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Language Horizons: Diverse Vistas in English Language Pedagogy II

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PREFACE

Welcome, fellow language explorers, to "Language Horizons: Diverse Vistas in English Language Pedagogy." This book series embarks on an exploratory journey through the diverse and dynamic landscape of English language teaching, presenting a mosaic of perspectives, theories, and practical applications to inspire educators, researchers, and language enthusiasts alike.

Within these chapters, a tapestry of topics unfolds, capturing the essence of contemporary methodologies, emerging technologies, and innovative strategies employed in the realm of English language pedagogy. From the transformative impact of distance education to the intricate influence of social media platforms like Twitter on language proficiency, this collection reflects the evolving paradigms and challenges in teaching English as a foreign language.

Each chapter serves as a portal, delving into various facets of language education. We traverse the experiences of language learners in study abroad programs, explore instruments fostering intercultural communication competence, and investigate the influence of digital platforms such as Google Classroom on students' speaking anxiety.

The series focuses on specialized areas like English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and the intricacies of grammar teaching, offering insights into the tailored needs of learners in different learning contexts. It also ventures into literary explorations, dissecting the lyrical language of renowned poets and drawing connections to language teaching.

"Language Horizons" doesn't merely scratch the surface; it invites readers to contemplate the depths of effective language pedagogy. It unveils the importance of reflective teaching models, the nuanced use of language intensifiers, and the intricacies of curriculum development, emphasizing the importance of a holistic approach to education.

We are indebted to the dedication and expertise of our contributors - academics, practitioners, and scholars - who have shared their research, experiences, and expertise to enrich this compilation. Their commitment to advancing the field of English language teaching has made this series a reality.

As the editor of the series, the main aim has been to compile a comprehensive resource that not only captures the contemporary landscape of English language teaching, but also serves as a catalyst for dialogue, innovation, and progress within the field. We hope this series sparks inspiration, fosters critical thinking, and ignites a passion for effective language instruction.

"Language Horizons: Diverse Vistas in English Language Pedagogy" leads you to an enlightening expedition through the ever-expanding vistas of language education. You are invited to immerse yourself in this compilation, engaging with diverse perspectives and embracing the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in the journey of teaching and learning the English language.

Editor

Asst. Prof. Dr. Dilşah KALAY

21.12.2023

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CHAPTER I

An instrument for enhancing intercultural communication competence and speaking proficiency in EFL Settings: Story Circle

Seçil TÜMEN AKYILDIZ¹
Vildan DONMUŞ KAYA²

Introduction

In today's interconnected world, societies are experiencing greater levels of intercultural contact than ever before, due to advancements in technology, the global economy, warfare, migration, educational exchanges, tourism, and trade. Language, as a means of communication, has become crucial in facilitating international interactions and fostering connections between individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Deardorff (2004) highlighted the importance of higher education institutions in equipping graduates to thrive in a rapidly evolving world. Their role

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is to ensure that graduates possess the necessary intellectual and cultural skills to navigate global challenges and be competent in both their own culture and other cultures. Byram (1997, p.34) emphasized the significant importance of linguistic competence, whereas Lambert (1994) (as referenced in Deardorff, 2004b) described foreign language competency as a primary element of intercultural competence. Hence, a fundamental requirement for being an international/global citizen is to possess sufficient communicative proficiency in a global language in order to engage with others from diverse backgrounds. English standing as a Lingua Franca (ELF) serves efficient functions to convey messages between speakers not sharing a common mother tongue and a common national culture (Firth, 1996; Crystal, 2003; Jenkins, 2007; Ostler, 2010). Sharifian (2009) suggests that users of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) are expected to engage in cognitive processes using their original language and cultural background, resulting in the perception of their English as non-standard. Given that the aim of utilizing ELF is to enhance comprehension when interacting with both non-native speakers and other ELF users (Pakir, 2009), it is crucial to prioritize the enhancement of intercultural communication (IC) and intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in English rather than focusing on establishing standardized conventions. It is because intercultural competence is regarded as a manifestation of globalization.

The primary objective of learning a foreign language is to successfully communicate with it (Byram, 1997). Consequently, learners are expected to possess communicative ability. Van Ek (1986) (as cited in Byram, 1997) elucidates that communication skills encompass the idea of social competence, which fosters both 'autonomy' and 'social responsibility'. Communicative competence in English as a foreign language (EFL) does not focus on the capacity to communicate oneself in a manner that is similar to that of a native speaker. Conversely, it pertains to the capacity to see the connection between one's own cultural convictions and those of others, as conveyed through a communication language (Byram, 1997). This

study is based on Van Ek's description of communicative capacity and Byram's (1997) perspective on intercultural communicative competence (ICC) in foreign language acquisition. The goal is to enable learners of EFL to effectively engage with both their peers and speakers of other languages. Teaching linguistic challenges related to EFL cannot be separated from teaching ICC, as stated by Byram (1997).

Nussbaum (2010) argues that foreign language learning allows students to get a broader understanding of the world through the viewpoints of others. This perspective reinforces the need of incorporating communicative competence in foreign language teaching (FLT) classrooms. Consequently, it is imperative to provide EFL learners with a comprehensive understanding of diverse cultures in order to facilitate meaningful engagement in the contemporary globalized society. Given the widely held belief that culture plays a significant role in enhancing language skills, there is a need for increased focus on ICC in the field of EFL. This emphasis is necessary to empower learners to effectively navigate and understand the nuances of different cultural situations. ICC is asserted to be an obligatory skill to have in EFL settings to ensure intercultural awareness and also to avoid cultural conflict (Tran & Duong, 2015). The objective of EFL teaching is also thought to foster translingual and transcultural proficiency (Chun, 2011). It is crucial to comprehend the EFL learners' understanding and perspectives on ICC.

In addition, it is important for EFL learners to engage in communication with their instructors and peers using the target language, as they do not have opportunities for contact outside of the classroom, as is the case in the Turkish environment. Hence, the instruction of oral communication abilities plays a crucial role in enhancing students' linguistic proficiency and intercultural communicative competence. UNESCO is currently piloting story circles worldwide as a practical application for the ongoing research. These story circles aim to cultivate ICC by adopting a fresh approach to traditional storytelling.

Around the world there is plenty of research with various scopes addressing the importance of ICC in the EFL context some of which propose instructional models and activities for intercultural language teaching (Morrison, Ross & Kemp, 2001; Dick, Carey & Carey, 2005; Usó-Juan, & Martínez-Flor, 2008; Branch, 2009; Jin, Ying & Yining, 2009; Chun, 2011; Tran & Seepho, 2015), and investigating the implementations and opinions of in-service or pre-service teachers on ICC in EFL (Sercu, 2002; Castro, Sercu and Garcia, 2004; Atay, 2005; Atay, Kurt, Çamlıbel, Ersin, Kaslıoğlu, 2009; Köroğlu, 2016; Güneş & Mede, 2019; Salih & Omar, 2022), revealing the perceptions of students on ICC in EFL (Devrim, 2006; Kahraman, 2008; Güven, 2015; Güneş & Mede, 2019; Lee & Lee, 2020; Wang, 2020). The majority of the pertinent studies in the field of EFL have primarily relied on the perspectives of the individuals involved, with only a few suggesting novel approaches. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is currently no study that utilizes story circles to enhance the ICC of tertiary-level students. Hence, it is imperative to comprehend the effects of using novel methodologies to enhance the ICC of students, as well as the viewpoints of instructors.

The purpose of this article is to examine the students' perceptions of the role of ICC in EFL speaking proficiency at the tertiary level. Additionally, it aims to evaluate the effectiveness and practicality of the story circle technique in developing ICC. This part will now discuss the literature on ICC in the EFL context, followed by an explanation of the story circle technique. Subsequently, the findings will be disclosed in a sequential manner.

Literature Review

Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Communication is the selective reaction of an organism to a stimulus, as described by Stevens (1950, p.689). This implies that messages should elicit responses through interaction. Communicative competence refers to the capacity to effectively

communicate within a specific speech community (Hymes, 1992) and to achieve the goals of communication in a socially proper way (Kiessling & Fabry, 2021). Hymes (1992) identified four components of communicative competence. The first component is the ability to communicate in a formal manner. The second component is the ease of implementation. The third component is the appropriateness to the situation. The last component is the actual performance of communication. These sectors encompass the individual's linguistic potential and proficiency. According to Byram (2008), ICC is comprised of five distinct categories of knowledge and competence. They encompass information, skills related to exploration and communication, skills for understanding and connecting, attitudes, and critical awareness of culture and political education, in that order. Within the FLT paradigm, van Ek (as referenced in Byram, 1997) put forward six characteristics related to communication competence. Linguistic competence refers to the capacity to comprehend and employ linguistically significant statements for proficient communication. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the aptitude to effectively generate and comprehend utterances in many social and cultural settings. Discourse competence pertains to the capacity to employ various ways in comprehending diverse writing genres. Strategic competency pertains to the utilization of specific verbal and non-verbal tactics for effective communication. Socio-cultural competence is employed to get familiarity with a wide range of socio-cultural environments. Social competence refers to the capacity and readiness to engage with others in various social contexts.

Successful communication is not limited to the mere transmission and reception of messages in an efficient manner. Instead, the emphasis should be placed on developing and sustaining relationships. Therefore, language should be utilized to showcase a willingness to connect with others, rather than simply providing information. The primary goal of communicating with individuals from varied cultural backgrounds is to demonstrate politeness and

respect for their differences (Byram, 1997). Intercultural communication can be defined in a similar vein. Stepanoviene (2011) emphasized the interaction among individuals with different communicative behaviors. Hammer (2003) and Bennet, Bennet, and Allan (2003) provided a definition of intercultural competence as the capacity to behave in a manner that is culturally appropriate and effective. It is important for individuals to be aware of each other's filters in order to accurately understand and interpret their words and actions (Gudykunts & Kim, 1984). Byram (1997) proposed that there are several prerequisites for intercultural communicative competence (ICC), including attitudes, knowledge, and abilities. Developing a nonjudgmental mindset towards different cultures, acquiring self-awareness and understanding of others, and honing interpretive, relational, and interactive abilities to effectively communicate in many contexts. Successful communication in an intercultural situation requires interlocutors to possess adequate intercultural attitudes, knowledge, and abilities (Baker, 2009; Holliday, 2013).

In order to prevent misunderstandings, individuals from other cultures should exhibit respect, openness, and adaptability towards a range of ideas (Unesco, 2013). Due to disparities in culture and limited language skills, individuals often misinterpret each other, leading to misunderstandings (Lim, 2002). ICC, which has been recognized as a 21st-century skill by UNESCO in 2006, has also become an essential skill for FLT according to Braine in 2010. Research conducted by Deardorff (2006) and Byram, Gribcova, and Starkey (2009) indicates that individuals are unable to fully attain intercultural competency due to the dynamic character of culture and the evolving understanding of it. Therefore, it may be argued that acquiring fluency in a foreign language is necessary in order to effectively communicate with others as an intercultural speaker (Byram, 1997; Olson & Kroeger, 2001). Monolingualism is a significant barrier to international communication (Catteuev, 2012). While fluency in a foreign language is essential for effective communication, it is not sufficient for developing cultural

competency (Deardorff, 2006). Instead, it merely serves as a gateway to understanding other cultures (Catteuw, 2012). Overall, it has been determined that possessing intercultural competency is an essential ability in FLT, and the efforts to enhance it are worth considering. The following section focuses on story circles as a methodology utilized in FLT to cultivate intercultural competency, as described by Deardorff (2020).

