traditional face-to-face instruction. They felt safe during face-to-face instruction, which they felt was important for them. Moreover, they preferred step-by-step instruction such as the introduction of a topic followed by related practice and feedback. One student stated "*when I returned home, I don't want to think about studying certain content from the beginning."*

Introduction of the content in class and practice online: Three learners mentioned that they would prefer a decrease in class time. They believed they spent too much time at school and with little results. Thus, they preferred that content be introduced in class and practiced online at home.

Flipped instruction: One learner preferred the idea of using class time only for speaking or writing practice. With flipped instruction, he could reserve class time for interesting and interactive activities rather than sampling following the same course routine. However, some other learners also mentioned that they did not like the idea of having content introduced while at home since for them, initially learning about the content itself was the most difficult part of their learning.

Online instruction: A few learners mentioned that online instruction was a type of learning with which they felt comfortable, but they did not want it to replace face-to-face classes. At the same time, face-to-face instruction could be available for them, so they would still have a concrete institution to support their studies.

6. Involvement of Learning Subjects

5 students preferred to study alone and 4 preferred studying with an instructor. 2 preferred to study with a partner and 1 preferred to study in a larger group.

Studying Alone: For five learners, studying on their own was essential since they viewed learning a foreign language as a subject. They individually should be able to comprehend it. They referred to grammar and vocabulary as examples of content which they preferred to study alone. In this regard, technology meant that they had their own time, and space.

Studying with an Instructor: The instructor was considered an important parameter both in face-to-face and online instruction by four students. They believed that studying with an instructor would assist them in achieving their learning goals in the simplest and most direct way. They also felt that the

instructor knew the best individual paths for them due to her extensive teaching experience. Moreover, some felt that instructors serve the role of a companion throughout the journey of learning a foreign language in that they provide emotional support such as motivation and confirmation.

Studying with One Partner: Studying with one partner was a preferred option because it would assist them in following instructions and learning content while ensuring that their ideas and voices be heard. They felt that in a larger group, they might have to compete with dominant personalities and my lack opportunities for engagement. One learner emphasized the quality of the partner as an important factor. They stated that they preferred partners with whom they would feel safe in attempting to produce the language either in writing or in speaking. Likewise, learners felt that in some instances they may prefer an online partner whom they had never met in-person so that they would feel less pressure and insecurity.

Studying with a Larger Group: One student preferred this option in which more interesting dialogue might emerge, more spontaneous language might be produced, and less pressure might be felt. He mentioned that he left comments in an online conversation in English. He said that "*I am happy when I got likes on my comments online."*

8. Type of Online Interaction

While 4 students preferred synchronous instruction, 8 students preferred asynchronous online instruction.

Synchronous Interaction: Four learners explained that synchronous online instruction felt "alive" in that it ensured immediate, interactive, and interesting learning. In fact, some online tools such as Zoom, Skype, and videoconferences are similar to face-to-face interaction. This type of instruction could prepare them for spontaneous interactions in question-and-answer sessions following the instruction.
One disadvantage mentioned was when it was designed in a way that required too much preparation, it was overwhelming for the students alongside their face-to-face instruction and class-related responsibilities.

Asynchronous Interaction: This type of interaction was beneficial for eight students in the sense that learners could engage in online activities whenever they chose. They could even skip some sections of online assignments. One problem was that when it was mandatory and included dense content as well as a long session duration, learners stated that "I cannot stand nonstop online activities."

DISCUSSION

Elementary students who were repeating their course of study after failing an exam were included in the qualitative study. For twelve weeks of the study, the students employed BL as remedial help. "What are the perspectives of the low-achieving EFL learners regarding blended learning (BL) as remedial assistance? was the research topic. To address this subject, semi-structured interviews, monthly class discussions, and weekly reflection sheets were used. Under the relevant parameters, the students' justifications, remarks, examples, and specifics about their experiences were documented.

The study examined the strengths and weaknesses of face-to-face and online instruction and concluded the advantages of BL surpass its drawbacks for low-achieving students. To begin with, traditional instruction provided a sense of safety and ensured students got what they needed from each lesson. Students believed that a physical space with a familiar way of instruction was essential for effective learning, providing a quiet, comfortable, and known environment away from distractions. They also valued strong networks formed through school experiences, which increased their involvement in EFL. These results align with the findings of another scholar (Zhu et al., 2021), who discovered that maintaining connections with peers and receiving feedback from teachers inspired learners and improved the quality of their work. The students may require one-on-one communication

and attention from their teachers, as well as collaboration with their peers in the classroom (Shimkovich et al., 2022). However, they also reported the long, tedious lessons, and homework assignments as less enjoyable than expected, leading to increased anxiety and boredom. In summary, despite its limitations, face-to-face mode allowed them to differentiate themselves from other elements of their environment that were detrimental to EFL.

Online instruction offers a rich way of delivery through various formats for the needs of diverse students (Ming et al., 2016; Gulnaz et al., 2020). It enables students to engage with the world and acquire authentic language use. However, it may prove overwhelming for students with an A1 level, particularly those who lack self-discipline, procrastinate, struggle with complex content, or find long computer screen periods boring. Furthermore, while synchronous online instruction provides immediate, interactive, and captivating learning experiences, it can be overwhelming due to the need for too much time, energy, and preparation. Asynchronous interaction provides flexibility in engaging in online activities, but it may lead to a loss of patience and interest when mandatory online instruction includes dense content and long sessions. Online may also be inefficient for these students who need to prepare for exams in a shorter time. Overall, students' success in online instruction depends on their ability to adapt to their busy schedules and unique learning environments.

It can be concluded that some learners may select specific options to conceal their personal weaknesses through self-regulation or to escape the burden of overwhelming content. For instance, some learners advocated for traditional face-to-face instruction with a one-to-one teacher to alleviate the burden of online learning, while others advocated for solitary online study to circumvent peer pressure during in-person language practice. In the same way, obligatory choices promote self-regulation and connection, and lastly preventing going off track. Similarly, while some findings in the current study suggest flexibility with the parameters, further analysis suggests that an attendance policy, a structured syllabus, and teacher support should contextualize and limit them. Lastly, a few students preferred in-class introduction of information over flipped instruction, attributing this preference to a deficiency in self-regulation. This contrasted with other studies that suggest online introduction of content, followed by practice in class (Kong, 2014; O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015; El-Bassuony, 2016), and that found learners can determine when and how to utilize the available resources effectively (Ja'ashan, 2015; Mulyadi et al., 2020). These contractions may be due to studies using normal-achieving students, which may not apply to low-achieving students. They require their own fieldwork in BL to avoid negative consequences.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DESIGNING BL

In light of the previously mentioned information, the following features are proposed for designing BL as remedial assistance for low-achieving students.

Involvement of the students: EFL educators should design blends which incorporate their learners (Öncü, & Bıchelmeyer, 2021). The reason for that is each student has different learning experiences with BL. While one learner mentioned that he could not stand staring at a computer screen for a long time, another learner complained that face-to-face instruction occupied too much of his time so that he did not have his own extracurricular time or space for pursuing his online study. Furthermore, some learners may choose certain options to disguise their weaknesses, for example, preferring that face-to-face instruction be obligatory in order to relieve themselves of the responsibility of online learning or preferring to study online in isolation in order to avoid social pressure among their classmates. For this reason, designs should not be static or linear. One option would be to leave a small portion of the blend to be determined at a later time with students or when the opportunity arises.

***Multilayered and dynamic blends*:** Another implication is to design multilayered and dynamic blends. The results showed that the exact percentage of each mode did not matter to students. It can be concluded that educators employing BL should not focus in advance on certain percentages of the modes or the combination of the parameters. In a sense, educators should try to mimic the already

existent proportion of face-to-face and online interactions that are part of the learners' routine lives. To illustrate, when learners may awaken in the morning, they immediately reach for their mobile phones in order to connect with their families on Skype, as they are separated from their families while attending the university. Next, they might organize a meeting with friends via a WhatsApp group since they often feel like socializing. During the meeting, they might check the latest news regarding their favorite football team. Likewise, small- and short-term blended designs based on small projects should mirror the lives of the target learners to some extent. Introducing content, practicing it, and receiving feedback could mirror the normal routines of the learners in mixed ways. For example, the combination of the modes could connect a) a face-to-face context with other face-to-face contexts, b) online modes with face-to-face modes, or c) an online context with another online one.

***Starting with traditional and moving towards online*:** The reflections of the participants showed that the majority praised traditional face-to-face instruction, followed by an obligatory attendance policy and a teacher delivering the content in class. Fewer students preferred the inclusion of flipped instruction in their writing or speaking lessons. These results contradicted those of some other studies which proposed that content be introduced online and practiced or further discussed in class (Kong, 2014; O'Flaherty and Phillips, 2015). On the other hand, there were some students that linked online with preparation for their future or with connecting with the world. As a solution, BL designs should begin with traditional face-to-face mode. Later on, the blends might transition from face-to-face instruction to online instruction, from an available language context to an international context, and from core structured instruction to less structured instruction.

Include more support: BL might be seen as an easy way (Ashraf et al., 2021) or a cost-effective method of instruction. However, the results of that study showed that low-achieving students might cease to learn when they encounter a technological problem, be reluctant to speak with their unwilling classmates, or be overwhelmed with the large quantity of asynchronous online. Hence, they may need linguistic, technological, or affective support while studying. Preparing a blend, educators should be aware of the responsibility of addressing low-achieving students who are already struggling to learn a language. To conclude, BL that supports students should be prepared by educators.

CONCLUSION

The research aimed to understand the opinions of low-achieving students on the parameters used in BL designed as remedial assistance in productive skills. Students emphasized the benefits of face-to-face instruction with obligatory aspects as offering a physical space, familiar and usual teaching methods, the close attention of an instructor, keeping focused "in the heart of instruction," and providing stronger networks. Additionally, they reported complicated feelings in that context, such as feeling anxious, bored, and ashamed to be an underachiever with other unmotivated classmates. Similarly, the students appreciated some of the features of online learning, such as its rich delivery method (Uygur, 2022), its ability to regulate speed, and its ability to connect with the world and international job opportunities. Moreover, while the synchronous aspect of online learning offers immediate, interactive learning, it demands a significant amount of time, energy, and preparation. On the other hand, asynchronous interaction enables learners to participate in online activities at their convenience. In brief, the students tend to select aspects of the parameters that provide one-to-one support for their language learning struggles and their inability to create an environment conducive to English learning, even though they acknowledge the benefits of innovative technology and methods.

This study had limitations, including a small participant count and an equal gender ratio. Additionally, logistical constraints were present, as the study was conducted within a formal preparatory English program, which limits the researcher's ability to design unique content for "alternative" instruction for low-achieving EFL learners. Further research related to alternative instruction with BL should be conducted.

Ethical Statement: The authors confirm that ethical approval was obtained from the Ethical Committee of Çağ University, as outlined in the ethical permission document dated 02/01/2019.

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Research Article

Pre-Service Language Teachers and Practitioner Research: Investigating Professional Role Identity Formation

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Abstract: Emerging from a practitioner research course aimed at equipping pre-service language teachers with research skills, this study aimed to explore perceptions of research engagement and professional role identities constructed through it. Employing narrative inquiry as the research methodology and focusing on one of the research groups formed, we analyzed the written and oral narratives of two pre-service language teachers engaged in Exploratory Practice, a prominent form of practitioner research. Our findings indicated that the participants viewed their involvement in practitioner research positively and benefited from it both personally and professionally, achieving a transformative shift from a singular student-focused perspective to a more complex dual viewpoint that also embraces aspects of a teacher's perspective. Among the various professional role identities that language teachers enact, our participants emphasized the roles of 'care provider' and 'motivator' over more traditional role identities such as 'presenter' and 'manager'. In addition, the roles of 'learner' and 'researcher', when combined, were found to be more dominant than the role of 'knowledgeable', signifying an inquiry and growth mindset. We conclude that a course design requiring active research engagement and reflection on teacher identity offers significant benefits for language teacher education and, therefore, should be included in the curricula of such programs.

Keywords: *pre-service language teachers, practitioner research, research engagement, professional role identities, teacher education*

INTRODUCTION

Practitioner research has gained significant acknowledgment as a valuable tool for teachers to enhance their teaching practices and professional development. However, despite the growing recognition that various forms of practitioner research have received, their implementation remains relatively infrequent (Borg, 2017). Among various factors, Borg (2017) identifies 'identity-related barriers' as a key reason for their limited uptake and argues that if teachers do not see teacher research as part of who they are, even if they have enough knowledge and skills, it is unlikely that they will engage in research activities. Therefore, incorporating an academic research skills course into the curricula of language teacher education (LTE) programs without establishing a clear link between research engagement and language teacher identity (LTI) might not yield the intended results. The theoretical concern behind the current study pertains to such a missed opportunity and the promising potential of a practitioner research course with a further focus on LTI to encourage research engagement among language teachers.

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Danielewicz (2001) views becoming a teacher as an identity-forming process by the individual and the others, such as teacher educators. However, there remains a paucity of evidence on whether teacher educators could ascribe researcher identities to future language teachers or, more importantly, whether those identities will be embraced and claimed by these teachers themselves. Although previous studies (Akyel, 2015; Trent, 2010, 2012) have shown that teachers are more likely to view conducting research as part of teaching after engaging in research, they also reveal that teachers have reservations about continuing these activities in their professional practice by adopting a teacher-researcher identity. In this respect, this study will contribute to the existing discourse about the possibility of assisting pre-service teachers in the process of becoming teacher-researchers by answering the following research questions:

(1) How do pre-service language teachers perceive their lived experiences of practitioner research engagement?
(2) How do pre-service language teachers construct their LTI through practitioner research engagement?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Exploratory Practice

Exploratory Practice (EP) emerged in the early 1990s through the work of Dick Allwright and his partner language teachers and teacher educators (Allwright, 2003). It is a form of practitioner research in which "learners as well as teachers are encouraged to investigate their own learning/teaching practices, while concurrently practicing the target language" (Hanks, 2017, p. 2). In EP, the priority is on 'puzzles' (a term replacing 'research questions') related to language learning and teaching, and it aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomena subject to these puzzles, which will improve the quality of life in the classroom (Hanks & Dikilitaş, 2018). In line with the other forms of practitioner research methods, e.g., reflective practice and action research, EP views education as a social process, aims to empower teachers, includes elements of reflection, and claims that "the arena for research should be the classrooms and the pedagogic practices of practitioners" (Hanks, 2017, p. 3). However, EP also differs from other research methods in that it emphasizes the importance of the agency of learners as well as teachers (Hanks, 2017), prioritizes understanding over solutions by focusing on 'why' instead of 'how to' (Allwright, 2005; Miller, 2009), and recommends that the inquiry undertaken is integrated into classroom practices (Miller & Cunha, 2019). By doing these, it aims to "minimize the burden" of already overloaded teachers and, therefore, "make it a continuous enterprise" (Allwright & Hanks, 2009, p. 260, original emphases).

Constructing Language Teacher Identities

Although the importance of LTIs is widely recognized today, there was a long period in ELT history when language teachers were seen as passive technicians who were supposed to apply certain methodologies for learning to take place (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). This shift in perspective took place in the 1990s, with more scholars arguing that "issues of education should be addressed first and foremost in terms of identities and modes of belonging and only secondarily in terms of skills and information" (Wenger, 1998, p. 263). Thanks to classroom-based research, teachers, who represent a multitude of social and cultural roles and identities (Duff & Uchida, 1997) and bring their whole identities intrinsically to the classroom (Barkhuizen & Mendieta, 2020), were recognized as critical components of language classrooms (Tsui, 2007; Varghese et al., 2005). When LTI emerged as an object of research, how identity was conceptualized had already shifted from a psychological process to a contextualized social process in line with the sociocultural turn (Miller, 2009). Much of the recent literature on LTI since then has embraced this new understanding of identity as "multiple, shifting, and in conflict" (Varghese et al., 2005, p. 22) and "fluid, context-dependent, and context-producing" (Norton & Toohey, 2011, p. 419). It is "an ongoing process of negotiating and interrelating multiple I-positions" (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011, p. 135) that is "constructed, maintained, and negotiated to a

significant extent through language and discourse" (Varghese et al., 2005, p. 23). We also draw upon these widely accepted conceptualizations in the field when seeking to take a snapshot of our participants' "dynamic and everchanging" (Yazan, 2018, p. 25) LTIs constructed in the process of their research engagement. Theoretically, we adopt Barkhuizen and Mendieta's (2020) framework (Figure 1), which acknowledges various aspects of the personal and professional identities of teachers and situates their LTI in an institutional and community context first and a macro-sociocultural and ideological context next.

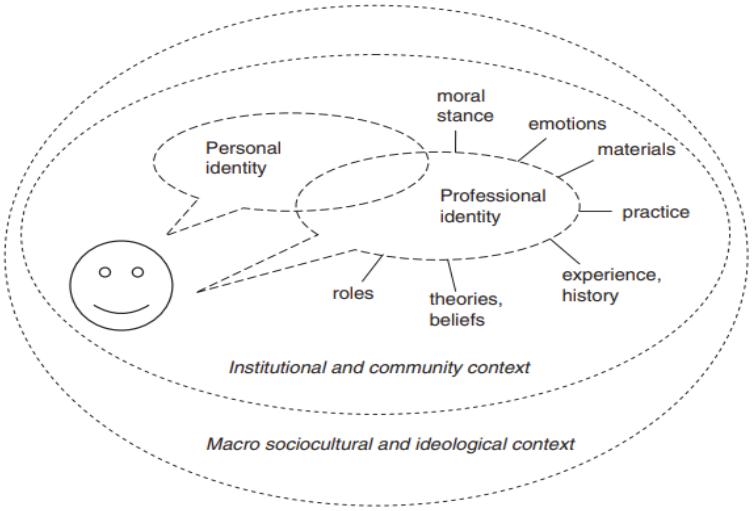

Figure 1. Barkhuizen and Mendieta's (2020, p. 5) facets of language teacher professional identity

In this study, however, we focus on the pre-service language teachers' professional role identity (PRI), "a finer-grained entity than one's larger identity, which is composed of the amalgam of role identities that reflect the multiple roles one fills in life" (Martel, 2017, p. 89). Similarly, Farrell (2011) describes teacher role identity as "the configuration of interpretations that language teachers attach to themselves, as related to the different roles they enact and the different professional activities that they participate in as well as how others see these roles and activities" (p. 91). Collecting data from three Canadian college teachers through group discussions and interviews, Farrell (2011) identified 16 role identities grouped under three major categories: (1) teacher as manager, (2) teacher as acculturator, and (3) teacher as professional. Since then, various other studies have used his framework and/or taxonomy to investigate the role identities of university instructors of EFL (Aghaei et al., 2020; Butler, 2024; Moritani & Iwai, 2019; Yesilbursa, 2012; Yi & Meng, 2022), university instructors of ESOL (Fowler, 2017), university instructors of EAP (Atai et al., 2018), and in-service teachers of EFL (Rahimi & Bigdeli, 2014; Sahragard & Sadeghi, 2017). The present study also employs Farrell's (2011) taxonomy in its exploration of pre-service EFL teachers' PRI construction, which appears to have received scant attention in this line of research.

METHODOLOGY

We adopted a qualitative approach by employing narrative inquiry, a methodology that has been well-established since Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) seminal work. Exploring the lived experiences of research engagement and how identities develop throughout these experiences, this study required a methodology that could capture the complexities of both phenomena and narrative inquiry offered an effective way of doing so (Barkhuizen et al., 2013; Creswell & Poth, 2016). As noted by Creswell and Poth (2016), "narrative research is best for capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single individual or the lives of a small number of individuals" (p.71), which makes it an optimal approach for exploring the lived experiences of research engagement. Additionally, researchers interested in identity exploration are so captivated by narrative inquiry that identity has become "the single most frequently mentioned theme in narrative studies of teaching and learning" (Barkhuizen et al., 2013, p. 12). Considering these insights, we employed narrative inquiry to gain a

detailed understanding of pre-service language teachers' research engagement and identity development.

The Setting

Both researchers of the present study work as teacher educators at the LTE program under investigation in Türkiye. Pre-service English language teachers in this four-year program take a general theoretical course titled 'Research Methods in Education' in their second year, which focuses more on academic research. However, the majority of the graduates are employed as K-12 teachers of English, not as academicians/researchers. Therefore, as suggested by Dikilitaş and Bostancıoğlu (2019), we believed that pre-service teachers in our program needed to learn about practitioner research and, more importantly, get a chance to put the theoretical information they were presented with into practice by conducting a research project of their own. With this in mind, we designed a new research course following Dikilitaş and Bostancıoğlu's (2019) specialized book titled 'Inquiry and Research Skills for Language Teachers' for the third-year pre-service language teachers of English who have already taken the Research Methods in Education course in their second year. Offering a structural course design based on the argument that research should be a fundamental component of LTE programs, this book effectively met our course and research objectives.

The practitioner research course, taught by the first researcher, comprised 14 weeks of instruction, with two contact hours per week. Designed to develop the research competencies essential for pre-service language teachers, the course consisted of five modules (see Appendix A for the contents). Following the first module on the concept of research through an EP lens, pre-service teachers learned about puzzles, a term replacing 'research questions' of academic research, and were asked to form groups of two or three to discuss and develop their own puzzles. Collaborative inquiry was preferred to individual inquiry in line with the third principle of EP, 'involve everyone' (Hanks, 2017). Thus, 12 groups were formed, and each group decided on a puzzle to investigate together. This instruction-followed-by-practice pattern continued throughout the course with modules on data collection, data analysis, and tying it together on a research poster. Supervision was provided to each group individually during practice weeks. As for the requirements of this course, pre-service teachers were asked to submit their data collection instruments, the data they gathered, and their analysis of that data as well as write five narratives to offer insights into their research journey and LTI construction during this process (see Appendix B for the weekly coursework and Appendix C for the written narrative prompts). These components collectively constituted their midterm assessment. Additionally, at the end of the term, they were expected to present the research project they conducted on a poster, which included an abstract and four sections, namely introduction, methodology, findings and discussion (see Appendix D for an example). This poster served as their final assessment. Therefore, a comprehensive evaluation approach was adopted, incorporating both process and outcome dimensions

Data Collection

When the course ended, employing purposeful sampling and privatizing depth over breadth, we contacted the two members of one of the research groups, Alex and Horus (pseudonyms). Both participants had taken the practitioner research course this study investigated in their third year with the rest of their cohort and decided to work together when asked to form research groups and choose a puzzle in line with EP (Hanks, 2017). To prevent potential bias, we did not seek their consent to participate in this study until the course was completed. They were chosen based on the topic of their collaborative research project, the intricate relationship of teachers with students experiencing problems in their personal lives, considering its close links to the multifaceted nature of LTIs. Alex and Horus both agreed to the use of the research poster (see Appendix D) and the narratives they had already produced as part of their course requirements and to take part in an additional series of interviews designed for the present study (see Appendix E for the interview questions). The written narratives and the research poster submitted as coursework had been produced in English and were retained in their original form without any language corrections to preserve the authentic voice and

intent of the narratives. On the other hand, the interviews, which took approximately one hour each, were conducted in the language choice of the participants, Turkish. The Zoom recordings were later transcribed, translated into English, and checked by the researchers multiple times to maintain data consistency. Therefore, as demonstrated by Figure 2, the empirical data for this investigation consisted of the written narratives generated throughout the research course, the research poster produced at the end of it, and the oral narratives from a series of three semi-structured phenomenological interviews (Seidman, 2019). Collecting data from multiple sources, we aimed to achieve data triangulation and prevent researchers' bias (Mackey & Gass, 2015).

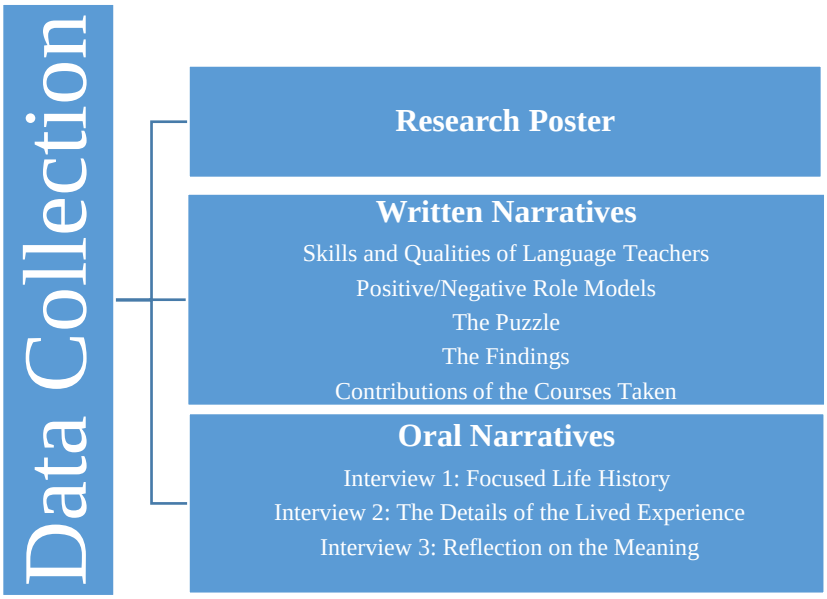

Figure 2. Multiple Sources of Data Collected for the Study

Data Analysis

We first formed brief life histories of our participants, offering valuable data in its own right (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) and providing essential context to enhance our understanding of the data (Flores & Day, 2006). An inductive, data-driven thematic analysis was conducted for the data collected in response to the first research question addressing the pre-service teachers' perceptions of practitioner research engagement. For the second research question, a deductive approach was employed to analyze the data using the taxonomy of teacher role identities proposed by Farrell (2011) However, because of the various contextual differences, especially considering that Farrell's (2011) taxonomy was developed based on data from experienced teachers working at a language course, the role identities identified by this taxonomy did not align adequately with the participants in our study. For example, while some role identities, such as the vendor, never showed up in our data, others that were absent in Farrell's (2011) study, such as the mentor, were evident in ours. Therefore, this taxonomy was adopted as an initial framework and subsequently adapted in response to insights gained from the first round of data analysis conducted by both researchers. After finalizing the taxonomy, a second round of analysis was conducted by the first researcher to reach findings regarding the construction of the LTIs and, more specifically, the PRIs of our participants. With the issues highlighted above, we attempted to ensure analytical depth and consistency of our analysis developed from the data, revisited and refined via multiple rounds of re-reading by the first researcher and shaped by the feedback from the second researcher on emerging categories. We believed that such a collaborative engagement helped challenge potential bias and contributed to the refinement of the results. In addition, we enhanced the trustworthiness of our analysis by incorporating data triangulation across multiple sources of written narratives and interviews.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Life Histories of Alex and Horus

In his oral and written narratives, Alex explicitly described himself as "a bit lazy" and not very attentive to schoolwork. English classes were always challenging in primary school, and he continued to struggle with it in middle school, too. However, a positive change in his perspective occurred in high school, thanks to a dedicated English language teacher who told him that he had "a gift in English". Dissatisfied with his math and science teachers, he decided to pursue a language major in high school and be an English language teacher. He did well in his university entrance exam and was able to get a place in the English Language Teaching department. He initially faced difficulties in productive language skills during the first term of the preparatory school, and later came the one-and-a-half-year period of online courses, which he found less engaging during the COVID-19 pandemic. He felt more connected during face-to-face education in the second year of university, but his classes were still mostly theoretical. His expectation of more practice-oriented courses was finally met in his third year, allowing the application of theoretical knowledge acquired in his first and second years. He was in his fourth and final year of university and was gaining valuable teaching experience from his practicum when the interviews were conducted.

On the other hand, Horus had a successful academic start, ranking first in school until the sixth grade, when a change in the curriculum and the impact of puberty led to a decline in interest and academic performance. Despite excelling in math and history, English became a challenging subject mostly due to the teachers he described as aggressive and ineffective. High school marked another period of disinterest until meeting an inspiring teacher of English who motivated a great change. Intensive English study in the language department with him and private tutoring resulted in significant improvement and led to success in getting a place in a university. However, university life away from family posed new challenges, impacting his daily routines and finances. This, unfortunately, resulted in psychological problems and concentration issues at preparatory school. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, he returned to his hometown, which made these challenges disappear, but online education led to another decline in academic interest. There was a gradual recovery after starting face-to-face education in the second year, but he noticed a mismatch between university education and the practical skills needed for teaching in schools, which created doubts about the overall utility of the education he received. After completing his third year, he participated in the Work & Travel program in the USA and decided to take a 2-year break from university to improve his language skills. He was still in the USA working as a delivery driver when the interviews were conducted.

Perceptions of Practitioner Research Engagement

Regarding their research engagement, the first theme recurring in their narratives was personal relevance. First of all, the data collected revealed that both Alex and Horus already had an investigative stance characterized by a strong desire to seek knowledge, explore new ideas, and understand the world even before taking the research course aiming to promote it (Dikilitaş & Bostancıoğlu, 2019). Despite differences in earlier life experiences, a common thread that indicated a curiosity-driven inquiry mindset was found to be running through their narratives:

> I love research and self-development, I love to learn new information every day. I have a great curiosity about this… so it can be from podcasts, it can be from scientists or TEDx Talks, it can be from different places. (Horus, Interview 1)

> There were some names in the books I read that pushed me to learn and be curious, but not in school. One of them was a theoretical physicist Richard Feynman. I tried to resemble his character… His curiosity about everything made me so excited. (Alex, Interview 1)

As can be seen, both Alex and Horus mentioned enjoying acquiring knowledge across a broad range of subjects and engaging in continuous self-education, demonstrating skills in managing one's own learning (Candy, 1991). Horus also mentioned that they usually engaged in intellectual discussions with each other, and he particularly enjoyed sharing what he learned during stimulating conversations. Therefore, it can be said that research engagement was personally relevant to their inquiry mindset, which was characterized by their love of learning and deep and genuine curiosity about the world around them. Secondly, the theme of personal relevance emerged in the reasons why they chose to explore their particular puzzle question: how teachers should approach students experiencing problems in school due to challenges in their personal lives. For instance, Alex and Horus both consistently referred to the connection between their puzzle and past lives:

> When we were creating the project, we created it by taking examples from our own lives… When I was creating this puzzle, I remembered a friend of mine from high school. (Alex, Interview 2)

> So I think that's why we chose this puzzle in your class at some point. Because I can understand the situation of those students very well. (Horus, Interview 1)

In addition to their past, the participants believed that their research engagement had personal relevance to their future selves as teachers. "Classroom life is a complex system that requires research work" (Xu, 2016, p. 121) and, as acknowledged by our participants, research projects during pre-service years can prepare them for it by providing the knowledge and the skills needed.

> [Thanks to this project] I may even find a solution to make use of in my teaching career hopefully. (Horus, Interview 2)

> I can use the knowledge I gained in this project in my own teaching life. (Alex, Interview 2)

Achieving personal relevance was obviously in alignment with the pre-established objectives of this research course designed for practitioners (Allwright, 2005); however, it is noteworthy that the participants have gained awareness of the transferability of the knowledge and skills they acquired during the practitioner research course to their future careers as teachers, thereby reinforcing the intended outcomes. Our analysis suggested that concepts clustered within the first theme of personal relevance significantly contributed to the emergence of the desired outcomes of our research course, which we grouped within our second theme, personal and professional benefits. Among these benefits observed were its contributions to the participants' critical thinking, interpretation, and deep reflection abilities, which were especially salient in Horus's responses.

> This course also gave us the ability to look critically. I think it was a really useful course. I really think it added to our ability to interpret some things… see more clearly, see more statistically. (Horus, Interview 2)

> This would not have even occurred to me without this course. This course also gave me this chance. I was able to concentrate on the topic in my mind. (Horus, Interview 2)

By giving "space to think" (Trent, 2010, p. 163), research engagement provided opportunities for reflection and becoming more reflective, which was also reported as a benefit of research engagement by Akyel (2015), is an important asset for teachers (Farrell, 2011). In addition, Alex appreciated the chance to learn how to conduct a research project during his pre-service years, which was highlighted by his experiences in the practicum.

> When I was doing my practicum, our mentor teacher, was carrying out projects such as Tübitak or Erasmus. We normally did not have the opportunity to produce and execute such a

> long-term project, except for the one in your course… if we had come out of the university without having learned anything like this, I think we would have a very difficult time in our own teaching experience. (Alex, Interview 2)

Seeing that teacher projects carried significance in his practicum school as well, he could develop another layer of appreciation for the opportunity of conducting one afforded by the research course. This finding supports previous research (Akyel, 2015; Trent, 2012) that revealed the importance of the school contexts in strengthening (or weakening) the possibilities of such activities for teachers. Notably, he made further references to research as an activity broadening the horizons of teachers, and therefore contributing to their students and also their colleagues, when shared.

