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Editorial Note:

Letter from Editors-in-Chief for the launch of FELT [1]

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On behalf of the editorial board, it is our privilege and great pride to announce the launch and the very first issue of our journal 'Focus on ELT' (FELT). Devoted to and focused on solely to the English language teaching and learning, FELT is an open source journal and accepts articles written from a theoretical or applied perspective with the possible applications to the field of English language teaching and learning.

To make FELT a high-calibre scientific publication venue, we have the following principles while accepting studies to the journal:

- FELT publishes fully refereed high-quality original research articles and studies for the benefit of teachers and researchers in the field of English Language Teaching.
- FELT accepts articles written from a theoretical or applied perspective with the possible applications to the field of English language teaching and learning.
- FELT follows stringent publication ethics and all submissions are undergone rigorous plagiarism check. If there is an issue with plagiarism in any of the submissions, these papers are withdrawn at any state of the publication process.

The editors-in-chief and the editorial board dedicated a huge amount of time and energy to the publication of this first issue. It would be impossible to manage peer review

[1] We dedicate the first issue of our 'fledgling journal' to the humane, sympathetic, constructive, and professional identity of our very own Prof. Dr. Ismail Hakkı Erten whose sudden death has deeply saddened us.

process and publish a successful issue without reviewers' contributions. Thus, we would like to thank wholeheartedly to the reviewers of our first issue.

The present issue features six articles investigating various topics with respect to the field and shares detailed findings for particular cases.

The first paper of the issue titled "The linguistic dimension of L2 interviews: A multidimensional analysis of native speaker language" and authored by *Pascual Pérez-Paredes* and *María Sánchez-Tornel* looks at the linguistic nature of the tasks employed to assess general "proficiency" in a given language. The results indicate that L2 interviews are found to be effective in paving the way for a more complex assessment the proficiency of language learners. In addition, with the help of examination of different speaking tasks, the authors discuss how the speaking tasks influence the way interviews could be profiled.

The second paper of the issue titled "High school language division students' perceptions of English as a Lingua Franca" and authored by *Zeynep Yücedağ* and *Ali Karakaş* zooms in on Turkish context to discover the perceptions of high school language division students towards English as a lingua franca. The study has some interesting results about the perception of English as a lingua franca, including the differences between the expectations of students and their teachers.

The third paper of the issue titled "A meta-analysis of the effect of bimodal subtitling on vocabulary learning among adult EFL learners" and authored by *Reem Ali Jaber* and *Yeşim Keşli Dollar* is a meta-analysis study conducted to investigate the impact of English subtitling on EFL learners' vocabulary improvement. The results of the study shows a positive effect of the bimodal subtitling on vocabulary learning among adult EFL learners.

The fourth paper of the issue titled "Effects of writing portfolio assessments at tertiary level intensive English program: An action research" and authored by *Emrah Cinkara* and *Hong Yu Connie Au* is a study exploring students' attitudes toward the use of writing portfolio assessment and examined the effects of writing portfolio in a module course. The results reveal that most students generally possessed positive attitudes toward the use of portfolio. Based on the findings, this study also suggests that performances on writing portfolio assessments may be predictive of students' writing performance on writing exams.

The fifth paper of the issue titled "Learning in scaffolded autonomous in e-learning environments amongst EAP students in a UK university" and authored by *Serpil Meri-Yılan* examines learner autonomy, scaffolding and their relationship in e-learning environments where EFL learners in the UK aimed to improve their academic English without the help of any human. As a conclusion, scaffolding plays an important role in learning achievement thereby promoting learner autonomy.

The sixth and the last of the paper of the issue titled "How effective is TPRS for adult EFL learners with limited English proficiency?" by *Mehmet Asmalı* focuses on

examining the 'Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling' (TPRS) on students' grammar and vocabulary performance as well as their attitude toward learning English. The results of the study indicate that TPRS had an effective role in learners' improvement in grammar as well as vocabulary learning.

One of the objectives of this journal is to encourage publication from various contexts addressing issues from different perspectives as is outlined above. We therefore would like to welcome submissions to discuss the latest developments in the field of English Language Teaching and Learning for the future issues of FELT Journal.

Before we finish the letter from Editors-in-Chief, it is with extremely deep and genuine sadness that we bring the news of the recent death of Prof. Dr. Ismail Hakkı Erten (Hacettepe University, Turkey), an exceptional and supportive academic in the field of ELT. Having his PhD from University of Exeter, he has contributed to various topics ranging from academic motication and L2 achievement to vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension. His research has appeared in many reputable and leading journals such as *System*, *European Journal of Teacher Education* as well as The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching (Wiley). He was also Editor-in-Chief of *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics* (EJAL) for which he worked day and night to make the 'fledgling journal' (as he said) a leading journal in the field of Applied Linguistics. Not only did we lose a positive and thoughtful person leading professionals and students but also we lost a great man of integrity in our academic circle. He will be greatly missed and remembered by his colleagues across the world, by his students, and by his family with love and respect. We therefore dedicate the first issue of our 'fledgling journal' to his humane, sympathetic, constructive, and professional identity.

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The linguistic dimension of L2 interviews: A multidimensional analysis of native speaker language

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ABSTRACT

This research profiles L2 interviews from a variationist perspective by using native speaker data in order to gain insight into the characteristics of three different speaking tasks in the framework of the *LINDSEI* learner language corpus tradition: Personal Narrative Component, an Interaction Component and a Picture Description. This way, we set out to research one area of the assessment of proficiency that is usually neglected: that of the linguistic nature of the tasks used to assess general "proficiency" in a given language. Our corpus was part-of-speech (POS) tagged and analysed using Multidimensional Analysis (MDA). We found that the different speaking tasks determine the range of linguistic features that are more likely to be generated by the communicative potential of the task itself. This profiling is of interest in areas such as language assessment, where the interview is widely used to evaluate the speakers' communicative competence, but also in the field of learner language research.

Keywords:
oral proficiency interview
native speaker language
corpus linguistics
Multidimensional Analysis (MDA)
dimensions of language use

Introduction

Interviews have been used extensively as an elicitation technique either for language research (Gilquin & Gries, 2009) or for communicative competence appraisal. Apart from the cue-based interviews used to evaluate the depth of vocabulary knowledge (Kunnan, 1998), interviews in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) are regularly conducted to assess the communicative competence of language learners. International institutions like the *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages* (ACTFL), *Cambridge English for Speakers of Other Languages* (ESOL) *Examinations*, or Trinity College, among others, use the oral proficiency interview (OPI) to test the oral competence of candidates worldwide. In the US, agencies such as the CIA, the FBI, and the DLI have been using L2 interviews to assess the foreign language speaking capabilities of their employees since the 1950s (Johnson 2001, p. 7).

Given the tradition of assessing learner language by means of interviews, it is hardly surprising that the interview has been the most widely used elicitation technique in the collection of spoken learner data (Tono, 2003). In the field of learner language research, the publication of the first spoken learner corpus, the Louvain International Database of

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Spoken English Interlanguage (LINDSEI) (Gilquin, De Cock and Granger, 2010), which was compiled by means of oral interviews, was a major breakthrough in the analysis of spoken learner language. The new Trinity Lancaster Corpus (TLC) (Gablasova, Brezina and McEnery, 2019) will contribute to our understanding of how L2 English is used in oral proficiency interviews across a variety of tasks and, interestingly, performance levels.

Despite its importance in learner language research and learner language assessment, the L2 interview as a linguistic register remains under-researched. Iwashita, Brown, McNamara and O'Hagan (2008) have pointed out how different authors have tried to gain further insight into the features of the language produced by test-takers (Shohamy, 1994), the speech event(s) in L2 interviews (Van Lier, 1989), or the relations between candidates' performance and the scores awarded (McNamara et al., 2002). Given the widespread use of interviews and the lack of research in this register from a native speaker perspective, we set out to gain insight into the nature of L2 interviews through Multidimensional Analysis (MDA). Specifically, we want to find out whether the three speaking tasks that were used to gather our corpus can be profiled distinctively**.** If so, what other registers do these sub-registers resemble? In this research, we aim at profiling the L2 interview from a variationist perspective, using English native speaker data in order to shed light into the characteristics of this particular register as manifested across different speaking tasks. We argue that tasks do not just simply prompt different language use, but they actually afford the usage of a set of specific linguistics features.

L2 interviews: speaking tasks, language assessment and corpora

Corpora in the assessment and operationalization of proficiency

Corpus-based approaches are widely considered as central to diverse areas of language study including, among others, Language Testing and Assessment (LTA). This field has, for many years now, benefited from the use of real language data in various respects. Alderson (1996) presented one of the first accounts of the potential uses of corpora in language assessment. Among these we find test construction, compilation and selection, test presentation, response capture, test scoring and calculation and delivery of results. Given the limited use of computers (let alone language corpora) in language testing at the time, the author referred to his account as mere speculation, but he anticipated that "since corpora exist, they will eventually be used, for better or worse […] it makes sense to think about how to best use them in order to control their development rather than to suffer it" (Alderson, 1996, p. 249). Time has proven that Alderson was not far wrong, as the following paragraphs will illustrate.

Since the creation of the *Cambridge Language Corpus* (Cambridge ESOL Examinations) as a repository of rubrics and exam answers transcripts, the use of native speaker and learner corpora in LTA has unfolded in different directions. The application of corpus methods to analyze native speaker or learner data is indeed valuable in LTA, whether it be aimed at profiling and characterizing proficiency, at assessing it or at informing and validating test design. In the language testing tradition, native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) corpora have been used to revise tests, devise new test formats as well as teaching and testing materials, create and/or revise wordlists, shed light on the

characteristics of academic speech and investigate differences by speaker group or discipline (Taylor and Barker, 2008; Barker, 2010). Native speaker data help to make sound decisions on structures, phrases or vocabulary which are to be included or avoided in tests, thus leaving test writers' intuitions and experiences out of the picture (Barker, 2010). Furthermore, they serve as a source of real-life texts that can be adapted or used without further editing and also as a reference resource in the stage of marking or grading. As for learner corpora, they have been used, among other aspects, to identify what learners can do and the errors that are common at a given proficiency level, to confirm test writers' intuitions about the features that are typical of certain levels, to revise rating scales, to explore automatic rating, or to analyze the relationship between demographic variables, test mode and learning environment on learner output (Barker, 2010; Taylor and Barker, 2008).

Much as the use of corpora has resulted in the advancement and improvement of LTA, it is no less true that the definition of proficiency and the delimitation of the boundaries of different proficiency bands still seem to be rather challenging for test designers and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers alike. Carlsen (2012, p. 162) has pointed out that "levels of proficiency are not always carefully defined, and the claims about proficiency levels are seldom supported by empirical evidence" and Barker (2010) highlights that "establishing the nature of language proficiency at different levels is vital for language testers seeking to design tests that either aim to assess candidates at a particular proficiency level or report results across part of or the whole proficiency scale." Moreover, the correct placement of learner corpus texts in their corresponding proficiency bands has further implications, given that the linguistic features expected in those bands can only be isolated reliably "if a learner's level is correctly identified and recorded in a corpus" (Barker 2010, p. 637). The importance of ensuring validity and reliability with respect to the assignment of learner corpus texts to different levels of proficiency stands out, therefore, as a shared concern in the field, since erroneous decisions may lead SLA experts to make spurious assumptions regarding language learning. Díez-Bedmar (2018, p. 208) has "highlighted the main challenges that linguistic competence descriptors pose to CEFR and ELP users […] with a particular focus on the grammatical accuracy descriptors and strategy descriptors for monitoring and repair at B1 level". From this it follows that a sound approach to LTA depends greatly on a series of factors that are closely interwoven, ranging from the precise characterization of proficiency and proficiency levels to the right design of tests, all of them informed and supported by NS and NNS corpora in different ways.