Story Circles

The phrase "story circle" denotes a very efficient intercultural tool for cultivating intercultural competency with minimal resource requirements. These activities can be conducted in many places and contexts, involving diverse groups, and offer a secure means of sharing personal experiences. UNESCO implemented a story-circle methodology to demonstrate the efficacy of managing cultural diversity, as evidenced by Deardorff's research in 2020. Storytelling has long been recognized as a means of communication for transmitting cultural identity (Bowles, 1995). Story-telling is defined by McDrury and Alterio (2003) as 'Uniquely a human experience that enables us to convey, through the language of words, aspects of ourselves and others, and the worlds, real or imagined, that we inhabit. Stories enable us to come to know these worlds and our place in them given that we are all, to some degree, constituted by stories' (p.31). This definition emphasizes the significance of human experience, encompassing both the individual and others, communicated through verbal language. Since stories are often derived from human experiences, they inherently captivate the attention of all individuals (Park, 2001). In addition, storytelling is acknowledged as one of the efficient teaching strategies to develop not only first (Zaro & Salaberry, 1995) but also second and foreign languages (Cameron, 2001; Ghosn, 2002) with their contextualized and engaging manners (Kim, 2010). It is stated that narrative has a key impact in enhancing speaking competence in FLT (Ghosn, 2002; Hsu, 2010; Kim, 2010; Afrilyasanti and Basthomi, 2011; Atta-Alla, 2012; Fikriah, 2016; Zuhriyah, 2017). It is because storytelling

activities involve interactive language use and engagement in the process. Story circles, also known as self-reflection tools, serve as platforms for individuals from various cultural backgrounds to exchange their life experiences, fostering self-awareness, receptiveness, and appreciation of others' abilities. Story circles have a dual purpose: they allow individuals to examine both the similarities and contrasts across cultures, and they may be effectively used in FLT classrooms to promote interaction with an emphasis on respect and empathy (Deardorff, 2020).

Turning now to explain how story circles can occur with the rules of Deardorff (2020) briefly. Circles had better consist of four or five people having different stories and experiences so that they can feel themselves relaxed and secure in relatively small groups. Participants recount their experiences in two successive rounds, each prompted by a specific topic. During the initial round, participants acquaint themselves with each other and subsequently, in the subsequent round, they discuss intercultural matters. After finishing the initial two rounds, it is now appropriate to engage in introspection in order to cultivate intercultural connections with individuals. The two crucial factors are active listening without judgment or immediate response, but rather seeking comprehension and showing respect for others. Additionally, there are certain prerequisites for carrying out story circle activities. Initially, the individuals involved must be volunteers and possess a genuine willingness to enhance their intercultural competency. Additionally, individuals should exhibit respect and embrace diversity. The environment ought to provide a secure and nurturing space for individuals, ensuring their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Sufficient time should be allocated. Furthermore, it is imperative to establish a universally accepted and utilized language (Deradorff, 2020). Story circles are believed to enhance not only the intercultural communication skills of the participants, but also their oral communication skills.

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The preceding section has demonstrated that ICC plays a crucial role in EFL education. Specifically, the use of storytelling and story circles has been found to effectively boost students' ICC levels, in addition to its positive impact on the development of oral skills. The current research aims to enhance the existing literature by examining the use of story circles as a means to increase ICC and speaking abilities in speaking classes. The present study aims to investigate the impact of including story circles in EFL speaking classes on students' perceptions of ICC. The study is led by the following questions:

- 1- What are the participants' perspectives on the significance of ICC in EFL speaking classes?
- 2- What are the participants' perspectives on the impact of story circles on their ICC perceptions?
- 3-What are the participants' perspectives on the impact of utilizing story circles on communication in the target language?
- 4-What are the participants' perspectives on the overall disadvantages of the story circles?

Methodology

Research Design

Various approaches to comprehending social phenomena in the field of social sciences are attempted to be elucidated (Jackson, Drummond, & Camara, 2007). The primary emphasis of qualitative research lies in the examination of the experiences and reflections of individuals (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Qualitative research necessitates participants to provide comprehensive and detailed comments to their experiences in order to enhance the research (Jackson et al., 2007). Thus, this research has been formulated as a case study in order to collect comprehensive data on a particular instance (Creswell, 2007). A focus group discussion was conducted

to ascertain the perspectives of learners regarding the utilization of narrative circle activities in speaking classes.

Trustworthiness

The initial endeavor to establish the reliability of the study involves selecting participants on a voluntary basis. According to Shenton (2004), granting individuals the option to decline participation in the research is a method to enhance the study's credibility. In terms of transferability, the results of a study may be applicable to various contexts or situations (Merriam, 1998). Nevertheless, the country and culture of the location where the participants reside may not accurately reflect that of others in a similar manner. Other societies with comparable cultural values can utilize the findings of this research for their own purposes. To ensure reliability, the researcher provided a comprehensive account of the methodology, as mentioned by Shenton (2004). Three scholars from the Education faculty have verified the codes to exclude any suspicion of subjectivity. The recordings of the focus group discussion have been preserved.

Participants

The study was conducted in the Department of English Language and Literature in a university situated in the eastern region of Turkey during the autumn semester of the 2022-2023 academic year. Approximately 80% of the graduates from this department secure employment as English language instructors. The present study was carried out in their Teaching English Language Skills course, specifically focusing on the instruction of speaking skills. The researchers utilized convenience sampling methods to pick people who were the most easily accessible and geographically closest. These participants volunteered to take part in the study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). In accordance with the guidelines outlined in the manual for story circles (Deardorff, 2020), a total of six individuals were invited to participate in the narrative circle activity. One participant hailed from Syria, another from

Azerbaijan, while the remaining individuals were from various parts of Turkey. There are 4 females and 2 males, with ages ranging from 22 to 30.

Data Collection

Initially, the researcher and her visiting doctoral researcher from Algeria, who had previously participated in story circle activities with Darla Deardorff, carried out a preliminary story circle activity. The purpose was to foster students' awareness and acceptance of cultural diversity among each other. Prior to commencing the activity, participants were taught to specific intercultural skills, like displaying respect for others, actively listening to gain understanding, fostering curiosity, enhancing empathy, and engaging in critical reflection. Subsequently, the story circle guideline was made widely known. The major obligations outlined in the guideline were to uphold confidentiality, express oneself really, communicate information in a straightforward manner, keep a positive mindset, talk from personal experience, demonstrate authenticity, be open to learning, and actively listen to promote comprehension. There were a total of three sessions in the activity. During the initial prompt, the visiting researcher provided her name along with three keywords or phrases that characterized her expertise and explained their significance to her. Subsequently, the 6 participants proceeded to perform the same task sequentially. During the second provocation, participants were given three minutes to discuss significant encounters they had with other individuals and the insights they gained about themselves and others from those experiences. The previous session was dedicated to exploring past events through a flashback. During the session, each individual had 15 seconds to recount the most unforgettable aspect of the prior encounter that the participant had revealed in sequence.

According to Krueger (1998), semi-structured questions were prepared and subsequently reviewed by two professors from the Faculty of Education. The researcher and six students convened for

a focus group discussion regarding the activity conducted in the preceding week. The conversation was conducted using Zoom meetings. The researcher assumed the role of moderator, while her master's degree student served as her assistant (observer), providing guidance as needed and recording notes during the session. The focus group discussion aimed to elicit the participants' perceptions regarding the activity by employing appropriate techniques. As classmates, they were acquainted with one other and felt at ease expressing their thoughts. The conversation took place in the English language. The researcher posed the research inquiries and additional ones as needed to acquire profound understanding. An adaptable ambiance was established, and the one-hour discourse took place in an amicable environment. It was documented. Subsequently, the moderator and the observer transcribed the recordings and analyzed them in sequence.

Data Analysis

The researcher and the observer transcribed the data collected during a focus group discussion. The transcribed data were reviewed to establish codes and categories pertaining to the research objective. The data were analyzed using descriptive analysis with the NVivo 8 software package. In qualitative descriptive analysis, data are analyzed by applying predetermined themes for interpretation (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). A software package programme for qualitative analysis was chosen to enhance the analysis (Bazeley & Jackson, 2007). Subsequently, the documents were entered into the software application and NVivo 8 was utilized to build diagrams that visually represent the codes and themes. The typical viewpoints were presented verbatim, without any additional commentary. Each participant's response was categorized as P1M/F (Participant 1, male or female).

Findings

What are the participants' perspectives on the significance of ICC in EFL speaking classes?

The first study question aimed to ascertain the participants' perspectives on the significance of ICC in EFL speaking classes. The data analysis of the participants in the story circle exercise yielded codes pertaining to the significance of ICC in FLT speaking sessions. These codes are presented under the designated theme and visualized in Figure 1.

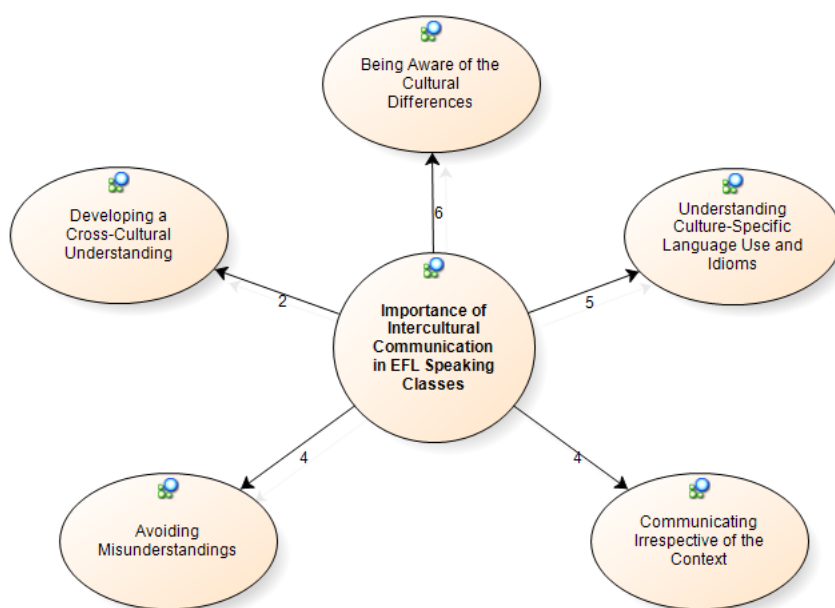


Figure 1. The Importance of ICC in EFL speaking classes.

Figure 1 presents the data gained from the analysis. From the picture, it is evident that five codes have evolved. The participants recognized the indispensability of incorporating ICC in FLT classes. A prevalent perspective among the participants was the need of

recognizing and understanding cultural disparities (f=6). In this instance, the participants believed that incorporating intercultural matters and possessing sufficient proficiency in intercultural communication facilitate the understanding of cultural disparities, namely between the native language and the target language. P5F stated 'through the International Cultural Competence (ICC) program, individuals gain a comprehensive understanding of at least two distinct cultures, including their own and the culture associated with the target language. This understanding facilitates smoother communication with others. Engaging in interaction necessitates being cognizant of people and the disparities that exist'. Another common view among the participants was that ICC's effect on understanding some culture-specific language use and idioms (f=5). Participant 2 (P2M) remarked 'there are disparities in idiomatic expressions between our mother tongue and the language we are trying to learn. Being proficient in a language requires a comprehensive understanding of its intricacies, including idiomatic idioms. In order to effectively utilize idiomatic terms, it is imperative that we possess a high level of proficiency in both the target culture and communication'. The other code under the current category is 'Avoiding misunderstandings' (F=4). P1F expressed there are occasions when we may misinterpret verbal expressions, particularly when we lack knowledge about the other culture. Hence, it is imperative that we possess sufficient proficiency in both the target language and the target culture. Misinterpretations are the most significant obstacles to achieving efficient communication.'. Four of the participants indicated that ICC helps people to communicate irrespective of the cultural context. P3M reported 'In foreign language classes, it is widely acknowledged that students often encounter challenges while attempting to articulate themselves in unfamiliar circumstances.' Having a deep understanding of the cultural nuances of the target language facilitates effective communication with others. Only a small number of participants (F=2) indicated that with ICC foreign language learners can develop a cross-cultural understanding.

What are the participants' perspectives on the impact of story circles on their ICC perceptions?