> I think that teachers should first improve themselves with this research information and in this way, the effect on students' language learning will increase. (Alex, Interview 3)

> …Teachers should be able to do research among themselves and explain to each other. I think they should be involved in this kind of research so that their horizons are broadened. (Alex, Interview 3)

As stated above, Alex considered dissemination of the findings to be an integral part of research and also voiced his willingness to continue running joint research projects and sharing findings just like they did as pre-service teachers. However, acknowledging certain challenges that come with that, he stated that he was not sure about how often he would be able to have energy for it. It is important to note that although confidently expressing the benefits of their research engagement, both participants also made references to the difficulties they experienced, especially during data collection/analysis, and the help they needed to seek from their classmates or the instructor to overcome them. Earlier studies (Akyel, 2015; Trent, 2010, 2012) have also reported similar findings revealing the challenges pre-service teachers had to face and the reservations they had about their future engagement with research as full-time teachers. In general, however, for our participants, the benefits far outweighed the challenges, and although not very frequently, teachers could still get involved in small-scale research projects.

Finally, we identified another significant benefit that emerged when the narratives Alex and Horus wrote on the reasons why they chose their puzzle and their research poster were compared. In their narratives written at the very beginning of their research journey, it was clear that our participants looked at their puzzle through the lens of a student and conveyed their dissatisfaction with teachers' neglect, authoritarian behavior, and focus on teaching content over fostering a supportive and caring learning environment.

> At this point, the problematic ones are the teachers and their attitudes. Fossilized old teachers who do not care about their students' feelings and ages blame their students for not understanding and attending their lessons and threaten them to make them listen to their lessons. Thus, a student who has a problem on that day or who has a problem with the teacher does not want to join or attend to their lessons. Later on, they are treated as being lazy or ignorant because blaming it on students is easier than caring about those students' problems for many teachers… Instead of losing a student by ignoring his or her problems, a teacher should try his or her best to take that student back and get his or her love instead of hate. (Horus, Narrative 3)

> When I was in high school, I saw that many teachers of mine never cared about students who had problems. Some of those students were sleeping, some couldn't give their attention to lessons and these were not a problem for teachers. I believe that they think their only job is to teach whatever they can before time runs out and go home… If teachers should have tried to help him maybe, tried to talk to him, he could have been a more successful person in life. (Alex, Narrative 3)

However, when they shared their research in the research poster in the end, a shift in perspective was apparent. The initial standpoint, considering teachers as the primary cause and/or sole responsible party, transformed into a more balanced and realistic viewpoint:

> Many ideas point out that it's not exactly somebody's fault or duty to help students to be more successful and involved in the lessons; everyone should take part to overcome them. (Horus and Alex, Research Poster)

When asked about this shift in perspective during the second interview, Alex and Horus reflected on the complexities of classroom management and teacher responsibilities. Their responses illustrated their understanding of the constraints teachers could face in addressing individual student needs. Alex highlighted the practical limitations that prevent teachers from offering individualized attention to each student. Horus's response underlined an awareness of the division of labor within educational settings, acknowledging that while teachers play an essential role in student well-being, their ability to address psychological challenges is constrained by structural factors, which might be solved by collaboration.

> So you can't pay special attention to each student. You don't have enough time. For example, when I was studying, the teachers would try to take care of the students, but the time was not enough. So we were saying, how can that be? I mean, he can take care of everyone, I thought he had enough time, but then, you realize that it is very difficult. (Alex, Interview 2)

> Some of them [their participants] did not see it as their job. I mean, "is it my job if the child's psychology is disturbed", but they did not say this with bad intention, of course, because they rightly thought that we would not have time to devote to each student. They said we need to cooperate. I think they have a lot of justification in their own way. (Horus, Interview 3)

Although their research revealed that teachers' involvement in the lives of the students who experienced problems was still expected and needed, they were able to acknowledge the complex dynamics of the situation thanks to their research project. Therefore, it led to a transformative process, allowing for a more comprehensive view of contributing factors and acknowledging the shared responsibility for outcomes and the need for collaboration. By reflecting on the opinions of their participants, who put themselves in the shoes of teachers, Alex and Horus could achieve a more realistic, dual perspective from the eyes of both students and teachers as another key benefit of their research engagement. With this, they also portrayed the multiple, dynamic, and shifting (Varghese et al., 2005; Yazan, 2018) nature of LTIs and the identity negotiations teachers navigate throughout their careers.

LTI Construction

An important facet of teachers' professional identity is the roles and associated functions they perform as teachers (Barkhuizen & Mendieta, 2020; Burns & Richards, 2009). Interrelated with their personal identities, the role identities that reflect the multiple roles teachers fill in their professional lives are constructed and reconstructed at different times and in different contexts (Beijaard et al., 2004) on a continuum of ready-made roles and individually-created ones (Farrell, 2011). In a similar vein, the analysis of the data collected to address the second research question supported the notion that certain role identities might be foregrounded or backgrounded depending on the context (Barkhuizen & Mendieta, 2020). In other words, within the context of this study exploring practitioner research engagement on a specific research project its participants carried out, certain role identities that could be dominant in other contexts did not emerge, and some others that might not be typically salient elsewhere did emerge in our study. Figure 3 below presents a breakdown of PRIs as identified and mentioned by Alex and Horus, suggesting that their conceptualization of role identities is strongly

rooted in emotional and motivational dimensions of teaching over a predominant focus on instructional roles.

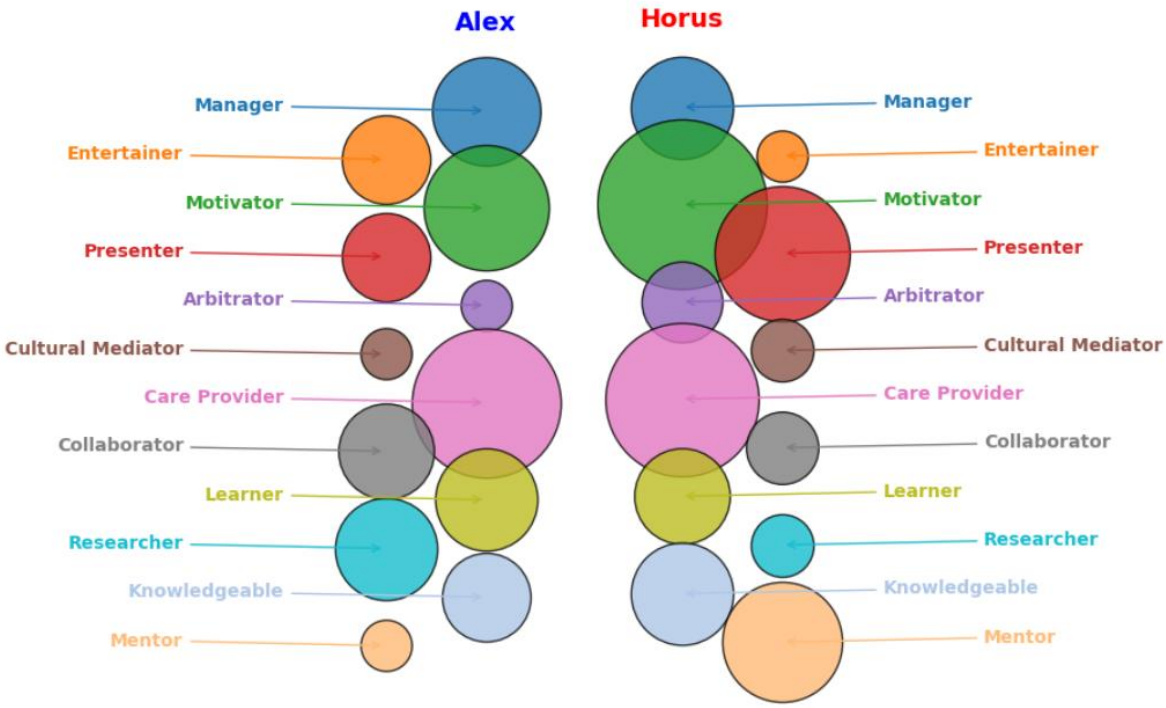

Figure 3. Role Identities of Alex and Horus

Since the research project Alex and Horus conducted focused on their puzzle regarding the relationship of teachers with students experiencing various problems in their lives, the core role identity they chose to explore was that of a 'care provider'. As discussed earlier, Alex and Horus first started by complaining about "fossilized old teachers who do not care about their students' feelings and ages" and teachers who "think their only job is to teach whatever they can before time runs out and go home" when they were designing their puzzles. Therefore, the fact that it was also one of the most common role identities our participants referred to in their narratives was expected (see Figure 3). We outline the general characteristics of this role identity guiding our analysis as follows: A teacher cast in the role of a care provider is likely to emphasize individualized support and emotional well-being both within and outside the classroom by nurturing the personal and emotional development of students, creating a supportive and empathetic learning environment. Similar to the teachers in Flores and Day's (2006) study, both Alex and Horus put great emphasis on the care provider role of teachers and stated that the care expected from a teacher could even be similar to that of a parent or sibling:

> It was about the importance of the teacher's care and attention, which we ourselves saw in the schools where we went on practicum. Because students see teachers like a parent. (Alex, Interview 2)

> I really loved English, and this was largely thanks to the teacher's attitude towards me. I mean, we became like brothers, that's how protective he was. (Horus, Interview 1)

This PRI was also identified in Aghaei et al. (2020), Butler (2024), and Yesilbursa's (2012) data, where she labeled it as 'nurturer'. A teacher's care contributes to creating a positive learning environment where students feel valued, respected, and appreciated. In such an environment, students are more likely to engage actively in their learning, and this way, teachers can make a lasting impact on their students' lives and pave the way for their success both inside and outside the classroom. Talking about a friend who had family problems and also suffered financially as a student, Alex

shared his ideas on the difference he thought teachers' care could have made in his friend's life as follows:

> What I want to point out is if teachers should have tried to help him maybe, tried to talk to him, he could have been a more successful person in life. (Alex, Narrative 3)

The second most common PRI that our participants referred to was the 'motivator', which frequently appeared in other studies as well, such as Aghaei et al. (2020), Butler (2024), Moritani and Iwai (2019), Rahimi and Bigdeli (2014), and Yesilbursa (2012). This role identity shares common ground with the role of 'care provider' in their focus on enhancing student engagement. While the 'care provider' attends to the emotional needs of students, the 'motivator' encourages active participation in learning activities, and both contribute to overall student engagement and holistic development. Since both Alex and Horus met an English teacher in high school who literally changed their lives by motivating them to learn English and eventually become English teachers, the 'motivator' was identified to be a key role identity that they frequently referred to in their narratives.

> My English classes in middle school were very bad… and I really didn't like English class. Then when I went to high school, this situation changed… I decided to become a language teacher with the help of my English teacher, he told me that I have a gift in learning English and teaching it to others (Alex, Narrative 2)

> The teacher said I see potential in you, but you've never tried hard…So I evolved into a completely different person. Maybe he really had a great influence on me and I loved English very much, thanks to him I loved it very much and I tried incredibly hard in English. (Horus, Narrative 2)

With this lived experience in their backgrounds, both participants believed in the power of motivation and placed more importance on it than the traditionally more prominent roles for teachers, the 'presenter' of information or the 'manager' of the classroom. Horus expressed this notion clearly in the following words:

> Teaching techniques don't have to be great, at least not for me. I need to be motivated at some point; I know myself. I mean, if I am motivated, I can do it. (Horus, Interview 1)

The 'learner' and the 'researcher' are other closely related role identities that our participants mentioned more frequently (when combined) than another conventionally established role identity for teachers, the 'knowledgeable'. We highlight this comparison, which signifies a shift towards life-long learning since we acknowledge that they are intertwined and encompass each other (although we made a distinction between them for this study focusing on practitioner research engagement). In our analysis, we attributed the 'researcher' identity exclusively when participants directly referenced engagement with practitioner research. On the other hand, we categorized it as a reference to the 'learner' identity when research was discussed as a learning activity involving books or other resources. As discussed earlier, both Alex and Horus had a curiosity-driven inquiry mindset fueled by their love of learning and enjoyed learning about various topics. Horus also mentioned his satisfaction when sharing what he learned with others as the most important thing he loved about being a teacher.

> When I learn information randomly, I should definitely go and share it with someone. If I keep it to myself, I feel like I have learned it for nothing. I mean, let others learn it too, let them be surprised by this information as I was surprised by it. It was a little bit like that, of course. I mean, my love for research is incredible. (Horus, Interview 3)

The 'learner' is indeed a common PRI that was identified in many other studies, such as Aghaei et al. (2020), Atai et al. (2018), Fowler (2017), Rahimi and Bigdeli (2014), and Sahragard and

Sadeghi (2017). The 'researcher', however, appeared relatively less frequently in the related literature; for example, in Atai et al. (2018), participants referred to the benefits of teachers conducting needs analysis, and in Aghaei et al. (2020), one participant was observed to be conducting action research to overcome a problem. For Alex, the sources of information for teachers were more varied, including students, research activities, or other teachers' research activities:

> I definitely think they continue to do so [learn]… since teachers are always together with students who have different perspectives and different ideas, they always add something to themselves by evaluating their perspectives and ideas…. I think that teachers should first improve themselves with research information and in this way, the effect on students' language learning will increase… I think about running research projects on students like this or with students in my own class or at the school where I work, I mean, I even think that I will still be in touch with some of my classmates at the moment and I am thinking about sharing data with them or carrying out joint projects with them. (Alex, Interview 3)

As in the words of Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999), "[t]he emphasis here is … making classrooms sites for inquiry—that is, learning how to teach and improve one's teaching by collecting and analyzing the "data" of daily life in schools" (p. 17). Here, Alex also referred to the 'collaborator' identity teachers when mentioning conducting research not only on students but also 'with' students, which EP puts great emphasis on (Hanks, 2017). In addition, as they did in the practitioner research course, he considered partnering with other teachers on joint research projects and sharing their data with other colleagues in the future, further enacting the role of the 'collaborator'. This PRI, also observed in Sahragard and Sadeghi (2017), suggests that teachers learn from and with others through collaboration. Although we cannot deny that teachers are expected to be knowledgeable, valuing the 'learner', 'researcher', and 'collaborator' roles promotes a growth mindset among teachers. Thus, whether it be thanks to students, research activities of one's own, or other colleagues, "[t]o teach is to learn" (la Velle, 2024, p. 367).

Although less common than the role identities discussed above, some other roles that teachers are typically expected to fulfil were emergent in the narratives of our participants, such as the role of 'entertainer' when referring to the drawbacks of boring classes, as in Rahimi and Bigdeli (2014), Sahragard and Sadeghi (2017), Moritani and Iwai (2019), and Yesilbursa (2012); 'arbitrator' when mentioning the feedback teachers give, as in Sahragard and Sadeghi (2017), and 'cultural mediator' when discussing the need to include target culture in language instruction as in Aghaei et al. (2020). However, there existed an additional role identity warranting further discussion since it very distinctively emerged in the narratives of one participant. Horus described his role identity, which he called the 'mentor', as the dominant role identity in a way that encompassed all the other roles he embraced.

> I mean, I was sure that I could succeed in teaching English, but after a while I felt like my talent started to shift to mentoring…because I can't agree with the part that when you teach children, you are an English teacher and you will only teach English. I am their teacher. I will teach them life. Not just English. I think that's the way it should be…, I have to teach life to those children. I should also be able to pass on my own experiences. I think I should be able to touch their perspectives. (Horus, Interview 3)

Even if it appeared only twice, Alex also had a similar notion attributing the role of a mentor to teachers:

> Because as a teacher, we will not only teach content matter in our own field and our teaching process is to support students in every field, that is, to support them in every field, to teach and educate in every field. (Alex, Interview 3)

This perspective highlights a fundamental aspect of teaching that extends beyond the subject matter itself, and indeed, nothing gets left out when aiming to teach about life or educate and be a role model in every field (Flores & Day, 2006). The reason why Horus adopted such a role identity could be the teacher who had made such a big impact on his life with the way he lived his life and 'become an idol' for him. In essence, it is a known fact that teachers often mirror aspects of the educators who left a lasting impression on them (Flores & Day, 2006). Upon entering LTE, they bring with them their personal journey through the school system, making their own learning history feel directly pertinent to their new role (Britzman, 2003). Horus's approach to teaching English transcends the boundaries of language instruction to enable a holistic educational experience that nurtures students' minds, hearts, and souls by embodying characteristics or approaches similar to those of his own past teacher. Therefore, it can be concluded that whether consciously or unconsciously, these influences shape how teachers construct their LTIs and execute their role identities.

CONCLUSION

Characterization of LTI development during pre-service years is fundamental to our increased understanding of the fluid nature of LTIs, which we critically need in order to be able to effectively support the identity construction of pre-service teachers (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016). By creating opportunities for them to consider research engagement as part of their identity during this period, teacher educators can help to make their future research activities possible and sustainable (Borg, 2017). With this in mind, in this study, we explored the integration of a research course into an LTE program with a further focus on LTI construction. Since "identities are constructed in and through narrative" (Barkhuizen, 2016, p. 656), we employed narratives "both as a research tool and as a learning tool for [pre-service] teachers to make sense of, and lead, their own ongoing learning experiences" (Yazan, 2018, p. 5) and captured these processes in real-time, revealing how identity construction is shaped by reflection, interaction, and hands-on research experiences.

We demonstrated that, with a chance to engage in a self-selected research project and reflect upon their experiences, our participants underwent a transformative shift in perspective of teacher roles, transitioning from a unidimensional student viewpoint to a more nuanced dual perspective that incorporates elements of a teacher's standpoint as well. In addition, acknowledging the contributions of research as an activity that cultivates critical thinking and reflection and appreciating the unique opportunity to carry out a personally relevant project during pre-service years, our participants were found to have positive perceptions of their research engagement. Both participants acknowledged the importance and utility of practitioner research and expressed a willingness to undertake research projects in the future, embracing 'the researcher' as part of their PRI. The findings of this study also emphasized other multifaceted role identities of teachers, encompassing elements of care, motivation, life-long learning, and mentorship. Teachers, in the eyes of our participants, extend beyond the traditional role of imparting knowledge and play a crucial part in shaping students' overall experiences and perceptions. Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge the challenge associated with fulfilling all these diverse and crucial roles expected of teachers. In this respect, enacting the role of the 'collaborator' more frequently and establishing cooperative relationships with students, their families, and fellow educators emerges as a strategic approach to navigating these multifaceted responsibilities.

Although the findings of this study are specific to a time and place, taken together, they highlight the significance of engaging in practitioner research and identity work during pre-service years and suggest that such practitioner research courses should be integrated into the curriculum of LTE programs. Theoretical courses on research methods with little attention to practitioner research and no chances for hands-on applications risk leaving future teachers underprepared to conduct meaningful, context-driven inquiries within their classrooms. Furthermore, pre-service teachers may struggle to view research as integral to their professional practice, which could significantly diminish their likelihood of engaging in research throughout their careers. Therefore, in line with our contention that "the overall aim of a teacher education program is best conceived as the development of professional identity" (van Huizen et al., 2005, p. 275), we advocate for the integration of practitioner

research courses with an identity approach into LTE programs. Future research can build upon these insights by examining similar interventions across different LTE programs and cultural settings, further validating the applicability of our conclusions.

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Ethical Statement: This research has been conducted in compliance with the institutional regulations of Erciyes University, as outlined in the ethical permission document dated 27/12/2022 (Application No: 569)

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Appendix A

The Contents of Modules

Module 1	Research & EP	What is Research? Who are the Researchers? Why do we Need a Research Course? Differences between Academic Research and Pre-service Teacher Research Key Characteristics of Qualitative and Quantitative Research The Kind of Knowledge Pre-service Teachers Can Discover Developing Reflectivity Exploratory Practice
Module 2	Puzzles	Puzzles vs. Research Problems Sources of Puzzles (Puzzles about the Self, Puzzles about the Others)' (Challenges, Achievements) Defining and Revising Puzzles (The What, The Who, The How, the Other Issues -Ethics, Cost, Review of Literature) Sample Puzzles

Module 3	Data Generation	Types of Data Generation Tools 1. Questionnaires (close/open-ended) 2. Interviews (structured / semi-structured / unstructured) 3. Observation (participant/non-participant) Samples of Data Generation Tools Principles of Data Generation (Validity, Reliability, Credibility, Trustworthiness, Ethics)
Module 4	Data Analysis	Qualitative Data Analysis Steps of Thematic Analysis Samples Quantitative Data Analysis Types of Quantitative Data Analysis Samples Using Digital Tools in Managing Your Data Set
Module 5	Tying it Together	Relating the Results to the Puzzle Question Interpreting the Results Producing a Written Report (Title, Abstract, Introduction, Methodology, Results/Discussion, Conclusion)

Appendix B

Weekly Coursework

Weeks	**In-Class Activities**	**Assignment**
1	Syllabus Introduction to Module 1	Written Narrative (1)
2	Module 1	Written Narrative (2)
3	Module 2 Discussion on puzzle ideas	Forming research groups Forming puzzle questions
4	Module 2 Continued Supervision for puzzles	Finalizing puzzle questions Written Narrative (3)
5	Module 3	Choosing methodology
6	Module 3 Continued Supervision for methodology	Data generation
7	Midterm Week	Data generation
8	Module 3 Continued Supervision for data generation	Data generation
9	Module 4	Data generation

10	Module 4 Continued Supervision for data analysis	Data analysis
11	Module 4 Continued Supervision for data analysis	Data analysis
12	Module 5	Data analysis Written Narrative (4)
13	Module 5 Continued	Research poster Written Narrative (5)
14	Supervision for posters Conclusion	Research poster

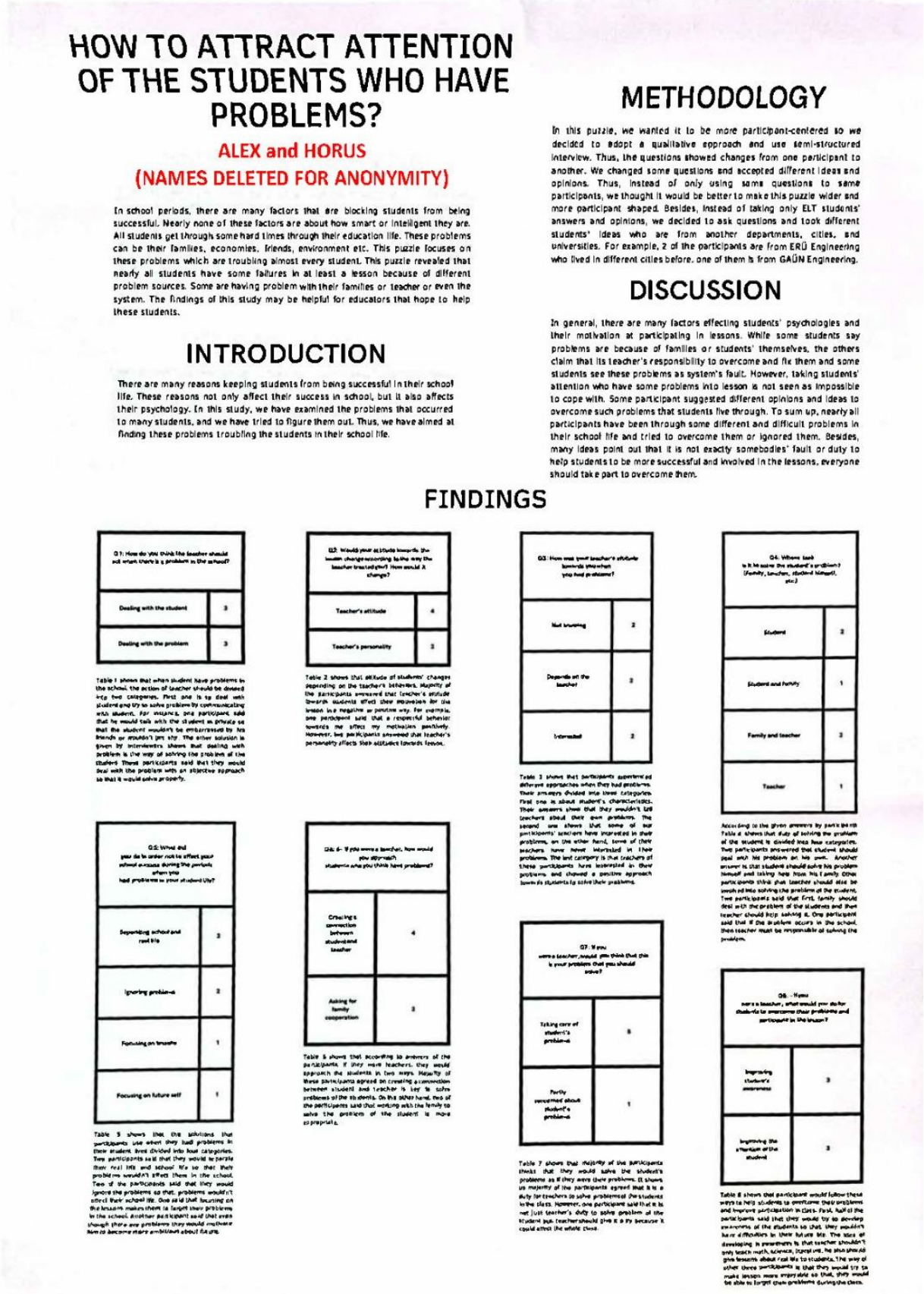
Appendix C

Written Narrative Prompts

Written Narrative 1	Who is a language teacher in your opinion? What do language teachers do? What skills/qualities do/ should they have?
Written Narrative 2	Did you have language teachers who were positive or negative models for you? What did they do?
Written Narrative 3	Why did you choose this puzzle and how did you create it?
Written Narrative 4	How was your data analysis process? What findings did you reach as a result of your research? Were these the results you expected?
Written Narrative 5	What are the contributions of the courses you have taken or are currently taking to your development as a language teacher?

Appendix D

Research Poster



HOW TO ATTRACT ATTENTION OF THE STUDENTS WHO HAVE PROBLEMS?

ALEX and HORUS

(NAMES DELETED FOR ANONYMITY)

In school periods, there are many factors that are blocking students from being successful. Nearly none of these factors are about how smart or intelligent they are. All students get through some hard times through their education life. These problems can be their families, economies, friends, environment etc. This puzzle focuses on these problems which are troubling almost every student. This puzzle revealed that nearly all students have some failures in at least a lesson because of different problem sources. Some are having problem with their families or teacher or even the system. The findings of this study may be helpful for educators that hope to help these students.

INTRODUCTION

There are many reasons keeping students from being successful in their school life. These reasons not only affect their success in school, but it also affects their psychology. In this study, we have examined the problems that occurred to many students, and we have tried to figure them out. Thus, we have aimed at finding these problems troubling the students in their school life.

METHODOLOGY

In this puzzle, we wanted it to be more participant-centered so we decided to adopt a qualitative approach and use semi-structured interview. Thus, the questions showed changes from one participant to another. We changed some questions and accepted different ideas and opinions. Thus, instead of only using same questions to same participants, we thought it would be better to make this puzzle wider and more participant shaped. Besides, instead of taking only ELT students' answers and opinions, we decided to ask questions and took different students' ideas who are from another departments, cities, and universities. For example, 2 of the participants are from ERÜ Engineering who lived in different cities before. one of them is from GAÜN Engineering.

DISCUSSION

In general, there are many factors effecting students' psychologies and their motivation at participating in lessons. While some students say problems are because of families or students' themselves, the others claim that its teacher's responsibility to overcome and fix them and some students see these problems as system's fault. However, taking students' attention who have some problems into lesson is not seen as impossible to cope with. Some participant suggested different opinions and ideas to overcome such problems that students live through. To sum up, nearly all participants have been through some different and difficult problems in their school life and tried to overcome them or ignored them. Besides, many ideas point out that it is not exactly somebodies' fault or duty to help students to be more successful and involved in the lessons, everyone should take part to overcome them.

FINDINGS

Q1: How do you think the teacher should act when there is a problem in the school?

Dealing with the student	3
Dealing with the problem	3

Table 1 shows that when student have problems in the school, the action of teacher should be divided into two categories. First one is to deal with student and try to solve problem by communicating with student. For instance, one participant said that he would talk with the student in private so that the student wouldn't be embarrassed by his friends or wouldn't get shy. The other solution is given by interviewers shows that dealing with problem is the way of solving the problem of the student. Three participants said that they would deal with the problem with an objective approach so that it would solve properly.

Q2: Would your attitude towards the lesson change according to the way the teacher treated you? How would it change?

Teacher's attitude	4
Teacher's personality	2

Table 2 shows that attitude of students' changes depending on the teacher's behaviors. Majority of the participants answered that teacher's attitude towards students effect their motivation for the lesson in a negative or positive way. For example, one participant said that a respectful behavior towards me affects my motivation positively. However, two participants answered that teacher's personality affects their attitudes towards lesson.

Q3: How was your teacher's attitude towards you when you had problems?

Not knowing	2
Depends on the teacher	3
Interested	2

Table 3 shows that participants experienced different approaches when they had problems. Their answers divided into three categories. First one is about student's characteristics. Their answers show that they wouldn't tell teachers about their own problems. The second one shows that some of our participants' teachers have interested in their problems, on the other hand, some of their teachers have never interested in their problems. The last category is that teachers of these participants have interested in their problems and showed a positive approach towards students to solve their problems.

Q4: Where lies in it to solve the student's problem? (Family, teacher, student himself, etc.)

Student	2
Student and family	1
Family and teacher	2
Teacher	1

According to the given answers by participants Table 4 shows that duty of solving the problem of the student is divided into four categories. Two participants answered that student should deal with his problem on his own. Another answer is that student should solve his problem himself and taking help from his family. Other participants think that teacher should also be involved into solving the problem of the student. Two participants said that first, family should deal with the problem of the students and then teacher should help solving it. One participant said that if the problem occurs in the school, then teacher must be responsible of solving the problem.

Q5: What do you do in order not to affect your school success during the periods when you had problems in your student life?

Separating school and real life	3
Ignoring problems	2
Focusing on lessons	1
Focusing on future self	1

Table 5 shows that the solutions that participants use when they had problems in their student lives divided into four categories. Two participants said that they would separate their real life and school life so that their problems wouldn't affect them in the school. Two of the participants said that they would ignore the problems so that, problems wouldn't affect their school life. One said that focusing on the lessons makes them to forget their problems in the school. Another participant said that even though there are problems they would motivate himself to become more ambitious about future.

Q6: If you were a teacher, how would you approach students who you think have problems?

Creating a connection between student and teacher	4
Asking for family cooperation	3

Table 6 shows that according to answers of the participants if they were teachers, they would approach the students in two ways. Majority of these participants agreed on creating a connection between student and teacher is key to solve problems of the students. On the other hand, two of the participants said that working with the family to solve the problems of the student is more appropriate.

Q7: If you were a teacher, would you think that this is your problem that you should solve?

Taking care of student's problems	3
Partly concerned about student's problems	1

Table 7 shows that majority of the participants thinks that they would solve the student's problems as if they were their problems. It shows us majority of the participants agreed that it is a duty for teachers to solve problems of the students in the class. However, one participant said that it is not just teacher's duty to solve problem of the student just. teacher should give it a try because it could affect the whole class.

Q8: If you were a teacher, what would you do for students to overcome their problems and participate in the lesson?

Increasing student's awareness	3
Increasing the attention of the student	3

Table 8 shows that participant would follow these ways to help students to overcome their problems and improve participation in class. First, half of the participants said that they would try to develop awareness of the students so that they wouldn't have difficulties in their future life. The idea of developing in awareness is that teacher shouldn't only teach math, science, literature, he also should give lessons about real life to students. The way of other three participants is that they would try to make lesson more enjoyable so that, they would be able to forget their problems during the class.

Appendix E

Oral Narratives

Interview 1 Focused Life History	1. Can you provide a brief overview of your educational background with a focus on your English learning process? 2. How would you describe your overall attitude towards schooling and what were you like as a student? 3. Were there any significant events or people that had a lasting impact on you and your choices? 4. What were your initial expectations and goals when you entered your department at university?
Interview 2 Details of the Lived Experience	1. What do you remember about this research course you took? 2. What was your overall impression of it? 3. Do you think it contributed to you in any sense? 4. What do you remember about your puzzle and what you learned from it? 5. Let's now take a moment to look over the narrative you wrote on your puzzle and the poster you prepared at the end of your research to reflect on their content and implications again.
Interview 3 Reflection on the Meaning	1. How is your School Experience/Practicum going? 2. Did the way you see the teaching profession change with this experience? 3. Do you want to work as a teacher? 4. Do you think teaching can be a learning experience for the teachers as well? If so how? 5. Can a teacher be engaged in research? 6. Can you share any personal experiences or examples of practitioner (teacher) research in your school experience? 7. What types of research questions do you think are most relevant for teachers to explore in their own practice? 8. What role do you think practitioner (teacher) research plays in the professional development of teachers? What do you believe are the benefits of incorporating practitioner (teaching) research into teaching practices? 9. Do you believe that practitioner research should be a component of teacher education programs? Why or why not? 10. What kind of teacher do you want to be in the future? Can you describe him/her to me? And how close do you think you are to that teacher right now? Or are there things you need to do, things you need to acquire to get closer to that teacher you want to be? 11. If yes, what are they?