Bearing these concerns in mind, one might go one step further and question the validity of certain tasks that are commonly found in language tests and, in particular, in the speaking section of language tests. This is an area that has not attracted much attention to date as tasks oriented towards the assessment of specific linguistic features may or may not actually bring to the surface the use of such linguistic features, even when NS perform these oral texts.

The study of the potential of tasks to elicit the use of particular phrases, structures or vocabulary that may, presumably, be produced while solving those tasks seems a promising area within LTA. It has not yet been established whether specific tasks are as

adequate as test designers expect them to be and it is precisely here where the analysis of native speaker language by means of MDA advocated in this study may play a central role. MDA of learner language has been underused as a tool for language research and pedagogy. One of the few studies where MDA was used to explore learner language is Connor-Linton and Shohamy (2001) and one of the few pedagogic applications of MDA is Aguado et al. (2012). Considering that corpus techniques have proved useful in the analysis and characterization of learner output and in the exploration of native speaker language oriented towards test design and validation, it remains to be seen how LTA and learner corpus research (LCR) can benefit from the study of L2 interviews from a variationist perspective by using MDA.

We adopt, therefore, a critical perspective on task and test design and propose the use of MDA to examine the potential of the L2 interview to elicit an adequate and sufficient number of linguistic features. The underlying principle is that it cannot be assumed that a task is valid or reliable to assess oral proficiency in the light of the presence of particular features without knowing, first, if those features would be employed by a native speaker performing the same task. The application of MDA in LTA is mainly based on the works carried out by Douglas Biber. In the *TOEFL 2000 Spoken and Written Academic Language (T2K-SWAL) Project*, Biber and his colleagues brought together MDA and NS corpora to investigate the linguistic characteristics of institutional registers at university and thus "ensure that the texts used on listening and reading exams accurately represent the linguistic characteristics of spoken and written academic registers" (Biber et al., 2004, p. 2). In a previous investigation Biber and Jamieson (1998, cited in Taylor and Barker, 2008) found that the reading and listening texts did not fully match the registers being tested, which calls for a closer examination of language tasks in the light of MDA.

The L2 interview and language learner assessment

The L2 interview is the "dominant approach to measuring a language learner's oral proficiency" (Connor-Linton and Shohamy, 2001, p. 124), being widely used nowadays (Ricardo-Osorio, 2008) by different and prestigious institutions (Ferrara, 2008). Cambridge ESOL[1] runs different examinations which target a wide spectrum of levels. The *First Certificate of English* (FCE) examiners run an oral test to "assess the candidate's ability to produce spoken English in a variety of tasks". This test involves two candidates and two examiners. The first part of the oral test is an interview where the interlocutor asks each candidate questions which "relate to [his or her] own lives and focus on areas such as work, leisure time, future plans" and social language. The second part of the test is an "individual long turn" where the candidates have to fulfill a one-minute speaking task where two photographs are shown and a printed question has to be answered. This part "tests the candidate's ability to produce an extended piece of discourse which may involve comparing, describing and expressing opinions". The third part of the test, labeled collaborative task, is a "two-way discussion between the candidates, developed around a topic-based visual stimulus" where the candidate's ability to sustain an interaction, exchange ideas, express and justify opinions, agree and/or disagree, make suggestions,

[1] http://www.cambridgeesol.org/assets/pdf/fcecae_review10.pdf

speculate, evaluate and work towards a negotiated outcome is evaluated". Finally, a discussion on one of the topics in the third part is promoted by the interlocutor so as to evaluate the candidate's ability to "engage in a more in-depth discussion, exchange information, express and justify opinions and agree and/or disagree". In total, the test runs for approximately 14 minutes and involves personal information, description of visual prompts and the expression of ideas and opinions over a given topic.

The *Cambridge Advanced English* (CAE) test follows an identical format, while the *Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency* in English (CPE) extends a little longer and may last up to 19 minutes. However, the structure of the interview and its distribution is almost identical: an interview and a collaborative task followed by a discussion between two candidates, one assessor who remains silent, and an interlocutor. The *ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview* is a standardized procedure for the global assessment of functional speaking ability. It is a face-to-face or telephone interview between a certified ACTFL tester and an examinee that determines how well a person speaks a language by comparing his or her performance in specific communication tasks with the criteria for each of ten proficiency levels described in the *ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines-Speaking*.

The use of interviews is not restricted to the evaluation of General English. Trinity College London runs *Spoken English for Work* (SEW) examinations which "address [a] growing demand [of use of spoken English in real work settings] by offering a face-to-face assessment which measures spoken English in a working context relevant to the chosen profession of the candidate". The four levels range from B1 to C1 and take from 13 to 27 minutes. In all of them, one-to-one, face-to-face assessment is involved, including a telephone task and a topic discussion led by the examiner. Interactive tasks are present in all levels except for B1 and topic presentations are evaluated in the two higher level.

L2 interviews and speaking tasks

L2 researchers have addressed the effect of the speaking task on the linguistic nature of L2 interviews from, at least, two different perspectives. First, we find research which has analyzed the interview as a register. Second, there is research which has limited its scope to discrete linguistic elements. Connor-Lynton and Shohamy (2001) studied the stylistic variation of NNS' spoken discourse across different elicitation tasks and contexts (face-to-face vs taped-mediated). Using MDA, the authors analyzed the data in Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt and Waizer (1993), viz. 10 adult female L1 Hebrew EFL learners of varied proficiency levels. These individuals completed three different tasks in parallel forms in order to minimize memorization effects. In the first, they told their interviewer about themselves; in the second, using the role-play technique, they were asked to complain about noise; in the third, they had to request of a professor an extension on a term paper or a second chance on a final exam. These tasks were combined with five elicitation contexts (face-to-face conversation with a tester, with a peer, telephone interaction, videotaped prompt and audio taped prompt). The authors found that the *t*-tests of the dimension scores confirmed that each pair elicited "stylistically and functionally equivalent performance samples" (Connor-Lynton and Shohamy, 2001, p. 133). Similarly, their MDA analysis provided evidence that the stylistic profiles of complaints and requests elicited similar

language in terms of communicative functions, which, according to the authors, shows some of the potential uses of MDA in designing L2 interviews which can discriminate a more varied set of speech events.

Johnson (2001) attempted to characterize the L2 interview in terms of speech events through a discourse analysis methodology. The data that the author used were 35 telephone interviews codified according to five major categories, namely, floor turn, repair, topic, question type and discourse unit. Her analysis concludes that the L2 interview resembles more accurately a monologic speech event, rather than conversation. Neary-Sundquist (2009) examined the relationship between the effect of proficiency levels and task types on the use of cohesive devices in English and German second language speech production under test conditions that followed the ACTFL. In the German data, the narrative task showed a higher frequency of use of conjunctions and a decrease in discourse marker use. In the English data, the leaving-a-telephone-message task behaved significantly different from the other tasks as to the frequency of discourse markers. The author concludes that the degree of structure in a task may have an impact on language performance.

Methodology

Corpus used in the analysis

The corpus used in this analysis is the extended LOCNEC (*Louvain Corpus of Native English Conversations* (LOCNEC) (Pérez-Paredes and Bueno, 2019). The LOCNEC (De Cock, 2004) is made up of 90,300 words contributed by 50 native speakers of English, all of them undergraduate and graduate students at Lancaster University. The extended LOCNEC includes 28 extra interviews from the British component of the CAOS-E corpus (Aguado et al., 2012). It is made up of 21,509 words contributed by British undergraduate students at Manchester Metropolitan University.

The extended LOCNEC was compiled following the same format of The *Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage* (LINDSEI; De Cock, 1998; Gilquin, De Cock and Granger, 2010). First, informants were given three topics for discussion, i.e., an experience that has taught the interviewee an important lesson, a country that has made an impression on the interviewee or a film or play that has attracted their attention. Then, the interviewer engaged the interviewee into an even more involved, interpersonal communication by asking about their studies or future plans. In the last part of the interview, the interviewee was given four pictures that represented a story and was asked to offer an account of what was going on. Table 1 summarizes the main characteristics of the corpus.

Table 1. *Characteristics of the extended LOCNEC (Pérez-Paredes & Bueno, 2019)*

Number of speakers	78
Nationality	British
Interview locations	Lancaster University and Manchester Metropolitan University
Running words	111,809
Speaking tasks/ Components	Personal Narrative
	Interaction
	Picture Description

The first part of the interview gave the speaker the opportunity to build a narrative based on his own previous life, travelling or film-viewer experiences. The second is mainly interactional. The interviewer asks the interviewee questions that provide an occasion for the interviewee to talk about themselves and their activities at the moment when the interview took place. These two parts favour involved production. As regards the third part of the interview, the picture description task offers speakers the possibility to elaborate on individual interpretations arising from a situation in which a woman is being portrayed by a painter, and where she seems to be dissatisfied with the painter's first piece of work. This last part of the interview can be regarded as description-oriented production.

Analysis

Our interview corpus was POS tagged and analysed using MDA (Biber, 1988; Conrad, 2001; Biber, 2006). This methodology seeks to interpret linguistic data in the light of language variation across registers or different dimensions of use. Each dimension of use "comprises a distinct set of co-occurring linguistic features, and each has distinct functional underpinnings" (Biber, Reppen and Conrad 2002, p. 459). The five dimensions of use in Biber (1988) are (D1) involved versus information production, (D2) narrative versus non-narrative concerns, (D3) explicit versus situation-dependent reference, (D4) overt expression of persuasion and (D5) abstract versus non-abstract information. Accordingly, five dimension scores were computed for each interview and for each of the parts of the interviews in the corpus. After that, a factor score[2] was calculated. All the frequencies were standardized to a mean of 0.0 and a standard deviation of 1.0 before the computation of the factor. Differences between the three components were tested using the Duncan's Multiple Range Tests, a procedure based on the comparison of the range of a subset of the sample means with a calculated least significant range. The analysis of our data followed the guidelines in Biber, Johansson, Leech, Conrad and Finegan (1999) and, in particular, took into account the tasks performed in discourse by the different linguistic features, the processing constraints which the pedagogic interview register presents, and the conventional association of linguistic features with the peculiarities of the interview situation analyzed.

[2] A factor score is a numerical value that indicates a text relative standing on a latent factor in factor analysis.

Results

Each interview in our research corpus was composed of three different speaking tasks, namely, a Personal Narrative Component, an Interaction Component and a Picture Description. Table 2 shows the scores of the three speaking tasks on the five dimensions of language use in Biber (1988) plus the score of the whole interview, that is, the unabridged, complete interview.

Table 2. *Scores of the speaking tasks on the five dimensions of language use in Biber (1988)*

	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5
Personal Narrative	27	-0.7	-4	-2	-2
Interaction	31	-2	-5	0.13	-2
Picture Description	24.6	-0,1	-5	-4	-0.1
Whole interview	29.50	-1.10	-4.70	-1.02	-1.50

In the following paragraphs we will provide the score of the different speaking tasks on these five dimensions together with the normalized counts of the most relevant linguistic features for each of the dimensions of use.