Turning now to the second research question, the analysis of the obtained data revealed some significant codes displayed in Figure 2.

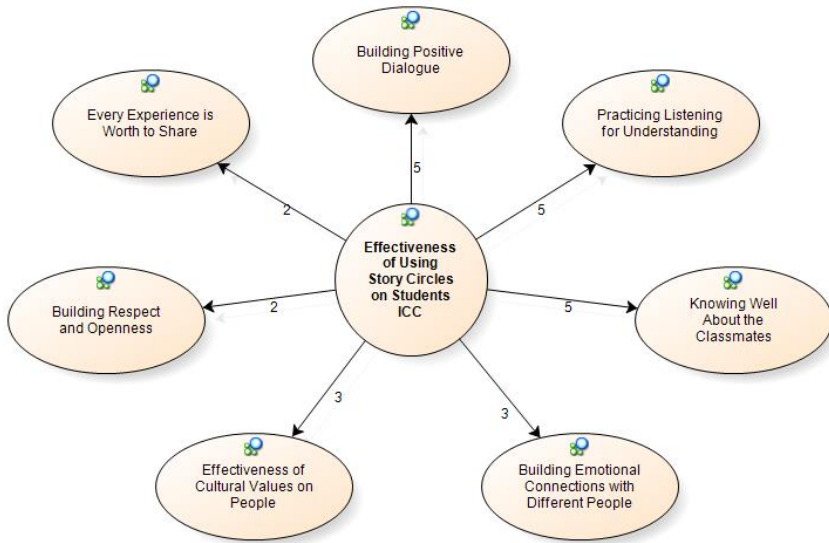


Figure 2. Effectiveness of Story Circles on ICC

The current research question was posed to ascertain the impact of employing the narrative circle technique on the ICC of students in FLT classes. The responders indicated a diverse range of viewpoints. Concerns regarding knowing about the classmates were widespread among others ($f=5$). P4F alluded to the notion of knowing classmates better saying 'Through the story circle activity, I had the opportunity to acquaint myself with one of my classmates and cultivate empathy as she shared her personal experience with us.' The other common concern is to build positive dialogue among people ($F=5$). P3M commented 'During the workshop, we fostered constructive conversation by exchanging our personal anecdotes within a warm atmosphere.'. It was suggested that story circle session

was an opportunity to practice listening for understanding (F=5). P2M put it '...We put aside our preconceived notions about one another and listened without passing judgment. For instance, I found it challenging to accept the wide range of racial and cultural backgrounds there. On the contrary, I tried not to pass judgment on my fellow participants and instead to empathize with them during the session'. 3 codes were identified as building emotional connections among people (F=3). In this case P6F thought 'We bonded emotionally with one another, and since then, our group has been getting together more regularly than before'. The next code was formed as understanding how cultural values affect others (F=3). As P4F reported 'My preconceived notions about different cultures were challenged during the session as I listened to the stories of my friends. I can't say they shift, but I do know I need to broaden my horizons'. A small number of participants (F=2) suggested that every experience is worth sharing. Talking about this issue P1F said 'Before it was my turn, all I could think was that my story doesn't hold up to the others'. But when I shared it with my pals, they showed genuine interest, and I finally felt like I belonged somewhere'. The last code was identified as building respect and openness towards others (F=2). The comment of P3M illustrated 'After the session, I confessed to myself that there are inevitable tensions in life. Divergent worldviews are possible. We often hear ridiculous claims made about others. We should treat the differences with dignity if we want to continue the conversation'.

What are the participants' perspectives on the impact of utilizing story circles on communication in the target language?

The third question unveiled the perspectives on the impacts of narrative circles on the proficiency to communicate in the target language, as depicted in the accompanying figure.

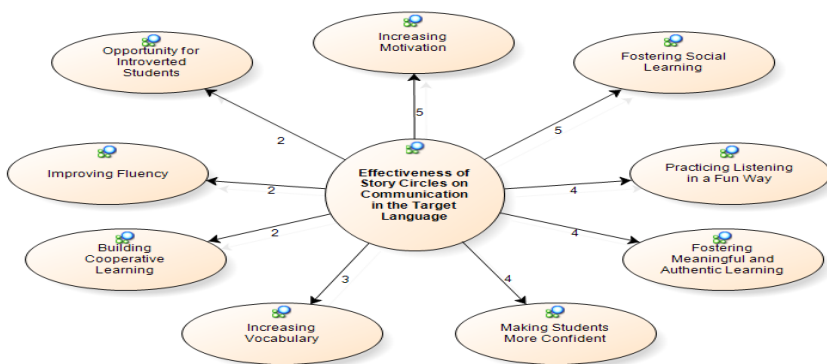


Figure 3: Effectiveness of Story Circles on Communication in the Target Language

A closer inspection of the figure showed that 9 positive codes were labelled. The first one is fostering the effect of story circles on social learning (F=5). Commenting on this code, P2M said 'The members of the storytelling group aren't the only ones who benefit from the Story Circle's audience participation. This is because the others can benefit from the story's communicative effect simply by seeing the group's interaction. During recess, for instance, students can talk about their day'. The other code that emerged was its increasing students' motivation (F=5). As P1F commented 'Group activities, such as the story circle, encourage me to speak up rather than listen passively to a presentation. Being a part of a community where my voice is valued and respected inspires me to do my best'. Talking about meaningful and authentic learning (F=4) P6F stated 'Teaching someone how to talk is a difficult task. When I graduate from college and start working as an English teacher, I hope to incorporate more opportunities for students to share their own anecdotes and insights in a similar fashion. They have more depth, which makes them more interesting and entertaining, and they last longer.' The next code was encouraging confidence in expressing themselves (F=4). In this case P2M said 'Even though I lacked the appropriate words to elaborate on my experience, I felt comfortable sharing my thoughts and feelings in the story circle setting.' Most of

the participants (F=4) stated that this activity was one of the useful ways to practice listening in a fun way. This view was echoed by P6F who put it 'You need to pay close attention so that you can relay the most fascinating aspect of each participant's tale at the session's conclusion. In this situation, however, I am able to devote my full attention to the person who is speaking. This exercise might thus be seen as a helpful means of fostering better active listening skills'. Half of the participants (F=3) declared that this activity has the potential to increase one vocabulary. P5F alluded this view saying 'I picked up a wide variety of new words to use in this situation, so I can see how this exercise could also assist kids improve their vocabulary in addition to their public speaking abilities'. The development of a collaborative learning environment was another issue that arose (F=2). P2M said 'During this activity, we collaborated in a small group, fostering a collective mindset that facilitated the acquisition of new knowledge'. The other code was the story circle activity's improving effect on fluency (F=2). P1F illustrated 'Due to the time constraint, I made an effort to understand what was being said and to respond quickly. Therefore, it compelled me to speak with greater fluency than usual'. The last code of the current category was the activity's being an opportunity for introverted students (F=2). P1F indicated 'A member of the group's voice was something I had never encountered before. She was Syrian, and at first we assumed she just didn't want to talk to us. Through this exercise, however, we were able to learn more about her background and cultural beliefs, as well as the explanation for her reserved attitude'.

What are the participants' perspectives on the overall disadvantages of the story circles?

Concerning the general drawbacks of the story circles in teaching speaking classes, 3 codes were identified.

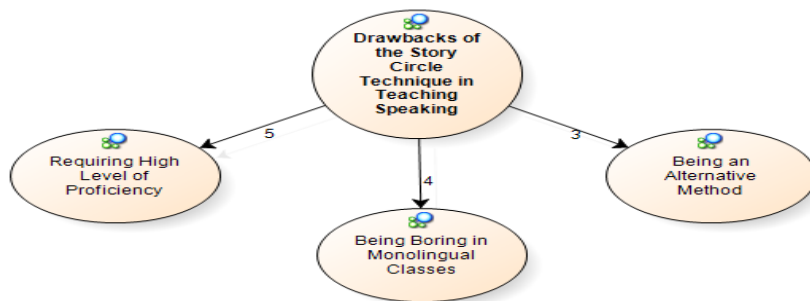


Figure 4. Drawbacks of Story Circle Activity

A majority of the participants (F=5) agreed with the statement that story circle activity requires a high level of target language proficiency. One respondent (P4F) reported 'The students must possess a high degree of competency in order to carry out this exercise in a general English teaching class. Otherwise, they will encounter difficulties in exchanging their knowledge. The presence of a language knowledge gap of that nature can lead to misconceptions, so hindering the activity from attaining its objectives'. A majority of respondents (F=4) indicated that in monolingual and monocultural classes the activity may be boring. For example, one respondent (P2M) said 'I had a great time participating in the activities we did. Since the lingua franca was English, I was able to learn a great deal about the cultures of the other members of the group. What if we try to have the same exercise in a class where everyone speaks the same language and there is no diversity of experience? It's possible the results won't be as good as with us'. The last code of this category was that the activity may be utilized as an alternative technique, not a main speaking technique (F=3). In this case P1F commented 'Some methods, including as simulating real-world scenarios, role playing, questioning, performing conversation, telling stories, and acting them out, can be utilized regularly in an intermediate-level or higher speaking class. Using these methods, both the instructor and the students can

improve the lesson's content. The experience shared in the narrative circle, however, needs to be authentic and engaging. Because of this, it can't replace the more commonplace methods'.

Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

This paper presents a study proposing the utilization of story circle activity in an EFL setting. Hence, the study has the capacity to provide a valuable contribution to the pertinent topic. The overall outcome of this study indicated that the participants of the story circle activity held favorable perspectives toward the utilization of story circles in EFL speaking classes. The primary research inquiry aimed to ascertain the importance of ICC in EFL classrooms. Incorporating intercultural knowledge into EFL programs is essential for students to enhance their intercultural skills, hence facilitating effective understanding and interaction in English. Previous research has highlighted the significance of ICC in the field of language instruction (Byram, 1997; Gu, 2016; Romanowski, 2017). The participants' responses indicated that there is a perceived need for ICC in EF) speaking classes. This need arises from the recognition of cultural differences among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, the importance of using and comprehending idiomatic expressions in the target language, the desire to prevent misunderstandings, and the goal of effective communication regardless of the context. The results were consistent with the findings of Estaji and Rahimi (2018), which emphasized the necessity of incorporating intercultural training into foreign language instruction. In a study conducted by Kahraman (2008), it was found that foreign language learners displayed a strong desire to acquire knowledge about the culture associated with the language they were learning. Alptekin (2002) found that ICC facilitated the development of intercultural awareness and enhanced learners' comfort in communication. Galante (2015) also found that incorporating Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) into English classes enhances communication with students from diverse

cultures and facilitates the comprehension of the values associated with various cultural identities.

Regarding the second study issue, it was determined that the utilization of narrative circles in EFL speaking classes proved to be an efficacious method for enhancing ICC. Story circles, as highlighted in the literature review, offer a platform for individuals from diverse backgrounds to examine intercultural parallels and distinctions (Deardorff, 2020). Within the realm of EFL programs, story circles can be utilized as a method to emphasize the need of promoting interaction with an emphasis on mutual respect and empathy. This outcome is probably connected to the technique's efficacy as an intercultural tool for cultivating intercultural competence with few resources. The outcome is comforting as both story-telling and story circle activities have the objective of enhancing language abilities in an enjoyable manner, fostering students' engagement in listening to stories and subsequently expressing their thoughts in a meaningful setting (Atta-Alla, 2012, Kim, 2010).

The third question in this investigation was to ascertain the impact of employing narrative circles on communication in the designated language. The results of this inquiry were entirely favorable. Thus, it can be employed as a substitute means of communication in EFL speaking classes. This finding broadly supports the work of other studies (Ghosn, 2002; Hsu, 2010; Kim, 2010; Afrilyasanti and Basthomi, 2011; Atta-Alla, 2012; Fikriah, 2016; Zuhriyah, 2017) in this area linking using storytelling activities with EFL teaching.