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Research Article

Language Learners' Reading Comprehension Needs in the Turkish Context: A Comprehensive Needs Analysis

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Abstract: This study investigated the reading comprehension needs of 8th-grade Turkish EFL learners in lower secondary education. A mixed-method design was employed in which data were gathered using needs analysis forms, environmental needs analysis checklists, and teacher interviews. Data were collected from 28 students and 23 teachers. The findings revealed that students' reading comprehension needs can be categorized into three primary areas: (1) reading skills and strategies, including the effective use of reading strategies, vocabulary development, and critical thinking skills; (2) language proficiency, encompassing proficiency in both native and target languages and cultural understanding; and (3) environmental factors, such as access to resources, technology, and supportive learning environments. These findings underscore the complex nature of reading comprehension. Effective reading comprehension requires a holistic approach that encompasses various factors, including language proficiency, reading strategies, diverse and engaging reading materials and a supportive learning environment. By addressing these interconnected elements, more effective and inclusive reading experiences can be cultivated for Turkish EFL students.

Keywords*: Turkish language learners, reading comprehension, English as a foreign language, needs analysis, lower secondary school*

INTRODUCTION

In today's globalized world, proficiency in English is a valuable asset, particularly in Türkiye, where it is the most studied foreign language, because of its perceived ability to unlock diverse career opportunities. However, despite their high demand, Turkish learners face significant challenges on their path to English mastery. Research has continuously revealed a range of obstacles hindering the progress of Turkish language learners, such as L1 interference (Kazazoglu, 2020), insufficient pragmatic knowledge (Ozcan, 2022), challenges in cultivating communication readiness (Altiner, 2018; Barin & Eyerci, 2021), and specific difficulties in reading comprehension in English (Beceren, 2020). This article delves into one of these obstacles, reading comprehension, as the capacity to comprehend reading is essential for the developing of other skills during learners' academic journeys.

Reading comprehension, the cornerstone for understanding written English and developing other language skills, such as writing and listening, is crucial for academic success (Adhi et al., 2019; He, 2008; Lervåg et al., 2017; Suhita et al., 2018). However, Turkish learners face some challenges on this path; some of them have limited vocabulary knowledge (Beceren, 2020; Gungor & Yaylı, 2016), encountering unfamiliar cultural references (Erten & Razi, 2009) and reading anxiety (Altunkaya, 2018; Isler & Yıldırım, 2022). Difficulties in understanding English grammar and sentence structure also create barriers to mastering reading comprehension (Susoy & Tanyer, 2019).

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Needs analysis involves examining the needs, aspirations, and challenges of learners as well as their learning preferences (Richards, 2009), thus providing valuable insights for designing targeted instruction (Long, 2005). This study utilizes Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) model to identify the reading comprehension needs of 8th-grade Turkish EFL learners. Unlike previous studies, which have primarily examined reading comprehension either in students' native language or among university-level and general EFL learners, this research specifically addresses 8th-graders at a critical transition stage, moving from basic to more complex academic reading. Given the importance of English in the Turkish context, this initial step toward engaging with more complex texts and higher cognitive demands is particularly significant. By incorporating data from needs analysis forms (NAF), environmental needs analysis checklists (ENAC), and interviews with language teachers, this study offers a more nuanced perspective on reading comprehension challenges faced by young learners. Understanding these specific needs is particularly significant in the Turkish EFL context, where limited research exists on this demographic. A comprehensive needs analysis will contribute to developing targeted pedagogical interventions that enhance 8th-graders' reading comprehension skills, ultimately supporting their academic success and future language learning.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study's theoretical framework is grounded in key principles from reading comprehension theories, second language acquisition (SLA), and needs analysis frameworks. These perspectives collectively inform the study design and guide the selection of research instruments to assess reading comprehension strategies employed by Turkish 8th-grade EFL learners. By integrating the cognitive, sociocultural, and pedagogical dimensions, this framework provides a comprehensive basis for understanding students' reading challenges and instructional needs.

Reading comprehension is a cognitive and constructive process that involves integrating background knowledge, processing linguistic input, and creating meaning at multiple levels. This study draws on Kintsch's (1998) Construction-Integration Model, which posits that comprehension requires constructing meaning from surface text, while integrating it into a coherent mental representation. Schema theory underscores the role of prior knowledge in understanding texts (Carrell et al., 1989). Turkish learners bring cultural and linguistic schemata that shape their reading experience in English. Thus, how well students activate relevant background knowledge influences whether they utilize bottom-up or top-down processing in their comprehension strategies. Building on this, the information processing theory provides insights into the mental processes involved in reading, such as decoding, vocabulary retrieval, and working memory load (Paris & Hamilton, 2014). This framework helps explain the cognitive mechanisms that support reading comprehension, and how instructional interventions can support efficient information processing. From an SLA perspective, Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory highlights the importance of scaffolding, interactions, and social mediation in language learning. The collaborative reading activities, teacher-guidance, and peer interactions facilitate comprehension development, but teacher and learners' perspectives were the focus of this study. A key aspect of reading comprehension development is self-regulation, which involves learners actively monitoring and managing their reading process. The self-regulated learning theory underscores the role of metacognitive strategies, such as goal setting, self-questioning, and summarization (Paris & Hamilton, 2014). Students' awareness of their reading strategies can be enhanced through explicit instruction in self-monitoring techniques.

To ensure that instructional suggestions align with learners' specific challenges, this study employed a needs analysis framework. This approach involved using student forms, and teacher interviews to capture a nuanced understanding of learners' difficulties, instructional practices and environmental challenges. By integrating these reading comprehension theories, SLA perspectives, and self-regulation principles within a needs analysis framework, this study offers a comprehensive lens through which to examine the reading comprehension processes of Turkish 8th-grade EFL learners. Theoretical insights directly informed the study's methodology and guided the selection of

research instruments and instructional considerations. Ultimately, this framework supports the development of targeted pedagogical interventions that address both the cognitive and social dimensions of reading comprehension, thereby fostering more effective reading instruction for Turkish learners. To further contextualize these theoretical considerations and understand how they have been applied in similar research, existing studies on reading comprehension needs, particularly those employing needs analysis in EFL contexts, with a focus on relevance to the Turkish setting were reviewed.

Studies conducted in the Turkish context have provided valuable insights. Sonmez (2019), focusing on native Turkish-speaking secondary school students, found that learners required increased awareness of reading difficulties, focused instruction in comprehension, pronunciation, and text tracking, adequate family support, and differentiation for struggling students. Kayaoglu and Akbas (2016) examined first-year medical students' language needs and identified the need for practical language skills tailored to medical settings, alignment with academic standards, and focused on oral communication instruction. Both studies underscored the critical importance of addressing learners' specific challenges and contexts.

Building on this foundation, studies that offer insights into pedagogical and instructional strategies for improving reading comprehension were examined. McLaughlin (2012) emphasized the social constructivist nature of learning and the importance of diverse text types and assessment practices. Salam (2017), focusing on Indonesian language students, identified the need for teaching materials that offer a variety of text types and topics, balance theory and practice, incorporate engaging activities, and utilize clear evaluation methods. These findings underscore the importance of effective teaching materials that are relevant to learners' needs and that promote a holistic reading experience.

Furthermore, motivation and engagement are crucial factors for successful reading comprehension. Ahmetović and Dubravac (2021) studied Bosnian elementary school students and found that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation influenced learners' attitudes and preferences. Recognizing the influence of grade level, they urged instructors to prioritize the development of intrinsic motivation over excessive use of external motivators. Andrés (2020), focusing on adult language learners in Colombia, identified a positive attitude toward English and a desire for reading practice as critical needs. Razavi and Gilakjani (2020) demonstrated that incorporating cultural content enhanced reading comprehension among Iranian EFL learners. AlGhamdi et al. (2018) conducted a reading needs analysis of preparatory-year EFL learners in Saudi Arabia and found that students preferred reading fiction but faced challenges with reading speed and critical reading. Alvarez et al. (1993) delved into the perspectives of Spanish educators and learners on reading needs and desires, revealing a disparity in viewpoints and highlighting the need to align teaching methods with students' preferences.

Contextual factors significantly influence reading comprehension. Atai and Nazari (2011) explored the reading comprehension needs of Iranian students of health information management, identifying key reading comprehension skills and highlighting the need to tailor reading courses to specific student needs. Karakoc et al. (2022) conducted a study to identify the reading requirements in first-year undergraduate courses in humanities and social sciences disciplines at a New Zealand university. This study emphasizes the importance of exposing students to a variety of academic texts and highlights the need for students to develop critical thinking and argumentation skills.

Language proficiency also plays a crucial role in this process. Zarifi and Asadpour (2017) investigated the target and present reading comprehension needs of undergraduate EAP students in Persian literature in Iran. The findings revealed that the students were weak in skills such as setting goals, predicting meaning, skimming, scanning, vocabulary knowledge, and understanding structure. This study emphasizes the importance of involving multiple stakeholders to gain a comprehensive

understanding of reading comprehension needs, aligning targets, and presenting reading comprehension needs.

A comparison of findings across EFL reading comprehension studies revealed common themes. Across both Turkish and international contexts, there is a strong emphasis on the need for exposure to diverse academic texts, such as textbooks, journal articles, and other sources. Such exposure is essential for developing not only comprehension but also higher-level reading skills, including critical thinking and argumentation. By engaging with various genres and formats, learners enhance their ability to analyze and construct arguments effectively. Lecturers in different educational settings prioritize these advanced reading skills beyond basic comprehension. Additionally, student motivation both intrinsic and extrinsic along with positive attitudes and instructional approaches that cater to learner preferences, plays a key role in promoting engagement with academic reading materials.

However, significant differences were observed between groups, suggesting that cultural and educational factors play a crucial role in reading comprehension. For instance, preferred reading strategies and learning styles may vary across cultures, influencing how students engage with texts. Additionally, differences in educational systems such as curriculum design and instructional focus affect the development of reading skills. While challenges like vocabulary acquisition and reading speed are common across contexts, other difficulties stem from specific cultural and educational environments. Cultural backgrounds shape learners' familiarity with topics, text structures, and ways of interpreting information, leading to disparities in comprehension. For example, in some educational cultures, instruction is primarily teacher-directed, whereas other systems emphasize student-centered learning. Cultural values also shape learning preferences, with some societies prioritizing collaborative learning while others emphasize independent study. Furthermore, educational systems influence reading development through their curricular focus; for instance, an emphasis on rote memorization may hinder deeper comprehension by prioritizing factual recall over inferencing and critical analysis. Given these cultural and educational influences, teaching methodologies, particularly explicit instruction in reading strategies become essential for equipping students with the necessary tools to navigate complex texts. In the context of Turkish EFL learners, a reliance on rote learning and a possible mismatch between instructional approaches and reading demands may contribute to specific comprehension difficulties, even though certain challenges, such as vocabulary acquisition and reading speed, remain universal.

Despite the existing research, a significant knowledge gap remains regarding the reading comprehension needs of lower secondary school students in Türkiye. Most studies focused on university students, leaving this group relatively unexplored. This lack of research makes it difficult to develop evidence-based interventions tailored to 8th-grade learners. Without targeted studies, instructional strategies for older students may be inappropriately applied to younger learners, potentially overlooking their cognitive and developmental needs. Moreover, the absence of research on this age group limits educators’ ability to design curricula that align with students' linguistic and cognitive abilities. Younger learners may require more structured scaffolding, explicit strategy instruction, and motivation-driven approaches than university students, but these factors remain underexplored in the Turkish EFL context.

This lack of studies has broader pedagogical implications. If teachers are unaware of the specific reading challenges faced by 8th-graders, they may rely on generic instructional methods that do not effectively support comprehension development. Policymakers may also struggle to implement curriculum reforms that address the precise needs of lower secondary students without empirical data on their reading difficulties and strengths. This review highlights the importance of tailoring reading instructions according to the specific needs of Turkish EFL learners. To address the existing knowledge gap, this study focused on the reading comprehension needs of 8th-grade students in the Turkish students.

METHODOLOGY

Following Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) framework, this study categorized learners' needs into target needs, which pertain to the specific reading skills required for academic success, and learning needs, which encompass the strategies and resources necessary for effective reading comprehension development. To achieve this, a mixed-method sequential exploratory design was employed. This design involves two phases: in the first phase, qualitative data were collected and analyzed, providing foundational insights; the second phase involved quantitative data collection and analysis, building upon the results of the qualitative findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Document analysis and semi-structured interviews with language teachers served as the primary qualitative method, with key themes identified and analyzed for frequency. These key themes directly informed the development of NAF and ENAC, which were then used for quantitative data collection. The quantitative data was subsequently analyzed to further examine learners' reading comprehension needs. The procedures of the design are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. The mixed-method sequential exploratory research design procedure (Adapted from Berman, 2017)

Phase	Procedures	Products
Qualitative data collection	Document analysis (Articles, Books, Legal documents, master's theses, PhD dissertations) Semi-structured Interviews	• Issues related to reading comprehension identified • Identifying perspectives and beliefs, challenges and difficulties, pedagogical practices and strategies and source usage language teachers
Qualitative data analysis	Coding and thematic analysis with MAXQDA	• Codes listed • Frequency tables
Connecting the qualitative and quantitative phases	Expert opinion	• Items merged and finalized issues to stand as a base for quantitative data collection instrument
Quantitative data collection	NAF ENAC	• Nominal (categorical) item scores
Quantitative data analysis	SPSS descriptive analysis	• NAF and ENAC data results, frequencies and mean scores

Integration of the quantitative and qualitative results	Interpretation and explanation of the qualitative and quantitative results	• Discussions of implications.

The instruments used for the data collection, purposes, sources of the data, and validation procedures of the instruments used for data collection are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. The data-gathering instruments

Data-gathering Instruments	Purpose	Source	Validation Procedure
NAF (35 items)	Identifying eighth-grade learners' reading comprehension needs, including beliefs, strategies, and challenges.	28 eighth-grade students	Expert opinion (three rounds), piloting with 34 students, field notes, guided reflections, and Cohen's kappa (0.80) to assess translation agreement.
ENAC (20 items)	Identifying environmental factors affecting students' reading comprehension		
Semi-Structured Interviews	Identifying the perspectives of language teachers in terms of their students' reading comprehension needs	23 language teachers	Expert opinions to verify and refine questions, revisions based on feedback, member-checking, audio-recording, verbatim transcription, and 0.77 coder agreement

This study explores three research questions that aim to identify the reading comprehension needs of eighth-grade Turkish lower-secondary-school students.

RQ 1. What are learners' perceptions of their reading comprehension needs?
RQ 2. What environmental needs do learners perceive in relation to reading comprehension?
RQ 3. What are learners' reading comprehension needs from language teachers' perspectives?

Participants

This study used purposeful sampling to recruit two participant groups, offering insight into Turkish learners' reading comprehension needs. The first group comprised 28 eighth graders, selected due to their representation of a typical 8th-grade Turkish EFL classroom, with diverse reading habits and varied parental education levels. The participants consisted of 20 students aged 13 (71.40%) and 8 students aged 14 (28.60%). Of these students, 15 were female (53.57%) and 13 were male (46.43%) without prior reading comprehension strategy training. The participants' reading habits were diverse. Most participants (64.29%) read between 1 and 100 pages per week, while a smaller group (14.29%) read between 101 and 200 pages, and another 14.29% read between 201 and 300 pages. Only 7.14% of participants read more than 300 pages per week. Regarding parental education, the majority of mothers (42.9%) had graduated from lower secondary school, followed by primary school (28.6%) and high school (25%). Only one mother (3.6%) had a bachelor's degree. Fathers had a slightly higher level of education, with 46.4% graduating from high school, 32.1% from lower secondary school, and 14.3% from primary school. Two fathers (7.1%) had bachelor's degrees. Notably, none of the parents had a master's or doctoral degree.

The second group consisted of 23 language teachers representing diverse school backgrounds: lower secondary school (39.1%), Imam Hatip lower secondary school (43.5%), and Science and Art Centers (17.4%). These school types were selected to represent the variety of educational settings in the Turkish context, allowing for the exploration of how different school environments might influence reading comprehension instruction. Teachers from different schools may implement distinct strategies based on their students' needs and the school curricula. Among the teacher participants, 17 were female (73.9%), while 6 were male (26.1%). Their teaching experience varied, with 21.7% having 1-10 years, 43.5%–11–20 years, and 34.8% over 21 years. The teacher ranged from 28 to 59, with four holding MA degrees (17.39%). Notably, none of them had received specific training that focused on reading comprehension strategies.

Setting

The study included teachers from two different types of schools and one institution, so a brief overview of each type will be provided. These school types which aims to identify different school environments might influence reading comprehension instruction and implement distinct strategies based on their students' needs and the school curricula. Science and Art Centers nurture gifted students by providing specialized skill development programs beyond regular school hours. These centers emphasize hands-on learning and exploration within scientific and artistic domains, often utilizing a task-based approach. Imam Hatip Lower Secondary Schools prioritize Islamic religious education and integrate Arabic language instruction alongside the standard curriculum. Additionally, these schools typically implement intensive English programs from grades five to seven to enhance students' English proficiency. General Lower Secondary Schools are public schools where students receive different amounts of English instruction. Some schools offer a more intensive program with extra English classes, especially in the 5th grade. This intensive program is limited to the fifth grade, and English classes revert to four hours per week in subsequent grades up to the eighth grade. Due to this educational structure, students are expected to achieve an A2 level of English proficiency by the end of education, as outlined in the Teaching Program published by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE).

Data collection

The data collection process involved two distinct stages: quantitative data from students and qualitative data from language teachers.

Stage 1: Identifying Reading Comprehension Needs and Challenges

This stage aimed to identify the essential reading comprehension needs of eighth-grade Turkish lower secondary students. To achieve this, the NAF and ENAC items were developed through a comprehensive document analysis of books, articles, official MoNE documents including Language Teaching Programs at various levels and vision statement 2023, PISA reports, master's theses, and doctoral dissertations. Additionally, semi-structured interviews with language teachers provided evidence for the forms' content and relevance.

The process began with an analysis of reading comprehension in the target language and identifying its key components, assessment instruments, and strategies for comprehension and awareness. Based on this, each item in the NAF was designed to address different aspects or stages of reading comprehension. The first section (Items 1-10) examined participants' beliefs about reading comprehension, including support, legibility, and fluency. The following sections focus on pre-reading (Items 11-17), while reading (Items 18-28), and post-reading strategies (Items 29-35) to assess comprehension needs. After drafting the items, the form underwent three rounds of expert validation by experts in reading comprehension and foreign language education who evaluated content validity, clarity, and relevance. Revisions have been made accordingly. Initially, the NAF contained 50 items; however, after revisions, it was refined to 35. A pilot test, conducted with 34 students, distinct from those in the main study, was implemented to assess clarity and comprehensibility. During the pilot phase, students provided feedback on item relevance and the researcher recorded field notes to identify common misunderstandings. Based on this feedback and field notes, further refinements were made to improve the instrument's wording and accessibility.

ENAC was included in this study to provide a holistic understanding of the external factors that influence students' reading comprehension. While the NAF focused on students' beliefs and reading strategies, the ENAC captures environmental conditions that might impact reading engagement and comprehension outcomes. Previous research has highlighted the importance of factors such as access to learning materials, technological resources, and classroom settings in shaping students' reading experiences. However, many studies on reading comprehension focus primarily on cognitive and metacognitive strategies, often overlooking broader learning environments.

The ENAC was designed to complement the NAF by identifying non-cognitive barriers to reading comprehension. Analyzing ENAC results alongside students' reading strategy preferences allowed the study to assess how external conditions supported or hindered effective reading practices. This integration aligns with the study's overarching goal of identifying and addressing the reading comprehension needs of 8th-grade Turkish students. By evaluating both individual learning strategies and environmental conditions, this study offers a comprehensive analysis that can inform targeted educational interventions and ensure both pedagogical and infrastructural improvements. The ENAC underwent the same step-by-step validation process as the NAF. Based on document analysis and data gathered from interviews, an initial 30-item form was developed to identify external factors affecting comprehension. After three rounds of revision, the final version was found to contain 20 items. To assess clarity and comprehensibility, a pilot test was conducted with 34 students separate from those in the main study. The researcher maintained field notes, and ten participants provided guided reflections on item clarity. Following the pilot phase, the final version of the form was administered to the same student sample. ENAC consists of 20 items categorized into five sections: physical environment (Items 1-9), access to learning materials (Items 10-13), technological resources (Items 14-16), multimedia and visual aids (Items 17-18), and supportive staff and instructors (Items 19-20).

Both the NAF and ENAC were administered in the learners' native language to ensure full comprehension, as their proficiency in the target language could have affected their ability to accurately interpret the items. Using the native language minimized potential misinterpretations and ensured that responses genuinely reflected the students' perceptions and experiences. For the purposes of this study, the forms were also translated into English. To verify the accuracy and consistency of the translation, Cohen's kappa was calculated, yielding a score of 0.80. This high level of agreement indicates strong reliability (Tantiwatniyom & Nagaviroj, 2022), reinforcing confidence that the translated form accurately conveys the intended meaning and effectively captures the reading comprehension needs of Turkish language learners.

Stage 2: Exploring Language Teachers' Perspectives on Students' Reading Comprehension Needs and Challenges

The second stage of the research involved semi-structured interviews with 23 language teachers from various schools in Türkiye to gain deeper insights into students' reading comprehension needs from their perspective. Before conducting face-to-face interviews at their respective schools, informed consent was obtained from all participants.

The interview questions (Appendix A) were carefully designed to comprehensively cover key aspects of reading comprehension. To achieve this, the questions were structured around four main themes: (1) teachers' conceptual understanding of reading comprehension, (2) perceived student challenges, (3) pedagogical strategies employed, and (4) approaches to promoting student awareness and self-regulation. To ensure their relevance and clarity, expert feedback was obtained, and revisions were made accordingly. All interviews were audio-recorded, and detailed procedural information is provided in the following sub-section.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data obtained from the NAF and ENAC were analyzed using SPSS 21 software. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the frequency and distribution of the responses for each item on the instrument. Qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with language teachers were analyzed using MAXQDA. This software facilitated the identification of recurring themes and patterns within teachers' perceptions of students' reading comprehension needs.

A thematic analysis approach was employed to identify and categorize recurring themes and patterns within the interview data. This analysis followed a systematic process: familiarization with the transcripts, coding of relevant passages, theme identification, and review and refinement of the thematic framework. To ensure the validity of the findings, member-checking was conducted, inviting participants to review their transcripts and provide feedback on the accuracy and interpretation of the identified themes. This process enhanced the trustworthiness and credibility of the research.

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researchers and critical friends, who possessed expertise in transcription and a thorough understanding of the research context. To ensure data accuracy and reliability, a multi-tiered validation process was implemented. First, the data were coded by the researchers, and then two critical friends independently coded a portion of the transcripts. Coder agreement was established through code comparison, yielding a Fleiss's Kappa of 0.77, indicating substantial agreement (Maybrier et al., 2018). Second, to ensure transcription accuracy, the transcriptions were shared with participants for member-checking, confirming that they accurately reflected their spoken words and intended meaning. Finally, randomly selected portions of the transcripts were compared, and any discrepancies were resolved through discussion.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study were presented in line with the research questions to provide a holistic picture of the reading comprehension needs of eighth-grade Turkish lower-secondary-school students.

RQ 1. What are learners' perceptions of their reading comprehension needs?

The frequencies of the items in NAF were presented using a 5-point Likert scale in Table 3. 5 represents "it totally reflects me," 4 is for "it mostly reflects me, 3 is for "it reflects me a little" 2 is for "it hardly reflects me", 1 is for "it doesn't reflect me at all".

Table 3. Frequency of the items in NAF (*N*=28)

Items	*F*					***M***	*Sd*
	5	4	3	2	1		
Learners' beliefs towards reading comprehension						3.52	.64
1. I comprehend better when I read the same subject from different sources.	7 (25.0%)	5 (17.9%)	14 (50.0%)	2 (7.1%)	0 (0%)	3.60	.95
2. I need my teacher's guidance to comprehend what I read.	1 (3.6%)	6 (21.4%)	8 (28.6%)	8 (28.6%)	5 (17.9%)	2.64	1.12
3. I need the support of my friends to comprehend what I read.	3 (10.7%)	3 (10.7%)	4 (14.3%)	3 (10.7%)	15 (53.6%)	2.14	1.45
4. To comprehend what I read, the text must be legible.	8 (28.6%)	9 (32.1%)	4 (14.3%)	4 (14.3%)	3 (10.7%)	3.53	1.34
5. I comprehend texts supported with visuals better.	14 (50.0%)	5 (17.9%)	3 (10.7%)	4 (14.3%)	2 (7.1%)	3.89	1.37
6. Having information about the cultural elements (holidays, traditions, special days, etc.) in the texts I read makes it easier for me to comprehend.	9 (32.1%)	6 (21.4%)	9 (32.1%)	0 (0%)	4 (14.3%)	3.57	1.34
7. I comprehend better when I read to use my free time.	5 (17.9%)	8 (28.6%)	10 (35.7%)	4 (14.3%)	1 (3.6%)	3.42	1.06
8. I can better comprehend texts that I read fluently.	19 (67.9)	5 (17.9%)	3 (10.7%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.6%)	4.46	.96
9. I comprehend better if the subject of the texts I read interests me.	14 (50.0%)	8 (28.6)	2 (7.1%)	2 (7.1%)	2 (7.1%)	4.07	1.24
10. I can comprehend better if I choose the texts, I want to read myself.	12 (42.9%)	6 (21.4%)	6 (21.4%)	2 (7.1%)	2 (7.1%)	3.85	1.26

Items	*F*					***M***	*Sd*
	5	4	3	2	1		
Pre-reading strategies						3.50	.73
11. I comprehend better if I have prior knowledge about the subject of the text.	10 (35.7%)	9 (32.1%)	4 (14.3%)	4 (14.3%)	1 (3.6%)	3.82	1.18
12. I look at the title of the text I read to comprehend what I read.	4 (14.3%)	7 (25.0%)	12 (42.9%)	2 (7.1%)	3 (10.7%)	3.25	1.14
13. I comprehend better when I read according to the instructions.	5 (17.9%)	6 (21.4%)	8 (28,6%)	7 (25.0%)	2 (7.1%)	3.17	1.21
14. Completing the tasks given beforehand makes it easier to comprehend what I read.	9 (32.1%)	5 (17.9%)	6 (21.4%)	3 (10.7%)	5 (17.9%)	3.35	1.49
15. I comprehend better when I have a purpose for reading.	17 (60.7%)	4 (14.3%)	6 (21.4%)	0 (0%)	1 (3.6%)	4.28	1.04
16. I need to plan what I am going to do before I start reading.	4 (14.3%)	4 (14.3%)	11 (39.3%)	3 (10.7%)	6 (21.4%)	2.89	1.31
17. I skim the text quickly before reading.	11 (39.3%)	7 (25.0%)	4 (14.3%)	4 (14.3%)	2 (7.1%)	3.75	1.32
While-reading strategies						3.49	.63
18. I underline what I think is important while reading.	14 (50.0%)	6 (21.4%)	4 (14.3%)	4 (14.3%)	0 (0%)	4.07	1.11
19. I read the text slowly to comprehend every detail.	6 (21.4%)	10 (35.7%)	7 (25.0%)	5 (17.9%)	0 (0%)	3.60	1.03
20. I can guess the meaning of unfamiliar words.	1 (3.6%)	7 (25.0%)	9 (32.1%)	7 (25.0%)	4 (14.3%)	2.78	1.10
21. I take notes on unfamiliar words.	7 (25.0%)	5 (17.9%)	8 (28.6%)	4 (14.3%)	4 (14.3%)	3.25	1.37
22. I comprehend better if I take notes while reading.	11 (39.3%)	4 (14.3%)	3 (10.7%)	4 14.3%)	6 (21.4%)	3.35	1.63
23. I look up the meaning of every unfamiliar word in the dictionary.	1 (3.6%)	6 (21.4%)	4 (14.3%)	9 (32.1%)	8 (28.6)	2.39	1.22
24. I put the events into order in text to comprehend what I read.	4 (14.3%)	6 (21.4%)	9 (32.1%)	6 (21.4%)	3 (10.7%)	3.07	1.21
25. I comprehend better when I translate every sentence in the text into Turkish.	13 (46.4%)	10 (35.7%)	2 (7.1%)	2 (7.1%)	1 (3.6%)	4.14	1.07
26. I read several times to comprehend what I read.	13 (46.4%)	8 (28.6%)	2 (7.1%)	5 (17.9%)	0 (0%)	4.03	1.13
27. I look at the pictures given to comprehend what I read.	10 (35.7%)	10 (35.7%)	5 (17.9%)	2 (7.1%)	1 (3.6%)	3.92	1.08
28. While reading, I try to check whether I comprehend what I read.	7 (25.0%)	10 (35.7%)	8 (28.6%)	2 (7.1%)	1 (3.6%)	3.71	1.04
Post-reading strategies						3.51	.77
29. I comprehend better when I identify the main idea of the text.	4 (14.3%)	14 (50.0%)	3 (10.7%)	6 (21.4%)	1 (3.6%)	3.50	1.10
30. I need to comprehend information that is not clearly stated in the text I read.	5 (17.9%)	8 (28.6%)	6 (21.4%)	6 (21.4%)	3 (10.7%)	3.21	1.28
31. I comprehend better if I create a graph, table, or concept map to comprehend the events or relationships in the text I read.	10 (35.7%)	9 (32.1%)	3 (10.7%)	5 (17.9%)	1 (3.6%)	3.78	1.22

Table 3 continued

Items	*F*					***M***	*Sd*
	5	4	3	2	1		
32. I ask myself questions to check my comprehending.	7 (25.0%)	5 (17.9%)	8 (28.6%)	5 (17.9%)	3 (10.7%)	3.28	1.32
33. It is enough for me to comprehend the main idea.	9 (32.1%)	5 (17.9%)	7 (25.0%)	4 (14.3%)	3 (10.7%)	3.46	1.37
34. After reading the text, I evaluate what is said in the text from a critical point of view.	8 (28.6%)	10 (35.7%)	4 (14.3%)	4 (14.3%)	2 (7.1%)	3.52	.64
35. I summarize what I read to comprehend it better.	11 (39.3%)	7 (25.0%)	4 (14.3%)	4 (14.3%)	2 (7.1%)	3.60	.95

The findings from the NAF revealed diverse perspectives among 8th-grade Turkish EFL learners regarding their reading comprehension needs. In terms of participants' beliefs about reading comprehension, a significant proportion (42.9%) indicated that reading the same topic from diverse sources helped their comprehension. While 25% relied on teacher guidance, indicating a need for scaffolding, a substantial number felt confident about their independent comprehension, revealing varying levels of learner autonomy. The majority (53.6%) found peer support unhelpful. The strong emphasis on clear and legible texts (60.7%) underscored the importance of accessible materials. The preference for texts with visuals (50.0%) indicated a potential need for multimodal resources. A significant majority of students (85.6%) indicated the importance of cultural references, supporting schema theory's emphasis on background knowledge. Similarly, a strong correlation was observed between fluency and comprehension (85.7%). Interest in the topic (78.6%) and autonomy in choosing materials (64.3%) pointed to the significance of intrinsic motivation and learner engagement.

For pre-reading strategies, the finding that 67.8% of participants found prior knowledge helpful. The moderate use of preview titles (39.3%) and following instructions (39.3%) suggest potential gaps in pre-reading strategy instruction. The strong association between reading purpose and comprehension (60.7%) emphasized the importance of purposeful reading activities. The use of skimming (64.3%) suggests that learners recognize the value of efficient reading techniques.

The widespread use of underlining (71.4%) highlights the popularity of active reading strategies. The varying responses regarding reading speed (35.7%) may reflect individual differences in cognitive processes. Moderate use of guessing word meanings (28.6%) and note-taking (53.6%) pointed to a need for explicit vocabulary instruction. The low reliance on dictionaries (25.7%) suggested that learners lacked effective dictionary-use skills. The high agreement on translation (82.1%) indicated a potential reliance on L1 mediation. The frequent use of rereading (75%) underscored the importance of repetition in comprehension. The use of visuals (35.7%) and monitoring comprehension (60.7%) pointed to the importance of metacognitive awareness.

For post-reading strategies, the emphasis on identifying the main idea (64.3%) highlighted the importance of summarization skills. The use of visual organizers (68%) suggested that learners found visual representations of information to be helpful. The balanced response regarding self-questioning indicated varying levels of metacognitive strategy use. The high percentage of participants who critically evaluated texts (64.3%) and summarized them (64.3%) suggested that they understood the value of active post-reading processing.

In sum, while learners appreciate the value of various reading strategies, the diverse responses and lack of a strong preference for any particular type suggest a need for more explicit and individualized instruction on effective reading strategies. These findings highlight the importance of considering learner beliefs, motivation, and individual differences in the design of reading interventions.

RQ 2. What environmental needs do learners perceive in relation to reading comprehension?