Dimension 1: Involved versus information production

This dimension marks affective or interactional content, as opposed to information density and exact informational content. Its internal composition makes it possible that much of the variability found in texts can be explained using this factor alone, which turns D1 into a fundamental dimension to discriminate textual variation (Biber 1988: 106). The whole interview scored high on this rank (29.5), above the original interview texts (17.01) in Biber (1988). The Personal Narrative Component score on this dimension (27) is closer to face-to-face conversations in Biber (1988) than the Picture Description Component (24.6), which in turn is closer to spontaneous speech and interviews in Biber (1988). This fact can be explained by the presence of fewer turns in this component, with the interviewer mainly offering backchanneling.

The Interaction Component score (31) places this part of the interview on top of this dimension, lying closer to face-to-face conversations than any other speaking task. Figure 1 shows the scores of all three tasks and the interview mean.

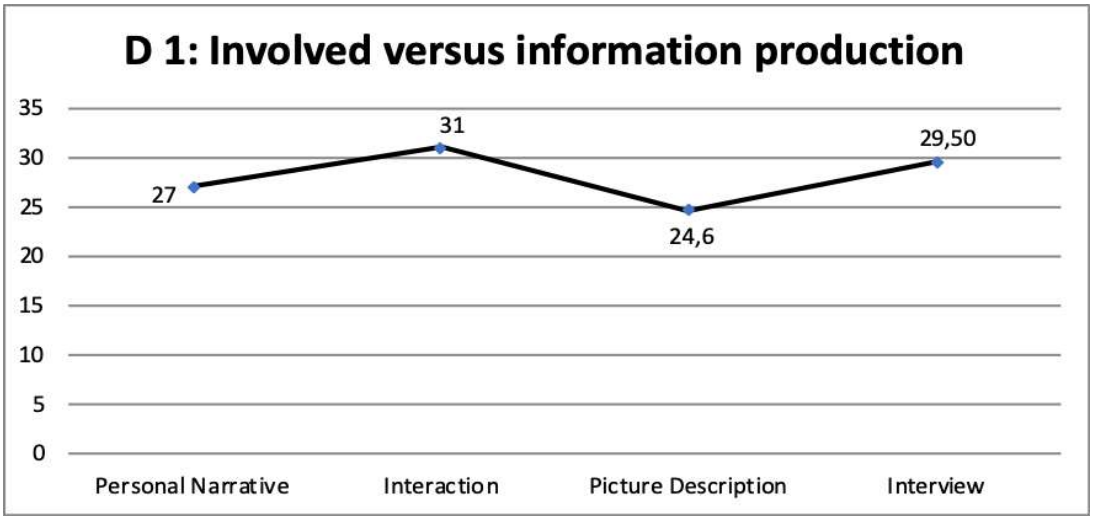

Figure 1. Interview scores on Dimension 1

The score difference between the Interaction Component and the Picture Description (6.4) seems to indicate that the speaking task plays an important role in the way LINDSEI-format interviews can be linguistically profiled. This is confirmed by the Duncan's Multiple Range Test for D1, which shows that the Interaction Component is significantly different from the other two tasks. Table 3 shows the results of the test.

Table 3. *Effect of speaking task on D1 profiling*

Dimension 1: Involved versus information production		
Duncan Grouping	Mean	Speaking task
A	30.830	Interaction
B	27.293	Personal Narrative
B		
B	24.643	Picture Description
Alpha 0.05		
Error Degrees of Freedom 226		
Error Mean Square 112.6946		
Harmonic Mean of Cell Sizes 76.20474		
Number of Means 2 3		
Critical Range 3.389 3.567		

The higher score of face-to-face conversations (35.3) in Biber (1988) seems to point out that our interviews presented fewer opportunities for affectiveness and involvement than conversations, although both registers may share similar real-time production constraints. Spontaneous speech and interviews in Biber (1988) behave in a very similar way on this

dimension of use, which confirms that the Involvement Component of our corpus is an efficient register delimiter, at least when compared to the interviews in Biber (1988)[3].

The linguistic features which are representative of the involved dimension include, in decreasing order of significance, private verbs, *that*-deletion, contractions, present tense verbs, 2nd person pronouns, *do* as pro-verb, analytic negation, demonstrative pronouns, general emphatics and 1st person pronouns. Table 4 lists the normalized means of selected features in our corpus.

Table 4. *Summary of SMD estimate across articles with 95% Confidence Interval*

	private verbs	*that*-deletion	contractions	present tense verbs	2nd pers. pronouns	*do* as pro-verb
Personal Narrative	23/1000	7.9/1000	3.0/1000	69.9/1000	23.9/1000	2/1000
Interaction	27.7/1000	10.1/1000	3.3/1000	96/1000	38.6/1000	3.3/1000
Picture Description	16.5/1000	6.7/1000	7.3/1000	118/1000	23.3/1000	1.2/1000
Corpus mean	22.7/1000	8.3 /1000	4.6/1000	97/1000	29/1000	2.3/1000

Other linguistic features are typically representative of information-oriented discourse: nouns, prepositions and attributive adjectives, see Table 5.

Table 5. *Linguistic features which are representative of information-oriented discourse*

	nouns	prepositions	attributive adjectives
Personal Narrative	164.7/1000	74.1/1000	17.2/1000
Interaction	157.6/1000	72.5/1000	15.6/1000
Picture Description	138.2/1000	62.3/1000	10.1/1000
Corpus mean	151.2/1000	68.6 /1000	14/1000

Dimension 2: Narrative versus non-narrative concerns

Dimension 2 distinguishes narrative discourse from other registers where exposition or description are more pivotal. Romantic and mystery fiction texts appear at one end of this continuum, while broadcasts and official documents qualify for a type of text where narration plays a very limited or no role at all (Biber, 1988).

[3] The interviews in Biber (1988) come from the London-Lund Corpus and are classified as part of the public discussion genre.

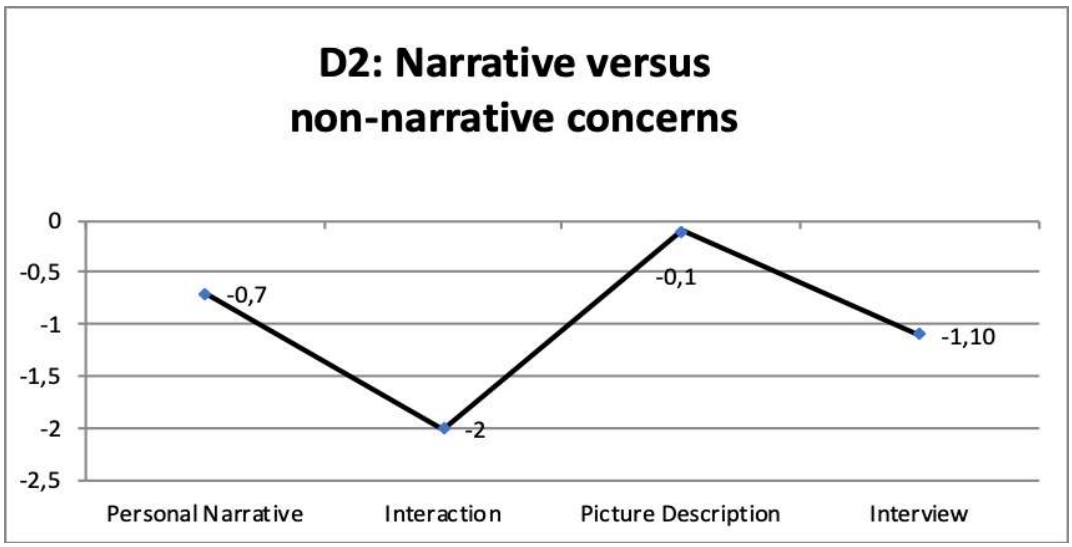

Figure 2. Interview scores on Dimension 2

The mean corpus score (-1.1) is identical to that of the interview texts (-1.1) in Biber (1988). On this dimension, interview texts in Biber (1988) and our corpus data behave exactly in the same way. The interview Personal Narrative Component score on this dimension (-0.7) is close to that of interview texts, and almost identical to that of face-to-face conversations (-0.6) in Biber (1988). The score of the Picture Description Component (-0.1) is slightly farther away from face-to-face conversations, while the Interaction Component score (-2) matches that of telephone conversations in Biber (1988). The score difference between the Interaction Component and the Picture Description Component (1.9) seems to indicate that the speaking task does play an important role in the way interviews can be linguistically profiled. This is confirmed by the Duncan's Multiple Range Test for D2, which shows that all three corpus components are significantly different from each other. Table 6 shows the results of the test.

Table 6. *Effect of speaking task on D2 profiling*

Dimension 2: Narrative versus non-narrative concerns		
Duncan Grouping	Mean	Speaking task
A	-0.1059	Picture Description
B	-0.6947	Personal Narrative
C	-1.6835	Interaction
Alpha 0.05 Error Degrees of Freedom 226 Error Mean Square 3.330233 Harmonic Mean of Cell Sizes 76.20474 Number of Means 2 3 Critical Range .5826 .6132		

The linguistic features which are representative of the narrative dimension include, in decreasing order of significance, past tenses, 3rd person pronouns, perfect aspect tenses and public verbs. Present tenses and attributive adjectives are typical features of non-narrative texts. Table 7 lists the normalized frequencies of these linguistic features in our corpus data.

Table 7. *Effect of speaking task on D2 profiling*

	past tense	3rd pers. pronouns	perfect aspect	public verbs	present tense	attributive adjectives
Personal Narrative	61.9/1000	20.8/1000	8.6/1000	2.3/1000	69.9/1000	17.2/1000
Interaction	32.8/1000	12.3/1000	10.4/1000	2.2/1000	96/1000	15.6/1000
Picture Description	8.8/1000	94.5/1000	2.7/1000	3.4/1000	118/1000	10.1/1000
Corpus mean	31.9/1000	46.2/1000	6.8/1000	2.8/1000	97/1000	14/1000

Dimension 3: Explicit versus situation-dependent reference

This dimension distinguishes between discourse which identifies referents in an explicit way, mainly through relatives, from discourse that relies more heavily on non-specific deictics (Biber 1988: 115). The score of our interview corpus (-4.7) is far away from that of interviews (-0.4) and spontaneous speeches (1.2) in Biber (1988). On this dimension, our corpus behaves in a similar way to telephone (-5.2) and face-to-face conversations (-3.9). Figure 3 shows the scores of the components of our corpus on dimension 3.

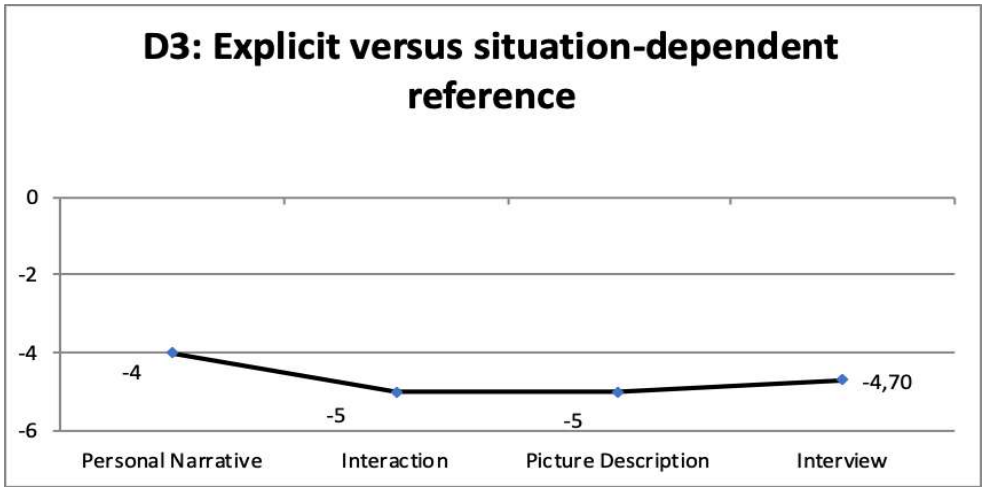

Figure 3. Interview scores on Dimension 3

The score of the Personal Narrative Component on this dimension (-4.5) is closer to face-to-face conversations in Biber (1988) than that of the Description Component (-5),

which is closer in turn to telephone conversations. The score difference between these two components (0.5) seems to indicate that our speaking tasks do not play an important factor in the way interview can be linguistically profiled on this particular dimension. This is confirmed by the Duncan's Multiple Range Test for D3, which shows that the three corpus components are not significantly different from each other. Table 8 shows the results of the test.