The last issue in this research was the drawbacks of using story circles in EFL speaking classes. Three codes were attained regarding this question. They are the activities that necessitate a significant level of foreign language expertise, have the potential to become tedious in courses with a single culture, and are not a primary strategy for speaking. Upon reviewing the literature, no data was discovered about the correlation between the utilization of story

circles and EFL. This is due to the fact that it is the researcher's first attempt at implementing story circles in EFL speaking classes, therefore limiting the available knowledge on the subject. Nevertheless, this outcome has the capacity to make a meaningful contribution to the pertinent domain. All in all, EFL classes should involve intercultural knowledge and skills to have an effective understanding and interaction in the target language. Story circles are a recommended strategy for developing intercultural competency. They serve as an effective intercultural tool. These activities can be conducted in many places and contexts, involving different groups, and offering a safe means to exchange personal experiences. The insights obtained from this study could be valuable for future research, as it addresses a significant matter. In prospective inquiries, it may be feasible to employ an experimental framework to assess the efficacy of story circles in EFL by means of statistical evidence. Furthermore, it is imperative to increase the utilization of this method for enhancing both ICC and proficiency in the target language within EFL environments.

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CHAPTER II

What do they Really Need?: An ESP Study Based on the Needs of a Private English Course's EFL Learners

Ümit Levent DEĞİRMENCİOĞLU¹

Introduction

Developing curriculum has been one of the hotly debated topics of L2 learning for a considerable amount of time. Different eras and different assumptions have led to different ways of carrying out pedagogical procedures. Much of these changes resulted because of constantly changing methods (Richards, 2001) as educators were continuously searching for the best method that was waiting to be discovered (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Around 1960s and 70s, the term English for specific purposes (ESP) was brought into our lives and it looked at L2 learning through a different window than that of General English (GE). ESP was identified as a learning and learner based syllabus design and it supported the idea of meeting learners' needs. This aspect distinguishes ESP from GE as the latter one

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provides learners with many aspects of the target language, both necessary and unnecessary (Dudley-Evans et al., 1998). The size of the difference between the two terms, ESP and GE, was explained by Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 53) as "in theory nothing, in practice a great deal." Therefore ESP has an effect that cannot be underestimated.

ESP gained much importance especially in the last decades considering the recent globalized world. Globalization led English to become the most dominant language of the world and as a result, the term English as Lingua Franca (ELF) has emerged. This situation created a huge difference in the modern world. English proficiency became a must and families enrolled their children to private schools with better English education so that they could have better job opportunities when they are grown. Social demand for qualified workers who are competent at English increased. Factors like this made English learning quite important to survive in the recent world. Curriculums with GE helped learners only to some extent nevertheless ESP offered more effective L2 learning.

ESP is more purposeful than GE. The aims and purposes are shaped according to the specific learners. Therefore, while in GE all four skills have the same importance, ESP determines which skills are necessary and should be taught (Rahman, 2015). ESP curriculum designs achieve their relevant teaching by identifying the language needs of the addressed learners. This identification process is considered as a cornerstone of ESP designs (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998) and it is called "Needs Analysis".

Needs Analysis

Having been introduced back in the 1970s through ESP movement (Flowerdew, 2013), needs analysis is one of the major aspects that distinguish ESP from other curriculum designs. Needs analysis was simply defined by Brown (2009) the process of collecting information about needs of a particular group that will shape a future curriculum. It is the first step of any ESP curriculum

which aims to meet learners' needs (Richards, 2001). Developing an ESP curriculum cannot be imagined without a needs analysis. Needs analysis have revealed that successful language learning does not stem from mastering the linguistic features of the target language. Instead, it is achieved by determining what the learners need with that language (West, 1994).

Until recently, needs analysis have been largely discarded from developing curriculums as it was believed to be difficult to specify the needs of learners (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). However, needs analysis proves to be quite effective at figuring out developmental needs of learners despite its difficulty.

To understand needs analysis, it is essential to understand what needs are. Since it is not quite straightforward, needs might often be regarded as learners' wants or desires from a language program (Brindley, 1984). However, Richards (2001) defines needs as language needs, which are required to cope with an English-dominant society. What the learners desire from a language curriculum cannot be considered as needs. This might sometimes result in misconceptions between teachers and learners since they both might have different opinions on the needs (Brindley, 1989).

Conducting needs analysis has also benefits on emotional factors of the learners. Most of the time in GE curriculums, learners cannot see the end product of their language learning processes. Consequently, the learners lose their interest and motivation in the middle of the educational term. Basturkmen (2014) suggests that along with equipping the learners with the aspects of English that they need, needs analysis will positively affect learners' motivations since they will be aware of the consequences of the program. The needs of the learners will be met and the feedback that is provided by the learners will be in favor of ESP.

Considering the points mentioned above, the present study will also implement a needs analysis to develop the contents of its own curriculum.

Purpose of the Study

ESP is purposeful in nature (Basturkmen, 2014) and therefore the present study set itself a number of aims that are in correlation with the insight that was provided by the administered instruments. In particular, the objectives of the present study were:

- To find out the learners' prospective professional needs
- To define the learners' English language needs
- To collect the learners' beliefs on their language needs
- To prepare a language curriculum consisting of 5 week that depends on the findings of the needs analysis.

Methodology

The study was administered in a private language course in Bursa, Turkey. Random sampling was used and the data collection method was chosen to be Mixed Method, involving both Quantitative and Qualitative Methods of data collection. The reason of this was to use Triangular Approach, a method to increase reliability of a study by using multiple data collection types. Quantitative data were collected through a survey that took about 4-5 minutes average for each participant. To support the data gathered from the survey, a semi-structured oral interview was also conducted with 8 participants who also filled in the survey. Since the survey was not online, the participants were kindly asked to spare 5 minutes of their time after a lesson. 2 weeks later, when the data was analyzed 8 learners were chosen voluntarily to take part in the interview.

The Participants

The participants were 18 Intermediate level students who had enrolled to a private English course in Bursa, a large city in Turkey. The participants were still studying in the specific course at the time the study was being conducted. The group consisted 10 female and 8 male students. The participants were aged between 20 and 28.

The Instruments

To assess the needs of the participant students, a survey that had been prepared by a European Foundation named Leonardo Da Vinci/ Lifelong Learning Program was used. The survey has 20 items all of which try to elaborate which aspects of the target language are the most needed by the participants. The original survey initially intended to assess the needs of vocational education students. Items 15, 17, 18, 19 and 20 were discarded since they were particularly addressed to these students. The void resulting from the removing of these items were compensated by moving the 16th item to the 15th. In the final form, the questionnaire had 15 items at total. The remaining items could be generalized to a broader range of students and therefore they were used in the study.

Additionally, 8 participants consisting of three female and five males agreed to further help the study by joining a semi-structured interview. The interview was done orally. The interview's first and major goal was to support the data that was collected from the survey. Because of this reason, the questions of the interviews were shaped according to the results of the survey. There were two interviews; the first one had two participants and the second one had six. Before the interviews, participants were kindly asked to give consent for audio recording.

Procedure

The data collection was administered by the researcher himself. First the students were asked if they would voluntarily participate in the study. 18 volunteer students took the written survey in the class together. 2 weeks later when the results of the survey were analyzed, interview questions were decided and volunteers from the same sample were chosen. With 8 volunteers, interview type of data gathering was administered. The conversation between the researcher and the participants were audio recorded and these recordings were then transcribed into text.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data of the study was evaluated by using SPSS Statistics program. The reliability score of the answers given to the survey was revealed to be $\alpha = .787$ which suggests that the survey was internally consistent. This is an impressive reliability score given the fact that the sample was only 18 people. The frequency of the given answers regarding the students' needs in the target language will be given in the next section through the data analyzed via SPSS.

Results

After the mean scores of each item in the survey was analyzed, it was revealed that the 8th item in the questionnaire had the lowest mean score ($M = 2.89$, $SD = .832$). This item was asking the participants whether they were feeling the need to express Turkish culture and lifestyles by using English. The second lowest mean score in the data was found in the third question ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.18$). This item was asking the students whether they needed to read any brochures or travel books in English.

On the other hand, the item with the highest mean score was revealed to be the 11th ($M = 4.83$, $SD = .383$) and the item with the second highest mean score was the 7th ($M = 4.78$, $SD = .548$). Both items were assessing the participants regarding their needs of using English in their professional fields. The third most popular item was a match between the 6th and the 10th items ($M = 4.72$, $SD = .460$). Respectively, the items were assessing the needs of expressing oneself in touristic locations comfortably and using the four skills (listening, reading, reading and writing) in daily life effectively.

The interview questions were shaped according to these data gathered from the survey. Since one of the most popular item in the questionnaire was assessing the needs of four skills, the interviewees were asked which one they needed the most: speaking, writing, grammar, listening or reading. The grammar was later added in this question as the first item which investigated the needs of using

English grammar effectively showed the necessity of using correct grammar ($M= 4.06$, $SD= .937$). Among 8 participants, 6 (75%) answered this question by stating that speaking is the most important skill for them. One of the remaining two participants pointed out the importance of all skills while the other merely said writing is the most important skill for her.

Another question of the interview was to get information concerning the participants' future goals. The participants were asked why they were learning English. They were informed that they could give more than one answer. Almost all of them ($N= 7$, 87.5%) stated the necessity of English for future job opportunities. Moreover, 4 (50%) also expressed that they would like to communicate with foreign people in the world while 3 (37.5%) reported that they would like to live abroad.

Finally, the participants were also asked to elaborate what they were doing to improve their English proficiency. They stated besides continuing to that specific English course, they were also watching foreign TV series.

Discussion

The needs analysis and the oral interview that was conducted with the participants led to findings that shape the design and content of this curriculum. The most obvious needs were revealed to be intercultural contexts, English that is used in professional areas and speaking skills. Each of these aspects will be discussed separately.

It is crystal clear that language teaching will also result in teaching culture of that particular culture (Thanasoulas, 2001). In our day and age, where cultural literacy is quite important, the learners need to be interculturally competent. After the EFL turned into ELF, one question emerged; which English should we teach, as with each different English, we teach a different culture (Kumaravadivelu, 2012). The survey revealed that the participant learners needed Turkish culture embedded in their curriculum the least. Therefore teaching aspects of Turkish culture through English should be

discarded from the language curriculum. This interpretation could be done by merely looking at the mean score of the 8th item since it is the lowest. Instead, using intercultural contexts in the curriculum will most likely be much more effective to these learners. This could be done by involving information about cultural events from all around the world. This might also help the learners get familiar with more cultures, not only English or American. An effective way to accomplish intercultural competence could be using technology for pedagogical purposes (e.g. Berardo & Deardorff, 2012; Godwin-Jones, 2013; Janto, Graaff & Jauregi, 2014). One of the technology's greatest opportunities; blogs could be quite effective in this regard. The learners might be asked to create their own online blogs and share some posts about cultural events related to particular countries. This will not only improve their English writing and vocabulary skills, but will also improve their intercultural communicative competence.

The two of the most popular items in the survey, 11th and 7th indicate that the participant learners are in need of using English in their professions. Given the fact that all 18 participants had different professions, it would be difficult to choose specifically one professional area to teach. This could have been done easily if all the participants had been carrying out the same profession. Instead, presentations of their jobs could be useful. Through role-playing activities and presentations, the students can practice the English they will use while carrying out their professions.

One of the third most popular items in the survey was using English in touristic contexts. This shows us the necessity the participants feel towards English when they go on a vacation. Role-playing tasks embedded in authentic meaningful contexts could be quite a big help in this regard. Moreover, Task Based Teaching can be quite effective when teaching authentic language. The students can be asked to work on a meaningful task together such as planning a trip to another country or booking hotel rooms.

The survey and the interviews proved that the participants would like to improve their skills especially speaking. Therefore the curriculum to be created will have lots of speaking tasks. These speaking tasks will be through authentic contexts thus the learners can carry their knowledge outside of classroom.