ENAC investigated students' perceptions of their environmental needs on reading comprehension. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Frequency of the items in ENAC (*N*=28)

Items	YES	NO	*M*	*SD*
Physical Environment			0.36	0.21
1. My classroom is well lit.	18 (64.5%)	10 (35.5%)	0.64	0.48
2. There are no distractions in my classroom.	7(25.8%)	21 (72.4%)	0.25	0.44
3. The seating arrangement in my classroom is suitable for reading activities.	16 (58.1%)	12(41.9%)	0.58	0.50
4. The furniture or resources in my classroom are rearranged according to specific learning needs.	7 (26.7%)	21 (73.3%)	0.26	0.45
5. My classroom is adequately ventilated.	14 (48.4%)	14 (51.6%)	0.48	0.50
6. There are no heating and cooling problems in my classroom.	16 (58.1%)	12 (41.9%)	0.58	0.50
7. My classroom has a designated area for reading and language learning resources.	4 (13.8%)	24 (86.2%)	0.13	0.35
8. My classroom has a quiet area for reading activities.	3 (9.7%)	25 (90.3%)	0.09	0.30
9. My classroom has measures in place to minimize noise and disruption during reading activities.	6 (22.6%)	22 (77.4%)	0.22	0.42
Access to Learning Materials			0.39	0.07
10. My class has sufficient reading materials (various books, magazines and online resources) in English.	10 (35.5%)	18 (64.5%)	0.35	0.48
11. I have access to reading materials in English in my classroom.	12 (43.3%)	16 (56.7%)	0.43	0.50
12. The English books in my class are suitable for my level.	13 (46.7%)	15 (53.3%)	0.46	0.50
13. English reading materials in my class are interesting for me.	9 (32.3%)	19 (67.7%)	0.32	0.47
Access to Technological Resources			0.70	0.09
14. My classroom has a smart board, computer, or tablet for digital reading activities	20 (72.4%)	8 (25.8%)	0.74	0.44
15. My classroom has secure Internet access to read online resources.	22 (77.4%)	6 (22.6%)	0.77	0.42
16. I have access to a digital library or e-resources in my classroom.	17 (60%)	11 (40%)	0.60	0.49
Multimedia and Visual Aids			0.44	0.08
17. My classroom has visual materials (pictures, posters, diagrams) for reading activities.	11 (38.7%)	17 (61.3%)	0.38	0.49
18. My classroom has audio materials (audio recordings, video recordings) for reading activities.	14 (50%)	14 (50%)	0.50	0.50
Supportive Staff and Instructors			0.57	0.13
19. My classroom has knowledgeable and accessible tutors or staff to help with reading comprehension activities.	19 (67.7%)	9 (32.3%)	0.67	0.47
20. My classroom has a system where students can get help or clarification when they need it.	14 (48.4%)	14 (51.6%)	0.48	0.50

The ENAC provided insights into the environmental factors influencing 8th-grade Turkish EFL learners. The data revealed a complex picture highlighting both the strengths and weaknesses of the participants' learning environment.

In terms of physical environment and resources, the perceived adequacy of classroom lighting (65.6%) suggests a positive physical learning environment conducive to reading. However, the high level of reported distractions (72.4%) indicated a significant impediment to focused reading, potentially reflecting issues with classroom management or external noise. The mixed responses regarding seating comfort (58.1% positive) and the perceived lack of furniture arrangements to support diverse learning styles (73.3%) suggest the need for a more flexible and student-centered classroom design. The reported lack of adequate ventilation (51.6%) and inconsistent heating/cooling (41.9%

experiencing problems) points to potential physical discomfort that could negatively impact reading engagement. The overwhelming lack of designated reading areas (86.2% and 90.3% for quiet areas) highlights a significant gap in the provision of dedicated spaces for focused reading, which is essential for developing independent reading habits. The majority reporting a lack of noise-minimizing measures (77.4%) reinforced the concern about distractions and a non-conducive learning environment.

In terms of access to learning materials, the perceived lack of sufficient reading materials (64.5%) and mixed access to English materials (56.7% positive) underscored a potential resource scarcity, which could limit students' exposure to diverse reading experiences. The varied opinions on the suitability of English books (46.7% finding them suitable) suggest the need for better alignment between materials and learners' proficiency levels. The high percentage of uninteresting reading materials (67.7%) highlighted the importance of selecting engaging and relevant content to foster reading motivation.

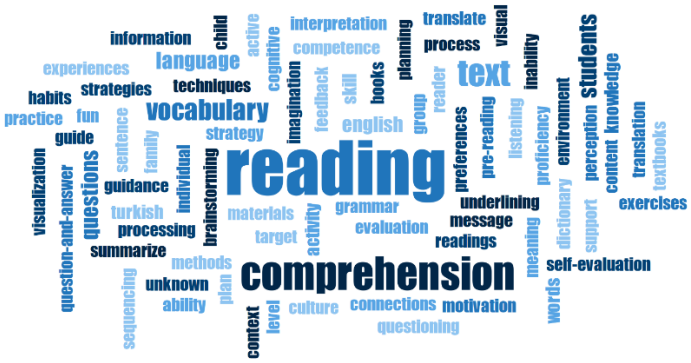
In terms of Technological Resources and Support, the widespread availability of digital devices (72.4%) and Internet access (77.4%) indicated a positive trend towards integrating technology into reading instruction. However, mixed access to digital libraries (72.4% positive) and the lack of visual materials (61.3%) suggests the need for a more comprehensive and strategic use of technology to enhance reading comprehension. The evenly divided opinions on audio materials (50/50) point to the potential underutilization of auditory learning resources. The generally positive perception of knowledgeable tutors (67.7%) indicated a strong foundation for academic support. However, mixed experiences with accessing help (48.4% positive) suggest the need for more effective and consistent support systems to address students' reading challenges.

In summary, ENAC data highlight the complex interplay between environmental factors and reading comprehension. Although the physical environment presents some strengths, significant concerns remain regarding distractions, resource availability, and the integration of technology. These findings underscore the importance of creating conducive learning environments that support diverse learning styles, provide access to engaging materials, and effectively leverage technological resources. The positive perception of academic support suggests the potential for targeted interventions to address the identified environmental challenges.

RQ 3. What are learners' reading comprehension needs from language teachers' perspectives?

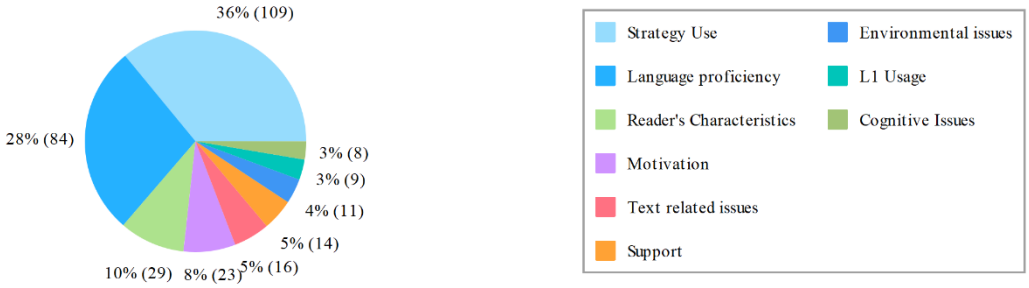
Semi-structured interviews were conducted with language teachers to explore their perspectives on their students' reading comprehension needs.

Figure 1. Word cloud of qualitative data (*N*=23)



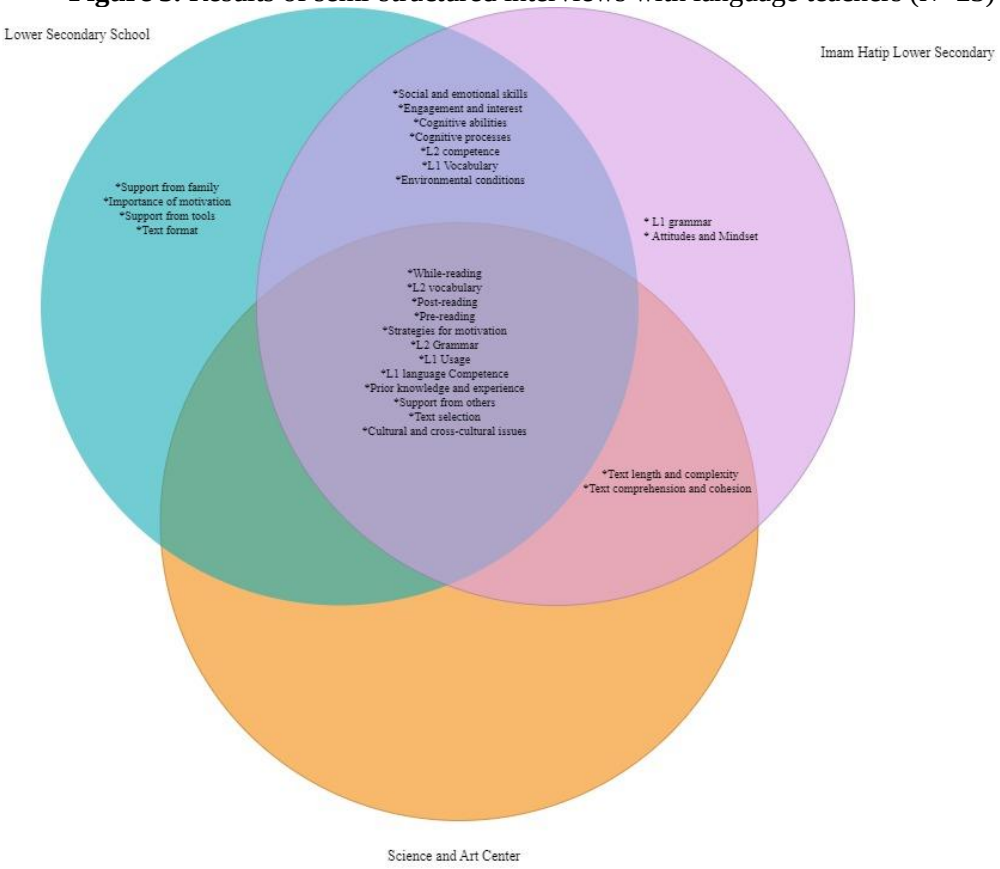
Reading and comprehension are core concepts of this analysis, underscoring their central importance in developing strong reading skills. Supporting elements like vocabulary, strategies, techniques, and practice are closely linked to effective reading and comprehension. Elements such as language, culture, and context highlight the importance of the broader environment in which reading occurs. Word cloud indicates the interconnectedness of the process influenced by various individual and external factors.

Figure 2. Code system (*N* = 23)



Language teachers identified strategy use as the most crucial factor that influences students' reading comprehension. Visual representations of the two-case model are provided in the appendices. Based on this data, a Venn diagram was constructed to offer a more comprehensive interpretation.

Figure 3. Results of semi-structured interviews with language teachers (*N*=23)



Students' language proficiency in both the native and target language and reader characteristics were also emphasized by language teachers. They also reported diverse student needs in reading comprehension, including adequate grammar and vocabulary, ability to think in English while reading, and skills in interpreting texts, predicting content, and questioning information. The lack of vocabulary knowledge and understanding of the cultural context were identified as potential sources of reading comprehension difficulties. Teachers employed various strategies to address these challenges, such as encouraging dictionary use, promoting independent reading, vocabulary practice, and group work.

Collectively, the findings from the three research questions provided a comprehensive understanding of the reading comprehension needs of eighth-grade Turkish lower secondary school students.

Based on Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) learning-centered approach, the target needs and learning needs of eighth-grade learners are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Reading comprehension needs of 8th-grade Turkish lower secondary school students

Challenges	What Students Need	How We Can Help
Limited reading materials	Students do not have a sufficient variety in what they read.	Providing more interesting and diverse reading materials, both online and in print.
Weak vocabulary & guessing	Students struggle with new words and guess their meanings instead of learning them.	Teaching strategies for building vocabulary, such as semantic mapping and learning word parts.
Difficulty adjusting reading style	Students read everything the same way, regardless of the purpose (e.g., skimming for main idea vs. reading closely for details).	Teaching students how to adjust their reading approach based on what they need to obtain from the text.
Not checking understanding	Students do not stop to ensure that they understand what they are reading.	Encouraging students to ask questions, summarize what they have read, and predict what might come next.
Trouble predicting content	Students found it difficult to guess what a text might be based on clues.	Teaching strategies for predicting content based on contextual clues, such as titles, pictures, and what they already know.
Weak grammar & vocabulary (Both languages)	Students struggle with grammar and vocabulary in both Turkish and the target languages (e.g., English).	Providing targeted instruction to improve grammar and vocabulary skills in target language. Collaboration between native language and target language teachers to create a cohesive reading experience.
Difficulty thinking critically	Students have trouble analyzing and interpreting texts in English.	Teaching strategies for critical thinking in English, such as questioning the author's perspective and finding evidence to support ideas.
Trouble analyzing texts	Students found it difficult to break down and understand the meaning of a text.	Teach techniques for effective text analysis and interpretation.
Limited resources & teacher training	Students do not have access to sufficient technology and resources, and teachers may need more support.	Providing secure Internet access, a wider range of digital learning resources, and professional development for teachers regarding effective reading comprehension strategies.

Potential cultural barriers	Reading materials may not reflect students' cultural background.	Using culturally relevant materials and activities to ensure understanding.

DISCUSSION

This study explored the reading comprehension needs of eighth-grade Turkish EFL learners. These findings indicate that language learners have multifaceted needs in this context. In alignment with the first and third research questions, which aimed to identify learners' and teachers' perceptions of reading comprehension needs, a clear consensus emerged. Both groups agreed that a lack of vocabulary knowledge is a significant barrier to reading comprehension. Many students reported difficulty with unfamiliar words, and language teachers emphasized the importance of adequate vocabulary for better comprehension. This challenge has also been highlighted in studies conducted in various contexts, including in Saudi Arabia (AlGhamdi et al., 2018; Alshehri & Zhang, 2022) and Iran (Atai & Nazari, 2011).

The study's findings underscored the significant role of reading strategies in enhancing student comprehension, with both students and teachers acknowledging their importance. Students reported utilizing a variety of strategies, including skimming, underlining, and translating, indicating an awareness of their value. However, they also expressed a desire to explicit instruction in more advanced techniques, such as making inferences, summarizing, and using visual organizers, to further refine their reading skills. Notably, teachers confirmed this need, employing a wide array of pre, while, and post-reading strategies in their instruction, including think-alouds, questioning, and note-taking. This consensus on the importance of strategy instruction aligns with previous research, such as Kanmaz (2022) and Fadilah et al. (2021), which demonstrated that explicit and comprehensive strategy instruction significantly improves reading comprehension outcomes.

Student participants also indicated that motivation plays a crucial role in their reading experience. They noted that reading texts that were engaging or culturally relevant improved their willingness to engage in the reading tasks. This finding is consistent with the research of Razavi and Gilakjani (2020), who highlighted the positive impact of culturally relevant materials on learner motivation and reading comprehension. However, as suggested by Karakoc et al. (2022), it is important to consider learners' diverse needs by providing texts that are both culturally diverse and suitable for various age groups.

Addressing the second research question, this study sought to understand learners' self-reported perceptions of environmental needs related to their reading comprehension. Learners identified several environmental needs that affected their reading comprehension. One of the most commonly cited needs is the availability of a conducive reading environment in classrooms. Students emphasized the need for a quiet, well-lit classroom with easy access to reading materials. This finding aligns with AlGhamdi et al. (2018), who highlighted the impact of physical and social settings on students' reading experiences and noted the importance of having access to a variety of reading materials, including digital resources. The finding that students benefit from reading materials that are interesting and relevant to their lives is supported by previous research, such as studies by Brantmeier (2003) and Karakoc et al. (2022), which demonstrates that topic familiarity significantly influences the comprehension of various academic texts.

The participants also emphasized the need for greater social support in the classroom. However, this finding has two dimensions: while students perceived a need for increased teacher support, teachers highlighted the importance of peer support and fostering a supportive learning environment. These findings are consistent with the principles outlined by McLaughlin (2012), which demonstrate that collaborative learning environments significantly enhance both student motivation and reading comprehension.

This study investigated language teachers' perspectives on learners' reading comprehension needs as outlined in the third research question. From the teachers' perspective, the primary needs of students revolved around explicit instruction in reading strategies and differentiated instruction. Many teachers noted that their students lacked awareness of advanced reading strategies, which hindered their comprehension. This finding aligns with Duke and Pearson (2009), who argued that explicit strategy instruction is essential for helping students become active strategic readers.

Teachers also emphasized the importance of addressing students' diverse needs. This finding aligns with the related literature, which highlights the significance of tailoring instruction to individual learning styles and preferences to enhance motivation, engagement, and comprehension (Ghavamnia & Kashkouli, 2022). By recognizing and respecting each learner's individuality, as emphasized by Alvarez et al. (1993), more effective learning environments can be constructed for students in this context. Language proficiency of students is one of the areas emphasized by language teachers, which aligns with Endley (2016) and Maghsoudi (2022), who emphasized the critical role of language proficiency in reading comprehension.

Another area of concern for teachers was students' vocabulary development, which they also emphasized as a significant challenge. Teachers observed that many students struggled with unfamiliar words, which were identified as major obstacles to comprehension. This echoes findings from Alshehri and Zhang (2022) and Atai and Nazari (2011), who emphasized that limited vocabulary knowledge is a persistent challenge in EFL contexts.

As emphasized by the teachers who participated in this study, it is crucial to address the challenges faced by lower secondary school students in Türkiye, particularly their limited reading habits. Bagci and Unveren (2020) found a positive correlation between reading habits and self-efficacy in reading comprehension. Students with poor reading habits displayed low levels of self-confidence and reading comprehension. Thus, encouraging and developing reading habits among lower secondary school students in Türkiye could significantly improve reading comprehension.

The three research questions of this study collectively aimed to comprehensively investigate the reading comprehension needs of eighth-grade Turkish lower secondary school students. An analysis of the data collected from students and teachers revealed that eighth-grade Turkish EFL learners face multifaceted challenges in reading comprehension. Central to their needs are language proficiency, particularly vocabulary knowledge, effective use of reading strategies, motivation, and a conducive reading environment. The interplay between these factors underscores the need for tailored instruction that addresses both the cognitive and affective dimensions of reading comprehension.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Fostering proficient reading comprehension among Turkish EFL learners requires a multifaceted collaborative approach that prioritizes learners' needs. Understanding learner diversity is of paramount importance. By conducting thorough needs analysis and utilizing learning-style inventories, educators can gain invaluable insights into students' reading preferences, strengths, and challenges.

Tailored instruction is the cornerstone for effective reading comprehension. This involves customizing instruction to individual learners through adaptive teaching strategies, personalized learning plans, and the strategic use of technology. Various instructional methods can be implemented through tiered assignments, flexible grouping for reading activities, and a variety of reading materials to cater to diverse interests and levels. Personalized learning plans can guide individual learning journeys by setting specific, measurable, and achievable goals; providing personalized feedback; and recommending appropriate reading materials. To effectively support these customized learning approaches, a well-designed curriculum is essential. Curriculum developers play a crucial role in this process by conducting thorough needs assessments, setting clear and attainable learning objectives, and selecting engaging and culturally relevant reading materials. By designing objectives that

accommodate various learning levels and styles and offering diverse instructional activities, the curriculum can provide a rich, engaging learning experience. Activities may include visual aids, group discussions, hands-on projects, and integration of online resources.

Leveraging technology can revolutionize personalized reading instruction. Interactive online platforms, educational apps, and digital libraries offer a wealth of resources for individualized learning experiences including personalized reading assessments, access to a wide range of digital texts, and opportunities for interactive reading.

Creating a supportive learning ecosystem requires strong collaboration among stakeholders. School administrators play a vital role by providing the necessary resources, including access to a rich and diverse collection of high-quality reading materials, technology, and professional development opportunities for teachers. Investing in teachers' ongoing professional development is of paramount importance. This could focus on equipping educators with the knowledge and skills needed to implement effective reading instruction strategies such as customized teaching methods, personalized learning, and the use of technology to support reading comprehension.

Families play a crucial role in supporting children's reading journey. By creating a language-rich home environment, engaging in shared reading experiences, and encouraging independent reading, families can significantly enhance their children's reading comprehension and cultivate a lifelong love for reading.

Several limitations of this study should be considered when interpreting these findings. First, the relatively small sample size of 28 eighth-grade students and 23 language teachers may limit the generalizability of the results to the broader population of Turkish EFL learners across different grade levels. While the purposeful sampling strategy allowed for the collection of rich, detailed data from specific participant groups, the limited number of participants restricts the applicability of the findings to broader statistical inferences and to larger or more diverse educational settings.

Another limitation is the nature of the instruments used. Although self-reported questionnaires and semi-structured interviews provided valuable qualitative data, they may not have captured the full spectrum of factors that influence reading comprehension. Specifically, participants might not have been fully aware of or able to articulate all relevant factors affecting their reading processes.

Furthermore, the cross-sectional design of this study has temporal constraints. This approach does not allow for the tracking of changes in reading comprehension needs over time, thereby limiting our understanding of how these needs may evolve as students' progress on their language learning journey.

Finally, the specific Turkish EFL context in which this study was conducted may limit the transferability of the findings to other educational settings or contexts characterized by different cultural, linguistic, or educational features.

Future research could investigate the long-term effects of factors such as language proficiency, reading strategies, motivation, and environmental influences on reading comprehension development among Turkish EFL learners. This includes examining how these variables interact over time to shape learners' reading ability and comprehension. Additionally, studies could assess the effectiveness of targeted interventions designed to address specific reading comprehension needs, such as personalized teaching approaches, personalized learning plans, and culturally relevant materials.

The role of technology in supporting reading comprehension warrants further research. Future research could evaluate the impact of digital tools such as educational apps, online platforms, and AI-driven resources on enhancing motivation, engagement, and comprehension in Turkish EFL classrooms.

Future research can consider increasing the sample size to improve the generalizability of the findings and employ different methodologies to provide a more comprehensive understanding of reading comprehension needs. Longitudinal studies are particularly recommended to track changes in reading comprehension over time and identify the most effective strategies for supporting sustained improvement. Furthermore, future research could explore the applicability of these findings across diverse educational settings and contexts, including schools with varying resources and student demographics.

In conclusion, this study investigated the reading comprehension needs of eighth-grade Turkish EFL learners and revealed the complex interplay of factors influencing their reading development. The findings underscore the multifaceted nature of these needs, encompassing language proficiency, particularly vocabulary, the effective use of reading strategies, motivation driven by engaging and culturally relevant materials, and supportive environmental factors. Specifically, the study highlighted learners' need for explicit instruction in advanced reading strategies such as inference and summarization, access to diverse and level-appropriate reading materials, and a learning environment free from distractions. Teachers corroborated these needs, further emphasizing the importance of adaptive instruction and addressing potential cultural barriers.

Therefore, a comprehensive and collaborative approach is crucial for improving reading comprehension outcomes. Through adaptive instruction, this approach can prioritize explicit instruction in a range of reading strategies tailored to learners' diverse needs. Providing culturally relevant and engaging reading materials is essential to promote motivation and engagement. Supportive learning experience involves fostering collaboration, ensuring access to sufficient technological and digital resources, and reducing distractions. Providing targeted professional development for teachers further strengthens these efforts.

The insights provided by this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the specific challenges faced by Turkish EFL learners in developing reading comprehension. These findings offer valuable guidance for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in Türkiye. By addressing identified needs through evidence-based practices and encouraging collaboration among stakeholders such as teachers, administrators, and families, Turkish EFL learners can be empowered to become more confident, proficient, and engaged readers, ultimately leading to improved academic and personal success.

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Declaration of AI use in the writing process

The authors of this paper acknowledge that in developing this manuscript, Chat GPT 3,5 was used to assist in refining the clarity of writing. Continuous human oversight (editing and revising) and verified the AI-generated output were maintained. AI was never used to find, locate, or review literature or resources, summarize the articles, analyze the selected articles, or synthesize the findings. All analyses and higher-level efforts were completed by the authors.

Ethical Statement

This study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Graduate School of Education (E-84026528-050.01.04-2200276280, 18.11.2022).

The research adheres to ethical standards ensuring that participants are fully informed of their role as research subjects, the voluntary nature of their participation with the right to withdraw at any time, the purpose and scope of the research project, the measures taken to maintain confidentiality, and any potential risks associated with their involvement. Participants are aware that the results of the study may be presented for publication, and their informed consent is obtained before their participation.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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APPENDIX A

Semi-structured interview questions

1. How would you define reading comprehension in the context of language learning?
2. What unique challenges do you think students face when reading in a foreign language compared to their native language?
4. What competencies are required for successful reading comprehension in a foreign language, specifically
5. What are the most common reading difficulties you observe in your students?
7. What do you think are the underlying reasons for these common reading problems?
8. Can you describe some specific techniques or activities you use to help students overcome reading comprehension challenges?
9. What do you consider to be the most crucial skill, competency, or strategy for effective reading comprehension in the target language? Explain why you believe this particular skill or strategy is so important.
10. How do you identify the signs that a student is struggling with reading comprehension?
11. What proactive steps do you take to prevent reading comprehension problems?
12. Are there any supportive strategies in the textbooks that you use?
13. Can you provide examples of how you use cognitive strategies to support reading comprehension during your lessons?
14. Can you describe specific metacognitive strategies you employ to help students become more aware of their own reading processes?
15. What specific techniques do you use to support students in developing and using cognitive strategies for reading comprehension?
16. How do you help students become more aware of their own thinking processes while reading,

and how do you support their use of metacognitive strategies?

APPENDIX B

Figure 4. Codes defined from Lower Secondary School and Science and Art Center

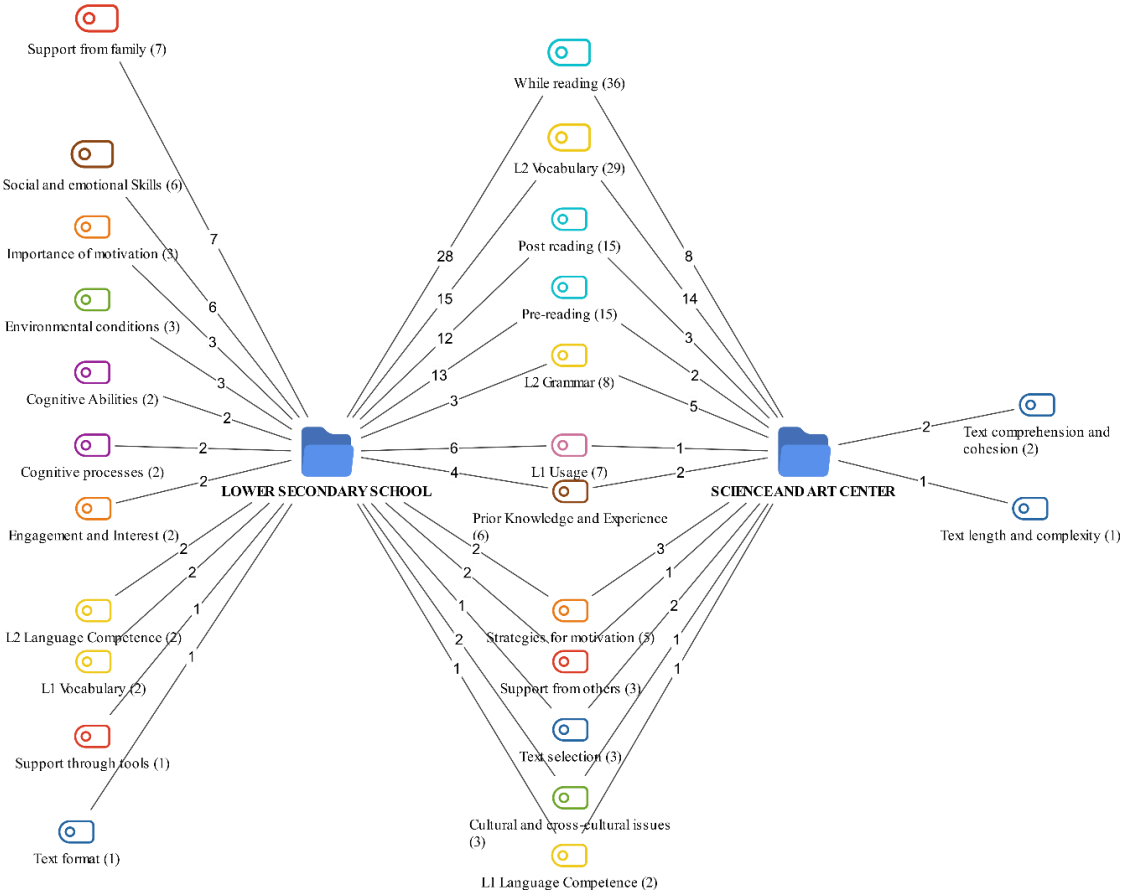


Figure 5. Codes defined from Imam Hatip Lower Secondary School and Science an Art Center

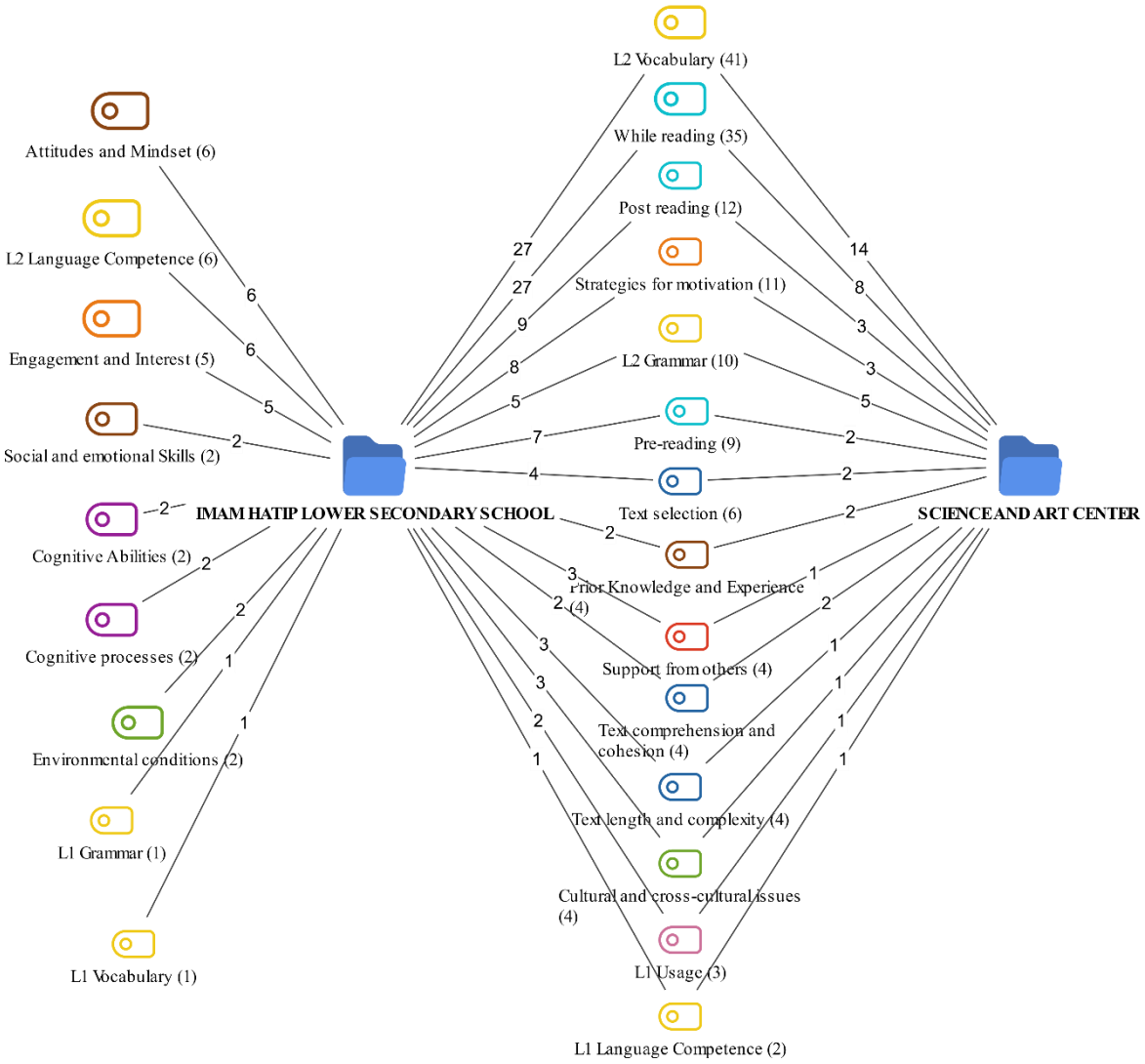
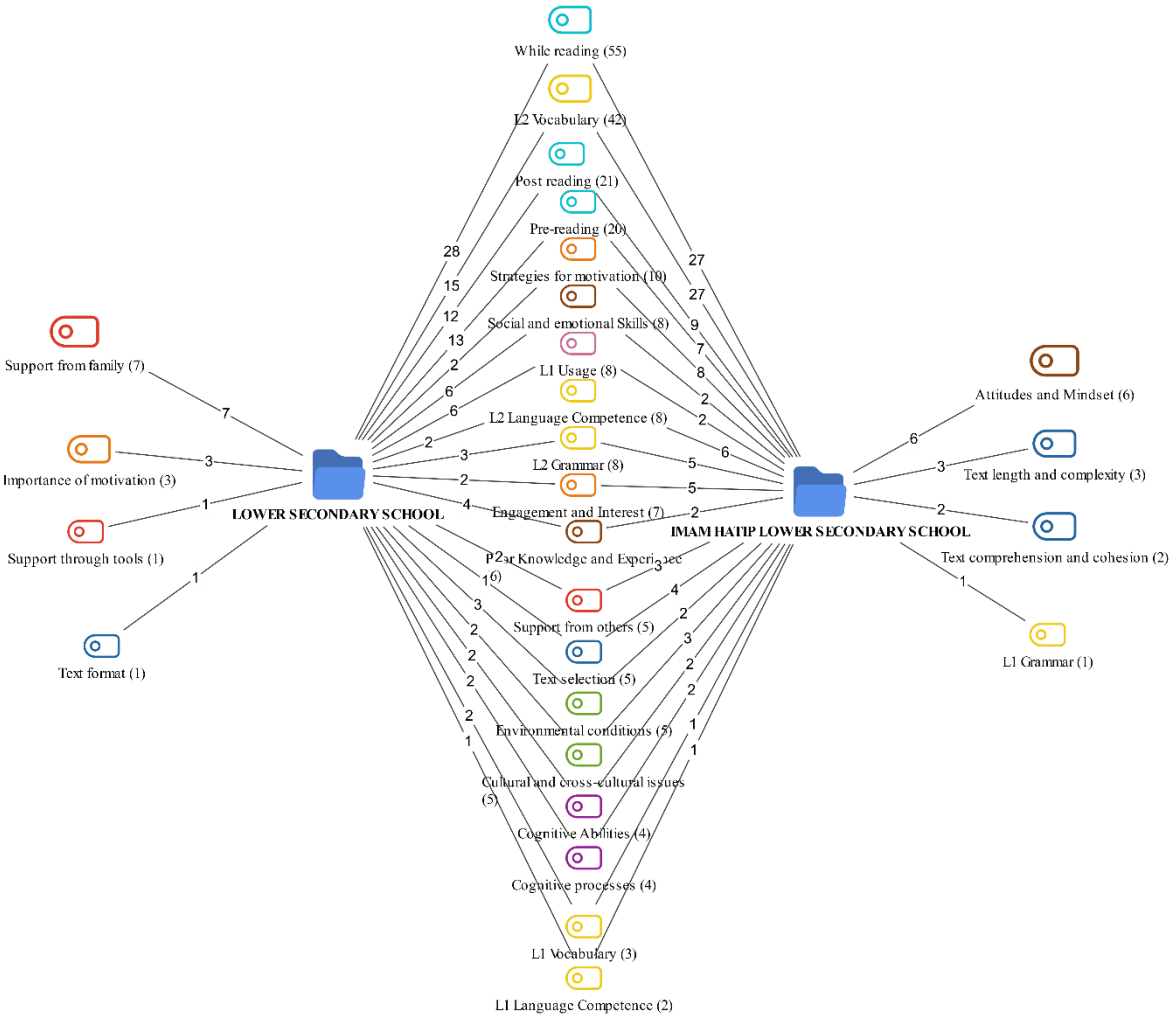


Figure 6. Codes defined from Lower Secondary School and Imam Hatip lower secondary



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Research Article

Empowering Pre-Service English Language Teachers: The Impact of Scenario-Based SRL Training on Self-Regulated Learning and Teaching Self-Efficacy

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of scenario-based self-regulated learning (SRL) training on the SRL and teaching self-efficacy of pre-service English language teachers. Utilizing a quasi-experimental design, 48 participants were divided into experimental and control groups, with the experimental group receiving SRL-focused interventions through scenario-based exercises, peer collaboration, and reflective practices. Findings revealed significant post-intervention improvements in SRL and self-efficacy, particularly in instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement. Large effect sizes and robust post-hoc power analyses affirm the effectiveness of the intervention. While the study demonstrates the transformative potential of scenario-based SRL training, further longitudinal research with larger and more diverse samples is recommended to ensure the generalizability and sustainability of results. This research offers a replicable framework for integrating SRL into teacher education, equipping pre-service teachers with essential skills to foster autonomous learning and improve educational outcomes.