Table 8. *Effect of speaking task on D3 profiling*

Dimension 3: Explicit versus situation-dependent reference		
Duncan Grouping	Mean	Speaking task
A	-3.9823	Personal Narrative
A	-4.7660	Interaction
A	-4.9726	Picture Description
Alpha 0.05 Error Degrees of Freedom 226 Error Mean Square 5.44739 Harmonic Mean of Cell Sizes 76.20474 Number of Means 2 3 Critical Range 1.255 1.321		

The linguistic features which are representative of explicit reference discourse include, in decreasing order of significance, *wh*-relative clauses in object positions, pied piping constructions, *wh*-relative clauses in subject positions, phrasal coordination and nominalizations. Other linguistic features are typically representative of dependent reference discourse: time adverbials, place adverbials and adverbs. Linguistic features that showed negative loadings on this factor such as place and time adverbials, showed frequencies of use unusual in interviews texts in Biber (1988). Table 9 lists the normalized mean of all these linguistic features.

Table 9. *Linguistic features which are representative of the explicit reference dimension*

	object *wh*-relative clauses	subject *wh*-relative clauses	phrasal coordination	nominaliz-ations	place adverbials	time adverbials
Personal Narrative	0.6/1000	1.7/1000	1.8/1000	13.1/1000	12.5/1000	6/1000
Interaction	0.3/1000	0.9/1000	1.7/1000	16.4/1000	12.1/1000	7.1/1000
Picture Description	0.3/1000	1.9/1000	1.9/1000	3.6/1000	6/1000	12.5/1000
Corpus mean	0.4 /1000	1.6 /1000	1.7 /1000	8.1 /1000	10/1000	8.8/1000

Dimension 4: Overt expression of persuasion

This dimension is associated with the expression of own point of view or with the use of argumentation to persuade the interlocutor. The score of the whole interview corpus (-1.02) is far below than that of interview texts (1) and spontaneous speeches (0.3) in Biber (1988). On this dimension, our interview corpus behaves in a similar way to adventure fiction (-1.2) or biographies (-0.7). Figure 4 shows the scores of the components of our corpus on dimension 4.

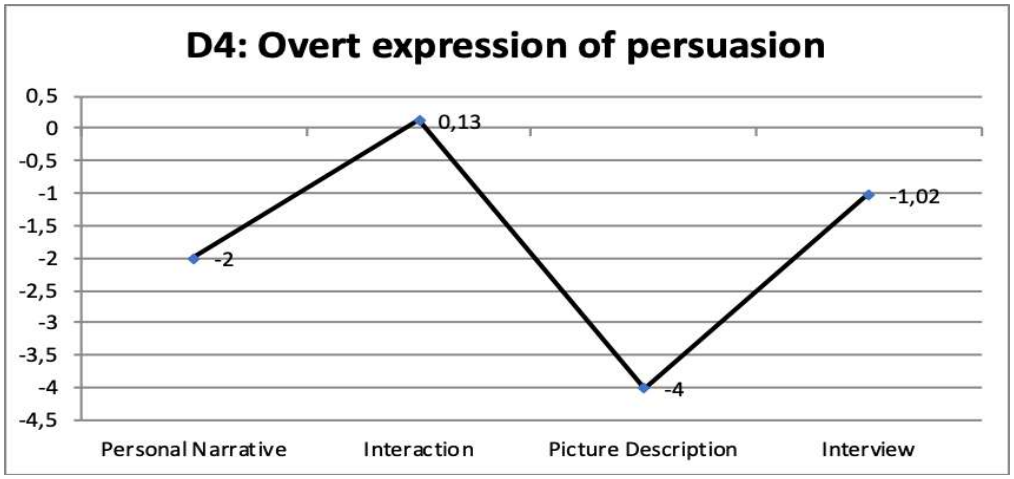

Figure 4. Interview scores on Dimension 4

The score of the Personal Narrative Component on this dimension (-2) is closer to the score of face-to-face conversations (-0.3) in Biber (1988) than the Description Component (-4), which is closer in turn to broadcasts (-4.4). The score difference between the Interaction and the interview Description Components (4.13) seems to indicate that our speaking does play an important factor in the way interviews can be linguistically profiled on this particular dimension. This is confirmed by the Duncan's Multiple Range Test for D4, which shows that all three corpus components are significantly different from each other. Table 10 shows the results of the test.

Table 10. *Effect of speaking task on D4 profiling*

Dimension 4: Overt expression of persuasion		
Duncan Grouping	Mean	Speaking task
A	0.1311	Interaction
B	-1.9848	Personal Narrative
C	-3.8735	Picture Description
Alpha 0.05 Error Degrees of Freedom 226 Error Mean Square 8.902971 Harmonic Mean of Cell Sizes 76.20474 Number of Means 2 3 Critical Range 0.953 1.003		

The linguistic features that are representative of this dimension include, in decreasing order of significance, infinitives, prediction modals, suasive verbs, conditional subordination, necessity modals and split auxiliaries. Table 11 lists the normalized mean of all these linguistic features.

Table 11. *Linguistic features which are representative of the persuasion dimension*

	infinitives	prediction modals	suasive verbs	conditional subordination	necessity modals	split auxiliaries
Personal Narrative	10/1000	4.3/1000	1/1000	2/1000	2.5/1000	2.9/1000
Interaction	15/1000	7.3/1000	1.7/1000	4.1/1000	3.1/1000	2.8/1000
Picture Description	20.1/1000	5.4/1000	1.2/1000	1.1/1000	0.7/1000	0.6/1000
Corpus mean	15.4/1000	5.4 /1000	1.2/1000	2.3/1000	2.4/1000	2.1/1000

Dimension 5: Abstract non-abstract information

This dimension distinguishes discourse with a highly abstract and technical informational focus from discourse which lacks that quality. Academic texts appear at one end of this continuum, while telephone conversations qualify for a type of text where interlocutors share information which is non-abstract and informal (Biber, 1988, p. 113). Figure 5 shows the scores of the components of our corpus on dimension 5.

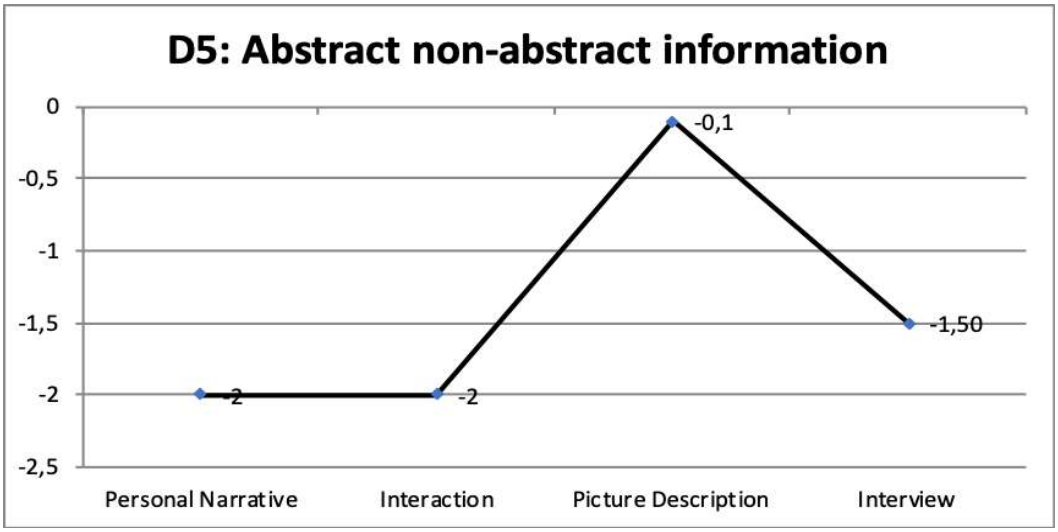

Figure 5. Interview scores on Dimension 5

The mean interview score (-1.5) is close to that of broadcasts (-1.8) and interview texts (-2) in Biber (1988). The Personal Narrative Component score on this dimension (-2) is identical to that of the Interaction Component and to that of the interviews texts in Biber

(1988), while the Picture Description Component (-0.1) overlaps the score of popular lore. The score difference between the Personal Narrative and the Picture Description Components (1.9) seems to indicate that the speaking task does play an important factor in the way interviews can be linguistically profiled on this particular dimension. This is confirmed by the Duncan's Multiple Range Test for D5, which shows that the Picture Description Component is significantly different from the other two tasks. Table 12 shows the results of the test.

Table 12. *Effect of speaking task on D5 profiling*

Dimension 5: Abstract non-abstract information		
Duncan Grouping	Mean	Speaking task
A	-0.1179	Picture Description
B	-1.7865	Personal Narrative
B		
B	-2.3744	Interaction
Alpha 0.05		
Error Degrees of Freedom 226		
Error Mean Square 16.29063		
Harmonic Mean of Cell Sizes 76.20474		
Number of Means 2 3		
Critical Range 1.288 1.356		

The linguistic features which are representative of this dimension include, in decreasing order of significance, conjuncts, agentless passives, adverbial past participial clauses, *by*-passives, past participial whiz-deletion and other adverbial subordinators (other than cause, concession and condition). Table 13 lists the normalized mean of all these linguistic features.

Table 13. *Linguistic features which are representative of the abstract dimension*

	conjuncts	agentless passives	adverbial ppl. clauses	*by*-passives	ppl. whiz-deletions	other adverbial subordinators
Personal Narrative	1.6/1000	2.7/1000	/1000	0.4/1000	0.5/1000	5.9/1000
Interaction	1.2/1000	1.8/1000	/1000	0.1/1000	0.5/1000	6.8/1000
Picture Description	3.2/1000	7.9/1000	/1000	0.2/1000	0.6/1000	7.5/1000
Corpus mean	2.2/1000	5.2/1000	/1000	0.2/1000	0.5/1000	7/1000

Discussion

This study explores the application of corpus-based methods in LTA and LCR that go beyond test design and validation. By applying MDA to a corpus of 78 interviews with native speakers of English we have tried to provide insights into the nature of spoken tasks from a variationist perspective and, in particular, into the potential of the L2 interview to bring forth linguistic features that would be expected to be characteristic of the spoken register. The adoption of this approach can be key in supporting test validation as conceived by Bachman (1990), who states that "in test validation we are not examining the validity of the test content or of even the test scores themselves, but rather the validity of the way we interpret or use the information gathered through the testing procedure" (Bachman, 1990, p. 238).