Weekly Objectives

The courses in this private course last for 5 weeks, therefore the curriculum will be consisting of 5 weeks accordingly. Each week's objectives, materials and processes have been categorized individually.

Week 1. The first week's major focus will be based on getting to know each other and other cultures around the world. This will be done through using online blogs. Each student will create their personal blogs and introduce themselves and their lives by posting on their blogs. The peers will later comment on each other's blogs. The students' next assignment will be choosing a foreign country and describing a cultural event that is unique to that specific country. These descriptions that were posted on the blogs will be presented orally in the class in the following lessons.

Week 2. The second week's main goal will be related to the learners' professions. Each student will introduce their jobs on their blogs and later present them in the class. Next, the students will later do role-playing activities with partners in the class and animate their routines in their professions.

Week 3. Professional language is one of the most crucial aspects of English for these participants. Therefore in the third week, the learners will practice writing e-mails to their colleagues and managers. They will do this tasks through their computers or smart phones.

Week 4. The participants stated that they did not want their English proficiencies improved in order to read travel books or brochures. Instead, they reported that they would like to acquire the

proficiency to communicate in touristic places. Therefore, this week's and the following week's main objectives will be centered around travelling. This week, the students will first describe their favorite touristic places on their online blogs and with their partners they will organize a trip to go to their favorite places.

Week 5. In the last week, the learners will practice accommodation in their favorite touristic places. They will role play authentic dialogues in hotels. They will focus on their problem solving skills.

The main objectives and materials of the 5-week curriculum could also be seen in table below.

Table 1. Weekly objectives and materials

	Objective	Materials
Week 1	The students will get acquainted by using online blogs	Online blogs, course book
Week 2	The students will describe their jobs through oral presentations and role-play their professional routines	Online blogs , Projector, Video Cameras
Week 3	The students will write e-mails to their colleagues and managers	Course book, Computers or smart phones
Week 4	The students will practice travelling to another country	Online blogs, task sheets, course book
Week 5	The students will practice dialogues in hotels through role-playing activities	Course book

Conclusion

This study aimed to create a 5-week language curriculum which is based on the participant learners language needs. The two steps needs analysis that was administered in the beginning of the research put forward that the participant learners needed to improve their productive and receptive skills- specifically speaking-, learn the English they could use in their professional areas, and learn how to communicate in touristic places. The students clearly reported that

they would not like to be taught Turkish culture and lifestyle in English, therefore the curriculum did not involve any Turkish cultural context. Instead, the program consisted many intercultural contexts for the learners to practice. This would improve their intercultural communicative competence along with their speaking skills. These extracted needs were covered with weekly objectives and each week's objectives were introduced individually. Moreover, the materials to be used while carrying out the weekly program were also added.

The 21st century is defined as the age of technology. Therefore the power of technology cannot be underestimated. Furthermore, it was strongly emphasized in this study's curriculum through online blogs, video cameras and smart phones. For a more effective and interesting language learning experience, the curriculum strongly needs varying uses of technology.

This study points out the importance of needs analysis and need-based curriculum designs by focusing on the needs of participant learners while creating its language program. However, it is limited by varying professions of the sample group. If all the participants had the same profession, more accurate assumptions with the curriculum objectives would have been made. Further studies could investigate the effects of needs analysis without this limitation.

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CHAPTER III

An Introspective Teacher Education Model: Reflective Approach

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Introduction

It is an undeniable fact that teachers play a role in effective learning in foreign language teaching. Although these heroes of the foreign language education process do their best, supporting them in professional competence will contribute to the learning process being much more efficient. Regarding professional competence, teacher training is both the beginning and the cornerstone of an effective learning/teaching process.

One of the areas where transformation/change in the world is perhaps very slow and has little impact is teacher education.

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Naturally, the world is changing/transforming very quickly. The internet age has made interaction much easier and brought with it change/transformation. Teacher education also received its share of this, at least partially. This paper aimed to shed light on teacher education and relevant issues.

The Teacher Education Spectrum: Towards Reflective Approach

Day (1993) examines the development of teacher education for second language instruction, with a specific emphasis on the ESL/EFL setting. It emphasizes the precedents in the requirements and standards for educators of L2. Historically, those who taught a second language were either native speakers of the language being taught or had significant expertise in the language, even if they did not have official training in language instruction. The minimum educational prerequisites were determined by proficiency in the literature and culture of the language being instructed, with native fluency frequently serving as the dominant criterion. Over the years, there has been a notable increase in the instruction and acquisition of second languages, especially in the field of teaching ESL/EFL and the training of language educators. This increase has resulted in a shift in the perception of what defines good language instruction and the need for more organized and thorough teacher training programs in ESL/EFL.

Öztürk (2021) delves into the multifaceted nature of teaching, highlighting various domains including content, pedagogy, practicality, and technology. Initially, emphasis was placed on teachers possessing robust content knowledge, where they were expected to master the subject matter which they taught comprehensively. This evolved to include pedagogical expertise, encompassing teaching methods and processes independent of specific subject areas. Shulman (1987) introduced the integration of content knowledge and pedagogical strategies as essential components within teachers' minds, leading to the concept of pedagogical content knowledge, which is crucial for teachers to

master. Öztürk (2021) highlights that teachers' knowledge is considered vital for their competence and plays a crucial role in both their development and their students' progress. This knowledge is seen as dynamic, situated, and subject to reconstruction and reshaping. Practical knowledge, gained through experience, holds a significant place in teachers' competence, characterized by its situational, theoretical, personal, and contextualized nature. He states that teacher knowledge is viewed as an amalgamation of content, pedagogy, and technology, indicating a dynamic relationship between these components (Koehler & Mishra, 2005).

Wallace emphasized the disparity between theoretical concepts and their practical application from the replies and complaints of experienced teachers and noted that this problem is not peculiar to teaching but found in every profession. He states that there exist three main models of professional education for teachers. These models are respectively and chronologically "the craft model, the applied science model, and the reflective model". The first model, the craft model, basically requires the trainee to study with an expert, follow and replicate the expert's instructions, guidance, and suggestions. In this model, the basic principle is the transformation of the information from the expert/master to apprentice/novice. This method, regardless of its efficacy, is conservationist and is dependent upon static communities. That's way, it brings on adaptation difficulties to new approaches and methodologies that the modern, dynamic, and changing societies necessitate.

On the other hand, according to Wallace (1991), the applied science model, or with Schön's term "technical rationality" (1987), is the classical and the most common model used in teacher education or training programs. It is based on the empirical science/scientific knowledge ground. Experts transfer scientific knowledge such as the findings, results, implications, and facts founded out from empirical studies to the apprentices. The trainees are expected to apply whatever they are given and try to come

through the same conclusions/findings. In case of any failure, it is assumed that either they have not fully and/or thoroughly understood or applied what they had been given and taught. For the applied science model, Wallace highlights some points as criticism. The experts, especially teaching professionals, are mostly far from the real practice scene/day-to-day practice of the profession, engaging their studies from the universities or other institutions. This gap causes a difference as "thinkers" and "doers" between experts and practitioners. Therefore, while experts/thinkers mainly focus on theoretical knowledge at the academic level, the trainees are on the side of practice/practical knowledge. This situation leads to the distinction between research and practice, making both sides strangers and/or antipathetic to one another.

Wallace (1991) points out that professional knowledge, in general, involves "received knowledge" and "experiential knowledge". The former one requires the trainees to learn and know certain theories, facts, concepts and so on while the latter one is more related to day-to-day practices and learning from them. He refers to the craft model by experiential knowledge and to the applied science model by received knowledge. However, he highlights that each has weaknesses along with strengths, and that's way each model is not competent enough to cater for the needs and to solve the problems of teacher education programs. He took a compromising position and proposed an alternative model which attaches importance to both craft and applied science models, and additionally to reflection on both: the reflective model.

The reflective model aims to relate received knowledge to experiential knowledge, in other words, theory to practice. It is a kind of mixture of the two. Another important issue is that no trainee, apprentice, or whatever it is called as a true beginner to the teacher education process, s/he has not tabula rasa, impartial perspectives or preconvinced notions. True or false, voluntarily or involuntarily, intentionally or unintentionally, shortly one way or the other, they bring some collection of cognitive or mental frameworks, structures, ideas, attitudes, beliefs, etc. called as "conceptual schemata" with

them to the process. These conceptions might be resulted from their observations of previous teachers, from their readings, experiences, personality characteristics, cultural backgrounds, social dynamics and so on. According to Wallace, the trainees' background information is crucial to the optimum level of efficiency of the teacher education programs.

According to Wallace, reflective practice holds greater value for professional education and growth compared to unreflective practice. However, the significance of reflection lies not only in its existence, but also in the quality thereof. When reflection results in productive transformation, it is important to acknowledge the advantages of the reflective model.

There have been suggestions that teachers may also engage in research activities, having a role of teachers as researchers. There is a prevailing belief that this would effectively reconcile the disparity between theoretical concepts and practical application. However, despite its apparent appeal, certain challenges such as limited time, budgetary constraints, the need for specialized research skills, individual personality traits, and other factors can significantly impede the process.

In their paper as a reaction and critical analysis of Medgyes' study titled "The (ir)relevance of academic research for the language teacher" (2017), Şanverdi and Ekinçi (2022) addressed this issue whether language teachers need to possess both teaching and research skills, considering the challenges they face in their profession and the gap between academic research and classroom practices. They stated that Medgyes highlights a lack of emphasis on research in language teaching conferences and the limited engagement with published research among teachers. Reasons for this include time constraints, difficulty understanding academic studies, and insufficient practical application in their teaching. He criticizes researchers for prioritizing their careers over addressing teachers' real-life issues and claims that researchers are unsuccessful in connecting theoretical concepts with practical application.

Medgyes (2017) points out problems such as the isolation of researchers, lack of collaboration among different fields in language education, and contradictions within research that hinder its practical implementation. He concludes that the failure of academic research to impact classroom practices lies more with researchers than teachers. He also acknowledges advancements in language research but laments that these developments haven't translated proportionally into language education. He notes that despite methodological changes, classroom practices remain largely unchanged.

Şanverdi and Ekinçi (2022) agree with Medgyes' observations on the challenges faced by teachers in engaging with research, such as time constraints, limited access, and the gap between theoretical research and practical application. It concurs that teachers' roles are evolving beyond traditional teaching to include reflective practices, problem-solving, and critical engagement with societal issues. However, they disagree with Medgyes' assertion that teachers' primary role is solely teaching students, arguing that contemporary teaching requires a broader skill set, including research abilities. It also disputes the preference for the term "inquirer" over "researcher," viewing both terms as interchangeable.

They emphasize the importance of fostering a culture of research within teaching communities and providing conducive conditions for teachers to engage in research. It acknowledges that teachers are increasingly motivated by internal factors to conduct research for professional development and effective teaching. They affirm the need for teachers to embrace research skills alongside teaching abilities and stress the importance of bridging the gap between ideal pedagogical methods and real classroom practices through reflective and research-based approaches, echoing Medgyes' call for internal motivation in teachers' research endeavors.

Due to these aforementioned factors, it has been proposed that educators may exhibit greater interest in engaging in "action research," a form of inquiry that affords them greater autonomy and

pertinence in addressing classroom-related concerns, hence yielding practical solutions and outcomes in their own context. Through the use of action research, "the study of singularities" (Bassey, 1986:21), teachers might come up with a solution within a little timeframe and without extensive investigations and make modifications to their teaching methods. Burns (2016) defines action research as a necessary means to reconcile the disparity between the ideal (the most efficient methods of doing things) and the real (the actual methods of doing things) within a social context (Burns, 2016).