Keywords: *Teacher professional development, reflective teaching practices, student-centered learning, EFL teacher education, educational psychology, K-12 school contexts*

INTRODUCTION

Self-regulated learning (SRL) has long been recognized as a cornerstone of effective teaching and learning, with research emphasizing its importance in fostering academic achievement, motivation, and life-long learning (Schunk & Greene, 2018; Zimmerman, 2001). SRL involves the cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational processes learners employ to set goals, monitor progress, and reflect on their performance, thereby enhancing their ability to manage learning independently (Schunk, 2012). While its relevance to student success has been extensively documented, the role of SRL in teacher professional development remains underexplored, despite its potential to address critical gaps in instructional effectiveness (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004; Panadero et al., 2016; Theobald, 2021).

Existing research highlights that while teachers recognize the value of SRL, their instructional practices often fail to integrate SRL strategies effectively (Eker Uka, 2022; Isbej et al., 2024; Mejeh et al., 2024; Spruce & Bol, 2015; Dignath-van Ewijk & van der Werf, 2012). This discrepancy stems from a lack of training in SRL-focused pedagogy, leaving teachers ill-equipped to model and foster these strategies in their classrooms (Cleary et al., 2022; Spruce & Bol, 2015). Additionally, studies have demonstrated that professional development programs emphasizing SRL significantly enhance teachers' instructional practices and self-efficacy (Kramarski & Michalsky, 2015; Quackenbush, 2020; Tran et al., 2024; Zhi & Derakhshan, 2024). However, these initiatives are scarce, particularly in pre-

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service teacher education, where developing foundational competencies is paramount (Callan et al., 2022; Karlen et al.,2023; Tillema & Kremer-Hayon, 2002).

Further compounding this gap is the limited integration of SRL-focused interventions with practical and collaborative teaching models. While SRL training has been shown to improve teachers' ability to support students' self-regulation (Cleary & Platten, 2013; Dignath & Büttner, 2008; Latva-aho et al., 2024), the literature underscores the need for structured, contextually relevant training that bridges theory and practice (Ao et al., 2024; Alvi & Gillies, 2024; Butler et al., 2004; Perry et al., 2006). Yet, few studies have systematically evaluated such approaches, leaving an evident research gap.

This study addresses this gap by introducing a teacher training model designed to promote SRL through three interrelated components: personalized guidance, practical application, and collaborative learning. By equipping teachers with both theoretical knowledge and practical tools, the model aims to enhance their SRL strategies and capacity to integrate these skills into their instructional practice. This study contributes to the growing body of literature by addressing the pressing need for comprehensive, SRL-centered teacher training programs that bridge the gap between research and practice. This is particularly crucial in contexts like English Language Teaching (ELT) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL), where the cultivation of learner autonomy is paramount for language acquisition and long-term academic success. The findings have the potential to contribute to teacher education programs by offering a robust framework for integrating SRL-focused training into teacher preparation and professional development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) and the Teacher

SRL is a multifaceted process that encompasses cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational strategies, enabling learners to set goals, monitor their progress, and reflect on their performance to achieve academic success (Zimmerman, 2000; Schunk & Greene, 2018). Research has consistently highlighted SRL as a teachable and critical component of effective learning, linking it to enhanced academic achievement, motivation, and lifelong learning (Greene et al., 2015; Panadero et al., 2016). However, the effective implementation of SRL strategies in educational contexts relies heavily on teachers' ability to model, teach, and support these processes in their classrooms (Yaşar, 2025).

Teachers play a dual role in the realm of SRL—as learners themselves and as facilitators of SRL in their students. However, despite acknowledging the importance of self-regulation in their classrooms, many teachers struggle to effectively implement SRL principles in their classrooms (Spruce & Bol, 2015; Perry et al., 2008). A significant factor contributing to this disconnect is the limited pedagogical knowledge teachers possess to explicitly model and teach SRL strategies (Dignath-van Ewijk et al., 2012; Mejeh et al., 2024). Despite being high-performing individuals during their own educational journeys, many pre-service teachers lack awareness of metacognitive control and effective SRL strategies, hindering their ability to effectively teach these skills to their future students (Greene, 2021; Kornell & Bjork, 2007; McCabe, 2011).

Research also underscores the superficial nature of SRL practices among teachers, particularly in the absence of structured prompts and scaffolding (Moos & Miller, 2015; Özdemir & Önal, 2021; Yaşar, 2025). Studies reveal that pre-service teachers often engage in limited SRL unless prompted across all three phases—forethought, performance, and reflection (Ortube et al., 2024; Vosniadou et al., 2021). Without these deliberate interventions, the potential for deep SRL development and its application in instructional planning may not be fully realized (Alvi & Gillies, 2024; Michalsky & Schechter, 2013). Teachers cannot instill SRL in their students if they do not possess these skills themselves (Agbenyegah, 2022; Bembenutty, 2024). This highlights the necessity of addressing this gap in teacher training.

Teachers' Self-Efficacy for Teaching

Teacher' SRL involves multiple aspects, such as motivation, emotions, cognitive strategies, and behaviors (Efklides et al., 2017). Motivation, particularly self-efficacy, plays a crucial role in teachers' SRL (Dignath-van Ewijk & van der Werf, 2012). Teachers' self-efficacy, a key aspect of their SRL, significantly influences their teaching practices and student outcomes (Dignath, 2016). It refers to their belief in their ability to effectively engage and teach students, even those who are unmotivated and unwilling to participate in content-related classroom discussions (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Self-efficacy, like SRL, significantly influences both students' and teachers' learning and performance (Wu et al., 2019). Teachers with high self-efficacy often demonstrate stronger SRL skills, such as planning and organization, and show a greater willingness to experiment with innovative teaching methods to meet their students' needs (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). Research by Chatzistamatiou et al. (2014) highlights that teachers' self-efficacy beliefs predict their use of strategies to enhance students' SRL. Furthermore, studies confirm that teachers' self-efficacy can be developed through targeted training, reinforcing the notion that SRL is a skill that can be taught and learned (Bachtiar, 2024; Howardson & Behrend, 2015; Schunk & Greene, 2018; Schwoerer et al., 2005; Sitzmann & Ely, 2011; Perry et al., 2008). Collectively, these findings emphasize that fostering teachers' SRL and self-efficacy through professional development enhances instructional effectiveness and positively impacts both teachers' and students' learning outcomes in K-12 educational settings.

Pre-service Teacher Training Programs

Previous research highlights that SRL plays a limited role in both pre-service and in-service teacher training programs (Dunlosky et al., 2013). It's a common misconception that successful learners automatically become effective teachers of SRL (Allshouse, 2016; Buzza & Allinotte, 2013). However, studies show that teachers need explicit training in SRL principles, practice using SRL strategies for their own learning, and opportunities to engage in active learning processes to effectively support students' SRL development (Ganda & Boruchovitch, 2018; Kramarski & Michalsky, 2009). Buzza and Allinotte (2013) emphasize that teachers' academic strengths alone are insufficient to foster SRL in students without explicit instructional connections. Additionally, guidance is essential to help teachers reconcile discrepancies in their understanding of their own learning processes and those of their students (Krečič & Grmek, 2010).

Yaşar (2025) posits that both pre-service and in-service teacher training must explicitly address SRL development to improve instructional effectiveness and student outcomes. Moos and Miller (2015) also advocate for pre-service programs to focus on SRL needs, while research on in-service training shows positive impacts, particularly when engaging disengaged or unreflective learners. These findings suggest that explicit SRL instruction and support in teacher training programs are critical (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; White, 1998). By embedding SRL into teacher education, these programs not only equip educators with the skills to model and teach SRL but also foster long-lasting relationships essential for student achievement and instructional success (Klei Borrero, 2019).

Objective of the Current Study

This study aims to address the gap in research on teacher training in SRL, particularly focusing on pre-service English language teachers. Despite the limited number of studies in this area, prior research highlights the need for sufficiently powered interventions to explore the impact of SRL training (Cerezo & McWhirter, 2012; Smith, 2001; Stronge et al., 2011; Taranto, 2024). By targeting pre-service teachers, who represent prospective teachers, this study emphasizes the importance of authentic skill application in real classroom contexts. It builds on existing SRL intervention research, which has demonstrated significant results even with short-term interventions, and focuses on the role

of expert support and ongoing collaboration in enhancing teachers' SRL skills (Alvi & Gillies, 2024; Butler et al., 2004; Önal & Özdemir, 2024; Panadero et al., 2016; Perry et al., 2008). By investigating the relationship between teachers' SRL, self-efficacy, and instructional effectiveness, this study seeks to demonstrate how an intervention can significantly enhance teachers' ability to self-regulate, boost their self-efficacy, and ultimately improve their instructional practices.

Given the above findings, this study aimed to investigate the effect of an SRL-based teacher training model on the pre-service English language teachers' SRL and self- efficacy for teaching. In accordance with the objective of the study, the following research questions were raised:

1. Does the intervention of scenario-based SRL teacher training model affect pre-service English language teachers' self-regulated learning?

2. Does the intervention of scenario-based SRL teacher training model affect pre-service English language teachers' self-efficacy for teaching?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Participants

The study pursued a pretest-post-test quasi-experimental design. It seeks to determine the effect of the SRL teacher training model by comparing the SRL and teaching self-efficacy levels of two groups: one (experimental group) participating in the SRL teacher training program and the other (control group) doesn't. A three-week orientation phase and an eight-week implementation took place between the pre- and post-tests in the spring semester of 2024-2025 academic year. The accessible population consisted of pre-service English language teachers enrolled in the *Teaching Practice* course at the Department of Foreign Languages Education (FLE) at the Faculty of Education in a Turkish state university. The *Teaching Practice* course was divided into seven sections, and all participants were enrolled in one of these sections. Each section was supervised by a faculty member from the university and had approximately 12 students. The course required the participants to observe real classroom environments, gain teaching experience, and develop school-based skills at primary and secondary schools (shortly K-12) under staff supervision. As part of the course, they attended six lessons per week and visited cooperating K-12 schools for twelve weeks during the semester. The course involved completing observation and reflection activities, along with teaching tasks. During this period, participants became familiar with their mentor teachers and the school setting. The course required two main types of tasks: **Observation tasks and Teaching tasks. Observation tasks** involved participants observing various classroom elements, guided by pre-prepared questions from their university instructor. **Teaching tasks** required participants to conduct lessons and submit written reflections on their teaching experiences. These tasks aimed to provide hands-on experience and promote deeper understanding of instructional practices. Through these semester-long teaching tasks, the study investigates the impact of the SRL teacher training model on pre-service English language teachers' self-regulated learning and teaching self-efficacy.

The participants in the experimental group were selected through purposive sampling from a total of 84 pre-service ELT teachers (aged 23-26), who volunteered to participate in the intervention process. The control group consisted of participants who agreed to complete the pre- and post-test scales administered as part of the study. Informed consent was obtained from the 28 participants in the experimental group who initially volunteered, after five withdrew. On the other hand, 35 students were included in the control group. However, 10 were excluded because they failed to take part in either of the pre- or post-test. As a result, the experimental group consisted of 23 participants (18 female and 5 male), while the control group comprised 25 participants (17 female and 8 male). Prior to the implementation, all participants were informed about the voluntary nature of the study, its objectives, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time. Table 1 below includes information on the design of the study.

Table 1. Overview of the research design and participants of the study

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Pre-tests	X	X
Intervention	X	
Post-tests	X	X
Teaching Practice course	X	X
Teaching tasks at K-12 schools	X	X
Observation tasks at K-12 schools	X	X
Number of participants	23	25

Instrumentation

The self-regulated online learning questionnaire (SOL-Q)

The revised version of the Self-Regulated Online Learning Questionnaire (SOL-Q-R), originally developed by Jansen et al. (2018), was used to assess the SRL levels of both groups. The SOL-Q-R has been validated in multiple studies assessing SRL in online and blended learning environments, indicating strong psychometric properties with a reported Cronbach's alpha of .82 to .91 across its subscales (Broadbent et al., 2018; Jansen et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2022).

While the initial version of the SOL-Q was designed for online learning contexts, modifications were made to adapt the questionnaire for classroom settings to align with the study's instructional environment. For example, the item *"I think about what I really need to learn before I begin a task in this online course"* was adjusted to *"I think about what I really need to learn before I begin a task in the classroom."* These adaptations ensured that the content remained relevant to the participants' experiences in face-to-face instruction, preserving the integrity of the instrument's constructs. Previous research supports the use of adapted versions of the SOL-Q in classroom-based SRL studies (Jansen et al., 2018; Kizilcec et al., 2017; Kumar & Pande, 2019). The revised instrument underwent a pilot test with a small sample of pre-service teachers (n=12) to confirm item clarity and internal consistency before full-scale implementation. The pilot results yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .88, reinforcing the reliability of the adapted tool in measuring SRL in classroom contexts.

The SOL-Q was chosen for its ability to comprehensively assess SRL through 42 items rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = "not at all true for me" to 7 = "very true for me") and distributed across seven subscales: (a) Meta-cognitive Activities Before Learning (MABL), (b) Meta-cognitive Activities During Learning (MADL), (c) Meta-cognitive Activities After Learning (MAAL), (d) Time Management (TM), (e) Environmental Structuring (ES), (f) Persistence (PER), and (g) Help-Seeking (HS). This multi-faceted approach allows for a thorough examination of SRL behaviours.

The teacher sense of efficacy scale (TSES)

The Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES), developed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001), was used to measure the impact of the Scenario-based SRL Teacher Training intervention on the participants' sense of efficacy. The TSES is a widely validated instrument designed to measure teachers' self-efficacy across three key dimensions: Instructional Strategies (IS), Classroom Management (CM), and Student Engagement (SE) (Duffin et al., 2012; Klassen et al., 2009). It consists of 24 items, with 8 items dedicated to each subscale. Efficacy in Instructional Strategies (Items 7, 10, 11, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24), Efficacy in Classroom Management (Items 3, 5, 8, 13, 15, 16, 19,

21), and Efficacy in Student Engagement (Items 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 14, 22). Participants respond to items using a 9-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Nothing) to 9 (A great deal), indicating the extent to which they feel capable of handling various teaching tasks. The TSES exhibits strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha exceeding 0.90 for both the overall scale and nearly all its individual subscales (see Table 2).

Table 2. Overview of the reliability scores of the TSES and each dimension

(Sub)scales	Mean	SD	alpha
TSES	7.1	.94	.94
Instructional Strategies	7.3	1.1	.91
Student Engagement	7.3	1.1	.87
Classroom Management	6.7	1.1	.90

Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001)

By administering the SOL-Q and TSES, the study aims to assess changes in participants' SRL levels and teaching self-efficacy following the intervention process. The study employed a three-phase design: pre-testing, intervention, and post-testing. The data collection process is illustrated in Figure 1.

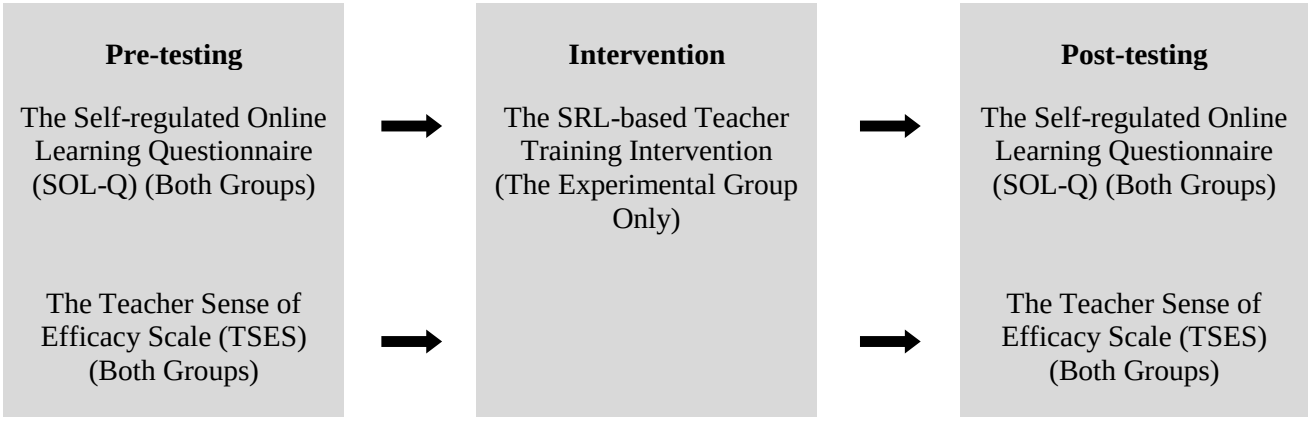

Figure 1. The flow of the data collection procedures

Procedure

After obtaining necessary approvals, the study commenced with an introductory meeting with the trainees. During this meeting, they were informed about the research and provided with a consent form to sign. During the pre-data collection and orientation stage, the participants were introduced to the concept of SRL and its importance in teaching practice. They received explicit SRL skill training during instructional coaching. Two-hour instructional coaching sessions were delivered by the author, i.e. the trainer over the course of three weeks during the pre-intervention phase. These sessions took place twice a week for two days each week.

The intervention process, which lasted 8 weeks, began on January 20, 2025. The SOL-Q and the TSES were administered to the participants in both groups as pre-tests to assess their initial SRL levels and self-efficacy beliefs about implementing SRL in everyday practice. The tests were administered online through the university's official Learning Management System (LMS), ensuring a secure and standardized data collection process. The same LMS platform was used to conduct post-

tests for both groups after eight weeks of implementation, ensuring uniformity in data collection procedures and enhancing the validity and reliability of the results. The intervention process was over on March 14, 2025. Procedural phases are described in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Timetable of the intervention and data collection procedures (2024-2025, Spring)

Weeks	Data Collection
Three Weeks/Two days each week (Two-hour instructional coaching sessions each day)	Introduction, Orientation and Pre-data Collection Stage - Pre-Tests (SOL-Q & TSES)
Week 1 (Jan, 20-24)	Intervention
Week 2 (Jan, 27-31)	Intervention
Week 3 (Feb, 3-7)	Intervention
Week 4 (Feb, 10-13)	Intervention
Week 5 (Feb, 17-21)	Intervention
Week 6 (Feb, 24-28)	Intervention
Week 7 (Mar, 3-7)	Intervention
Week 8 (Mar, 10-14)	Intervention
One Week	Post-Tests (SOL-Q & TSES)

Intervention

The Scenario-based SRL Teacher Training intervention began after the three-week orientation phase was over. **Weeks 1-2** focused on building foundational knowledge by the trainer and skills related to SRL. Interactive workshops were conducted to explore core SRL strategies like goal setting, task monitoring, and reflective practices. These workshops were designed to be relevant to real-world teaching challenges, helping trainees understand how SRL can be applied in their classrooms. Additionally, the trainees received instructional coaching in SRL pedagogy. This coaching involved explicit instruction on SRL concepts and opportunities to apply these concepts in practical teaching scenarios. The trainees were required to discuss their understanding of SRL and set personalized learning goals. The Scenario-based SRL training differs from traditional situation-based teaching in both structure and purpose. Situation-based approaches immerse trainees in realistic language-use situations to practice communicative functions, whereas scenario-based SRL training presents a scripted, multi-phase scenario that mirrors the forethought-performance-reflection cycle of self-regulated learning; trainees must forecast goals, monitor actions, and reflect on outcomes within the scenario. Thus the scenario is not only a context for language use, but a pedagogical device designed to elicit and rehearse SRL processes explicitly.

During **weeks 3-5,** participants engaged with scenario-based problem-solving activities to apply their knowledge of SRL to practical teaching situations. They were tasked with designing teaching scenarios (Appendix A) to practice SRL strategies such as goal setting, planning, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and help-seeking. These tasks aimed to stimulate their creativity, problem-solving skills, and ability to apply SRL strategies in practical contexts. To ensure the integration of SRL strategies, participants were encouraged to break down complex tasks, set clear learning goals, and establish regular self-monitoring checkpoints. The author provided guidance and feedback during weekly group sessions, helping trainees refine their solutions and incorporate SRL strategies. Peer and self-assessment were also integral components of this phase. Participants were assigned to evaluate each other's work, focusing on the application of SRL strategies. They also engaged in self-reflection to assess their own learning progress and identify areas for improvement.

In the final phase of the intervention **(weeks 6-8),** participants engaged in collaborative implementation and reflection. To maximize the quality of the learning experience, each trainee presented their refined scenario in a seminar-style session. These presentations included scenarios with unique contexts that required trainees to apply SRL strategies and meet the diverse needs of learners lacking SRL skills. Moreover, they were required to share and assess each other's teaching scenarios, fostering a collaborative learning environment. This peer review process encouraged them to refine their solutions, demonstrating the power of co-regulation. The trainer encouraged the trainees to reflect on their performances and discuss how their understanding of SRL had evolved, as well as how they planned to apply these principles in their future teaching practices.

In the final phase, the SOL-Q and the TSES were administered to both groups as post-tests again to compare the differences in the total mean scores of each group regarding their SRL levels and self-efficacy beliefs. Figure 2 presents the procedures followed along the intervention process.

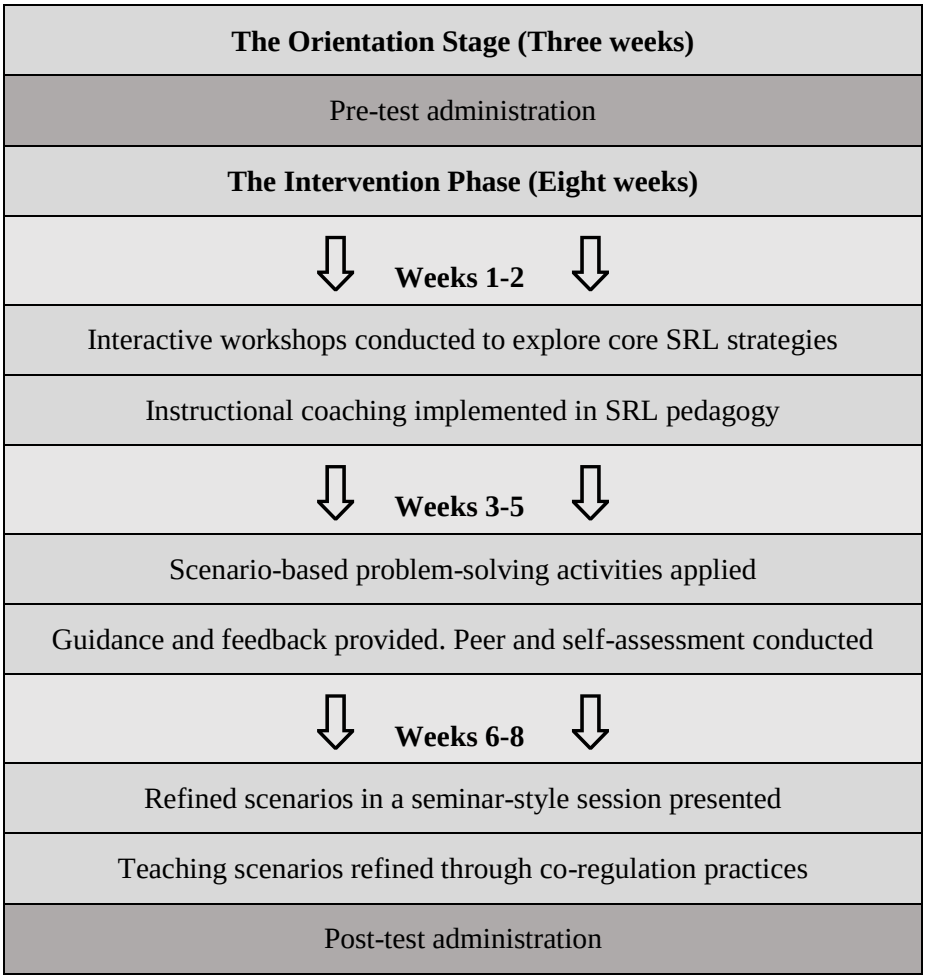

Figure 2. Procedures followed along the intervention

The process in the experimental and control groups

The experimental group participated in the eight-week training program. The trainees focused on SRL strategies and tried to apply them in practical teaching scenarios during their *Teaching Practice* course, completing tasks like lesson planning, classroom observations, and teaching practice under faculty supervision at cooperating K-12 schools.

The control group followed the standard curriculum, participating in classroom observations and teaching practice without the SRL-focused intervention. They completed the same *Teaching Practice* tasks but did not receive targeted SRL training or engage in problem-solving scenarios.

To ensure the validity of the experimental study, two experienced faculty members specializing in teacher education and SRL methodologies were consulted. These experts examined the study design, instructional content, and intervention framework to verify alignment with established educational practices and research protocols. Their insights helped refine both the intervention and assessment instruments. The procedures followed by both groups are depicted in Figure 3.

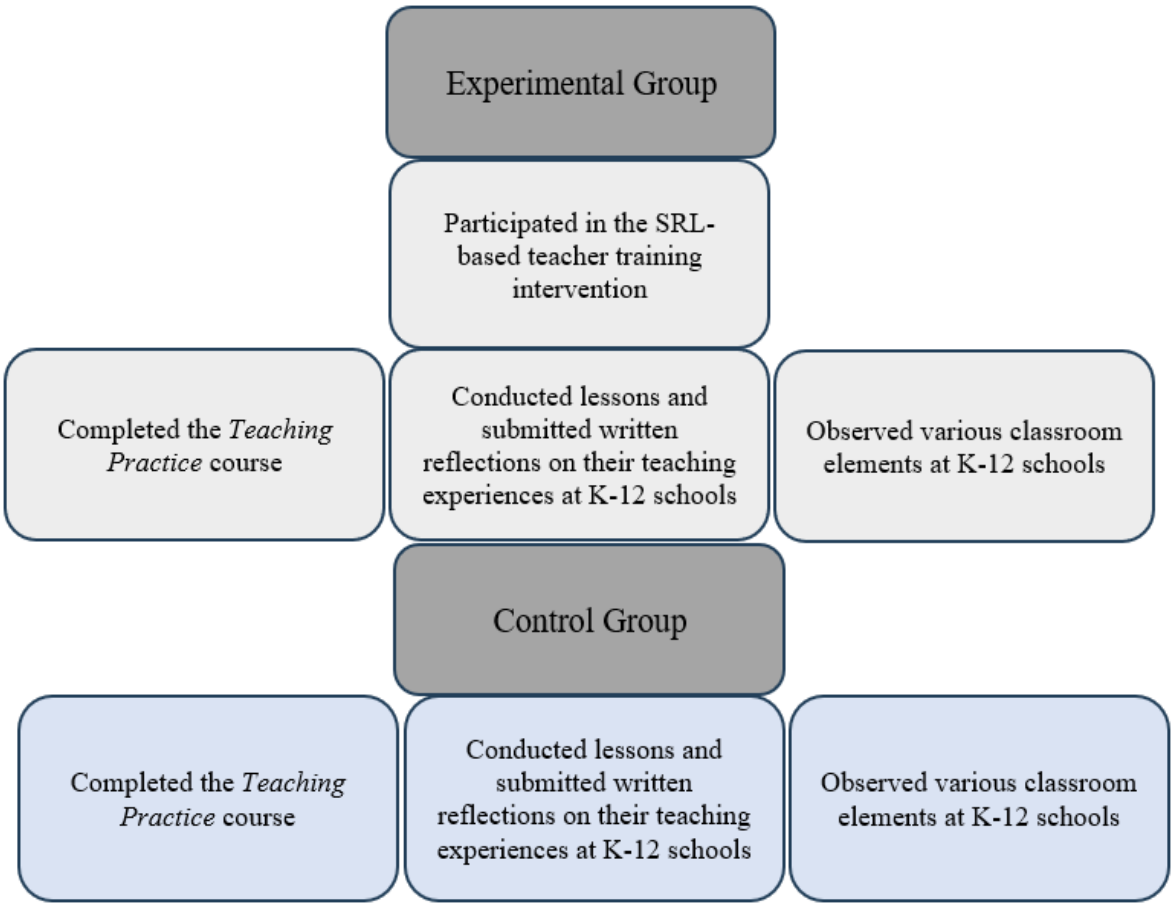

Figure 3. Procedures in the experimental and control groups

The scenario-based SRL teacher training model

This model emphasizes Instructional Coaching and Mentoring for personalized guidance, Scenario-Based Problem Solving for practical application, and Co-Regulation Practices for collaborative learning. Through a structured yet flexible approach, participants actively develop, implement, and refine SRL strategies, enhancing both their SRL skills and their capacity to promote these skills in their future students. The instructional coaching intervention in this model was adapted from a professional development workshop framework (Allshouse, 2016), a self-regulated learning guide (Cleary, 2018), and a self-regulated learning module (Willems et al., 2015). All instructional resources were designed to align with Zimmerman's (2008) SRL model and methodological development, providing trainees with practical tools and strategies to implement SRL in their classrooms.