Along the lines of Biber and Jamieson (1998, cited in Biber et al., 2004), who found that the linguistic characteristics of the texts in TOEFL exams did not resemble those of the target registers, our results suggest that the different tasks determine the range of linguistic features produced by speakers. For example, the normalized frequency of present tense verbs (118/1000) in the Picture Description Component is considerably higher than in the other two components, almost doubling the frequency of this feature in the Personal Narrative Component (69.9/1000). Could we say then that the picture description task creates the conditions for the use of the simple present tense? What if a speaker adopts a different perspective and decides to tell the painter/young lady story relying on the simple past? Our data exclude this possibility. The range of uses of the present tense in the Picture Description Component goes from 62.1/1000 to 198.4/1000 (SD = 28.7), that is, every speaker in the sample used at least almost the same amount of present tense verbs forms than the mean count for the Personal Narrative Component (69.9/1000).

In the context of learner language assessment, a speaking task is in many ways a speech event where learners are expected to show their competence. If this competence, or level of competence, is matched against the expectations of the examiner/evaluator or against a reference norm, can-do statements, and we all agree that even native speakers' intuitions are not always reliable (Sampson, 2007), it is urgent that we examine how these expectations are shaped by the use of a given register in the community of proficient speakers, i.e. native speakers. One of the types of findings that can be instrumental in this area is that, according to the Duncan Multiple Range Test (see Section 4), the Interaction Component is significantly different from the other two components on Dimension 1 (involved vs. information production), or put another way, the Personal Narrative and the Picture Descriptions Components yield significantly different language.

Biber and Conrad (2010, p. 16) have indicated that "the register perspective characterizes the typical linguistic features of text varieties, and connects those features functionally to the situational context of the variety". This is where corpus linguistics, and particularly MDA, can inform language proficiency evaluators about the complex relationships that govern the use of discrete linguistic features and how texts conform our own understanding of how registers work. Despite the differences between the Interaction Component on the

one hand, and the Personal Narrative and the Picture Description components on the other, all three score high on Dimension 1, which profiles them as speaking tasks where speaker's involvement is expected, above interviews or personal letters in the original Biber (1988) study. When examining the linguistic features which are characteristic of more information-oriented registers such as official documents or academic prose, we can see why the interview texts in Biber (1988) are found lower on Dimension 1 than any of the components in our corpus. For example, the normalized count for nouns in the interview register (160.9/1000) is only higher in the Personal Narrative Component (164.7/1000), while prepositions in interviews are more abundant (108/1000) or attributive adjectives (55.3/1000) are infrequent in Personal Narratives (17.2/1000). This shows again how particular speaking tasks are not valid in terms of eliciting certain linguistic features, which calls for a re-examination of the role of interviews and speaking tasks in gathering information about the grammar of learners. In this sense, the Picture Description Component shows very little potential for the use of attributive adjectives (10.1/1000) or, more noticeably, predicative adjectives (2/1000). Consider examples (1) and (2) from our data.

(1)

Speaker: erm well he's drawing her in this picture and then It looks like she doesn't like the way he's drawn her in this one but her the facial expressions

Interviewer: mm

Speaker: erm she like is doesn't like the way she's portrayed she doesn't like the way she looks and he's obviously gone and changed it to make her nicer in the picture obviously to impress friends who look at it like she's been painted nicer something beautiful cos people are gonna look at it and it's her so she wants them to think she looks nice. (CAOS-E C2-3)

(2)

Speaker: okay yeah erm well there's a painter and then there's erm a model who is having here self-portrait done and erm the first picture yeah sets the scenario nd then he says to her to the to the model erm what do you think so far and she doesn't look too pleased and saying that doesn't look anything like me she's unattractive o she she she obviously said well you better do something you better make this better this picture so she does it sits back down and he starts to paint away again and then she looks. she still doesn't look very happy with it in the end and she's saying to some friends or some other people do you think this looks like me. so she's not very happy with the painting okay. (CAOS-E C2-27)

While in (2) we find more adjectives[4], it is apparent that the two speakers do not use much adjectival description, relying more on present tense and the use of nouns to convey the idea of what the situation is about. This tendency is backed up by the corpus data. However, assessment of learners' lexis is commonly found in rubrics. Some researchers have seen that the correct use of adjective order (Lightbown & Spada 1990) or native-like intensification of adjectives (Lorenz 1999) are good indicators of language proficiency. Notwithstanding, other than in interviews which make use of cues to elicit discrete language features, it is extremely difficult to determine which registers or speaking tasks are more likely to yield which linguistic features.

As for Dimension 2, narrative versus non-narrative concerns, the Duncan's Multiple Range Tests corroborates that the three components of our corpus differ significantly from each other, which shows that the three speaking tasks offer distinct profiles on this dimension. While the Interaction Component overlaps with the mean score of telephone conversations (-2) in Biber (1988), the Personal Narrative Component overlaps with the mean score of face-to-face conversations (-0.7). The Interaction Component showed the lowest mean on this dimension, qualifying as the least narrative sub-register in our corpus data. The normalized frequency count of 3rd person pronouns (12.3/1000) and public verbs (2.2/1000) is the lowest in our corpus. By contrast, one of the reasons which may account for the high frequency of 3rd person pronouns in the Picture Description Component (94.5/1000) is the nature of the story going on in them, which includes the elaboration on a sequence of pictures involving a painter and a young lady being portrayed. This clearly favours the use of anaphoric reference and, together with the constraints on online processing in spoken discourse, created the conditions for this comparatively higher frequency of 3rd person pronouns. (3) is another example sample from our research corpus.

(3)

Speaker:	okay there's this this woman has gone to the to an artist for a portrait he does the portrait which is a true representation of her and she doesn't like it
Interviewer:	mhm
Speaker:	she wants to be made more beautiful than she thinks she is so he gets she gets him to redo it and shows off the portrait to her friends showing her as an nice attractive young woman clearly she isn't sadly so she she wants the portrait to give her a picture of what she sees herself as
Interviewer:	mhm
Speaker:	rather than what the world sees her as (LOCNEC-15)

All three speaking tasks scored low on Dimension 3, explicit versus situation-dependent reference, finding themselves between the ranges of face-to-face conversations (-4) and telephone conversations (-5.2). The tasks that were used to elicit spoken language proved to have no discriminatory power for this dimension of use, which was corroborated by the

[4] The adjective variation index is 0.12 for the first simple and 1.4 for the second.

Duncan's Multiple Ranges Tests. The fact that the frequency distribution of phrasal coordination and *wh*-relatives in object and subject positions is similar in the three corpus components, and that their scores overlap registers such as face-to-face conversations or telephone conversations in Biber (1988), which are neither explicit nor heavily situation-dependent registers, seem to indicate the lack of adequacy of these registers or elicitation tasks for the assessment of learner language along the functional underpinnings of D3. This finding is supported by Biber, Reppen and Conrad (2002, p. 46), who stated that there is "comparatively little linguistic variation among spoken registers, apparently because they are all constrained by real-time production circumstances". The same applies to Dimension 5, abstract versus non-abstract information, where significant differences where only found between the Picture Description Component, on the one side, and the Narrative and the Interaction components on the other, which in actual fact yielded the same score on this dimension. As one may expect, the three components showed very little power to generate abstract language of the type found in academic prose. Despite the Personal Narrative Component, it seems that the restrictions imposed by spoken communication were stronger than the thematic orientation of interviews for this component, where speakers were invited to talk about a book, a film or a journey that had influenced their lives. Another alternative explanation may be that the involvement dimension actually was favored by the speakers, defying the restrictions imposed by the university setting where the interviews took place.

However, what has been discussed about Dimensions 3 and 5, does not apply in the case of Dimension 4, overt expression of persuasion, where all three components were profiled in a significant different way. This finding may be of interest to EFL educators and test writers as the expression of one's point of view is a pivotal communicative function across the foreign language learning curriculum, from beginner to advanced levels. Contrary to the situation on Dimension 3, there is a huge difference between the mean scores of the Interaction Component (0.13) and the Picture Description Component (-4). Clearly, this last speaking task yields fewer opportunities for the expression of one's own point of view. The Interaction Component score is closer to NS registers such as spontaneous speeches (0.3) and face-to-face conversations (-0.3) than the Personal Narrative Component (-2) and the Picture Description (-4) Components. The frequency of prediction and necessity modals, suasive verbs as well as conditional subordination is much higher in the Interaction Component, which explains its power to generate communication where persuasion and point of view are evaluated.

Our research methodology provides usage evidence of NS language in registers that have not traditionally been included in major reference corpora such as the Brown Corpus or the BNC. In contrast, the interview corpus used is defined by the speaking tasks used when collecting learner language data. Principled corpora are made up of registers that represent NS use of the language, such as face-to-face conversations, sermons, radio broadcasts or fiction. It is interesting that these representative corpora have never included speaking tasks that are ironically so pervasive in language assessment and, accordingly, in language education. This fact has prevented learner language researchers from establishing more

robust comparability analyses between NS and NNS language, at least in spoken communication.

The type of findings we have discussed in our paper is in keeping with the claims of researchers in the field of corpus linguistics (Flowerdew, 2009) which call for the inclusion of contextualization in corpora. Furthermore, our research addresses concerns expressed long ago regarding validity in general and content relevance (or validity) in particular such as those to which Bachman (1990) drew attention: "the problem with language tests, of course, is that we seldom have a domain definition that clearly and unambiguously identifies the set of language use tasks from which possible test tasks can be sampled, so that demonstrating either content relevance or content coverage is difficult" (Bachman, 1990, p. 245).

Based on the data we have discussed in this paper, the LINDSEI-format interview can be considered a complex register on its own, with peculiarities which bring it closer to conversational language on most dimensions of use; but also a complex register which is very sensitive to the tasks which are selected to elicit language. On Dimensions 2 and 4 all three components differed from each other in a significant way, while on Dimensions 1 and 5 only the Interaction and the Description Components, respectively, behaved differently. Further research should examine each of these speaking tasks more closely so as to determine the potential benefits and drawbacks for language assessment and learner language research in the context of register and language variation.

Conclusions

The results of our MDA of native speaker language suggest that L2 interviews can be instrumental in creating the context for a more complex assessment of learner language proficiency, as the different speaking tasks involved have the potential to yield sub-registers of different nature. By exploring the characteristics of different speaking tasks, we have shown practical ways in which new registers can be linguistically profiled. This profiling is of interest in areas such as language assessment, where language interviews are widely used to evaluate the speakers' communicative competence, but also in the field of learner language research, where corpora such as LINDSEI or the TLC will unlock new perspectives on learners' spoken communication in similar ways as the *International Corpus of Learner English* (ICLE; Granger et al., 2009) did for the written mode.

Despite the limitations of our study, namely the number of interviews included and the exclusive use of the British variety of English, our research sheds light on central issues which affect language assessment and learner language research methodology. Moreover, the fact that studies like this are still very few in number (mainly Biber and Jamieson, 1998 and Biber et al., 2004) limits our capacity to relate our findings to previous work carried out along the same lines. These three limitations provide evidence that the potential of MDA of NS data to inform LTA is still under-exploited, which, on the other hand, hopefully opens up new ways to future work.