Burns (2015) highlights the key attributes action research shares as a) involves conducting research to bring about positive changes and improvements in the social context or situation of the participants involved. It aims to generate both theoretical and practical knowledge about the situation being studied, combining academic insights with real-world application. It encourages active involvement, collaboration, and engagement of participants who are directly involved in the situation being studied. It fosters a sense of collective responsibility and participation in the research process. Participants in action research adopt an attitude of continuous change, self-development, and growth. This approach involves ongoing reflection, adaptation, and openness to evolving perspectives and practices. Through action research, participants engage in introspection and reflection on their behaviors, actions, and interactions with others within the research context. Deliberate interventions are made to question and improve current practices based on insights gained from research findings. Research methods are adapted or modified to address emerging issues directly observed in the social situation being studied. There's a readiness to modify research goals and questions as understanding and insights into the social situation deepen and expand. Overall, Action Research is characterized by its participatory nature, continuous learning stance, and its focus on bringing about practical, positive changes in the social context under study while generating new knowledge through collaborative inquiry.

On the other hand, Şanverdi (2021) provided a comprehensive review of studies concerning the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Türkiye regarding their professional development (PD). He primarily focused on such aspects: the teachers' understanding of PD, the types of PD practices, barriers to PD, and the influence of variables such as experience, age, gender, and institution type on PD. The study explores the landscape of Professional Development (PD) programs for Teacher Education (TE) in Türkiye, specifically focusing on in-service training for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. It emphasizes the importance of evolving educational contexts and the need for teachers to continuously update their knowledge and skills to meet the dynamic demands of the teaching profession. Key findings and observations from the study include positive perceptions, negative perceptions and misperceptions. If to mention briefly, most participants view PD positively, recognizing its necessity and benefits in improving teaching skills and methodology. They see it as a means to enhance their knowledge, change perceptions, and foster lifelong learning. However, some participants perceive in-service training programs as repetitive, time-consuming, and delivering traditional theoretical knowledge, leading to skepticism about their effectiveness. On the other hand, some others associate PD with unrelated activities like language exams or academic career pursuits, rather than directly benefiting teaching practices. In terms of factors influencing PD perceptions, Şanverdi (2021) viewed into experience, age, gender, and type of institution. Hereof, experience doesn't significantly alter perceptions, but it does influence preferences for specific PD activities. Older teachers show less inclination towards PD, despite having positive perceptions. Women are more inclined towards participating in PD compared to men. Teachers in private schools show more interest in PD compared to those in public schools.

For the engagement in PD activities, Şanverdi (2021) stated that traditional PD activities like courses, workshops, and seminars are more commonly attended or preferred. Contemporary methods

like action research, peer coaching, and team teaching are often overlooked. Also, some teachers prefer their own experiences over traditional training as they gain mastery in their profession, while a minority actively seeks more innovative approaches. On the other hand, common obstacles to PD include excessive workload, lack of time and information, lack of interest, and demotivating factors from various sources such as family, institutions, or finances.

In short, the study reveals that while the majority of EFL teachers have positive perceptions of PD, there are significant numbers with negative or misaligned perceptions. Various factors like experience, age, gender, and institutional type influence their engagement in PD activities. Common obstacles remain consistent with broader literature, hindering teachers' participation in professional development. Şanverdi (2021) emphasizes the need for more diverse, dynamic, and effective PD programs tailored to the evolving needs of EFL teachers in Türkiye, addressing their concerns and preferences to ensure continuous professional growth in the teaching profession.

Conclusion

This paper aims to explore the pivotal role of instructors in foreign language instruction and highlights the imperative of providing them with support to enhance their professional competence, so ensuring effective learning. The paper examines the progression of teacher education, specifically examining different paradigms like the craft model, applied science model, and reflective model. It emphasizes the merits and drawbacks of each model in terms of educating educators.

Day (1993) and Öztürk (2021) examine the historical and changing demands placed on language educators, with a particular focus on the transition towards more structured and all-encompassing teacher training programs. Wallace (1991) presents three primary models of professional education for teachers: the craft model, the applied science model, and the reflective model.

Additionally, Wallace suggests a hybrid model that integrates aspects of both craft and applied science, with a particular emphasis on reflection.

The reflective model endeavors to close the divide between academic knowledge and actual experience in the field of teaching. Nevertheless, the task of incorporating research into teaching methods remains difficult, as noted by Medgyes (2017) and examined by Şanverdi and Ekinçi (2022). The authors examine the disparity between scholarly research and the practicalities of the classroom, emphasizing the constrained involvement of instructors in research due to time limitations and challenges in comprehending and implementing academic studies. In order to tackle these difficulties, educators suggest the use of action research, which enables teachers to carry out research within their classrooms, with the goal of implementing practical solutions and enhancing teaching methodologies. According to Burns (2016), action research is a method used to address the difference between the ideal teaching methods and the actual practices in the classroom, taking into account the social context.

In addition, Şanverdi (2021) offers valuable insights into the perspectives of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Türkiye regarding professional development (PD) programs. Although a majority of teachers hold a favorable opinion of professional development (PD) and acknowledge its advantages, a portion of them consider it monotonous or not directly applicable to their instructional methods. Teachers' engagement in professional development (PD) activities is influenced by several characteristics, including experience, age, gender, and institutional type. Traditional methods are generally favored over newer ones such as action research.

This paper emphasizes the significance of continuous professional development for language instructors, focusing on the difficulties in teacher education models and suggesting methods such as action research to connect theoretical knowledge with

practical application in the classroom. The statement underscores the necessity for PD programs that are more adaptable and personalized, in order to address the changing requirements of language instructors and ensure their ongoing professional development.

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CHAPTER IV

Holistic and Analytic Scoring in Writing Assessment: A Problematic Conundrum

Nuray Alagözlü¹

Introduction

It is evident that teaching and testing are closely linked together. Teachers need to know how to test students' performance to see if the content of teaching has been learned or not and how the learners have progressed in the learning process. As testing is a part of learning, it lets students "show what they know" and what they can do; their strengths and weaknesses, all of which are useful to make decisions for the content of teaching. To Hughes (2002), "testing is an obedient servant to teaching since it follows teaching and shapes it." In addition to measuring student performance and

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specifying course content and related skills, instructional materials may be designed/redesigned using the examination of test results.

Due to the crucial role of tests in measuring student performance, specifying course content and instructional materials, and also making educational decisions, as well as accurate measurement of student performance is of vital importance in testing. Accurate measurement of students' true performances or achievements may not be possible in some cases. Students' true abilities are not always reflected in the test scores. A test may not measure accurately for several reasons.

One reason is the mismatch between test content and test techniques. The techniques must be appropriately selected and used. For example, in testing writing, large compositions are not practical, but multiple choice test are not appropriate. Creating multiple choice items are easy to write, but measure writing poorly. Certain standards need to be met in the preparation of appropriate tests for a specific content and skill to allow for accurate measurement of students' performance.

The second reason why tests may not measure accurately is the lack of reliability of the tests. Reliability of a test refers to consistent measurements at different times on different occasions. It is expected that repeated implementation of the test must yield consistent and similar results. We must be confident that the students will get more or less the same score in repeated measurements with the same test at different times (Hughes, 2002). The sources of unreliability relate to the interaction between test characteristics and the test taker: Unclear and ambiguous items that must be minimized and the scoring of the test that must be standardized. If the same test is scored differently by the different scorers/markers and show far different results which are not correlated with each other, this is the source of unreliability. In some cases, even the same marker may score the same test differently, known as the absence of intra-rater reliability.

The third reason for inaccurate measurement of the tests is the problem of validity in the tests constructed. It is obligatory to *test*

what we teach/want to test. Test validity refers to **the extent to which a test (such as a chemical, physical, or scholastic test) accurately measures what it is supposed to measure** (Hughes, 2002). “Whether an appropriate balance of different aspects of the curriculum is represented in assessment” (*content validity*) or whether “the skills, knowledge and behaviours comprising the focus of assessment are consistent with the intended learnings” (*construct validity*) (Hill, 2017)

To achieve accurate measurement of student performance in language teaching, language various approaches have been adopted so far such as direct vs. indirect testing, discrete point versus integrative testing, norm referenced versus criterion referenced testing, objective versus subjective testing, computer adaptive testing, and communicative testing (see Hughes, 2002 for a comprehensive review).

Assessing writing is a critical component of educational evaluation, shaping the way students develop their writing skills and express their ideas. Two primary assessment methods, holistic and analytic scoring, are generally utilized to evaluate writing. Each approach offers distinct advantages and insights into a student's writing abilities. However, navigating the delicate balance between these two approaches poses a significant challenge, with various problems and complexities that need to be addressed.

Weigle (2002) compares holistic and analytic scoring under five categories: reliability, construct validity, practicality, impact, and authenticity. In terms of reliability, analytic scales provide a higher level than holistic scales. As to construct validity, holistic scoring is thought to measure all the relevant intended subskills of writing with a single score whereas analytic scoring divides writing skill into separate units which develop at different rates. Thirdly, holistic scoring is more practical, faster and economical than analytic scoring. Analytic scoring offers a way to accurately diagnose the weakness and strenghts of students' writing proficiency and offers ways to improve their writing ability. Regarding authenticity,

evaluating writing holistically is a more natural activity than analytical evaluation. In order to achieve the same authenticity level with holistic scoring, raters can adjust analytic scales to impressionistic holistic scales.

Table 1 *A comparison of holistic and analytic scales (Weigle, 2002; Nakamura, 2004)*

	Holistic Scoring	Analytic Scoring
Reliability	A lower holistic score than an analytical one is nevertheless acceptable.	Analytic scoring is higher than holistic scoring.
Construct Validity	Holistic scoring makes the assumption that all important writing skills can be measured with a single score and develop at the same rate.	Since different components of writing ability improve at different rates, analytic scoring is more suited for L2 writers.
Practicality	Holistic scoring is faster and easier than analytic scoring.	Analytic scoring is time-consuming and not economical.
Impact	Uneven writing profiles may be concealed by a single score, which could result in inaccurate placement.	When scales offer accurate diagnostic data for placement, rater training will benefit more from their use.
Authenticity	According to White (1995), reading holistically rather than analytically is a more natural activity.	Raters may read a document holistically and modify analytical ratings to reflect the impressions made.

Holistic scoring takes a broad approach to assessing writing. It involves evaluating a piece of writing as a whole, considering overall effectiveness, coherence, and overall impression. Rather than splitting the writing into specific components or criteria, holistic scoring seeks to provide a comprehensive judgment of the work (Wiegler, 2002; Nakamura, 2004; Hughes, 2002).

One of the key benefits of holistic scoring is its efficiency and practicality. It allows for quick and straightforward evaluation, making it suitable for large-scale assessments, such as standardized tests. Additionally, holistic scoring is less intimidating for novice raters or students, as it does not require a deep understanding of the specific elements of writing.

However, holistic scoring has limitations. It may not provide detailed feedback to students regarding their strengths and weaknesses in writing. This lack of specificity can make it challenging for students to understand how to improve their writing skills. Furthermore, holistic scoring may not capture nuances and subtleties in writing, potentially overlooking areas where a student excels or struggles.

Analytic scoring, on the other hand, divides the assessment of writing into distinct components or criteria. These criteria can include aspects like organization, clarity, grammar, vocabulary, and coherence. Each component is evaluated separately, and a final score is often obtained by summing up the scores for each criterion.

Analytic scoring offers several advantages. Firstly, it provides detailed feedback to both students and teachers. By identifying specific areas of strength and weakness, students can work on improving their writing skills more effectively. Secondly, it helps a more precise diagnosis of writing proficiency, which can inform instructional strategies adjusted to individual needs. Lastly, analytic scoring can be particularly valuable in educational settings where writing improvement is a primary focus.

Analytic scoring also has disadvantages, it can be time-consuming and requires trained raters who are capable of consistently applying the criteria. Moreover, the division of writing into separate components can sometimes lead to an overly fragmented view, so the overall quality of the writing may not be measured.