Additionally, the participants were given information about diverse teacher training formats; **instructional coaching and mentoring, scenario-based problem solving,** and **co-regulation practices**. How these practices will support their professional growth was explained to them. To provide a theoretical foundation, Zimmerman's (2000) three-phase model of SRL (forethought, performance, and reflection) was explained. In the **forethought phase,** trainees were guided to set specific learning goals, develop a plan of action, and motivate themselves to engage in the learning process. During the **performance phase,** they were encouraged to employ various SRL strategies, such as time management, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation, to execute their learning plans effectively. As for the **reflection phase,** the trainees were prompted to reflect on their learning experiences, assess their performance, and identify areas for improvement. This phase emphasized the importance of self-evaluation and metacognition in the learning process. An outline of **instructional coaching and mentoring** adapted from Allshouse (2016) and Schunk and Mullen (2013) (see Appendix B), **scenario-based problem solving** adapted from Seker (2016) (see Appendix C), and **co-regulation practices** adapted from Saariaho et al. (2016) (see Appendix D) was provided to participants.

Through the integration of coaching and mentoring practices, trainees received tailored guidance and ongoing support. These personalized interactions not only strengthened their confidence but also enhanced their competence as pre-service teachers. Applying these strategies during their K-12 teaching experiences enabled trainees to model SRL techniques and bolster their self-efficacy in teaching. Meanwhile, scenario-based problem-solving activities offered trainees the opportunity to address realistic challenges, thus equipping them for the complexities of classroom teaching. Lastly, the co-regulation practices enabled collaboration, mutual accountability, and shared reflection among the trainees to improve their readiness for real-world teaching challenges. The scenario-based teacher training model used to promote SRL is described in Figure 4 below. Figure 4 is an author-created composite that adapts elements from Allshouse (2016), Cleary (2018), Willems et al. (2015), and Zimmerman's (2000, 2008) three-phase SRL model.

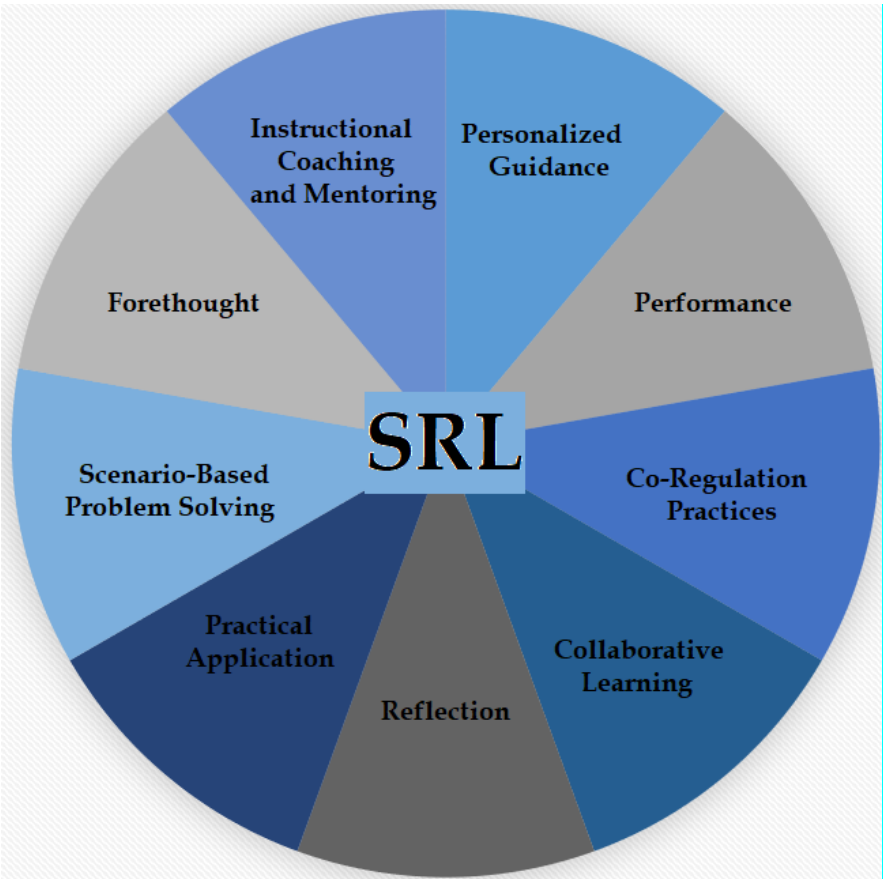

Figure 4. The pedagogical model used for the scenario-based SRL training

Data analysis

The quantitative data analyses were conducted using SPSS version 22. Pre- and post-test results from the experimental (n = 23) and control (n = 25) groups, based on the SOL-Q and TSES, were examined to assess normality and determine the suitability of the data for parametric testing. As shown in Table 4, the skewness and kurtosis values ranged between -1.12 and 2.26. Since all values fell within the acceptable range of ±2 (Garson, 2012) and were within the broader threshold of ±2.58 (Field, 2009), the data were considered to follow a normal distribution. Although the kurtosis value (2.26) for the post-test control group is near the upper limit of the acceptable range, parametric tests were deemed appropriate given the overall normality of the data and the robustness of t-tests for moderately non-normal distributions.

Table 4. Skewness and kurtosis values for pre- and post-test scores of both groups

Scales	Tests	Groups	Skewness	Kurtosis
SOL-Q	Pre-Tests	Experimental	-1.05	1.88
	Post-Tests	Control	-1.02	1.65
TSES	Pre-Tests	Experimental	.27	1.22
	Post-Tests	Control	-1.12	2.26

As the data from both groups followed a normal distribution, the parametric Independent Samples T-test was conducted to compare differences in the SRL and teaching self-efficacy levels between the experimental and control groups. Table 5 provides a summary of the research approach and procedures.

Table 5. Overview of research approach and procedures

Research Questions	Data Collection Tools & Study Group	Data Analysis
1-Does the intervention of scenario-based SRL teacher training model affect pre-service English language teachers' self-regulated learning?	Pre- & Post-Tests of SOL-Q & TSES Experimental + Control Group	Inferential Statistics (means and standard deviations)
2-Does the intervention of scenario-based SRL teacher training model affect pre-service English language teachers' self-efficacy for teaching?	Pre- & Post-Tests of SOL-Q & TSES Experimental + Control Group	Inferential Statistics (means and standard deviations)

FINDINGS

1st Research question: Does the intervention of scenario-based SRL teacher training model affect pre-service English language teachers' self-regulated learning?

To determine if the groups differed significantly prior to and after the intervention, pre- and post-test scores were compared. Test results in Table 6 show that although the experimental group initially demonstrated slightly higher scores, no statistically significant difference was observed between the groups (t = 1.37; p = .174). This lack of significant difference indicates baseline equivalence and suggests that any changes observed in the post-test can be attributed to the intervention rather than pre-existing differences between the groups.

Table 6. Comparison between pre- and post-test results of both groups in terms of SOL-Q

Test	Group	N	M	SD	t	p
Pre-Test	Experimental	23	**4.83**	.63	1.37	.174
	Control	25	**4.65**	.54		
Post-Test	Experimental	23	**5.42**	.60	2.91	**.007**
	Control	25	**4.79**	.55		

Independent Samples T-test

The post-test results in Table 6 indicate a statistically significant difference in favor of the experimental group (t = 2.91; p = .007), suggesting the positive effect of the intervention. Post-test analyses also indicated a significant effect of the intervention on SRL levels, with a large between-

group effect size (Cohen's d = 1.09). The experimental group demonstrated significant improvements in SRL from pre- to post-test, reflecting a large within-group effect size (d = 1.15), while the control group showed limited improvement (d = 0.22). These findings highlight the substantial impact of the intervention on enhancing the SRL levels of the experimental group compared to the control group.

Additionally, a post-hoc power analysis was conducted to assess the likelihood that the study detected a meaningful effect of the training. Using the calculated effect size (Cohen's d = 1.09), an alpha level of .007, and group sizes of 23 (experimental) and 25 (control), the analysis yielded a power of approximately 0.90 (90%), even though larger-scale replication may further substantiate these findings.

Overall, regarding the first research question: "Does the intervention of scenario-based SRL teacher training model affect pre-service English language teachers' self-regulated learning?" the results suggest that the training has a significantly positive and practically meaningful effect on students' SRL.

To deepen the understanding of the training's impact on participants' SRL, descriptive statistics were also applied to each subscale of the SOL-Q. Table 7 presents the results of the Independent Samples T-test comparing pre- and post-test performance across all SOL-Q subscales for both groups.

Table 7. Pre- and post-test score comparisons on each sol-q subscale across groups

Pre/Post Tests	Group	N	M	SD	p
Pre-MABL	Experimental	23	4.67	.91	.721
	Control	25	4.60	.94	
Pre-MADL	Experimental	23	4.96	.85	.543
	Control	25	4.87	.72	
Pre-MAAL	Experimental	23	5.10	.99	.796
	Control	25	5.04	.77	
Pre-TM	Experimental	23	3.09	.75	.891
	Control	25	3.01	.68	
Pre-ES	Experimental	23	5.12	1.48	.294
	Control	25	4.33	1.32	
Pre-PER	Experimental	23	5.01	1.10	.641
	Control	25	4.93	1.29	
Pre-HS	Experimental	23	4.68	1.22	.318
	Control	25	4.94	1.28	
Post-MABL	Experimental	23	5.21	.70	**.041**
	Control	25	4.71	.92	
Post-MADL	Experimental	23	5.30	.65	**.034**
	Control	25	4.85	1.01	
Post-MAAL	Experimental	23	5.78	.59	**.007**
	Control	25	5.09	.89	
Post-TM	Experimental	23	6.11	.51	**.001**
	Control	25	4.80	.74	
Post-ES	Experimental	23	5.68	1.45	.065
	Control	25	5.23	1.16	
Post-PER	Experimental	23	5.52	1.20	**.048**
	Control	25	5.02	1.38	
Post-HS	Experimental	23	4.98	1.52	.089
	Control	25	4.55	1.34	

Independent Samples T-Test

As seen in Table 7, the pre-test results revealed no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups across all subscales ($p > .05$). However, the results of the post-test analysis indicate a statistically significant improvement in self-regulated learning across key subscales for the experimental group compared to the control group. This suggests that the SRL-based teacher training intervention had a meaningful and measurable impact on enhancing the self-regulation skills of pre-service English language teachers. Because no pre-intervention differences were detected ($p > .05$), the significant post-test improvements in the experimental group can be attributed to the SRL-based training. However, future work should compare this model with other professional-development formats to determine relative efficacy in varied contexts.

Post-test results, as outlined in Table 7, demonstrate a statistically significant difference in favor of the experimental group across the following subscales: 'Time Management' ($p = .001$) – This subscale showed the most pronounced improvement, reflecting the trainees' enhanced ability to set achievable learning goals, manage tasks effectively, and track their progress. 'Meta-cognitive Activities Before and During Learning' ($p = .041$; $p = .034$) – Gains in these areas suggest the intervention successfully fostered anticipatory strategies (goal-setting and planning) and self-monitoring during tasks, essential for autonomous learning. 'Meta-cognitive Activities After Learning' ($p = .007$) – The significant improvement in this area highlights the experimental group's strengthened ability to reflect on their learning experiences and assess their performance, which aligns with Zimmerman's (2008) three-phase SRL model. 'Persistence' ($p = .048$) – The observed improvements in persistence reflect the development of resilience and sustained effort, both critical to overcoming learning challenges.

Although improvements were noted in 'Help-Seeking' ($p = .089$) and 'Environmental Structuring' ($p = .065$), these subscales did not reach statistical significance. Although the intervention effectively enhanced overall SRL, these findings suggest that future iterations could benefit from a greater focus on strategies that enhance peer collaboration and optimize the learning environment.

2nd Research question: Does the intervention of scenario-based SRL teacher training model affect pre-service English language teachers' self-efficacy for teaching?

Independent samples t-tests were employed to compare pre- and post-test scores between the groups. As indicated in Table 8, despite a slightly higher initial self-efficacy score in the experimental group, no statistically significant difference was found between the groups ($t = 1.21$; $p = .231$).

Table 8. ***Comparison between pre- and post-test results of both groups in terms of TSES***

Test	Group	N	M	SD	t	p
Pre-Test	Experimental	23	**6.35**	.81	1.21	.231
	Control	25	**6.18**	.75		
Post-Test	Experimental	23	**7.41**	.67	3.02	**.005**
	Control	25	**6.85**	.74		

Independent Samples T-test

Post-test results revealed a statistically significant difference in favor of the experimental group ($t = 3.02$; $p = .005$), suggesting that the intervention positively impacted the self-efficacy of the trainees. Further analysis of post-test scores revealed a significant effect of the intervention on self-efficacy levels, with a large between-group effect size (Cohen's d = 0.88). The experimental group demonstrated meaningful improvements in self-efficacy from pre- to post-test, reflecting a within-group effect size ($d = 1.21$), whereas the control group showed modest improvements ($d = 0.34$).

While the direction was anticipated, the *magnitude* of the gain (within-group d = 1.21; between-group d = 0.88) provides practical evidence of the training's effectiveness and is necessary for comparison with future studies. Post-hoc power analysis, conducted using the observed effect size (Cohen's d = 0.88), yielded a power of 0.87 (87%), indicating a high probability of detecting the intervention's impact with an alpha level of .005 and group sizes of 23 and 25.

Regarding the second research question, the findings suggest that the teacher training model significantly enhances the self-efficacy of pre-service English language teachers. However, as with the first research question, the modest sample size warrants cautious interpretation.

Pre- and post-test results from the TSES were also analyzed across its three key dimensions: Instructional Strategies, Classroom Management, and Student Engagement. Descriptive statistics were calculated to compare pre-test scores across all dimensions.

Table 9. Pre- and post-test score comparisons on each TSES dimension across groups

Pre/Post Tests	Group	N	M	SD	p
Pre-IS	Experimental	23	6.42	.78	.394
	Control	25	6.28	.83	
Pre-CM	Experimental	23	6.12	.81	.574
	Control	25	6.04	.85	
Pre-SE	Experimental	23	6.08	.86	.612
	Control	25	5.96	.88	
Post-IS	Experimental	23	7.55	.66	**.009**
	Control	25	6.79	.74	
Post-CM	Experimental	23	7.02	.71	**.021**
	Control	25	6.43	.79	
Post-SE	Experimental	23	7.14	.69	**.013**
	Control	25	6.50	.82	

Independent Samples T-Test

As seen in Table 9, the pre-test results reveal no statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups across all TSES subscales ($p > .05$). This confirms baseline equivalence, ensuring that any post-test differences can be attributed to the teacher training intervention rather than pre-existing disparities.

However, the post-test results indicate a statistically significant improvement in all three dimensions of the TSES for the experimental group compared to the control group: The most significant improvements were observed in 'Instructional Strategies' ($p = .009$), suggesting the intervention effectively empowered participants to design and implement engaging and effective teaching techniques. Notably, improvements were also observed in 'Classroom Management' ($p = .021$), indicating that participants gained valuable skills in maintaining a conducive learning environment and fostering a positive classroom climate. Finally, a significant improvement was observed in 'Student Engagement' ($p = .013$), highlighting the intervention's success in equipping participants with strategies to motivate and engage their students.

Overall, these findings suggest that integrating SRL strategies into teacher training significantly enhances pre-service teachers' confidence in instructional delivery, classroom management, and engaging students. By reinforcing reflective practices and goal-setting, the

intervention not only fosters SRL in teachers but also enhances their ability to model and cultivate SRL among students.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study underscore the transformative potential of scenario-based SRL teacher training interventions in enhancing pre-service English language teachers' SRL and self-efficacy for teaching. The statistically significant improvements observed across multiple dimensions of SRL, particularly in time management, meta-cognitive activities, and persistence, reflect the efficacy of the structured, multi-faceted approach employed in the intervention. These findings align with prior research by Kramarski and Michalsky (2015) and Butler et al. (2004), who also reported that structured, reflective SRL interventions improved pre-service teachers' regulatory strategies and instructional practices. Similarly, Yaşar (2025) emphasized that explicitly supporting SRL phases led to stronger gains in planning and reflection, consistent with the present study. In contrast, Moos and Miller (2015) observed that SRL growth was limited in the absence of structured prompts, highlighting the value of the scenario-based tasks and scaffolding used here.

Notably, the substantial gains in instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement also align with previous findings. Studies such as Chatzistamatiou et al. (2014) and Bachtiar (2024) reported that teacher training that integrates SRL components boosts efficacy beliefs in instructional competence. In particular, Perry et al. (2008) demonstrated that self-efficacy improvements are often mediated by explicit SRL instruction and peer-supported reflection, which were integral elements of the present intervention. By contrast, studies lacking such structured peer interaction (e.g., Alvi & Gillies, 2024) reported more modest changes in teacher confidence, suggesting that the collaborative elements of in the design of the present study may have enhanced the impact.

A key strength of this study lies in its application of Zimmerman's (2008) SRL model, integrating forethought, performance, and reflection phases into teacher training. This structured yet adaptable framework not only facilitated significant within-group growth but also demonstrated large between-group effect sizes, reinforcing the intervention's practical significance. By extending the application of Zimmerman's model to the unique context of pre-service English language teachers, this study introduces a nuanced adaptation that highlights the importance of SRL in language education. While Zimmerman's model has been widely validated, few studies have applied it directly in ELT-focused pre-service training; thus, the findings of this study offer a subject-specific contribution that complements more general SRL research.

The alignment of improved SRL skills with enhanced self-efficacy for teaching underscores the reciprocal relationship between these constructs. This relationship has also been identified in previous research (e.g., Ganda & Boruchovitch, 2018; Kramarski & Kohen, 2017), which noted that as teachers become more self-regulated in their own learning, their confidence in supporting student learning increases. The results support this bidirectional link and show that integrated SRL training can yield benefits in both cognitive and affective teaching competencies.

Additionally, this study invites critical reflection on the potential for SRL models to evolve. While the findings are consistent with much of the existing literature, some prior studies (e.g., Vosniadou et al., 2021; Mejeh et al., 2024) have reported uneven gains across SRL subskills. For example, improvements in help-seeking and environmental structuring were less pronounced in the present study as well, suggesting these areas may require more targeted support in future training designs. These differences reinforce the importance of tailoring SRL interventions to the specific challenges pre-service teachers face.

Importantly, the findings offer valuable insights into global teacher training practices by demonstrating how SRL-based interventions can be adapted to diverse cultural and linguistic contexts. As educational systems strive to enhance teacher quality and student outcomes, the scalability and

adaptability of this intervention make it a viable model for integration into international teacher training standards and policy frameworks.

Despite these promising outcomes, the modest sample size necessitates cautious interpretation of the results. It should be acknowledged that the intervention was not compared with other professional development formats, and thus it cannot be claimed it is the most effective approach. Therefore, future research that directly compares SRL-based models with other established techniques is highly encouraged. Replicating this study across multiple institutions and within varied cultural and linguistic settings will provide greater generalizability and enhance the credibility of the findings.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing recognition of SRL as a foundational element of teacher training and professional development. By demonstrating the tangible benefits of SRL-based interventions, the findings advocate for the widespread adoption of such models in pre-service education, equipping future teachers with the skills and confidence necessary to drive student success and lifelong learning. Furthermore, this research highlights the potential for SRL-based interventions to inform policy decisions and reshape teacher training curricula, ensuring that SRL is embedded as a core component of teacher development globally.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effects of a scenario-based SRL teacher training model on the SRL strategies and self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service English language teachers. Findings clearly demonstrate that the intervention significantly enhanced participants' use of SRL strategies and their confidence in core teaching competencies, including instructional planning, classroom management, and student engagement. While improvements in these areas may be anticipated, the study contributes novel insights by quantifying the impact through large effect sizes and applying an SRL intervention tailored to the specific challenges of English language teacher education. The structured use of scenario-based problem solving—aligned with Zimmerman's SRL model—offered a practical, replicable framework that promoted deep reflection, co-regulation, and sustained engagement. Beyond affirming known benefits of SRL, this research offers an applied model with high potential for integration into national and international teacher education curricula. It addresses a critical gap in how SRL training is operationalized during the early stages of teacher development. Future research should explore long-term impacts and compare this scenario-based approach with other forms of professional development to further evaluate its relative effectiveness.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study's findings reveal practical pathways for enhancing teacher education by embedding self-SRL strategies directly into pre-service training programs. Teacher educators can leverage scenario-based exercises, peer collaboration, and reflective practices to cultivate SRL skills, fostering more adaptive educators. The integration of SRL not only enhances instructional quality but also empowers teachers to model and transfer these strategies to their students, promoting lifelong learning habits. Policymakers and curriculum designers are encouraged to adopt SRL-focused frameworks, recognizing their capacity to drive sustainable improvements in teaching effectiveness and student achievement. By aligning teacher development with evidence-based SRL methodologies, educational institutions can address persistent gaps in classroom engagement, instructional adaptability, and teacher confidence. This pedagogical shift ensures future educators are better equipped to meet diverse learning needs and thrive in complex, evolving educational environments.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While this study offers preliminary evidence of the potential effectiveness of SRL-based teacher training interventions, several limitations should be taken into account when interpreting the findings. First, the relatively modest sample size and single-institution context limit the

generalizability of the results. Future studies should include larger and more diverse participant groups from multiple institutions and cultural settings to enhance external validity. Second, the short duration of the intervention restricts conclusions about the sustainability of observed improvements. Longitudinal research would provide more robust insights into whether gains in SRL and self-efficacy persist over time and translate into improved instructional practices. Additionally, some components of SRL—particularly environmental structuring and help-seeking—showed less pronounced development, suggesting a need for more targeted support or extended practice in these areas. Moreover, while the scenario-based model appeared beneficial, it was not directly compared to alternative teacher training formats. Therefore, future studies should explore comparative designs to determine the relative effectiveness of scenario-based SRL training versus other professional development approaches. Investigating the integration of technology-enhanced SRL tools may also help scale and diversify future implementations. These recommendations are offered with an understanding of the study's scope and constraints. Addressing these areas in future research can help refine SRL-based teacher training and inform the development of more adaptive, context-responsive models that support pre-service teachers' professional growth.

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Appendix A

Scenario-based Problem-solving Activities to Apply SRL Strategies (Random selection)

Trainees	Context (eg. population, setting, age groups etc)	Problem	Goals	Activities	*Mostly used SRL Strategies
Trainee 1	A high school student, Ceren, struggles with test anxiety and her teacher tries to find a solution to solve this problem by using SRL strategies.	She has some worries that affect her performance on tests. It is because she uses wrong strategies while studying which leads her to fail in exams.	Her teacher's goal is to help her to gain self-awareness and create her own techniques using SRL strategies to be successful.	Her teacher talked with Ceren and her parents to get some ideas about her study habits and her behaviors at home. After that, her teacher gave her some advice to solve these problems.	-Self evaluation -Goal setting and planning -Keeping track of records -Seeking for help and Time management
Trainee 7	The story is about five students at Sky haven academy. They were tasked with an exciting but challenging project. They needed to find suitable renewable sources to power their academy. At first, they did not exactly act like a team but then by using their holographic mentor EVA'S tools they achieved the find the most suitable one for their academy.	1)They don't have a strict plan. So they act freely. 2)They were studying in a crowded and noisy place. 3)After researching their own topics, each member defended his/her own ideas. 4)They couldn't manage their time effectively and Zara hesitated to ask for help.	Their goal is to find the most sustainable energy source to power their academy.	As a team, they all helped each other's task like finding the most suitable source and testing progress.	-Goal Setting -Environmental structuring -Help seeking -Time management -Task Strategies
Trainee 10	Rumi (Mevlana)'s life	The Loss of Loved Ones	Goal is to become a self-regulated person, without needing an external support.	His whole life	Simply all of the theories we mentioned in our classes
Trainee 12	In the year 2500, humans live in a world where an infinite library exists. This library holds all possible knowledge, ideas, and records of human history.	People are unable to decide which information is relevant to their needs, leading to procrastination, distractions, and an inability to take meaningful action.	The goal is learning the real learning process with infinite resources.	They are all stuck. They escape by self regulate themselves.	-Self Reflection -Time Management -Goal Setting & -Task Strategies
Trainee 17	A group of young adults (ages 20-40) traveling through a desert setting, seeking survival and hope	Scarcity of resources, betrayal within the group, and a dangerous ambush by a gang	To survive the desert journey, find the Last Oasis, and resolve internal and external conflicts	Traveling through harsh conditions, dealing with betrayal, negotiating with enemies, seeking allies	Goal setting, self-awareness, self-talk, seeking help, emotional regulation
Trainee 22	**A dystopian arena with intellectual challenges** testing creativity, knowledge, and emotional resilience. Contestants are **17-18 years** old. Population: Four contestants: **Aster** (District 1, elite, privileged) **Ryn** (District 12, self-taught problem-solver) **Kael** (District 7, resourceful and collaborative) **Mira** (District 5, analytical but emotionally volatile)	**The Learning Games** challenge contestants to overcome high-pressure, complex tasks requiring creativity, resilience, and learning strategies. Each contestant brings unique strengths but faces their own weaknesses: privilege, lack of resources, emotional control, and over-analysis.	**Primary Goal** is to win the Games and become the **Knowledge Keeper**.	The Library of Illusions (Processing Chaos) The Bridge of Knowledge (Problem-Solving Under Pressure) The Arena of Distractions (Focus Under Stress) The Maze of Choices (Decision-Making and Adaptation)	Metacognitive Strategies, Mnemonics and Visualization, Trial and Error, Emotional Regulation, Collaborative Learning, Goal Setting and Planning

Appendix B

The Outline for Instructional Coaching and Mentoring

Activity	Description	Objective
1. Initial Goal-Setting Conferences	At the start of the intervention, the trainer conducts one-on-one meetings with participants.	Help participants articulate their professional goals and identify areas where they want to improve their understanding or application of SRL strategies.
2. Ongoing Observation and Feedback	The trainer observes participants' presentations or teaching practice (real or simulated) and provides narrative feedback aligned with SRL strategies.	Offer specific, actionable advice to improve participants' implementation of SRL in teaching contexts.
3. Self-Monitoring and Reflection Discussions	The trainer mentors participants in analysing their learning process during bi-weekly check-ins.	Encourage participants to recognize their strengths, challenges, and how they adapt their strategies.
4. Role-Modelling SRL Strategies	The trainer models effective SRL strategies during workshops or meetings to demonstrate practical applications.	Show participants how SRL can be implemented in real-world teaching scenarios.
5. Tailored Problem-Solving Guidance	The trainer works with participants individually to tackle specific challenges in designing or implementing SRL strategies.	Provide personalized support for unique instructional contexts or difficulties.
6. Reflection after Collaborative Activities	After group activities or presentations, the trainer meets individually with participants to discuss their contributions, challenges, and takeaways.	Help participants internalize feedback and refine their SRL strategies.

Adapted from Allshouse (2016) and Schunk and Mullen (2013)

Appendix C

The Outline for Scenario-based Problem Solving

Activity	Scenario/Objective	Example
1. Designing Lessons for Unmotivated Learners	S: Participants are tasked with creating a lesson plan for a group of students who exhibit low motivation to complete tasks. O: Apply SRL strategies such as goal-setting, self-monitoring, and reflective practices to enhance student engagement.	Participants develop a plan incorporating: Goal Setting: Asking students to set daily learning goals and break them into smaller tasks. Self-Monitoring: Including progress tracking charts for students to check off completed steps. Reflection: Using guided reflection questions like, "What helped me stay on task today?"
2. Managing Disruptive Classroom Behaviour	S: Participants are presented with a classroom scenario where a few students frequently interrupt during lessons, causing a lack of focus for others. O: Identify and implement SRL-based strategies to manage behaviour and create a conducive learning environment.	Participants create strategies such as: Setting clear classroom behaviour goals collaboratively with students. Using self-monitoring tools, like behaviour charts, to track adherence to rules. Facilitating group reflections on how behaviour impacts learning and ways to improve.
3. Addressing Language Barriers in ELT	S: A group of students in an EFL class struggles with comprehension due to language barriers. Participants are asked to create an intervention to support their learning. O: Develop SRL-aligned strategies that help students manage their learning process.	Participants design: Bilingual vocabulary journals for self-monitoring progress in word acquisition. Structured peer support sessions where students discuss their learning challenges and strategies.
4. Differentiating Instruction for Mixed-Ability Groups	S: Participants must develop a lesson plan for a mixed-ability classroom where students have varying levels of English proficiency. O: Encourage participants to use SRL to create flexible and adaptive teaching strategies.	The solution includes: Grouping students by ability and setting group-specific goals. Providing scaffolding tools like step-by-step guides for lower-proficiency students and open-ended tasks for advanced learners.
5. Overcoming Assessment Anxiety	S: Participants are tasked with helping students who feel overwhelmed by formal assessments like exams or quizzes. O: Design SRL-based strategies to reduce anxiety and improve performance.	Participants propose: Pre-assessment goal-setting activities (e.g., setting a goal to review one topic per day leading up to the test). Stress management strategies like mindfulness exercises or positive self-talk incorporated into the preparation process.

Adapted from Seker (2016)

Appendix D

The Outline for Co-regulation Practices

Description	Activity/Objective	Example
1. Group Goal-Setting and Planning	A: Participants work in small groups to design a lesson plan or solve a teaching-related problem, such as creating differentiated activities for students with varied English proficiency. O: Encourage co-regulated goal-setting, planning, and task delegation.	The group sets shared goals (e.g., "Complete the lesson plan draft by Wednesday"). They use collaborative tools like checklists to allocate specific tasks (e.g., one person focuses on materials, another on assessments). Each group member identifies personal sub-goals and monitors their contributions to the shared objective.
2. Real-Time Collaborative Problem Solving	A: Groups are given a classroom scenario (e.g., addressing low participation in a hybrid learning environment) and must develop a collaborative solution during a workshop. O: Use co-regulation to foster collective monitoring, strategizing, and reflecting.	Group members brainstorm solutions together, discussing their thought processes aloud to co-regulate their planning. As the discussion progresses, participants periodically evaluate their ideas' feasibility using prompts like: "Does this solution align with the students' needs?"
3. Peer Feedback Sessions	A: Groups present their projects or teaching plans to their peers and receive structured feedback. O: Foster co-regulation by using peer evaluation to refine work collaboratively.	During feedback sessions, participants identify strengths and areas for improvement in others' work using a rubric focused on SRL elements like goal-setting, adaptability, and self-monitoring.
4. Structured Peer Teaching Activities	A: Groups take turns teaching their peers about specific SRL concepts (e.g., goal-setting, self-monitoring) while others act as learners. O: Foster co-regulation through collaborative teaching and learning.	A group teaches "goal-setting" by creating a mini-lesson, including activities where peers set their own goals. The teaching group reflects on how effectively they worked together to design and deliver the session.

Adapted from Saariaho et al. (2016)

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Research Article

Investigating EFL Teachers' Attitudes toward Alternative Assessment

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Abstract: Over the last decades, the widespread view that English is now a lingua franca has increased the prominence of English language teaching methodology and has led to the continuous revision and amendment of pedagogical issues such as language teaching and learning along with testing and assessment. To that end, there has been a considerable emphasis on the alignment of assessment practices with language teaching and learning practices. Accordingly, language assessment, more specifically, alternative assessment (AA) has been one of the critical issues that have received much attention in the field of language teaching. This current study, which was conducted quantitatively and qualitatively, has aimed to explore the attitudes of teachers of English as a foreign language towards alternative assessment methods. The participants of the study, 137 teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) who work in the state primary, secondary and high schools in the province of Samsun in Türkiye, responded to the 5-Likert scale with 15 items developed by İzci et al. (2014) in the survey part of the study. For the qualitative phase of the study, 16 teachers voluntarily agreed to be interviewed to answer four open-ended questions. The findings of the study revealed that the EFL teachers held a positive view on alternative assessment methods. Other findings also showed that their attitudes varied significantly in favour of the teachers who received inservice training, and that the participants also held the view that teachers often face the challenges which impede the use of alternative assessment tools and/or that there are factors which prevent them from implementing these methods efficiently.

Keywords: *assessment, language assessment, alternative assessment, teachers' attitudes, EFL context.*

INTRODUCTION

Over the years there have been substantial changes in language pedagogy. In order to provide novelty and diversity for language education and to enhance the support for the learners, new trends continue to emerge along with educational technologies. Naturally, these changes and pedagogical demands in language teaching have propelled teachers, educationalists and policy makers into doing some improvements in evaluating language students' skills and performance. Hamayan (1995) agrees that change in assessment practices is a neccessity in accordance with the shift in the underlying beliefs and practices in teaching and learning languages.

It is obvious that the primary role of testing and assessment on the part of the teachers is to obtain informative data about the students' progress, by means of which they can detect learning problems, and can evaluate their instructional materials, which will also lead to program evaluation. However, as Brindley (2001a) also indicates, assessment also has another major function such as motivating the students especially when they are effectively and appropriately implemented. Cheng and Fox (2017), discussing the motivational aspect of assessment, assert that one of the efficient ways to motivate students is to involve them in the assessment process. If students become aware of their

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own progress, this will sustain their motivation. Thus, it should be noted that the main purpose of assessing learners is to collect evaluative information about students' accomplisment of the course objectives on the one hand, and also in some way to strengthen students' motivation and increase learner autonomy on the other hand, which undeniably leads to their academic success. While the first refers to 'assessment of learning', the latter could be associated with 'assessment for learning', the case, which Green (2018) has likened to the work of a coach, who aims to develop the sporter's potential. Another term referring to an ongoing process which enables the students to be autonomous is 'sustainable assessment' or 'assessment as learning' as opposed to summative and formative assessment (Everhard, 2015). In a nutshell, as also argued by Hamp-Lyons (2016), assessment practices differ in accordance with the purpose for which evaluative information is required. It can also be asserted that assessment/testing, an indispensable part of teaching and learning contexts, has a critical role in making sound choices that will promote teaching and learning procedures.