Further analyses of each of the speaking tasks of our corpus will contribute to unveil the interplay between linguistic features, the functional dimensions of use in the MDA

tradition and the role of these features in the assessment of language proficiency in spoken communication.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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High school language division students' perceptions of English as a Lingua Franca

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to discover the perceptions of high school language division students towards English as a lingua franca in a Turkish province. For this purpose, a descriptive survey method was chosen via using a questionnaire consisting of 13 questions. The responses were rated on a 4-point Likert scale. The data were gathered from 85 students of three high schools in the fall term of the 2018/19 school year. Being analysed descriptively, the data revealed that most students believed in the importance of teachers' teaching standard English pronunciation to students and that language teachers should teach good grammar to their students. In spite of the students' strong-willed attitude towards pronunciation, they reported that their teachers seemed to have a higher expectation of their performance in grammar. The results also showcased that language division students desired their teachers to attach much importance to both pronunciation and grammar. Furthermore, as far as gender is concerned, more females than males perceived that native English speaking teachers (NESTs) are more effective teachers for language students, suggesting that government hire NESTs to teach English in Turkey. In conclusion, the findings suggest that the students strongly cling to normative perceptions about English as if it was still the language spoken primarily by native English speakers.

Keywords:
English as a lingua franca
native English speakers
non-native English speakers
ownership of English
standard language ideology

Introduction

In recent years, English has gained true value in the globalizing world as an international language used as a means of communication mostly among non-native English speakers (NNESs). After World War II, English has started to transform into a lingua franca throughout the world. It has become a necessity for nations to learn the world language of 'English' in addition to their own languages (Kesgin & Arslan, 2015). When the growth of English as a global lingua franca is considered, how swiftly English has encroached into educational systems worldwide is evidently seen. Thus, most countries have introduced educational policies, aimed at offering English as a second or foreign language as part of their national curricula (Gómez & Pérez, 2015).

The status of English as a lingua franca in most communication situations requires reconsidering the teaching of English as a foreign language from different perspectives due

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to the far-reaching consequences of globalization on the speaker profile and divergent uses of English. So, against this backdrop, language teachers are supposed to help their students improve their linguistic skills in a way in which they can cope with several kinds of familiar and unfamiliar accents and render themselves comprehensible to others. Besides, they should be cognizant of the speakers of English from other countries and learn to use it for communication not only in locations where English is used as a native language but also all around the world with speakers from different races and cultures (Mansfield & Poppi, 2012). Not surprisingly, albeit English spreading as a lingua franca, many learners still aim at reaching the level of inner circle speakers' pronunciation and tend to favour teachers on the basis of their holding a NES or NNES status (Buckingham, 2014). A review of literature shows examination of these issues by language researchers from diverse geographical settings, who roughly observed similar tendencies among learners of English, with a strong desire for NESs as their role models for language use and a strong wish for their pronunciation and accent to be like those of NESs (e.g., Barrett, 2009; Dweik & Al-Barghouthi 2014; Karakaş et al., 2016; Pilus, 2013; Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014). Even worse, in some studies, students were aware of the fact that the majority of their future interlocutors would be NNESs, and most students were pleased with the way they sounded while using English, yet still they insisted on the idea that standard or native English pronunciation should be taught at schools since they could give up on setting NES accents and pronunciation as the ultimate goal of speaking (e.g. Coşkun, 2011; Pilus, 2013). Indeed, such orientations to English among learners go against English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) tenets as it does not favour any speaker over the others in communication. Rather, it gives increased value to communicative effectiveness in interaction and the ways in which speakers meet their linguistic needs in their own terms by implementing different communicative strategies.

It is widely known that the majority of English language teachers do not come from a native English background. They are mostly NNES, who learned English during different stages of their lives, such as in childhood and adulthood, and in different settings, e.g. formal, academic settings, informal immersion with NESs (Dweik & Al-Barghouthi, 2014). As NNESs currently outdo NESSs in number, ELF interactions most frequently occur among NNESs (De Meerleer, 2012). The increase in the number of NNESs, and their changing lingua-cultural needs because of largely having contacts with NNESs and the transference of ownership of English to any users of it regardless of the users' first-language backgrounds have driven researchers to consider the implications of ELF in language teaching classrooms (Coskun, 2011). Since its birth as a field of research, ELF has greatly influenced the field of language learning and teaching, especially when it comes to speaking and listening skills as well as pronunciation (Calvo-Benzies, 2017).

One major setback in teaching English worldwide is that there seems to be little time allocated for teaching speaking for real-world communication in classrooms when compared with other elements of the language system, such as reading, grammar and vocabulary. Even, previous research provides evidence for this conclusion, as students

were found to value learning grammar more than learning productive skills (e.g. Shahzadi & Janjua, 2016; Umo-Udofia & Andera, 2018). For instance, to clarify what lies behind the favorable attitudes towards grammatical competence among students in certain contexts, researchers argue that most students are into learning the rules of grammar since learning grammar is viewed as crucial and basic not only to communicate effectively in English but also to improve language proficiency (Shazadi & Janjua, 2016). Moreover, in many settings like Pakistan and Turkey, students are more interested to learn grammar deductively than inductively as it is the way they got used to while learning English starting from the onset of their language learning trajectory.

Pronunciation often loses ground as something unneeded to pass major language exams (Waniek-Klimczak, 2015). Since speaking is such an important aspect of communication, most scholars and even laymen would concede that good second language (L2) learners should not ignore pronunciation. Rightly or wrongly, people often judge a speaker's level of language competence by his/her pronunciation in terms of fluency and accuracy. In this respect, creating a positive first impression on one's interlocutors really counts, particularly in the professional world (Almaqrn & Alshabeb, 2017). In spite of the so-called emphasis on speaking in policy documents and classroom materials, it has been ignored in schools and universities because of various reasons, yet mostly due to the exaggerated feelings of grammar and vocabulary being of significant value in language teaching practices (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017).

English pronunciation is seen as one of the most difficult skills to be acquired and improved. This may be owing to factors, such as the irregular correspondence between spelling and pronunciation and the impact factors, such as age, motivation and amount of exposure to the target language on the learning process (Calvo-Benzies, 2013). It is widely assumed that in order to master a second language, it is necessary to know and apply the correct grammatical rules used in any particular language, even if nobody observes such rules while using their own mother tongue in real-life communication (Shahzadi & Janjua, 2016).

Affective factors like attitudes, orientations, motivation and anxiety which are seen among the different factors influence language learning outstandingly. The attitudes of the learners towards language learning are seen as one of the crucial factors in stimulating the learners to learn the language (Soleimani & Hanafi, 2013). As attitudes of the learners influencing the learning process may not be explicit, the shareholders of education perhaps ignore the potential effects of such factors on learners' perceptions about language, its use and their own learning experiences. Hence, learners' engagement with the learning process can take different forms depending on how they feel about and perceive it. Hence, the display of their attitudes towards the language negatively or positively can influence the amount of struggle one has to cope with (Umo-Udofia & Andera, 2018). Learners' attitude plays a vital role in maximizing learning and teaching output. Learners' attitude can be defined as a collection of feelings regarding language use and its status in society (Crystal, 2008). The

perceptions which are good, bad and neutral may develop or prevent the learning process effectively (Ahmed, 2015). However, it should also be noted that language learning is affected by both attitudes and motivation, since learners with a negative attitude are unlikely to produce satisfactory results (Almaqrn & Alshabeb, 2017). There is no denying the fact that teachers who take an important role in developing students' language skills in foreign language classrooms are often the first agent in forming how students view language-related constructs, such as grammar and speech patterns, in the target language. Thus, they may either motivate their students towards learning languages by providing a suitable classroom environment or discourage them through their manners and practices that ore out-dated and of no use anymore (Mat & Soon, 2010).

English is a prestigious foreign language in many countries, including Turkey. Although it is not an official language in Turkey policy-wise, it is the most widely taught foreign language in the education system. Actually, English language has a crucial role in Turkey and is considered to be the most important and functional language for the technological and scientific development of the country (Cetinkaya, 2009). It is a compulsory school subject that students begin to learn from the 2nd grade and continue to learn preferably even after they graduate from the university. The extant research into attitudes towards English in Turkey indicates how welcome English is by students, teachers and even parents in schools (e.g. Karahan, 2007; Şentürk, 2019; Nilay, 2018). However, ELF awareness does not seem to have reached a satisfactory level in Turkey as researchers have observed that the majority of students and teachers cannot still adopt ELF principles in practice wholeheartedly due to some perceived constraints, including primarily assessment and measurement (e.g. Bayyurt et al., 2019; Jenkins, Cogo & Dewey, 2011; İnceçay & Akyel, 2014; Griffiths & Soruç, 2019; Kanık, 2013).

Considering the increasing need and ceaseless interest in learning English as an additional language, the main objective of the current study is to explore the attitudes of language division students towards English at three high schools in a small province. Investigation of language division students' attitudes is salient in that these students mostly prefer language-related programs when they are placed into universities and most of them wish to be language teachers. In a sense, they constitute the antecedents of pre-service teachers group. As their beliefs, opinions and feelings mostly take forms when they are still students, examination of their attitudes towards ELF can enable them to reflect on the current issues around English, and consequently inform their practices and broaden their views as regards the current face of English. Thus, the present study is expected to contribute to the field of English language teaching and learning in Turkey via helping language division students to become more aware of hotly debated issues surrounding English, its use and the ways in which it is taught and learned.

Method

Research Questions

In this research, we sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What are high school language division students' perceptions and attitudes about ELF?
2. Are there any differences in their perceptions and attitudes about English as a lingua franca depending on certain variables, i.e. gender, years of study, and schools attended?

Design

This study, which aimed to explore high school language department students' perceptions of ELF, was in the form of a descriptive survey study. The survey research in this study included closed-ended questionnaires that were designed to elicit specific information from the participants. Through this design, we wished to learn about the population of high school language department students who were rarely treated as respondents in previous studies with respect to the current issues around the contemporary face of English as a global lingua franca by surveying a sample of that population in a small Turkish city. Overall, our ultimate objective was to describe the patterns of perceptions, thoughts and attitudes among a group of language department students as regards the current role of English being a lingua franca and its diverse implications for language use and education.

Sample

The sample of the study was comprised of 85 language department students studying at three high schools in the province of Burdur at the time of data collection. The number of students from each high school is as follows: Cumhuriyet (47), Burdur USO (23) and Burdur 15 Temmuz Şehitler (15) Anatolian high schools. The reason behind targeting the language department group is that these students are taking intensive English lessons per week and language is the basic purpose for them in terms of their career prospects. Students placed in such language departments often choose English-major programs such as English Language Teacher Education, English Language and Literature, Linguistics, and Philology after taking the centralized university exam. While recruiting the participants, a purposeful sampling method was employed in the study with an eye to reaching the participants who could provide the most pertinent information on the research topic (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Dörnyei, 2007; Patton, 2002). The criterion for purposive sampling was that only those who were enrolled in language departments at their schools had to take place in the study as the focus of the investigation was specifically on this particular group of students. The participation in the study was on a voluntary basis. In terms of their gender breakdown, a total number of 43 participants were male and the remaining 42 students were female. As for their years of study, 37 students were in the 11th grade and 48 were in the 12th grade. Their age range was between 17 and 18. We included the 11th and 12th-year students in our study as high school students are placed

into discipline-specific departments upon successfully completing the 10th grade in their schools.