2. Which works best: Holistic or Analytic Scoring?

To determine which scoring method is most appropriate for a given context, it is essential to consider the specific goals of the assessment and the resources available. Holistic scoring is better suited for large-scale assessments where efficiency is crucial and a broad overview of writing proficiency is sufficient. Standardized high stakes tests like the SAT and GRE often employ holistic scoring to evaluate a large number of essays quickly.

Analytic scoring, on the other hand, is valuable when the goal is to provide detailed feedback to students and inform instruction (Thomas, 2020). In classroom settings or writing workshops, teachers often use analytic scoring to help students identify and work on specific areas for improvement.

It is also worth noting that these two scoring methods are not mutually exclusive. In practice, a combination of both holistic and analytic scoring can be employed to strike a balance between efficiency and specificity. For example, holistic scoring can provide an initial impression of a student's writing and it may be followed by analytic scoring to offer more detailed feedback.

In conclusion, holistic and analytic scoring in writing assessment are two distinct approaches. Each has its own set of advantages and limitations. Holistic scoring provides a broad overview of writing proficiency and is efficient for large-scale assessments. Analytic scoring, on the other hand, offers detailed feedback and a more precise evaluation of writing skills, making it valuable for instructional purposes. The choice between these methods should be guided by the specific goals and resources of the

assessment, and in many cases, a combination of both approaches may provide the most comprehensive assessment of a student's writing abilities (Goulden, 1989; Gilferd et al., 1992).

3. The assessment of writing has a complexity of problems that need to be addressed.

One of the prominent problems associated with the use of holistic and analytic assessment in writing is the potential lack of consistency in grading, which is expressed with the term 'Reliability'. Holistic scoring, with its emphasis on overall impression and coherence, can be subjective, leading to variations in evaluations from one rater to another. This subjectivity can raise concerns about the reliability and validity of assessment results. Analytic scoring, while providing more detailed criteria, can also be inconsistent if raters do not adhere to the same standards. This lack of consistency can undermine the fairness and credibility of the assessment process (Huot, 1990)

Another challenge is to establish the right balance between efficiency and specificity in assessment. Holistic scoring is often favored for its efficiency, specifically in large-scale testing situations. However, it may not provide the specific feedback that students need to improve their writing skills, but analytic scoring does. Nevertheless, analytic scoring, while offering detailed feedback, can be time-consuming and resource-intensive, making it less feasible for high-stakes assessments with numerous participants. Achieving a balance that ensures both efficiency and specificity is essential, but often proves to be a complex endeavor.

Holistic scoring tends to provide an overall evaluation of writing quality but may lack the diagnostic value required to pinpoint specific areas where students need improvement. Analytic scoring, with its breakdown of criteria, offers a more precise diagnosis, but this approach may overly focus on minor issues and fail to capture the overall proficiency of the writer. The problem lies in how to extract meaningful insights from both methods to inform effective teaching and learning strategies.

As another problem in utilizing these two approaches to writing assessment, a need for training and rater expertise in both holistic and analytic assessment methods is to be highlighted. Ensuring that raters consistently apply scoring criteria and maintain the integrity of the assessment process is a formidable challenge. Inexperienced or inadequately trained raters can introduce inconsistencies and bias into the assessment, further complicating the evaluation process.

Contextual variations may also affect the effectiveness of holistic and analytic assessment together with the purpose of the writing assessment. What works well for standardized testing may not be suitable for classroom assessment or writing workshops. Adapting these methods to diverse educational settings while maintaining their reliability and validity poses an ongoing problem (Wiseman, 2008, 2012, Metruk, 2018)

In summary, the use of holistic and analytic assessment in testing writing presents various problems that educators, researchers, and policymakers must address. These problems involve achieving consistency in assessment, balancing efficiency and specificity, maximizing diagnostic value, ensuring rater expertise, and adapting methods to different contexts. Dealing with these challenges is essential to develop effective writing assessment strategies that promote student learning and growth while maintaining the integrity of the assessment process (White, 1994).

4-Representative Sample Scales

It is evident that teaching writing encompasses testing and evaluation of the written texts which is perhaps the most challenging part of the process. It is equally challenging to find or develop an appropriate scale to be used for testing writing.

Two approaches to scoring writing which have been commonly adopted in practice: *Holistic and analytic* scoring can be exemplified by three holistic and two analytic scales: 1) a holistic scale in Hughes (2002) (2) ACTFL (American Council of the

Teaching of Foreign Languages), (3) Marking Rubrics of TOEFL Independent Writing Task (4) Anderson's (1987) analytic scale, and (5) Jacobs et al.'s (1981) analytic scale (in Hughes, 2002) (Appendices 1-5).

A first sample holistic scale in Hughes (2002, p.96-97), comprises eight descriptors which are quite vague and open for different interpretations. Raters will not possibly negotiate on the students' levels of writing proficiency as the descriptors do not provide detailing specific requirements for both content and language.

Another holistic scale developed for the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) examination is described in the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines. The scale describes five major levels of proficiency: Distinguished, Superior, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice. Each level presents a specific range of abilities. The major levels Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice are divided into High, Mid, and Low sub-levels.

When compared with the first scale, the ACTFL rubric is relatively more applicable with clearer descriptors. However, the levels still cover a wide range of sub-descriptors and this may confuse the scorers with what the bands exactly refer to, therefore there might be a need for training for the scorers. Otherwise, the scale may not discriminate well among the students writing proficiency.

In the first scale, it is suggested that each band should include more comprehensive descriptions of writing elements, including vocabulary, grammar, style, and organization. Although the second holistic scale was more far reaching and descriptive, it can still be improved in terms of the descriptors so that the raters could feel more comfortable in scoring. Regarding the rubrics of TOEFL Independent Writing Task, the requirements for the assigned scores vary from one scorer to another, which may lead to high level inconsistency in assessment, resulting in the lack of reliability and validity.

Among the analytic scales, Anderson's analytic scale mainly involves assessing different aspects of writing such as grammar, vocabulary, fluency (style and ease of communication), form (organisation), and mechanics. Each component is given equal weight. Assessing each aspect of writing makes the scorers feel comfortable in reaching a consensus about the writing proficiency levels of the students.

In Jacob et al's analytic scale, which also includes content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics, the 'content' is given the greatest weight and 'mechanics' the least. The weightings given to each component may change according to the purpose of assessment and the level of students as well as the goal of the educational institutions.

The evaluators are likely to encounter both advantages and challenges in using analytic scales for scoring. The first scale seems to be quick and straightforward, but its descriptions do not sufficiently clarify what is expected from the students in terms of rhetoric and language use. Although the descriptors have clear points, choosing between the two closest descriptors might pose difficulties.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, both scoring systems exhibit both drawbacks and benefits, highlighting the importance of selecting an appropriate system based on the testing purpose. Holistic scales may be advantageous for larger groups with lower stakes, such as placement tests. Conversely, analytic scales are better suited for diagnostic and achievement tests, where evaluating sub-dimensions of writing ability is essential. Combining both scoring systems could enhance the effectiveness of assessing writing skills.

Holistic scales are too generic and lack detailed information on language use and structure. The analytic scales are more objective than the holistic scales. Vague and all-inclusive descriptors in holistic scales cause some problems in drawing conclusions and

understanding the properties of the specific descriptive levels in the essays in spite of their practicality.

On the other hand, analytic scales' descriptors are clear, relevant, and to-the-point, which allows raters to assign the essays to correct scores. They are easier to use. Clear descriptors are negotiable by the raters. They permit the raters to find a score that best fits the performance of the students. However, total agreement rate may not be very high, which displays scales still need to be discriminating and fine grained.

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Appendix 1

A Holistic Scale for testing writing proficiency (in Hughes, 2002)

NS Native speaker standard

NS- Close to native speaker standard

MA Clearly more than adequate

MA- Possibly more than adequate

A ADEQUATE FOR STUDY AT THIS UNIVERSITY

D Doubtful

NA Clearly not adequate

FBA Far below adequate

Appendix 2

The ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012—Writing

<https://www.actfl.org/educator-resources/actfl-proficiency-guidelines/english/english-writing>

Distinguished
Writers at the Distinguished level can carry out formal writing tasks such as official correspondence, position papers, and journal articles. They can write analytically on professional, academic, and societal issues. In addition, Distinguished-level writers are able to address world issues in a highly conceptualized fashion. These writers can use persuasive and hypothetical discourse as representational techniques, allowing them to advocate a position that is not necessarily their own. They are also able to communicate subtlety and nuance. Distinguished-level writing is sophisticated and is directed to sophisticated readers. Writers at this level write to their audience; they tailor their language to their readers. Distinguished-level writing is dense and complex; yet, it is characterized by an economy of expression. The writing is skillfully crafted and is organized in a way that reflects target-culture thought patterns. At the Distinguished level, length is not a determining factor. Distinguished-level texts can be as short as a poem or as long as a treatise. Writers at the Distinguished level demonstrate control of complex lexical, grammatical, syntactic, and stylistic features of the language. Discourse structure and punctuation are used strategically, not only to organize meaning but also to enhance it. Conventions are generally appropriate to the text modality and the target culture.
Superior
Writers at the Superior level are able to produce most kinds of formal and informal correspondence, in-depth summaries, reports, and research papers on a variety of social, academic, and professional topics. Their treatment of these issues moves beyond the concrete to the abstract. Writers at the Superior level demonstrate the ability to explain complex matters, and to present and support opinions by developing cogent arguments and hypotheses. Their treatment of the topic is enhanced by the effective use of structure, lexicon, and writing protocols. They organize and prioritize ideas to convey to the reader what is significant. The relationship among ideas is consistently clear, due to organizational and developmental principles (e.g., cause and effect, comparison, chronology). These writers are capable of extended treatment of a topic which typically requires at least a series of paragraphs, but can extend to a number of pages. Writers at the Superior level demonstrate a high degree of control of grammar and syntax, of both general and specialized/professional vocabulary, of spelling or symbol production, of cohesive devices, and of punctuation. Their vocabulary is precise and varied. Writers at this level direct their writing to their audiences; their writing fluency eases the reader's task. Writers at the Superior level do not typically control target-language cultural, organizational, or stylistic patterns. At the Superior level, writers demonstrate no pattern of error; however, occasional errors may occur, particularly in low-frequency structures. When present, these errors do not interfere with comprehension, and they rarely distract the native reader.