In the Turkish context of language teaching, the English curriculum was reorganized according to the principles of the constructivist approach by Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in 2004. This has led to some changes in the policies of both teaching and evaluation procedures, especially to a move towards the learner-centered language classrooms. Accordingly, the issues such as individual differences, intelligence types, learning styles, learner autonomy and types of assessment have gained more importance to enhance the quality of language education. As a result, some differences in the teaching process and assessment practices have occured in a way that language teaching pedagogy and assessment practices should concord with each other. The reformation in the English curriculum by MoNE (2018) also required that testing and assessment principles that should be adopted are related to the use of multiple sources of evaluation techniques in line with process-oriented approach to language assessment. Another important regulation in the language assessment in schools which began to be put into practice in the 2023-2024 academic year has demanded that the students' listening and speaking skills should also be assessed with appropriate assessment tools.

This study has focused on exploring the EFL teachers' attitudes and beliefs towards the practices of AA tools. Although many teachers believe that it is important to implement AA in the language classroom, traditional assessment (TA) is still in great demand in language classrooms. The common perception is that AA is not implemented as widely as TA is. One of the purposes of the present study is to find out whether or not this is the case within the sample of the study. As it is expected that there should be a satisfactory match between curriculum objectives and assessment practices, it has become important to search for the teachers' opinions on AA as there are not many studies in the Turkish contex. This study is expected to develop an understanding about AA and raise the teachers' awareness about the importance of AA practices through the obtained findings. For this purpose, the present study has sought to find answers to the following research questions :

RQ 1. Which AA methods do the English teachers use?
RQ 2. What attitudes do the EFL teachers hold towards AA?
RQ 3. Do the teachers' opinions on AA vary according to the variables such as seniority, school type and participation in in-service training?

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Testing and Assessment

In the literature of testing and assessment in language teaching, it is possible to encounter diverse terms such as testing, evaluation, measurement or assessment at the conceptual dimension. To begin with , it is essential to note that the terms 'testing' and assessment' are considered to be overlapping terms to some extent in terms of usage, at least not to be very incompatible with each other, but that the latter has been more acceptable and preferable as a borader term more recently. Cohen (1994), who prefers the term 'assessment, asserts that, when he uses the term' testing', he alludes to all the ways of collecting data about the language abilities of the learners. However, the term

'test' is mostly associated with paper-and-pencil measurement tools, which are often administered in formal learning settings. In this respect, it is obvious that they are just one type of gathering information about students' progress. Thus, it is recognized that, as a more global and inclusive term, and as "something more like a kinder, gentler sort of test" in Hamp-Lyons's terms (2016, p.14), assessment covers other ways of collecting information about learners' competency, abilities and skills. Purpura (2016) also makes a general remark about the nature of 'assessments' and indicates that "the procedures used to elicit information involve varying degrees of systematicity, ranging from very controlled tests to far less controlled assessments as in routinized teacher protocols during instruction" (p.191).

As noted previously, testing and assessment practices carried out systematically to find out whether the behavioural objectives are achieved are integral part of teaching and learning process. Because of this interdependence, methods of testing and assessment are naturally influenced by the underlying approaches of instructional strategies. To put it another way, the use of appropriate assessment techniques for the curriculum objectives has a pivotal role in the teaching process. Admittedly, language testing differs from testing other content subjects. This is due to the nature of learning a foreign language, which requires multifaceted assesing tools to be used in order to gauge language learners' progress. It is also agreed that the performance of foreign language learners cannot be adequately measured through paper-and-pencil tests, which are called TA methods. As opposed to such an exam practice, there are also some other assessment types, which mostly aims to assess learners to see what they can do with language. Such assessment types are usually called 'alternative assessment'. However, Brown and Hudson (1998:657) indicate that the term 'alternative' in the expression 'alternative assessments' implies that they must be new and different from the so-called traditional assessment types. Thus, they prefer to use the term 'alternatives in asssessment' for the assessment types such as portfolios, conferences, self- and peer assessments. Brown and Hudson's viewpoint is also favoured by Brown (2004), who questions about why the term 'alternative' should be used since the assesment covers a number of assessing techniques along with tests, and by Brown and Abeywickrama (2019), and also by Brown and Lee (2015), who do not usually prefer using the collocated words in question in this sense. Along similar lines, Green (2014) and Hughes and Hughes (2020) also seem to favour a similar expression, refering to the other forms of assessment, which are regarded as less formal types of assessment. Although this perspective suggests that there seems to be a conceptual diversity in terms of use, the term 'alternative assessment' is often used in the meaning of alternative forms of assessment (e.g. Chapelle & Brindley, 2002; Coombe et al., 2007; Hamayan, 1995; Herman et al., 1992; Huerta-Macias, 1995). On the other hand, O'Malley and Pierce (1996) indicated that 'alternative assessment' is a criterion-referenced assessment and that as it is based on activities that reflect classroom and real-life environments, they preferred to use the term 'authentic assessment'. In the literature there are also some other conceptualizations such as "learning-oriented assessment" (Turner & Purpura, 2016), and "dynamic assessment" (Poehner, 2016; Poehner & Infante, 2016), which highlight the "assessment for learning" and "assessment as learning" as opposed to assessment of learning. With a holistic perspective, it could be asserted that they all have formative nature as they are embedded in the intstruction process. Throughout the paper, different expressions that refer to AA will sometimes be used where the meaning does not specifically differ, but for practical and purposeful reasons, the acronym AA will often be preferred.

Alternative assessments in ELT

It was not until 1990s that the deficiencies or problems found in standardized testing or TA tools were challenged, after which new concepts emerged under such labels as 'alternative assessment', authentic assessment, or performance-based assesment, which are often used synonymously. At this point, it should not be ignored that there are also other concepts related to the issue of language assesment such as dynamic assessment, ongoing assessment or continuous assessment, all of which put emphasis on the integration of assessment process into the instruction with an intervening approach. As Poehner (2016) argues, teaching and assessment are two inseperable processes that should go hand in hand with each other. It must be agreed that this cannot be realized

only through TA tools. Poehner suggests that integrating assessment and instruction could be possible through task-based processes.

Before going any further with the discussion of the properties of most common AA methods such as portfolios, self- and peer assessment and observation, it would be more appropriate to center on the hallmarks of AAs from the TA tools first. Each AA practice may have its own benefits and also drawbacks or challenges from a number of factors. However, in this study the focus would be on discussing AA methods from a holistic perspective because even if they are diverse practices, they have common properties.

Brown and Abeywickrama (2019, p.17), adapting from Armstrong (1994) and Bailey (1998), give a list of the properties pertaining to TAs and AAs comparatively as shown in the following table:

Table 1: Properties of TAs and AAs

"Traditional Tests	**Alternatives in Assessment**
One-shot, standardized exams	Continuous, long-term assessment
Timed, multiple-choice format	Untimed, free response format
Decontextualized test items	Contextualized tasks
Scores suffice for feedback	Formative, interactive feedback
Focus on the 'right' answer	Open-ended, creative answers
Summative	Formative
Oriented to product	Oriented to process
Non-interactive process	Interactive performance
Fosters extrinsic motivation	Fosters intrinsic motivation"

As they also indicate, the table appears to be biased against traditional tests as if TA tools were totally defective. It should be kept in mind that both types of assessment are complementary to each other. It is more convenient that depending on the purpose of teaching and learning contexts, they should be used in adequate proportion. In addition, Brown and Hudson (1998) present a list of common characteristics of AAs, outlining the lists given by Aschbacher (1991), Herman et al. (1992) and Huerta-Macias (1995): The AA practices

> 1. "require students to perform, create, produce or do something
> 2. use real-world contexts
> 3. are nonintrusive in that they extend the day-to-day classroom activities
> 4. allow students to be assessed on what they normally do in class every day
> 5. use tasks that represent meaningful instructional activities
> 6. focus on processes as well as products
> 7. tap into higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills
> 8. provide information about both the strengths and weaknesses of students
> 9. are multiculturally sensitive when properly administered
> 10.ensure that people, not machines, do the scoring, using human judgement
> 11.encourage open disclosure of standards and rating criteria; and
> 12. call upon teachers to perfom new instructionals and assessment roles".
> (p.653-654)

At this point, it is convenient to emphasize again that AA methods aim to get more comprehensive information about students' competencies and skills that cannot be obtained properly through TA tools, most of which usually look for accuracy and also far from assessing the student continuously as they are only product-oriented. It is accepted that most exam-oriented assessments hardly give information about the achievement of higher cognitive skills such as problem-solving and about the metacognitive strategies the students use. As underscored by Herman et al. (1992), teachers are urged to implement other forms of assessment beyond tests, which will lead to students' being creative and drawing their own conclusions by striving for more complex problems. Since they mostly include tasks which are meaningful and contextualized, they are more likely to promote students' intrinsic motivation and learner autonomy in comparison to TA. And it is clear that undoubtedly, the

information obtained through AA will provide the teachers with valuable opportunity to reorganize the pedagogical practices for the teaching process. It should be kept in mind that AA practices should not be preferred instead of TA tools, but that they should be used to supplement traditional measurement tools. For a deeper understanding, it would be appropriate to have a bit closer look, even briefly, at some particular AA methods.

Portfolios: Simply, a portfolia refers to a range of samples related to one's work in any domain. In educational settings, portfolios contain instances of student work, from extracts from projects which are documented to assist the teacher to monitor the student's progress. In order to develop learner-centered classrooms, portfolio assessment (PA) is the most known and popular type among the other AA methods. As Barnardt et al. (1998) put it more comprehensively, PA "is the systematic, longitudinal collection of student work created in response to specific, known instructional objectives and evaluated in relation to the same criteria" (p.3). Portfolios generated by the students through the teacher's help and guidance make the students actively involved both in learning and assessment process. Besides, by individualizing learning they encourage student responsibility for their own learning. They also inrease teacher-student interaction and also collaboration as peers and parents can also be involved in the process. (Barnadth et al. 1998; Brown &Abeywickrama, 2019; Delett et al., 2001; Genesee & Upshur, 1996). As portfolios comprise a variety of student's work which tends to reflect student's performance on different skills, PA allow for the learner's language progress in a multi-dimensional way (Delett et al., 2001). PA, being clearly an ongoing assessment, should be conscientiously organized so that it should achieve its desired goal. As addressed in the review study by Namayan (2022), it has drawbacks as well as benefits. First of all, they are time-consuming for teachers who are not familiar enough with PA. Kim and Yazdian (2014) also points to school administrators' points of view which may inhibit teachers from implementing PA. Last but not least, it is crucial to emphasize that it is a challenging job on the part of the teachers especially when they do not have enough knowledge about its implementation. On the other hand, although Rea-Dickins (2000) suggests that they should be kept in a place where students can easily access, this poses, if not insoluble, a serious problem, considering the crowded classrooms and physical conditions in many state schools in the Turkish educational context. However, bearing its motivational aspect in mind, the teachers should push their limits to integrate PA into the teaching and learning process.

Self- and peer-assessment: Self-assessment, which could be simply defined as 'can-do' assessments, has gained more importance with the shift in language teaching pedagogy from teacher-centered to student-centered. Generally speaking, in self-assessment process, the students are asked to evaluate themselves sometimes after a particular activity or studying a few particular units in the coursebook, and sometimes about their general language competence. However, it is unquestionable that the students cannot do this on her own without any guidance. According to Andrade and Du (2007), self-assessment is a process during which students evaluate their own works and their learning in accordance with the determined criteria, identify the good and bad sides of their works, and edit them. As also indicated by Brown and Abeywickrama (2019), they should be given either a scaled rubric or a checklist about their perceived skills and abilities. It is also argued that self-assessment would be effective providing that the students are trained about self-reflection and self-assessment strategies (Chapella & Brindley, 2002; Tedick & Klee,1998). Self assessment is highly beneficial as it allows for more student involvement, enhances intrinsic motivation, and encourages the students to become more autonomous and self-directed (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019; Brown & Hudson, 1998; Chapelle & Brindley, 2002; Everhard, 2015; Richards, 2015). It emphasizes the formative assessment as the students can be aware of their weaknesses and strength so that they can direct their own learning process, which makes them more autonomous learners. When the students engage in setting criteria for self-assessment tasks, they can have opportunity to deepen their understanding of learning process, which is remarkably important. On the other hand, self-assesment tasks may have drawbacks, and they are related to subjective judgements of students as it is possible that students may not be fair and accurate in evaluating their progress.

When it comes to peer-assessment, as its name suggests, it refers to tasks in which students evaluate the work of their peers, and could be said to have similar principles with self-assessment. It is

common knowledge that one of the pivotal components of learning process in a learner-centered classroom is, undoubtedly, to establish collaboration. Clearly, peer-assessment tasks, which are often fulfilled in writing classes in which they edit each other's compositions, pave the way to cooperative learning robustly. To put it another way, peer-assessment is viewed as assuming the role of a tutor to assess their peers' performance. From this aspect, it can be assumed that most students may find peer tutoring interesting as well as challenging. It is important that students should be equipped with sufficient knowledge about the strategies of peer assessment. As Falchikov (2001) underlines, certain criteria should be determined in advance so that the students could make reasonable judgements about whether their peers have reached expected goals or not. On the other hand, it is worthwhile to note that in order to boost the effectiveness of peer-assessment a positive and supportive classroom environment is essential.

Observation: It is common that language teachers always observe their students' language performance during the classes at least informally. Even when the observation is realized in this way, its benefit is undoubtedly enormous because the teachers can use this information for significant purposes such as determining the learning problems of particular students. As Chapel and Brindley (2002) underlines, observation is one of the most common ways in order to monitor the students' progress. As Cameron (2001) notes, the observation technique is often used in language classrooms for young learners as it does not distract them. Rea-Dickins (2000) also asserts that in contrast to TA, observation-based assessment necessitates that the teacher's involvement should be substantially qualitative. In a nutshell, it should be born in mind that observation as an ongoing assessment should be planned in a systematic way and should be implemented with a checklist. O'Malley and Pierce (1998) suggest that observations should be recorded systematically in order to determine changes in the student performance.

Conferences: Conference assessments (CA), as one of the "personal response assessments" in Brown and Hudson's term (1998, p.663), are carried out between the teacher and the student in an appropriate place, usually in the teacher's office, or online in order to have an interview based on the student's learning process in general or more specifically the student's work that has been completed recently. As a matter of fact, conferences differ from other ways of AA since the emphasis is to gain deep insights about the learning process and also the strategies the student uses. (Brown & Hudson, 1998; Genesee & Upshur, 1996). It is also stated that CAs could be conducted with small groups or with all students simultaneously. Even though this kind of implementation relatively dilutes their potential impact, both the teacher and the students can get considerable benefits, though. For the students to gain maximum benefit from the CAs, as Hughes and Hughes (2020) indicate, they should be asked to come to the meeting with their questions and comments. Brown and Hudson (1998) also note that their being time-consuming and usually not being scored are considered to be their disadvantages. Considering the school settings in the Turkish educational context, it could also be asserted that another disadvantage is that the teachers do not have their own offices individually, which poses a serious problem for the implementation of CA. However, interview, as a specific type of conference, is said to be one of the direct assessment tools to assess the students' speaking skill, which should not be neglected, and should be administered.

Projects: It is widely believed that, in comparison to the other AA tools, projects are the most widely used method in most educational settings. They are recognized as valuable AA tools especially in language teaching contexts as they provide the students with the opportunity to use the target language in meaningful and real-life contexts. Projects, which could be conducted individually or in groups, comprise the integration of multiple skills such as problem solving and critical thinking (Hughes & Hughes, 2020). Projects could be handed a a written report especially when they are carried out cooperatively. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) suggest that when they are delivered through an oral presntation, "projects… can be reviewed by a panel of judges rating the content presented, its organization, and/or the language used" (p.15).

Journals: Simply, journals refer to entries which are written down by students sometimes on a topic of their interest, sometimes in order to reflect their feelings, reactions, perceptions and attitudes

toward particular learning tasks or language learning process in general. These journals, which are usually jotted down by students, not paying much attention to the linguistic accuracy as indicated in Brown (2004), provide the teachers with valuable information related to the students' thoughts of learning process. Baxter (2009) argues that the fundamental goal in writing journals is writing to learn. As he put it (p.22), "writing to learn is based on the assumption that students' thoughts and understanding can grow and clarify through the process of writing". It is also worth noting that they should be viewed as different activities from writing tasks in the classroom in that the teacher and the student establish a genuine communication using the target language. For this reason, they are mostly referred to as 'dialogue journals' (Brown, 2004; Cohen, 1994; O'Malley & Pierce, 1996). In order to ensure that students can get maximum benefit from the teacher's feedback, Brown (2004), refering to recommendations given by McNamara (1998), indicates that it is important that, while giving responses, the teacher should be highly generous in praising the student, at the same time not forgetting to provide them with suggestions.

Presentations: Presentations, which mainly require the students to deliver a speech on a particular topic, are considered to be as common as projects in language classrooms. The main purpose is to assess the speaking skill with its various facets. Fundamental to the scoring is the use of a rating scale in presentations which the students can prepare with the supplement of visual aids or multimedia. As an analytic scoring, which is one of the ways of incerasing the objectivity of scoring in assessing productive skills, Coombe et al. (2007, p.123) presents a detailed rubric for assessing oral presentations which comprises ten components, such as communicative performance, pronunciation, time management, and so on, being scored from zero to ten. As opposed to holistic scoring, such rubrics enable the students to obtain more specific feedback.

Obviously, AA tools have significant merits for language learners as the proponents emphasize. Considering diverse educational settings, it can also be concluded that there are some factors which may rarify the implementation of AA tools effectively, and that not all AA tools are equally appropriate in all learning contexts, as most research reveals.

Related Studies

When the literature on the field of language assessment is examined, it has been observed that, because of the growing interest on classroom-based assessment , AA methods have been addressed in a great many studies , but each has concentrated on different facets of AA, and also for different purposes. Here only the studies regarding the EFL teachers's opinions on AA have been addressed.

Cheng et al. (2004), in a comparative and comprehensive study conducted in three different ESL/EFL contexts (Canada, Hong Kong and Beijing) at the tertiary level, aimed at exploring the instructors' assessment practices in regard to methods, purposes and procedures. Taking into consideration the results related to the assessment practices based on student-constructed response method only, the study obtained subtstantially different findings in the Canada, Hong Kong, and Beijing ESL/EFL contexts. According to the study, among the methods of journal, interview, portfolio, self- and peer assessment, student journals were the most used method in Canada and Hong Kong contexts while in Beijing context the interview was the most implemented one. As a matter of fact, the interview method was also prefered in the other contexts in comparison to the other methods. Inbar-Lourie and Donitsa-Schmidt (2009) conducted a well-rounded study with 113 EFL teachers who worked in state schools in order to investigate whether teachers were eager to utilize different types of assessment along with their opinions regarding the use of AAs. For their study, they developed a questionarie with 65 items based on the model proposed by Hargreaves and his colleagues, which subsumes four perspectives such technological, cultural, political and postmodern. The findings showed that teachers had a positive viewpoint towards the use of a variety of AA methods. Another finding led the authors to underscore that teachers should be provided with necessary training on AA implementation and to enhnace their assessment literacy. Another important finding is that teachers who hold a critical view of AA do not implement AA tools as much as teachers who are positive about

them, because they do not rely on AA instruments to reflect students' real knowledge. The research revealed no significant correlations teachers' beliefs and some demographic variables such seniority of teachers, teaching context, and education level. In a Taiwan elementary school EFL context, Chan (2008), conducting a large scale study, concluded that a great majority of teachers had such a strong view that utilizing multiple assessment tools would be best to assess the students. The teachers also indicated that multiple assessment methods including AA tools such as portfolios and observation would also be more effective in determining the students' learning problems. However, another result revealed by the study is related to the restrictions of multiple assessment tools, such as time constraint, the increase in workload, and subjective grading as most research also show. In their study, Al-Nouh et al. (2014) focused on EFL primary school teachers' attitudes toward AA as well as their AA literacy. The results of the study conducted with 342 female teachers showed that although some teachers stated that they need inservice training, in general, they described themselves as they have enough knowledge about AA. Their attitudes were found to be at a medium level; they preferred TA as they thought AA is time-consuming and ignores the students' writing skills. Similarly, another study carried out with 224 teachers of grades 5-8 in the Omani context also addressed the AAs in terms of EFL teachers' perceptions. In relation to the adequacy of AA tools, it was found that most teachers think they are moderately adequate. In particular, projects were perceived to be adequate as they pave the way for students' creativity. Another finding of the study pointed to the result that the implementation of AA tools is not an easy process and also time-consuming and challenging; besides their utilization require that students should be given extra guidance and support (Al-Ruqeishi & Al-Humanidi, 2016). A contrastive study on TAs and AAs conducted by Phongsirikul (2018) aimed to investigate the perceptions of English-majoring students and the instructors towards paper-and-pencil measurement tools and some particular AA tools. The findings of the study, which was carried out with 103 students and five teachers using questionaries in relation to the English Grammar course, revealed that both students and teachers had a higher tendency for TA tools. Another result is that the participants also held the view that AA tools may have a motivational effect in the skill-based courses. In a Jordanian context, Asassfeh (2019) searched for EFL teachers' tendencies towards language assessment from a number of perspectives such as purposes, techniques or sources and also the practices that have been carried out by the teachers. One of the results point to the fact that paper-and-pencil tests are the most preferrred and implemented techniques while AA tools such as portfolios and journals are the ones which are the least used methods. It was also indicated that official reasons made the teachers use TA tools rather than AAs.

The exploration of teachers' views on AA and their AA practices has also been the research issue in some other small-scale studies, some of which were qualitative research. The findings of the study employed by Abbas (2012) with a questionarie, all of whose items were prepared about the possible difficulties of implementation of AA methods have significantly shown that the instructors faced problems in using AA tools. Some of these problems were mostly related to time constraint and difficulties faced during the implementation of AA tools. Another small scale study which centered on the 20 experienced EFL teachers' conceptions and attitudes toward AA methods concluded that the teachers, who had low level of AA literacy, were in favour with summative evaluation, and that in their context of teaching, AA tools were not used because of various factors (Moradian et al.,2018). In a similar study, Naraghizadeh et al. (2023) have also concentrated on the 30 Iranian EFL teachers' opinions on AA tools. The findings obtained from the participants with MA and Ph.D degrees, who work in different educational settings, showed that most of the teachers have considerably positive views about AAs and that they consider them as effective tools to gauge student learning and to create a more appropriate learning environment which allows for more student engagement. In a qualitative study carried out in the Malaysian context, Singh et al. (2022) investigated 11 ESL teachers' alternative assessment strategies. The data of their study were based on interviews, observations and document analysis. The findings indicated that the teachers exploited a variety of AA tools along with summative assessment. And it was also found that six teachers' tendency was towards TA tools while 4 of them embedded AAs into their assessment process and only one teacher aimed to assess her students more globally, using AA tools. EFL teachers' points of views on AA were also investigated in a Moroccan context by Ghaicha and Omarkaly (2018). The results indicated that, although the participants of the study, 73 public high school teachers, had favourable attitudes toward AA tools,

they were mostly inclined to use TA tools. The study also showed that most teachers agreed that AA methods are effective means in promoting the teaching process along with the learning process, by enhancing students' motivation. The restrictions were related to time-constraint, class size and lack of training as indicated in some other studies. However, it was also found that the teachers that they had a desire to receive additional training on AA. In a similar vein, a study employed with 68 EFL teachers to investigate the teachers' perspectives of AA tools revealed that although the teachers were aware of considerable merits of AA methods such as individualization in assessment, motivating the students, and causing less stress, they were not inclined to use some particular AA tools such as portfolios because of the abovementioned similar negative factors such subjective grading, time-consuming, the workload increase, and also lack of training (Danica, 2020). In the study by Janisch et al. (2007), which aimed to address the benefits and drawbacks of AA through the lens of graduate students, the participants reported that through AA tools, teachers could have the opportunity of creating an authentic learning environment as well as tailoring the teaching process for the students. On the other hand, it was also noted that the main obstacles in implementing AA could be administrative issues and the education system. The authors also emphasized that it is critical that teachers should have AA literacy in order to be able to exploit the AA tools effectively. In another study carried out with 50 secondary school teachers, Nasri et al. (2010) concluded that predominantly, teachers had favourable perceptions on AA. It was specifically found that teachers believed that AA tools would enhance active learning and promote students' creativity and motivation. However, the findings also showed that the main disadvantage of AA was that they increased their workload. In another qualitative study, Troudi et al (2009) explored the views of a group of EFL teachers on language assessment in higher education in terms of the teachers' perspectives and roles. Their study revealed that almost all teachers were in agreement that TA methods were limited in assessing the students' performance and that students should be assessed with multiple sources of assessment as they believed that assessing students using AA methods along with tests would be much fair. Another finding obtained from the research is that some teachers believed that teachers should be trained about the implementation of these different assessment types.

In Turkish EFL contexts, some particular studies were conducted in relation to the EFL teachers' perspectives on AA methods. A mixed-method study conducted with 192 EFL instructors working in schools of foreign languages at different universities concentrated on the investigation of the instructors' views towards AA revealed that most instructors held a favourable manner toward AA. The study results also implicate that teachers find AA tools beneficial on the part of the students' learning process. The study which also explored the effect of 'in-service training' variable showed a result in favour of the teachers who received in-service training (Küçükhayrat, 2024). In a study conducted by Demir (2022) on EFL teachers' practices and perceptions of AA tools, it was found that EFL teachers working at primary schools used TA tools more frequently than AAs. Moreover, the study also explored the effect of participants' variables on their preferences. It was found that more experienced teachers and males preferred TA tools more frequently. Additionally, EFL teachers had a positive attitude toward AA tools although they had some problems related to students, the course, parents and teachers themselves in implementing them. Another study conducted with 152 EFL teachers in the Turkish context investigated whether or not the assessment methods implemented in the language learning context for young learners are in line with the objectives of English Curriculum determined by MoNE (2018). On the contrary to these objectives, the findings showed that most teachers were more inclined towards using TA tools rather than AA tools (Arslan & Üçok-Atasoy, 2020). The quantitative research conducted with 70 EFL teachers working in preparation school at a state university aimed to explore the teachers' assessment literacy and also along with the diverse purposes of assessment practices. Based on the findings obtained, it was indicated that the teachers had the strong belief that assessment should be used for formative purposes and that summative assessment was given the lowest level of importance. According to the results, between the other two dimensions, 'self-assessment' and 'assessment to improve instruction' have been given relative importance respectively. Another result of the study is that as a variable, teachers' years of experience did not have an effect about the teachers' (Önalan and Karagül, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study has been carried out through a sequential mixed-method research conducted with the integration of quantitative and qualiative data. As comprehensively discussed by Johnson et al. (2007), mixed-methods research is a research model which allows the inclusion of various methods of collecting data in a single study to obtain more comprehensive information about the phenomenon of interest and to see whether the obtained findings corroborate each other. For the data to be gathered quantitatively, a 5-point Likert scale was used while for the qualitative phase, open-ended questions were used in a semi-structured interview. The data collected through a semi-structured interview method comprises broader information with elobarative answers related to the participants' opinions (Mackey & Gass, 2005). And in this way, the findings obtained from the survey are expected to coincide with the qualitative findings, and the aim is to synthesize the information obtained.

Data Collection Tools and Participants

An AA Attitude Scale which was developed by İzci at al (2014) was used as the instrument of collecting the quantitative data, having taken necessary permission from the authors via e-mail to be able to use the scale in this study. The instrument, which is based on 5-point Likert scale with 15 items, (ranging as 'strongly disagree (1); disagree (2); partly agree (3); agree (4); strongly agree (5)'), has three sub-dimensions that explain the items in terms of three factors. These are ; 'supporting the learning process', limitations of AA' and 'supporting the teaching process'. The items pertaining to the subdimension 'supporting the learning process' are represented by items 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 while the items for the 'limitations of AA' are represented by items 3, 7, 10, 12, 14 and 15. The items, 8, 9, 11, and 13 are the items which represent the subdimension 'supporting the teaching process'. Since items 3, 7, 10, 12, 14, and 15 in the questionnaire are formulated negatively, the responses to these items have been reversed for the analysis of overall attitudes. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient for the overall scale was found to be 0.81. On the other hand, the Cronbach alpha for the sub-dimensions, supporting the learning process', boosting the teaching process' and 'the limitations of the AA' were calculated as 0.76, 0.76 and 0.73 respectively.

Along with the scale, a questionarie was also used for demographic information about the participants such as gender, seniority, school type and in-service training. This part also comprised a section which search for whether the teachers use any type of AA tools, and which ones they use. The qualitative data were gathered through the semi-structured interviews, in which the participants were asked to answer four open-ended questions that were constructed by the researchers. As for the population of the research, they were the EFL teachers who work in state primary, secondary and high schools affiliated to MoNE in the province of Samsun in Türkiye. The sampling of the study included 137 EFL teachers, who voluntarily participated in the quantitative phase of the study. The demographic information of the participants are as shown in Table 2 :

Table 2. Demographic Information of the Participants (n=137)

Variables	Demographic Details	The number of the participants (n)	Percent (%)
Gender	Female	108	78,8%
	Male	29	21,2%
Seniority	0-10 years	43	31,4%
	11-20 years	53	38,7%
	21 and more	41	29,9%
School Type	Primary School	22	16,1%
	Secondary School	71	51,8%
	High School	44	32,1%
In-service Training	Yes	57	41,6%
	No	80	58,4%

Total	137	100%

As Table 2 illustrates, according to the gender distribution, 108 teachers out of 137 (78, 8 %) are female and 29 (21, 2 %) of them are male. The results regarding the teaching experience of the teachers show a relatively balanced distribution in such a way that 43 teachers (31, 4 %) have 0- 10 years of teaching experience while 53 teachers (38, 7 %) and 41 teachers (29, 9 %) have 11-20 years of experience and above 21 years of experience respectively. In regard to the variable 'in-service training', 57 teachers out of 137 (41,6 %) have indicated that they have participated in in-service training programs about AA while 80 (58,4 %) teachers' responses point to the result that they have not receive any in-service training so far. In terms of the type of school where they have worked, the distribution was as follows: 22 (16,1 %) teachers work in a primary school while 71 (51,8 %) teachers work in secondary school and 44 (32,1 %) teachers work in a high school.

Procedure and Data Analysis

Primarily, the convenience sampling approach was chosen to determine the sample for the study. Convenience sampling is the selection of individuals who happen to be available for study (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The data collection form for the survey was arranged through Google forms and the collection was administered online in the academic year 2024-2025. The forms were sent to the EFL teachers working in state schools affiliated to MoNE in the province of Samsun in Türkiye through various online applications. Thus, as the sample of the study, 137 EFL teachers, giving their informed consent, voluntarily participated in the survey. The participants of the qualitative phase of the study were also determined through the convenience sampling method. The data which were based on the responses provided by 16 volunteer teachers were gathered through the semi-structured interviews conducted by one of the researchers, who also works in a secondary school as an EFL teacher. Nine participants were the EFL teachers who work in secondary schools while three and four of them work in high schools and primary schools respectively. The interviews were conducted face-to-face and one-on-one at the schools where the teachers work. The participants, who were invited to answer four open-ended questions, were primarily assured that their responses would only be used in this present study anonymously. The participants were interviewed in Turkish for their own convenience. The interactions, which lasted between 10 and 15 minutes were audio-recorded for later analysis. The recorded interviews, after being listened to several times in order to accurately capture what the participants uttered were transcribed by the two researchers together. Later they were translated into English.

The descriptive survey model was used to analyze the quantitatively obtained data using SPSS 26 program.

Table 3. Results of reliability analysis

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
AA Attitude Scale	0.786	15
Supporting the learning process	0.897	5
Supporting the teaching process	0.815	4
Limitations of alternative assessment	0.806	6

As Table 3 illustrates, in the analysis conducted regarding the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach Alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient for the overall scale was found to be 0.786 in this current study. The reliability coefficients were calculated as 0.897 for the sub-dimension 'supporting the learning process', 0.806 for the sub-dimension 'limitations of AA methods', and 0.815 for the sub-dimension 'supporting the teaching process'. These results indicate that the overall scale and each sub-dimension are reliable in terms of internal consistency. In this case, the reliability value of all items was found to be 0.786.