Data collection and analysis

The data were collected by a 4-point Likert scale questionnaire (1= strongly agree, 2= agree, 3= disagree, and 4 = strongly disagree) which was originally developed by Liou (2007) to evaluate the attitudes of high school language students and teachers towards English. It was practical for us to choose a 4-point Likert scale in order to encourage the participants to form an opinion on the items without giving them any safe 'neutral' option. The questions were modified when necessary to make it more suitable for the sample. The questionnaire with reliability value .85 consisted of 13 questions. To ensure the content and face validity of the questionnaire, three experts in a language teacher education program were asked to evaluate the questionnaire. Overall, the experts' content validity ratio emerged as 75%. The ratio was increased to 100% after the items in the questionnaire were reworded and clarified in accordance with the experts' suggestions. The revised statements are given in the appendix in the order in which they appeared in the questionnaire (see Appendix A).

In the questionnaire, the first group of questions (Q1 to Q8) was designed to explore language department students' perceptions about and attitude towards language proficiency of different users in different contexts, particularly in relation to the issues of grammar and pronunciation. Question Q9 was developed to determine students' perceptions about integrating Anglo-American culture into English language teaching content. Through questions from Q10 to Q13, we sought to look into students' attitudes towards English proficiency and pedagogical competence in teaching English, and their attitudes towards NS teachers' professional competences.

Seeing as the study adopted a descriptive survey method, the analysis of the data contained an amalgam of descriptive and inferential statistics. With a purpose to limit our generalization to the study group, i.e. high school language students from three different schools, descriptive statistics consisting of frequency analysis and percentages were run. Additionally, inferential statistics such as ANOVA and independent samples T-tests were carried out to find out whether the students' responses show divergence depending on variables like the schools they are based, gender and year of study. For these tests, statistical analyses were performed by means of computer software, i.e. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22.

Results and Discussion

Perceptions about ELF-related issues

It emerged from the analysis of the questionnaire data that almost all of the students (99%) believed that teaching standard pronunciation to students is a crucial teacher task (Q1). In parallel to this response, according to 96% of the respondents, teaching good grammar to the students is perceived to be among the core tasks of language teachers (Q2). This

finding slightly differs from what has been previously found in similar studies. For instance, Calvo-Benzies (2013) observed that although Spanish EFL university students generally considered the teaching of pronunciation to be crucial, it was reported that it only plays a minor role in their EFL classes and teaching materials. However, in other studies, such as those of Nowacka (2012), many students stated that pronunciation is very important to them. What is unclear in those studies is whose pronunciation the respondents took as a benchmark in their perceptions. Although this is not explicitly articulated in the studies, it is very likely that by pronunciation, those studies allude to the standard versions of English, predominantly those of British English and American English. Furthermore, Almaqrn and Alshabeb (2017) reported that 52% of respondents stated that learning vocabulary and grammar was more important than good pronunciation skills. In spite of the students' strong-willed attitude towards pronunciation, most participants had a higher expectation of students' performance in grammar, with 85% of them expecting students to use English with correct grammar (Q6). In the studies of Shahzadi and Janjua (2016) and Umo-Udofia and Andera (2018), it was discovered that students relatively held positive attitudes towards grammar. The results obtained for Q1, Q2, and Q6 were consistent with those reported by Liou (2007).

Table 1. *Students' Perceptions of ELF-related Issues (n = 85)*

Questionnaire items	S. A.	Agree	Disagree	S. D.
	Percentage %			
Q1. ELT teachers should teach good pronunciation to students.	71	28	1	-
Q2. ELT teachers should teach good grammar to the students.	58	38	4	1
Q3. ELT teachers must try to obtain accent-free language proficiency at all times.	26	38	33	4
Q4. ELT teachers must try to speak English without grammatical errors at all times.	21	41	38	-
Q5. Students' pronunciation should sound like standard English.	24	38	27	12
Q6. Students should use correct grammar.	32	53	14	1
Q7. People using English should try to speak accent-free English.	27	46	21	6
Q8. People using English should try to avoid grammatical errors.	22	42	29	6
Q9. If cultural materials are to be integrated into English language classes, they should focus on the English speaking countries' cultures.	32	34	24	11
Q10. ELT teachers should focus more on language knowledge than on the pedagogy.	20	40	33	7
Q11. NESTs are more effective teachers for language students.	53	26	16	5
Q12. The government should hire NESTs from English speaking countries to teach English in Turkey.	38	40	15	7
Q13. Bilingual NNES teachers are better models for students to learn English.	22	45	26	7

Drawing on the results obtained from these items, the students in the study can be said to have prioritized teaching grammar and pronunciation in a normative manner, suggesting that teachers are the primary agents to help students master good English grammar and

pronunciation. Nevertheless, what is meant by good English and good grammar by the participants is left to the reader. Previous studies on the perceptions of good English by English-major students demonstrated that these terms are often associated with standard English and native-like English of the educated British or American speakers (Karakaş, 2017). The descriptive statistics of each item on the questionnaire is presented in the table above.

A close inspection of items relating to the status of teachers showed that 67% of the students perceived NES teachers to be more effective than NNES teachers in teaching English (Q11). In accordance with this perception, more than half of the students (66%) suggested that the government adopt a policy of hiring NES teachers to teach English in the official schooling system in Turkey (Q12). This finding shows how positive the students are about NES teachers when it comes to teacher preferences for language classes. Additionally, this finding reflects the governmental stance on solutions to the problem of low English proficiency among Turkish people as the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) attempted to introduce a project, entitled Development of Foreign Language Teaching, in 2011 through hiring 40.000 NES teachers to be employed alongside Turkish teachers of English though the project was not put into practice due to its high cost ("40 bin yabancı öğretmen" [40 thousands foreign teachers], 2019). In the literature, there are studies that contradict this finding. For example, although Liou (2007) reached similar results to those obtained from the Q11 and Q12 of the current study, she indicated that 84% of the respondents agreed that local English teachers were better role models in learning English (Q13). When the results of the frequency analysis were considered as a whole, the questions, i.e. Q1, Q2, Q6, Q11 and Q12, are highly supported by the students whereas the remaining questions did get lower support. However, the literature abounds in studies that support our finding which indicates that NES teachers and NNES teachers are perceived to be preferable depending on the perceived advantages they hold over each other. For instance, Barrett (2009) pointed out that second language learners in an American institution of higher education placed higher value on having NES teachers in the areas of speaking skills, pronunciation, accent, and knowledge of target culture, but at the same time, they valued NNES teachers for their sympathy and ability to explain language rules explicitly. Similar results were also obtained in other contexts, with different study groups, e.g. teachers, pre-service teachers, non-English major students, and English-major students (e.g. Karakaş et al., 2016).

Differences in students' perceptions of ELF depending on certain variables

In order to investigate whether the students' perceptions differ from one another depending on the schools they are based at, we used an analysis of variance (ANOVA; see Appendix B for the test results). The test results showed significant differences in students' perceptions according to their schools at the 0.05 probability level for the questions Q3 and Q9 (see Table 2 below). Accordingly, the students studying at 15 Temmuz High School highly supported the questions Q3, i.e. *ELT teachers must try to obtain accent-free*

language proficiency at all times, and Q9, i.e. *If cultural materials are to be integrated into English language classes, they should focus on the English speaking countries' cultures*. A possible explanation for these differences might be the influence of the English language teacher(s) at 15 Temmuz Anatolian high school who are perhaps good at imitating NES accents in their speaking and integrating elements of target culture in their classes. The modelling principle suggests that students are inclined to imitate the acts of individuals whom they see as role models for themselves. Considering the fact that in language divisions of high schools, the role models are often the language teachers of students, this conclusion seems feasible.

Table 2. *The Degree of Difference in Students' Perceptions according to Schools (n = 85)*

	Schools		
Questionnaire items	Cum	USO	15TEM
Q1. ELT teachers should teach good pronunciation to students.	1.34	1.17	1.40
Q2. ELT teachers should teach good grammar to the students.	1.45	1.43	1.67
Q3. ELT teachers must try to obtain accent-free language proficiency at all times.	2.36a*[1]	1.96ab	1.73b
Q4. ELT teachers must try to speak English without grammatical errors at all times.	2.09	2.35	2.13
Q5. Students' pronunciation should sound like standard English.	2.38	2.26	1.93
Q6. Students should use correct grammar.	1.81	1.96	1.80
Q7. People using English should try to speak accent-free English.	1.96	2.26	2.07
Q8. People using English should try to avoid grammatical errors.	2.09	2.35	2.27
Q9. If cultural materials are to be integrated into English language classes, they should focus on the English speaking countries' cultures.	2.19a*	2.35a	1.60b
Q10. ELT teachers should focus more on language knowledge than on the pedagogy.	2.45	2.13	1.93
Q11. NESTs are more effective teachers for language students.	1.81	1.52	1.80
Q12. The government should hire NESTs from English speaking countries to teach English in Turkey.	1.85	2.13	1.80
Q13. Bilingual NNES teachers are better models for students to learn English.	2.30	1.91	2.20

[1]: Means within each row followed by the different letter are not significantly equal at 0.05 (*) and 0.001 (***)

To be able to identify the impact of gender on students' perceptions, we ran an independent samples T-test, the results of which revealed significant differences at the 0.05 probability for the Q6, Q11 and Q12 (see Table 3 below and Appendix C for the test results). That is, females highly supported Q6, i.e. Student should use correct grammar, Q11, i.e. NESTs are more effective teachers for language students, and Q12, i.e. The government should hire NESTs from English speaking countries to teach English in Turkey.

When it comes to the likely influence of their year of study in their departments, the T-test results showed that the means of 11th and 12th-grade students were significantly different on some questionnaire items (see Table 3 and Appendix D for the test results). While students at the 12th grade more strongly agreed with Q9, i.e. If cultural materials are to be integrated in English language classes, they should focus on the English speaking countries' cultures, and Q10, i.e. ELT teachers should focus more on language knowledge than on the pedagogy, those at the 11th grade highly supported Q11, i.e. NESTs are more

effective teachers for language students, and Q12, i.e. the government should hire NESTs from English speaking countries to teach in Turkey.

Table 3. *The Degree of Difference in Students' Perceptions according to Gender and Class (n = 85)*

	Gender		Class	
Questionnaire items	F	M	11th	12th
Q1. ELT teachers should teach good pronunciation to students.	1.29	1.33	1.32	1.29
Q2. ELT teachers should teach good grammar to the students.	1.55	1.42	1.43	1.52
Q3. ELT teachers must try to obtain accent-free language proficiency at all times.	2.26	2.02	1.95	2.29
Q4. ELT teachers must try to speak English without grammatical errors at all times.	2.12	2.21	2.19	2.15
Q5. Students' pronunciation should sound like standard English.	2.31	2.23	2.16	2.35
Q6. Students should use correct grammar.	1.69*	2.00	1.70	1.96
Q7. People using English should try to speak accent-free English.	2.14	1.98	2.11	2.02
Q8. People using English should try to avoid grammatical errors.	2.21	2.16	2.32	2.08
Q9. If cultural materials are to be integrated into English language classes, they should focus on the English speaking countries' cultures.	2.00	2.26	2.43*	1.90
Q10. ELT teachers should focus more on language knowledge than on the pedagogy.	2.21	2.33	2.51*	2.08
Q11. NESTs are more effective teachers for language students.	1.52*	1.93	1.27***	2.08
Q12. The government should hire NESTs from English speaking countries to teach English in Turkey.	1.71*	2.12	1.65*	2.12
Q13. Bilingual NNES teachers are better models for students to learn English.	2.26	2.09	2.24	2.12

From these results, it is evident that more students in the 11th grade perceived target language cultural artefacts to be valuable assets in language teaching and conceived of linguistic competence to be of top priority for language teachers compared to the students in the 12th grade. However, the main concern of the 12th-grade students was with the nationality background of language teachers, with great desire for the recruitment of NESTs in language classes. This finding is at odds with the findings of some previous studies. For example, Ballar and Winke (2017) found that in the minds of students, accentedness does not translate to unacceptability as a teacher. Namely, whether teachers speak English as their mother tongue was not a decisive criterion for these students. Nonetheless, there are plentiful studies that nearly share the same results with those of this study. To illustrate, a research study completed by Calvo-Benzies (2013) indicated that the law students tended to value NES accents more than NNES ones, whereas students of tourism broadly appreciated both NES and NNES accents.