Advanced
Writers at the Advanced level are characterized by the ability to write routine informal and some formal correspondence, as well as narratives, descriptions, and summaries of a factual nature. They can narrate and describe in the major time frames of past, present, and future, using paraphrasing and elaboration to provide clarity. Advanced-level writers produce connected discourse of paragraph length and structure. At this level, writers show good control of the most frequently used structures and generic vocabulary, allowing them to be understood by those unaccustomed to the writing of non-natives.
Advanced High
Writers at the Advanced High sublevel are able to write about a variety of topics with significant precision and detail. They can handle informal and formal correspondence according to appropriate conventions. They can write summaries and reports of a factual nature. They can also write extensively about topics relating to particular interests and special areas of competence, although their writing tends to emphasize the concrete aspects of such topics. Advanced High writers can narrate and describe in the major time frames, with solid control of aspect. In addition, they are able to demonstrate the ability to handle writing tasks associated with the Superior level, such as developing arguments and constructing hypotheses, but are not able to do this all of the time; they cannot produce Superior-level writing consistently across a variety of topics treated abstractly or generally. They have good control of a range of grammatical structures and a fairly wide general vocabulary. When writing at the Advanced level, they often show remarkable ease of expression, but under the demands of Superior-level writing tasks, patterns of error appear. The linguistic limitations of Advanced High writing may occasionally distract the native reader from the message.
Advanced Mid
Writers at the Advanced Mid sublevel are able to meet a range of work and/or academic writing needs. They demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe with detail in all major time frames with good control of aspect. They are able to write straightforward summaries on topics of general interest. Their writing exhibits a variety of cohesive devices in texts up to several paragraphs in length. There is good control of the most frequently used target-language syntactic structures and a range of general vocabulary. Most often, thoughts are expressed clearly and supported by some elaboration. This writing incorporates organizational features both of the target language and the writer's first language and may at times resemble oral discourse. Writing at the Advanced Mid sublevel is understood readily by natives not used to the writing of non-natives. When called on to perform functions or to treat issues at the Superior level, Advanced-Mid writers will manifest a decline in the quality and/or quantity of their writing.
Advanced Low
Writers at the Advanced Low sublevel are able to meet basic work and/or academic writing needs. They demonstrate the ability to narrate and describe in major time frames with some control of aspect. They are able to compose simple summaries on familiar topics. Advanced Low writers are able to combine and link sentences into texts of paragraph length and structure. Their writing, while adequate to satisfy the criteria of the Advanced level, may not be substantive. Writers at the Advanced Low sublevel demonstrate the ability to incorporate a limited number of cohesive devices, and may resort to some redundancy and awkward repetition. They rely on patterns of oral discourse and the writing style of their first language. These writers demonstrate minimal control of common structures and vocabulary associated with the Advanced level. Their writing is understood by natives not accustomed to the writing of non-natives, although some additional effort may be required in the reading of the text. When attempting to perform functions at the Superior level, their writing will deteriorate significantly.
Intermediate

Writers at the Intermediate level are characterized by the ability to meet practical writing needs, such as simple messages and letters, requests for information, and notes. In addition, they can ask and respond to simple questions in writing. These writers can create with the language and communicate simple facts and ideas in a series of loosely connected sentences on topics of personal interest and social needs. They write primarily in present time. At this level, writers use basic vocabulary and structures to express meaning that is comprehensible to those accustomed to the writing of non-natives.
Intermediate High
Writers at the Intermediate High sublevel are able to meet all practical writing needs of the Intermediate level. Additionally, they can write compositions and simple summaries related to work and/or school experiences. They can narrate and describe in different time frames when writing about everyday events and situations. These narrations and descriptions are often, but not always, of paragraph length, and they typically contain some evidence of breakdown in one or more features of the Advanced level. For example, these writers may be inconsistent in the use of appropriate major time markers, resulting in a loss of clarity. The vocabulary, grammar and style of Intermediate High writers essentially correspond to those of the spoken language. Intermediate High writing, even with numerous and perhaps significant errors, is generally comprehensible to natives not used to the writing of non-natives, but there are likely to be gaps in comprehension.
Intermediate Mid
Writers at the Intermediate Mid sublevel are able to meet a number of practical writing needs. They can write short, simple communications, compositions, and requests for information in loosely connected texts about personal preferences, daily routines, common events, and other personal topics. Their writing is framed in present time but may contain references to other time frames. The writing style closely resembles oral discourse. Writers at the Intermediate Mid sublevel show evidence of control of basic sentence structure and verb forms. This writing is best defined as a collection of discrete sentences and/or questions loosely strung together. There is little evidence of deliberate organization. Intermediate Mid writers can be understood readily by natives used to the writing of non-natives. When Intermediate Mid writers attempt Advanced-level writing tasks, the quality and/or quantity of their writing declines and the message may be unclear.
Intermediate Low
Writers at the Intermediate Low sublevel are able to meet some limited practical writing needs. They can create statements and formulate questions based on familiar material. Most sentences are recombinations of learned vocabulary and structures. These are short and simple conversational-style sentences with basic word order. They are written almost exclusively in present time. Writing tends to consist of a few simple sentences, often with repetitive structure. Topics are tied to highly predictable content areas and personal information. Vocabulary is adequate to express elementary needs. There may be basic errors in grammar, word choice, punctuation, spelling, and in the formation and use of non-alphabetic symbols. Their writing is understood by natives used to the writing of non-natives, although additional effort may be required. When Intermediate Low writers attempt to perform writing tasks at the Advanced level, their writing will deteriorate significantly and their message may be left incomplete.
Novice
Writers at the Novice level are characterized by the ability to produce lists and notes, primarily by writing words and phrases. They can provide limited formulaic information on simple forms and documents. These writers can reproduce practiced material to convey the most simple messages. In addition, they can transcribe familiar words or phrases, copy letters of the alphabet or syllables of a syllabary, or reproduce basic characters with some accuracy.
Novice High
Writers at the Novice High sublevel are able to meet limited basic practical writing needs using lists, short messages, postcards, and simple notes. They are able to express themselves within the context in which the language was learned, relying mainly on practiced material. Their writing is

focused on common elements of daily life. Novice High writers are able to recombine learned vocabulary and structures to create simple sentences on very familiar topics, but are not able to sustain sentence-level writing all the time. Due to inadequate vocabulary and/or grammar, writing at this level may only partially communicate the intentions of the writer. Novice High writing is often comprehensible to natives used to the writing of non-natives, but gaps in comprehension may occur.

Novice Mid

Writers at the Novice Mid sublevel can reproduce from memory a modest number of words and phrases in context. They can supply limited information on simple forms and documents, and other basic biographical information, such as names, numbers, and nationality. Novice Mid writers exhibit a high degree of accuracy when writing on well-practiced, familiar topics using limited formulaic language. With less familiar topics, there is a marked decrease in accuracy. Errors in spelling or in the representation of symbols may be frequent. There is little evidence of functional writing skills. At this level, the writing may be difficult to understand even by those accustomed to non-native writers.

Novice Low

Writers at the Novice Low sublevel are able to copy or transcribe familiar words or phrases, form letters in an alphabetic system, and copy and produce isolated, basic strokes in languages that use syllabaries or characters. Given adequate time and familiar cues, they can reproduce from memory a very limited number of isolated words or familiar phrases, but errors are to be expected.

Appendix 3.

Marking Rubrics of TOEFL Independent Writing Task (taken from <https://leapscholar.com/blog/toefl-writing-score-2/>)

The marking scheme for TOEFL independent writing task will be carried out as follows:

TOEFL Essay Score	Rubric Notes
5	-It is highly related to the prompt -It addresses the topic in an excellent way with details and examples -Written in a logical manner -It depicts strong language skills with no grammatical mistakes
4	-Address the topic well but may not be fully elaborated -Contains a well-structured flow of content -There are some noticeable grammatical mistakes, but they do not interfere with meaning -Shows good grip over vocabulary and language
3	-The essay somewhat addresses the topic -There is a considerable usage of examples and contains details -Contains occasional unrelated sentences -Have inconsistency in writing -Standard vocabulary with accurate sentences
2	-Not well-connected to the question provided -Does not contain enough examples and details -The idea of the topic is unclear -Sentences contain some error -Lack of choosing the right word -Contains many general sentences
1	-No connection with the prompt -Irrelevant details present in the essay -Lack of organising the content flow -Contains multiple grammatical errors -Usage or inaccurate or unjustified examples -Limited vocabulary
0	-Not written, just copied sentences from the prompt -Wrong sentence usage -No relation to the prompt

Appendix 4

An Analytical Scale for testing writing proficiency by Anderson (1987)

Grammar

6. Few (if any) noticeable errors of grammar or word order.
5. Some errors of grammar or word order which do not, however, interfere with comprehension.
4. Errors of grammar or word order fairly frequent; occasional re-reading necessary for full comprehension.
3. Errors of grammar or word order frequent; efforts of interpretation sometimes required on reader's part.
2. Errors of grammar or word order very frequent; reader often has to rely on own interpretation.
1. Errors of grammar or word order so severe as to make comprehension virtually impossible.

Vocabulary

6. Use of vocabulary and idiom rarely (if at all) distinguishable from that of educated native writer.
5. Occasionally uses inappropriate terms or relies on circumlocutions; expression of ideas hardly impaired.
4. Uses wrong or inappropriate words fairly frequently; expression of ideas may be limited because of inadequate vocabulary.
3. Limited vocabulary and frequent errors clearly hinder expression of ideas.
2. Vocabulary so limited and so frequently misused that reader must often rely on own interpretation.
1. Vocabulary limitations so extreme as to make comprehension virtually impossible.

Mechanics

6. Few (if any) noticeable lapses in punctuation or spelling.
5. Occasional lapses in punctuation or spelling which do not, however, interfere with comprehension.
4. Errors in punctuation or spelling fairly frequent; occasional re-reading necessary for full comprehension.
3. Frequent errors in spelling or punctuation; lead sometimes to obscurity.
2. Errors in spelling or punctuation so frequent that reader must often rely on own interpretation.
1. Errors in spelling or punctuation so severe as to make comprehension virtually impossible.

Fluency (style and ease of communication)

6. Choice of structures and vocabulary consistently appropriate; like that of educated native writer.
5. Occasional lack of consistency in choice of structures and vocabulary which does not, however, impair overall ease of communication.
4. 'Patchy', with some structures or vocabulary items noticeably inappropriate to general style.
3. Structures or vocabulary items sometimes not only inappropriate but also misused; little sense of ease of communication.
2. Communication often impaired by completely inappropriate or misused structures or vocabulary items.
1. A 'hotch-potch' of half-learned misused structures and vocabulary items rendering communication almost impossible.

Form (organisation)

6. Highly organised; clear progression of ideas well linked; like educated native writer.
5. Material well organised; links could occasionally be clearer but communication not impaired.
4. Some lack of organisation; re-reading required for clarification of ideas.
3. Little or no attempt at connectivity, though reader can deduce some organisation.
2. Individual ideas may be clear, but very difficult to deduce connection between them.
1. Lack of organisation so severe that communication is seriously impaired.

SCORE:

Gramm: ___ + Voc: ___ + Mech ___ + Fluency ___ + Form = ___

(TOTAL)

Appendix 5

An Analytic scale for testing writing proficiency by Jacobs et al. (1981)

ESL COMPOSITION PROFILE				
STUDENT	DATE	TOPIC		
SCORE	LEVEL	CRITERIA	COMMENTS	
CONTENT	30-27	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: knowledgeable • substantive • thorough development of thesis • relevant to assigned topic		
	26-22	GOOD TO AVERAGE: some knowledge of subject • adequate range • limited development of thesis • mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail		
	21-17	FAIR TO POOR: limited knowledge of subject • little substance • inadequate development of topic		
	16-13	VERY POOR: does not show knowledge of subject • non-substantive • not pertinent • OR not enough to evaluate		
ORGANIZATION	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: fluent expression • ideas clearly stated/ supported • succinct • well-organized • logical sequencing • cohesive		
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: somewhat choppy • loosely organized but main ideas stand out • limited support • logical but incomplete sequencing		
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: non-fluent • ideas confused or disconnected • lacks logical sequencing and development		
	9-7	VERY POOR: does not communicate • no organization • OR not enough to evaluate		
VOCABULARY	20-18	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: sophisticated range • effective word/ idiom choice and usage • word form mastery • appropriate register		
	17-14	GOOD TO AVERAGE: adequate range • occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage <i>but meaning not obscured</i>		
	13-10	FAIR TO POOR: limited range • frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage • <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>		
	9-7	VERY POOR: essentially translation • little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form • OR not enough to evaluate		
LANGUAGE USE	25-22	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: effective complex constructions • few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions		
	21-18	GOOD TO AVERAGE: effective but simple constructions • minor problems in complex constructions • several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions <i>but meaning seldom obscured</i>		
	17-11	FAIR TO POOR: major problems in simple/complex constructions • frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/ function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions • <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>		
	10-5	VERY POOR: virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules • dominated by errors • does not communicate • OR not enough to evaluate		
MECHANICS	5	EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: demonstrates mastery of conventions • few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing		
	4	GOOD TO AVERAGE: occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing <i>but meaning not obscured</i>		
	3	FAIR TO POOR: frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • poor handwriting • <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>		
	2	VERY POOR: no mastery of conventions • dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • handwriting illegible • OR not enough to evaluate		
TOTAL SCORE		READER	COMMENTS	