Table 4. Results of normality analysis

	N	Skewness	Kurtosis
The participants' perception	137	-.012	.815

Moreover, a normality test was applied to ascertain whether the data had been obtained from a normally distributed population. As in shown in Table 4, the Skewness value was calculated as -.012, and Kurtosis value was calculated as .815. Since these values are in the range of -1 and +1, the data indicate a normal distribution (Ak, 2010). Furthermore, Histogram and Q-Q Plot graphs as indicated in the figures below were also analyzed and it was seen that the distributions were normal. After this procedure, the data was prepared for parametric analysis. As the methods of analysis, the Independent Sample T-Test was employed to find out the relation between the teachers' attitudes toward AA and the variable 'receiving in-service training', whereas a One-Way ANOVA was employed in order to see the effect of the 'seniority' and 'school type' variables upon the teachers' AA attitudes. As for the analysis of the qualitative data gathered through the semi-structured interviews, the content analysis method was found appropriate to interpret the participants' responses. Firstly, the researchers had disccussion about the procedure to be followed for the coding process. It was decided that open coding with an inductive approach should be employed (Creswell, 2009). After scrunitizing the data several times to detect expressions with similar ideas, each researcher created initial codes individually first. As a second step, the researchers compared their individual code sets. It was agreed that the same code was used for the expressions in the participants' responses that were not exactly equal but had similar meanings. After the coded data was revised by the researchers together, potential themes under which codes could be grouped were identified. At this point, an expert opinion was taken to ensure the interrater reliability of the process and to minimize the possible bias. After the codes and themes were revisited and cross-examined once more, it was agreed that the code sets and related themes were compatible with the questions in the interview.

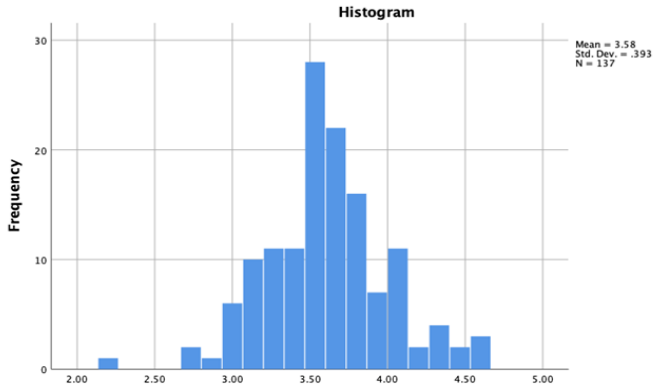

Figure 1. Histogram

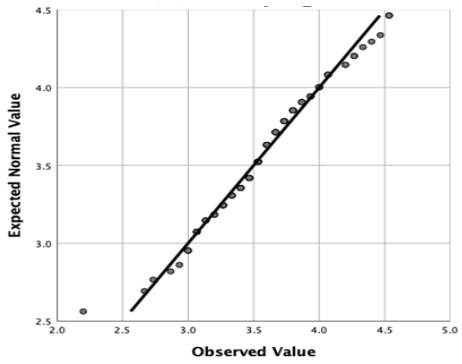

Figure 2. Q-Q Plot

FINDINGS

Findings of Quantitative Data

The findings of the quantitative data obtained from the survey are presented mainly in relation to the research questions: The findings related to the AA tools used by the teachers are followed by the findings regarding the teachers' attitudes toward AA, and the effect of some independent variables in the teachers' perceptions of AA

Table 5. Assessment tools used by the participants

	f	%	n
Portfolios	48	35	137
Peer assessment	48	35	137
Performance tasks	40	29.2	137
Self assessment	57	41.6	137
Projects	117	85.4	137
Observations	104	75.9	137
Presentation	98	71.5	137
Others	1	0.7	137
None of them	2	1.5	137

As can be seen in Table 5, most of the participants use projects, observation and presentation. Some of the participants use self-assessment while a few participants use portfolios, peer assessment and performance in ELT classrooms. Only one teacher state that s/he uses group projects as another AA tool. Moreover, only two of the participants never use AA tools.

Table 6. The descriptive analysis on the perceptions of EFL teachers about AA

Factor	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Supporting the learning process	1. With the help of AA, students' higher-order thinking skills (critical thinking, creativity, etc.) are measured.	4.05	.657
	2. With the help of AA methods, the student's interest, curiosity, and self-confidence are increased	4.07	.637
	4. Students can be proud of their learning through AA.	4.00	.748
	5. Performance and portfolio assessments allow students to develop solutions to everyday problems.	3.94	.784
	6. AA motivates students towards the lesson.	4.00	.653
Limitations of AA tools	3. It is difficult to evaluate with AA tools.	3.18	.848
	7. It is difficult to evaluate project tasks objectively.	2.88	.924
	10. Portfolios are not practical due to the time-consuming nature, their storage, and the analysis of the data obtained.	2.93	.913
	12. The abundance of AA tools presents a usability challenge.	2.79	.981
	14. AA is more complex than TA.	2.91	.911
	15. It is difficult to implement AA methods.	2.81	.836
Supporting the teaching process	8. AA tools make the teaching process enjoyable.	4.01	.612
	9. AA tools help to eliminate rote learning.	4.18	.667
	11. AA tools enable students'abilities to be assessed effectively and efficiently.	4.00	.594
	13. AA process shows what and how students learn.	3.80	.702

As can be seen in Table 6, when the results obtained from the 15-item scale used to determine the EFL teachers' perceptions of AA are examined; item 9 is the one which has highest mean. The mean of this item was found to be 4.18. Moreover, this was followed by items 1 and 2 with 4.05 and 4.07 means respectively. However, items 12, 15, 7, 14, 10 are the ones which have the lowest means respectively. On the other hand, the overall means of EFL teachers' perceptions on alternative is 3.58 and 'agree'.

Table 7. Results related to subdimensions of AA attitude Scale

Variables	X	ss
Supporting the learning process	4.01	.695
Limitations of alternative assessment tools	2,91	.901
Supporting the teaching process	4.06	.624

As illustrated in Table 7, the means of supporting the teaching process and learning process is 4.06 and 4.01 respectively, which means that EFL teachers perceive alternative assessment tools as a support for both teaching and learning process.

Analysis of teachers' perceptions of AA with respect to some variables

The teachers'attitudes toward AA were analyzed according to some independent variables such as type of school they work in, seniority, and in-service training. One-way ANOVA was used to investigate the relations of the EFL teachers' opinions on AA with 'seniority' and 'school type' while t-test was used to investigate in what way their opinions differ depending on whether or not they received inservice training.

Table 8. ***One-Way ANOVA results for the teachers' attitudes toward AAwith respect to the 'type of school' variable***

School Type	N	X	ss	f	p
Primary	22	3.6515	.50182	.466	.629
Secondary	71	3.5606	.34283		
High School	44	3.5682	.41234		
Total	137	3.5776	.39268		

As can be seen in Table 8, there are no statistically significant differences in EFL teachers' perceptions of AA based on the 'school type' variable (F [2,134] =.466, *p*= .629; p>.05). From this result, it can be inferred that school type is not an important factor for EFL teachers' attitudde toward AA.

Table 9. One-Way ANOVA results for the teachers' attitudes toward AA with respect to the 'seniority' variable

Seniority	N	X	ss	f	p
0-10 years	43	3.6186	.37834	.465	.629
11-20 years	53	3.5409	.42540		
21-more	41	3.5821	.36758		
Total	137	3.5776	.39268		

As can be seen in Table 9, there are not statistically significant differences according to the seniority of EFL teachers in their perception of AA (*F* [2,134] =.465, *p*= .629; p>.05). This result shows that seniority is not an important factor for EFL teachers' perceptions of AA.

Table 10. T-test results for the teachers' attitudes toward AA with respect to the 'inservice training' variable

In-service Training	N	X	ss	t	sd	p
Yes	57	3.6608	.37823	2.12	135	.036
No	80	3.5183	.39433			
Total	137	3.5776	.39268			

As illustrated in Table 10, there is a statistically significant difference according to the 'inservice training' variable in terms of the teachers' perceptions of AA, *(t[135]=2.12; p<.05).* From this result, it can be emphasized that inservice training is a substantial factor for EFL teachers' attitude toward AA. When examining the attitudes of those who have received in-service training compared to those who have not, it can be stated that the attitudes of those who have received training are generally more positive. This difference in mean scores ranges between .01 and .28, with an average difference of .14.

FINDINGS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

With the first open-ended question 'Do you use AA tools? If so, Which AA tools do you use?', it was intended for revealing whether the teachers use AA tools and which of them they tend to use. The emerged key words were the names of AA tools they used, such as 'portfolios', 'projects' and 'self-assessment' as seen in the table below. As their elaborative responses also shedded light on the frequency of using these tools, the key words were frequency words such such as 'sometimes', 'rarely', 'never' and 'often' as illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11. Results according to the AA tools used

Themes	**Codes**	**Teachers' opinions**	**f**	**%**
Frequency of Use	Frequently/often	T2, T4,T5,T8,	4	25
	Occasionally/Sometimes	T9,T10,T13,T16	4	25
	Not Much/Rarely	T11, T12	2	12.5
	Never	T1,T14	2	12.5
AA tools used	Peer-Feedback	T4,T5,T7	3	18.75
	Self-Assessment	T4,T5,T7	3	18.75
	Performance tasks	T2, T4,T11	3	18.75
	Presentation	T6,T11	2	12.5
	Projects	T2,T6,T9,T11	4	25
	Portfolios	T9,T12,T13	3	18.75
	Technology-supported Assessment	T3,T15,16	3	18.75

As understood from Table 11, it was found that most of the participants use AA methods in their teaching contexts. However, it was also seen that their use varies in terms of the frequency. Some teachers use these methods regularly while others use them less frequently. It was understood that most participants generally apply AA at the end of units or during specific periods.

In terms of AA tools that they use, it can be said that participants mostly prefer group projects, performance tasks, peer assessment and self-assessment. This is due to the fact that they believe that projects and performance tasks support students' learning by interacting with each other and also encourage creative thinking. ("*I use them. I think they are as necessary as traditional assessment methods. I think that peer-feedback, self-feedback practices that we do especially in the classroom are very effective for students*" [T2]; "*Well, I use them often. I mostly give students projects. And I ask them to make presentations on their projects*"[T3]). It has also been observed that technology-supported methods are also used by some teachers. In particular, AI-powered assessment and digital game-based assessment tools are considered to be effective tools that enable students to be involved in

the learning process. ("*I use them. I generally use self-assessment at the end of the unit and often use technology-supported game-based assessment*" [T9]).

In relation to the second question 'Do you think AA methods have limitations and difficulties in terms of implementation?' the aim was to investigate the teachers' opinions with specific respect to the restrictions and difficulties of implementing AA. The expressions used mostly in the teachers' utterances such as 'time constraints', 'workload', 'curriculum pressure', 'large classes' and 'technological access problems' constituted the category 'limitations' while such key words such as 'lack of student participation', 'objectivity/reliability problems', 'lack of knowledge', and 'difficulty in preparing rubrics' fall under the theme 'challenges' as seen in Table 12. At this point, it seems neccessary to indicate that one of the participants (T1) was not included in the tables (except for Table 11) as her responses to the three questions were too short and not elaborative.

Table 12. Results in relation to the dimension 'limitations of AA'

Themes	Codes	Teachers' Opinions	f	%
Limitations	Insufficient time	T2,T7,T8,T9,T16	5	31.25
	Intensive curriculum	T4,T9	2	12.5
	Workload	T2,T4,T5,T6	4	25
	Technological Access	T3,T16	2	12.5
	Large classes	T2,T4,T11,T12,T13	5	31.25
Challenges	Difficulty in preparing rubrics	T5,T6,T7	3	18.75
	Lack of knowledge	T7,T14	2	12.5
	Objectivity / Reliability	T5,T6,T15	3	18.75
	Lack of student participation	T4,T5,T7,T10	4	25

Most of the participants had the belief that there are various limitations and challenges in the implementation of AA tools. The most important limitation of AA practices pronounced by most participants is time-consuming. They also had the opinion that the curriculum determined by MoNE limits the use of these tools. ("*Unfortunately, yes, and I can say the biggest limitation is time. While trying to keep up with the curriculum within the academic year, teachers may not find enough time to use these assessment methods*"[T9]). Moreover, it is common knowledge that crowded classes in language teaching contexts make it very difficult to do many activities that students are supposed to be engaged in. Thus, the teachers also expressed that the implementation of some AA tools to monitor student progress individually likewise becomes difficult. ("*In large classes, assessing all students individually is challenging in terms of monitoring their progress*"[T4]). As also indicated by two teachers, internet access problems experienced during the use of technology-supported AA tools is also regarded as a serious limitation. It was stated that such problems are experienced more frequently, especially in rural areas ("*It may be a problem for students. Well, you know, some students may not have a tablet or sufficient internet access*"[T3]).

Three teachers stated that objectivity is another problem and that this could also reduce the reliability of the assessment tool used. It was also noted that creating rubrics was a time-consuming and challenging process. ("First of all, it is necessary to evaluate fairly and objectively. This is not so easy. It is necessary to score each behavior and skill at the right rate"[T6]). Besides, some teachers also touched on some challenges such as students' unwillingness in participating sufficiently in some particular AA practices or not fulfilling their responsibilities throughout the process: ("*Unfortunately, it is unrealistic to expect every student to fulfill this responsibility over a long period of ti*me"[T4]).

With the third question 'Do you think alternative assessment methods are beneficial for the learning process in EFL classes ?', it was intended for discovering whether the teachers believe that using AA methods support the learning process. Depending on the teachers' remarks, some particular key words such as 'internalizing', 'more engagement', 'meaningful and active learning' fall under the theme 'long-term retention' and the key words such as 'revealing student strengths', 'developing

creative thinking' and 'social skills' and 'inceasing student motivation' bring together under the theme 'impact on the learning process' as presented in Table 13.

Table 13. The results with regard to the dimension 'supporting the learning process'

Themes	Codes	Teachers' Opinions	f	%
Long-term retention	More engagement	T2,T3,T11,T12,T16	5	31.25
	Meaningful Learning	T14,T9	2	12.75
	Active Learning	T5,T6, T11	3	18.75
	Internalization	T8, T14	2	12.75
Impact on the learning process	Revealing student strengths	T2,T4,T11,T13	4	25
	Developing students' problem solving skills, creative thinking and social skills	T2, T5,T6, T15, T16	5	31.25
	Increasing students' motivation	T4,T7,T12,T16	4	25

Most teachers indicated that the students' being involved in assessment process would help to enhance both meaningful and active learning, which provides long-term retention. ("*I think that AA tools are much more useful. They also provide better and more active learning because the student is more active in such processes, deals with the task on his own. I think they have great benefits*" [T6]); "*I wish we could apply in every class, so we have the chance to see its benefits. Since it is a more individual and personalized assessment, each student has more meaningful learning in these processes*" [T14]). Two of the participants stated that AA tools help students learn by reconstructing the knowledge rather than memorizing it. It was also emphasized that these tools allow for more permanent learning and better monitoring of students' development processes. (*"These practices allow students to internalize information rather than memorize it"* [T8]).

The participants also remarked that projects improve students' skills such as collaboration, communication, and creativity. It was also indicated that such practices supported integration into society and a sense of responsibility. ("*Such methods… well, improve students' 21st century skills such as collaboration, communication, and creative thinking*" [T16]; "*Alternative assessment supports sense of responsibility and social development*". [T5]). Some teachers also emphasized that AA tools are more inclusive for students with different learning styles, and implied that this enables the students to show their potential abilities. They stated that some students who cannot succeed with paper-and-pencil measurement tools can stand out when being assessed with some particular AA tools. ("*Sometimes I realize that students who are not successful with traditional methods can do very good work in some alternative assessment practices*" [T13]). As often emphasized in the literature, the crucial benefit of AA is that involving students in the assessment process increases their motivation. Four teachers also stressed that some particular AA tools have the potential to enhance student motivation. ("*It increases student motivation by providing more engaging experiences, unlike traditional methods"* [T4]).

The fourth question 'Do you think alternative assessment methods are beneficial for the teaching process in EFL classes?' aimed to investigate the teachers' opinions on the possible supports of AA tools for the teaching process. Their elaborative responses led to highlight the benefits of AA methods for the teaching process with the emerged key words such as 'process-oriented', 'effectiveness', innovativeness', 'guidance' and 'monitoring', which fall under the themes 'impact on the teaching process' and 'teacher's role' as presented in Table 14.

Table 14. The results with regard to the dimension 'supporting the teaching process'

Themes	Codes	Teachers' opinions	f	%
Impact on the teaching process	Process-Oriented	T4,T7,T8	3	18.75
	Effectiveness	T4,T5,T6,T11,T12	3	31.25
	Innovativeness	T4,T16	2	12.75
Teacher's role	Guidance	T5,T16	2	12.75
	Monitoring	T3,T7,T9,T13,T16	5	31.25

Most of the participants had the belief that AA makes significant contributions to the teaching process. They emphasized that AA tools play an important role in increasing the effectiveness of the teaching process. It is agreed that especially practices such as group projects, peer assessment and performance tasks have the potential to increase students' interest and alleviate boredom, which enables the teaching process more effective. Moreover, it is agreed that AA tools appeal to students' different learning styles, which is important in order to enhance student interest and participation. ("*It is beneficial. It is flexible and offers continuous feedback. We can adapt alternative assessment tools to suit learning styles. This makes the process more useful and effective.*" [T7]; "*Using different tools for assessment during the classes help to diversify the lesson. In this way they increase students' interest in the lesson*" [T11]).

Some participants expressed their interest in innovative ways of assessment. The use of especially up-to-date technological tools, for instance, AI-powered and digital tools, adds an innovative dimension to the teaching process. Such tools provide teachers with the opportunity to analyze students' learning processes in more detail and enable them to conduct process-oriented assessment. "*With the technology-supported methods, I believe, it is possible to enrich the teaching process… Assessment conducted with technological tools can provide teachers with more information*"[T16]).

As it has been emphasized in the literature in relation to 'assessment for learning' and 'assessment of learning', one of the biggest advantages of AA is the continuous feedback they provide. Some participants stated that these tools allow students to progress at different speeds and help teachers manage the process more efficiently. Providing continuous feedback accelerates students' progress in the learning process. ("*For the teaching process,.. well, I think the teachers can have a process-oriented and more enjoyable teaching process. They follow their students' progress continuously and can notice what needs to be improved more quickly and effectively*" [T4]).

It is acknowledged that classroom-based assessments allow teachers to monitor students' progress constantly and guide them more efficiently. In particular, AA tools such as observation allow for a closer monitoring of language progress of the student. Most participants, emphasizing the importance of the teacher's guidance role, expressed that these methods provide the opportunity to monitor students' progress more closely. They stated that feedback allows teachers to make faster and more effective interventions according to students' needs. ("*Teachers can closely monitor their students' development and quickly identify their weaknesses"* [T9]); "*Since the teacher is in a role that supports… or guides learning rather than explaining, the student becomes active*" [T5]).

DISCUSSION

The discussion was based on the research questions respectively. The findings of the previous studies in the literature were referenced to make comparisons with what this current study has found. This study aimed to investigate EFL teachers' perceptions of AA and with the findings, to raise an awareness about the importance of the use of AA tools. Along with the search for their perceptions, the factors affecting their attitudes, the AA methods that they use and the use of frequency were also examined.

With the first research question, EFL teachers' AA practices and the tools were explored. The findings demonstrated that projects, observation and presentation are the most common tools preferred by EFL teachers. This may be due to two factors: One is that teachers must give one project assignment to the students for each term and the students are asked to make presentation about their projects, which means that teachers make observations and evaluate students' presentation. Hence, the most common tools preferred by the participants of this study are interrelated. The other is that English classes have been based on the Communicative Language Teaching Method since MoNE reorganized the curriculum according to the principles of the constructivist approach, so each unit has a project work about the topic. Portfolios, peer assessment are AA tools which were preferred least by the participants, which is not in line with the study conducted by Cheng et al. (2004). This may be due to the fact that it is difficult to apply these tools as it requires more time, effort, and sources, considering the crowded classes in most Turkish educational contexts. As Brindley (2001b) underlines, teachers have some concerns about how to give feedback to the students and guide them during the process.

In the second research question, the major aim of the study, the attitudes of EFL teachers toward AA were explored. The findings demonstrated that the teachers agreed that AA is useful to evaluate both the product and process and it also focuses on individual differences. This supports what was stated by Al-Ruqeishi and Al-Humaidi (2016) that teachers' belief was that AA promote students' creativity and their language skills in a stress free and natural environment. The same is also asserted in the study by Demir (2022) that teachers' attitudes towards AA are positive. Moreover, they preferred AA to TA as it provides the students to relate their knowledge with the real world and create multi solutions for the problems they encounter. This finding goes in harmony with the findings of the studies which revealed that participants held a favourable manner toward AA, and that they believed that AA tools are beneficial on the part of the students' learning process as they are considered to increase active learning, stimulate students' creativity and motivation (Danica, 2020; Ghaicha & Omarkaly, 2018; Küçükhayrat, 2024; Nasri et al., 2010).

The results also indicated that the participants had the view that AA helps to eliminate rote learning and measure students' higher-order skills such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. Additionally, it was found that the teachers agree that AA also fosters students' interest, curiosity, and self-confidence. Findings of this study further expanded insights of previous studies, such as the study conducted by Göçtü (2013), which indicated that implementation of both traditional and portfolio assessment boosts motivation and improves the students' language skills when compared with TA. Furthermore, it was found in the study that the teachers were eager to use them as they thought that it is effective and efficient to evaluate students with the help of these tools. They take a lot of advantage for both the students and the teachers as it helps them detect the students' weaknesses and strenghts in detail. It also boosts learner autonomy as it provides them to evaluate themselves and their peers so that they can manage their own learning process. Similarly, the research conducted by Chan (2008) revealed that a great majority of teachers were in favour of utilizing multiple assessment tools including AA tools such as portfolios and observation.

Another important result of the study about the teachers' attitude toward AA is that the participants have the belief that it is difficult and complex to evaluate objectively with the use of these tools. It was found that the teachers hold the opinion that AAs require a lot of time to complete, store, and analyze the data, which led to the view that implementing AA methods such as portfolios are considerably challenging. Not surprisingly, the study also revealed that the common belief that the teachers hold is that implementing AA methods cause extra workload such as preparing rubrics, storing the assignments, and analyzing the students' works. This result is in line with the study conducted by Çakır (2020), as it was found that class hours and crowded classes were prominent problems for EFL teachers in Türkiye. Another related result of the study is that assessing the students individually and evaluating their work was another critical issue because of being time-consuming. In other words, the teachers reported that alternative assessment requires a large amount of preparation and class time. Consistent with the findings of this research, the research by Çetin (2011) also concluded that time constraints and workload are critical issues for all the teachers. The conclusions

drawn related to the restrictions and challenges of AA methods are also corroborated by the findings of some other studies. (Abbas, 2012; Chan, 2008; Danica, 2020; Ghaicha & Omarkaly, 2018; Moradian et al. 2018).

In the third question, the teachers' perceptions on alternative assessment and their level of usage were analyzed according to some variables such as the type of school they work in, seniority, and in-service training status. It was found that there are not statistically significant differences according to the school type and seniority of EFL instructors in their perception of AA and their level of use while there are statistically significant differences in their perception of AA according to their participation in in-service training. This finding is consistent with the study of Küçükhayrat (2024) which explored the effect of the 'in-service training' variable. The study also showed a result in favour of the teachers who received in-service training. The result that the 'seniority' variable is not a significant determinant of EFL teachers' perceptions of AA does not contradict with the result of the study by Önalan and Karagül (2018), which revealed that the teachers' years of experience was not a determining factor in the teachers'perception of assessment.

CONCLUSION

Assessment of language learners' achievement has often been a critical isssue debated in many research contexts. It has been stressed that testing and assessment, which should not be viewed as a separate process from the instruction, should often be incorporated into the classroom practices. It is also common knowledge that AA practices enable the students to monitor their own progress and take charge of their language learning. This leads to the students' being more-autonomous learners, the importance of which is often highlighted in terms of effective learning in the literature of EFL learning and teaching. Morever, in terms of providing the students with ongoing feedback, promoting motivation, and making the learning process individualized, it could be said that the pedagogical aspects of AA methods are stronger than paper-and-pencil tests because of their positive washback effect. However, as indicated in some studies, they should be used with TA tools in some particular learning contexts in a way that they should be complementary to each other.

The major purpose of this present study, which was grounded in both quantitative and qualitative information, was to explore the overall opinions of EFL teachers working in different educational settings in the Turkish context, with regard to the use of AA methods. In this respect, to get more elaborative and compresensive results, the findings were analyzed in both phases of the study regarding the factors such as the benefits of AA in terms of learning and teaching process along with their limitations. The findings yielded from both the survey and the interviews revealed that the participants of the study, the EFL teachers, had a positive attitude toward AA and that they held the belief that AA methods are beneficical for both the learning process and teaching process, and that they have crucial limitations. It is also worth noting that the teachers' attitude varied significantly according to the 'in-service training' variable, which underscores that EFL teachers should have AA literacy. Although another finding showed that more than half of the teachers used AA tools from time to time, it was also found that the teachers believed that the implementation of AA is considerably a challlenging job and that it is also impeded by some factors.

To conclude, the findings of this study have several important implications for EFL teaching practice, teacher education, and policy-making. In order to promote meaningful assessment procedures that develop language proficiency with critical thinking, creativity, and learner autonomy, curriculum designers and administrators might more methodically integrate AA tools into language programs. The teachers are usually more inclined to use AA tools if they are included in the coursebooks. Moreover, training on AA techniques should also be given more importance in professional development programs, with an emphasis on both theoretical understanding and real-world implementation. Such in-service trainings should be regular, reflective, and context-sensitive so that they can have the greatest impact. Policymakers should recognize the benefits of AA and incorporate it into national curricula. Clear guidelines, assessment frameworks, and assessment literacy can further promote effective implementation.

Although the results of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to the field, it is essential to underline that it has several limitations. First and foremost, the current study has been confined to a cross-sectional research which was conducted with 137 EFL teachers, who work at state schools in the province of Samsun. Naturally, the sample of the study cannot be said to be entirely representative of EFL teachers. In other words, it should be acknowledged that this has restricted the generalizability of the findings to both the whole city and diverse educational settings. The study has also been limited to only the EFL teachers' views on AA and the inclusion of some particular independent variables. Further studies could be conducted with larger samples and the inclusion of different variables such as AA literacy of EFL teachers. The current study has been confined to the self-reported opinions of the teachers on AA methods. Therefore, a further study could investigate in what way some particular AA tools are implemented in classroom settings. Besides, quasi-experimental studies could also be carried out in order to see the impact of some particular AA methods on the students' motivation level, or academic achievement, and to explore students' perceptions on AAs in particular EFL contexts.

Ethical statement: Necessary permission and approval for the research, which was granted from the Social and Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee of Ondokuz Mayıs University, is documented on 29.11.2024 with 'Decision ID' 2024-1109.

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Book Review

Book Review on 'Classroom Research for Language Teachers'

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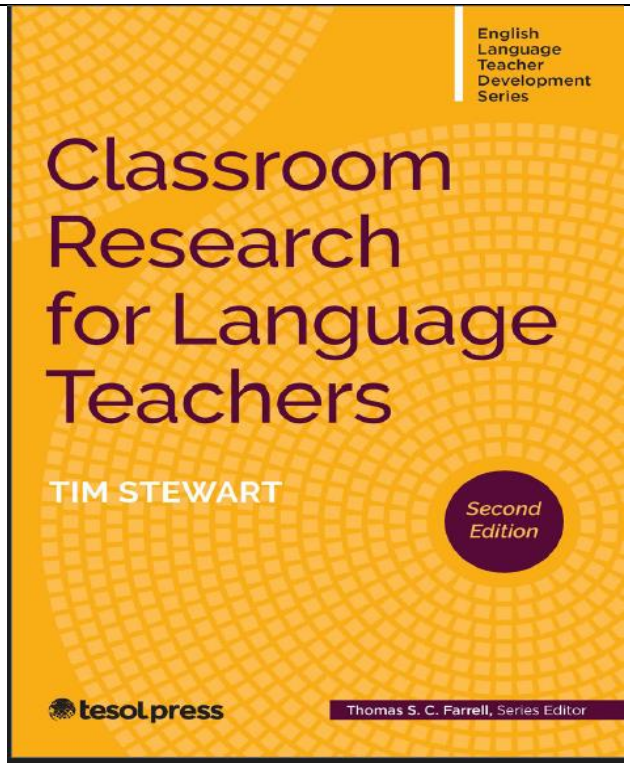

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Classroom Research for Language Teachers, published by TESOL International Association, serves as a practical guide for English language teachers, particularly new to the field of conducting classroom research. The book is well structured, covering major steps of the classroom research process like initiating research, data collection and analysis, publishing research findings, and maintaining research over time. Aligning with contemporary discussions in TESOL and applied linguistics that call for increased teacher agency in research, Stewart posits that teachers are not merely passive consumers of research. They are rather active contributors investigating diverse aspects of their pedagogical contexts through classroom-based research. The book can contribute significantly to professional teacher development of language teachers by demystifying classroom research and offering a concise step-by-step guide.

As one of the concise resource books among the English Language Teacher Development (ELTD) series, this book consists of five chapters. The chapters offer practical ideas about classroom research, including data collection, analysis, and publishing research findings. *Teachers and Research* is the first chapter in the book, and explicates the relationship between language teachers and classroom research. Stewart provides reasons for teachers to be a part of research by focusing on teaching in the 21st century and how research can serve as a method of professional growth for teachers. Indicating the gap between research and classroom practice, the author also underlines the necessity of teachers' voices in research discussions. *Getting Started* is the second chapter, introducing the initial decisions taken in the research process, covering how to determine research topics, questions, and appropriate research methods. Steward also explains the nature of research and the

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difference between "emic" and "epic" terms while encouraging the teachers to reflect on their practices. *Data Collection and Analysis* is the third chapter, presenting an overview of general areas of classroom research by concentrating on teacher and student actions, and student learning. Stressing the role of planning and using multiple perspectives, the chapter explores an organized process of utilizing systematic methods to collect and analyze data inside a classroom. The next chapter, *Publishing Your Findings,* guides teachers on how to find an appropriate publication venue, where to submit articles to academic journals, or how to present research findings at academic venues like conferences. This chapter clarifies the steps of preparing a research paper for publication and provides a submission checklist. It signifies the value of writing quality and professionalism, and encourages novice teachers to share research findings with diverse stakeholders. To this end, the author provides a list of suggested academic journals and venues, too. *Continuing with Classroom Research* is the final chapter, and it discusses the challenges of making research sustainable over time and offers strategies for converting research into an ongoing professional activity. Each chapter includes reflective breaks for teachers to help them clarify key points and how to integrate research into their classroom practices. The book additionally provides an appendix including a sample classroom research report.

The book's practical orientation and accessibility are two major strengths. The practical orientation sets it apart from many academic books that deal only with theory, as it discusses the nature of classroom research with specific strategies to incorporate it into everyday teaching. It is practical for classroom teachers since it also presents reflective questions and step-by-step guides. As for its accessibility, Stewart adopts a jargon-free approach, making complex research concepts comprehensible for teachers with no previous research experience. By providing real-world examples of teacher-led research projects, the author reinforces the practical relevance of the book. Furthermore, the book situates itself within the long-standing debate on the role of teachers in educational research. The author builds upon Long's (1984) assertion that classroom research reveals what happens in classrooms, rather than what is assumed. The author draws language teachers' attention to recover their knowledge and to dispel the "research versus teaching" divide with a reference to Ellis (2012).

Another crucial aspect of the book is its encouragement of teacher autonomy. Instead of modeling the teacher as a passive consumer of research, it enhances the teacher active participant in information production. The authors argue that traditional research is conducted in a way that relies on teachers as passive participants rather than active contributors, resulting in a gap between research and practice in the context of teaching. The author invites teachers to approach research as a natural result of the reflective process, by making research both accessible and meaningful. Stewart bases his discussion on a blend of theoretical perspectives and real-world examples. He draws on previous studies in applied linguistics, second language acquisition, and teacher education, while also incorporating case studies of teacher-led research. By incorporating reflective questions and activities throughout the book, the author encourages teachers to engage actively and sustainably. Additionally, he uses a clear and understandable writing style, and this feels like talking to the reader. As a result, the author successfully manages to get readers to become a part of the book.

It is also important to note some weaknesses and suggestions. The book focuses more on qualitative data gathering tools. While the author highlights the importance of mixed-methods research, the discussion on the use of quantitative data in classroom research remains limited. Teachers seeking guidance on quantitative research or experimental designs may need to consult other resources. Additionally, it fails to address common challenges or barriers that teachers may encounter in their research process, during which some struggle with time constraints and a lack of administrative support. Incorporating a chapter on how to navigate these challenges would enhance the book's impact.

To conclude, the overall value of the book as a resource for teachers interested in meaningful research is significant. Stewart succeeds in his attempt to make classroom research accessible, pragmatic, and meaningful to language teachers. The practical approach and engaging writing style encourage readers to enhance their language instruction through research. The book is well-written

and informative, and is recommend it to anyone interested in language teaching- whether as a teacher, prospective teacher, teacher educator, curriculum developer, or someone seeking to bridge the gap between research and practice.

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