Conclusion

The main issue under investigation in this study was how a young group of English-major students perceived ELF and its main principles about language and language education. The investigation did not concern itself with whether students knew the term ELF by name. Rather, the focal attention was paid to the matters ELF has dealt with for a long time, such as awareness of ELF paradigm, perceptions about standard English norms, the

role of culture in language instruction, and accents used regionally and globally in diverse settings. The findings revealed that high school language department students' perceptions and attitudes towards ELF are very norm-oriented, with great appreciation of the aspects of standard and native Englishes (e.g. grammatical accuracy) as well as speakers of inner circle Englishes. We can presume that these students will hold on to these views in their future engagement with English regardless of whether they use it or teach it. Therefore, it is imperative that language teachers in such language-intensive programs at high schools introduce the diversity of English into their classes through various thought-provoking and awareness-raising tasks so that the students can make better-informed decisions about their linguistic acts and set realistic linguistic goals for themselves.

Being one of the rare studies into the perceptions of high school language department students about ELF, this study has some limitations, primarily due to its analytical framework for data collection and sample. We collected the data through quantitative tools, which do not let us explore the issues under investigation in an in-depth fashion, yet allow us to generalise our results to the students sharing similar characteristics with the study sample. Hence, we recommend that researchers study high school language division students' attitudes and perceptions by means of quantitative and qualitative tools. Most importantly, as preliminary research, this study sheds light on the fact that most perceptions and attitudes are shaped through students' early educational experiences with language learning. Keeping this in mind, the stakeholders of language teaching should make efforts to help students become aware of the current sociolinguistic reality of English and its speaker profile, and how they can exploit their linguistic resources to be effective and skilled language users rather than making futile attempts to use English in conformity with certain ways followed by a particular group of speakers, i.e. NESs.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire items

(Q1) ELT teachers should teach good pronunciation to students.

(Q2) ELT teachers should teach good grammar to the students.

(Q3) ELT teachers must try to obtain accent-free language proficiency at all times.

(Q4) ELT teachers must try to speak English without grammatical errors at all times.

(Q5) Students' pronunciation should sound like Standard English.

(Q6) Students should use correct grammar.

(Q7) People using English should try to speak accent-free English.

(Q8) People using English should try to avoid grammatical errors.

(Q9) If cultural materials are to be integrated into English language classes, they should focus on the English speaking countries' cultures.

(Q10) ELT teachers should focus more on language knowledge than on the pedagogy.

(Q11) NESTs are more effective teachers for language students.

(Q12) The government should hire NESTs from English speaking countries to teach English in Turkey.

(Q13) Bilingual NNES teachers are better models for students to learn English

Appendix B: ANOVA test results

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q1	Between Groups	,590	2	,295	1,242	,294
	Within Groups	19,458	82	,237		
	Total	20,047	84			
Q2	Between Groups	,621	2	,311	,781	,461
	Within Groups	32,603	82	,398		
	Total	33,224	84			
Q3	Between Groups	5,565	2	2,782	4,168	,019
	Within Groups	54,741	82	,668		
	Total	60,306	84			
Q4	Between Groups	1,084	2	,542	,953	,390
	Within Groups	46,610	82	,568		
	Total	47,694	84			
Q5	Between Groups	2,302	2	1,151	1,267	,287
	Within Groups	74,474	82	,908		
	Total	76,776	84			
Q6	Between Groups	,379	2	,189	,382	,684
	Within Groups	40,633	82	,496		
	Total	41,012	84			
Q7	Between Groups	1,423	2	,711	,984	,378
	Within Groups	59,283	82	,723		
	Total	60,706	84			
Q8	Between Groups	1,178	2	,589	,807	,449
	Within Groups	59,810	82	,729		
	Total	60,988	84			
Q9	Between Groups	5,482	2	2,741	2,954	,050
	Within Groups	76,094	82	,928		
	Total	81,576	84			

Q10	Between Groups	3,617	2	1,809	2,507	,088
	Within Groups	59,159	82	,721		
	Total	62,776	84			
Q11	Between Groups	1,361	2	,680	,828	,441
	Within Groups	67,416	82	,822		
	Total	68,776	84			
Q12	Between Groups	1,457	2	,729	,892	,414
	Within Groups	66,966	82	,817		
	Total	68,424	84			
Q13	Between Groups	2,297	2	1,149	1,568	,215
	Within Groups	60,056	82	,732		

Appendix C: Independent samples T-test results according to gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Q1	Equal variances assumed	,906	,344	-,374	83	,709
	Equal variances not assumed			-,375	82,043	,709
Q2	Equal variances assumed	2,289	,134	,945	83	,347
	Equal variances not assumed			,942	77,129	,349
Q3	Equal variances assumed	,524	,471	1,304	83	,196
	Equal variances not assumed			1,304	82,987	,196
Q4	Equal variances assumed	,881	,351	-,550	83	,584
	Equal variances not assumed			-,549	81,249	,585
Q5	Equal variances assumed	,613	,436	,369	83	,713
	Equal variances not assumed			,369	82,097	,713
Q6	Equal variances assumed	,938	,336	-2,082	83	,040
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,082	82,992	,040
Q7	Equal variances assumed	2,140	,147	,900	83	,371
	Equal variances not assumed			,898	79,678	,372
Q8	Equal variances assumed	1,286	,260	,277	83	,782
	Equal variances not assumed			,276	80,213	,783
Q9	Equal variances assumed	,081	,777	-1,200	83	,234
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,198	81,557	,234
Q10	Equal variances assumed	1,716	,194	-,591	83	,556
	Equal variances not assumed			-,590	79,136	,557
Q11	Equal variances assumed	6,158	,015	-2,113	83	,038
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,122	74,407	,037
Q12	Equal variances assumed	,122	,728	-2,094	83	,039
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,097	82,402	,039
Q13	Equal variances assumed	3,525	,064	,903	83	,369
	Equal variances not assumed			,901	81,389	,370

Appendix D: Independent samples T-test results according to the years of study

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Q1	Equal variances assumed	,068	,794	,304	83	,762
	Equal variances not assumed			,306	79,648	,760
Q2	Equal variances assumed	1,312	,255	-,640	83	,524
	Equal variances not assumed			-,658	82,757	,513
Q3	Equal variances assumed	,262	,610	-1,894	83	,062
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,904	79,084	,061
Q4	Equal variances assumed	,090	,764	,262	83	,794
	Equal variances not assumed			,263	79,112	,793
Q5	Equal variances assumed	15,041	,000	-,917	83	,362
	Equal variances not assumed			-,966	81,262	,337
Q6	Equal variances assumed	,017	,896	-1,691	83	,095
	Equal variances not assumed			-1,708	80,164	,092
Q7	Equal variances assumed	,036	,850	,467	83	,642
	Equal variances not assumed			,469	78,444	,641
Q8	Equal variances assumed	4,137	,045	1,298	83	,198
	Equal variances not assumed			1,359	82,190	,178
Q9	Equal variances assumed	,766	,384	2,571	83	,012
	Equal variances not assumed			2,550	75,072	,013
Q10	Equal variances assumed	4,295	,041	2,334	83	,022
	Equal variances not assumed			2,276	69,031	,026
Q11	Equal variances assumed	17,078	,000	-4,567	83	,000
	Equal variances not assumed			-4,928	73,580	,000
Q12	Equal variances assumed	6,472	,013	-2,486	83	,015
	Equal variances not assumed			-2,611	81,678	,011
Q13	Equal variances assumed	,419	,519	,625	83	,534
	Equal variances not assumed			,636	81,708	,526

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A meta-analysis of the effect of bimodal subtitling on vocabulary learning among adult EFL learners

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ABSTRACT

A meta-analysis is conducted to investigate the impact of English subtitling on EFL learners' vocabulary improvement. This study was conducted by collecting and analyzing previous research to investigate the effect of bimodal subtitles on vocabulary learning, among EFL learners in different contexts and settings. The main point here is to systemize the existing literature on bimodal subtitles in relation to vocabulary learning as a topic and to compare the results of different studies in this respect. Thus, second language development could be addressed through this area, which can be considered as one effective teaching method for EFL learners. In an effort to elaborate previous literature, a meta-analysis is developed to measure the overall effect size of the study, and to guide English instructors accordingly. Stata 14 software is used for the analysis. The results extracted from the 10 papers found overall positive effect of the bimodal subtitling on vocabulary learning among adult EFL learners.

Keywords:
bimodal subtitles
subtitling
meta-analysis
vocabulary learning

Introduction

Having English as a dominant language around the world, studies in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) SLA (Second Language Acquisition) continue to grasp the language researchers' attention into building a better system, for a better language education. In this regard, Cohen (1998) suggests that language learning requests certain strategies in classroom for guidance of materials in order to be learnt or needed; including language categories, branches, and language rules. In addition to that, beliefs and thoughts affect learners' behaviors and attitudes in general, and vocabulary learning in specific (Easterbrook, 2013). Vocabulary learning is considered to be on top as being an indefinite component of language, Alqahtani (2015) approves by suggesting that the vocabulary system does not follow fixed rules, unlike other language components. Hence, language learners should take some strategies into account in line with language exposure; which is considered to be crucial for language learners to adapt the communicative and authentic part of language.

Language exposure is reviewed as important as language instruction in SLA and EFL fields. Viera (2017) emphasizes the importance of language exposure by picturing the

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foreign language learning as process of changes the learners constantly experience. To illustrate, Ellis (2002) comments on language exposure, suggesting that learners have to meditate language in order to discover it. The idea thus sheds the light on the necessity that language learners have to continuously observe the language. Accordingly, the noticing hypothesis calls for the necessity of language observance. The noticing hypothesis runs from Schmidt's experiences as a language learner of Portuguese, when Schmidt realized that linguistic forms begin to make forms and structures by their own (as cited in Iwanaka, 1998).

One rich source that has eased and opened up for several methods and improvements in education is technology. Hence, technology is enlarging to become both; a rich source and a tool to boost language education and acquisition (Dovedan, Seljan, & Vučković, 2002). The main debate here revolves around the power of multimedia and audiovisual in particular, as it is believed to strengthen the acquisition of language components; including reading, writing, speaking, and listening. For instance, Gibriel (2017) suggests that language exposure as in incidental vocabulary learning; whether through reading, listening and/ or watching videos, promotes language acquisition and learning. Correspondingly, this study investigates bimodal subtitling or same-language subtitling as an effective method in language acquisition.

Subtitling is defined by number of researchers differently. For example, subtitles or captions are defined by Luyken et al. (1991) as "condensed written translations of original dialogue which appear as lines of text, usually positioned towards the foot of the screen. Subtitles appear and disappear to coincide in time with the corresponding portion of the original dialogue" (as cited in Kuo, 2014, p. 62). Whereas Cintas & Remael (2014) identify subtitling as "a translation practice", which includes written data and dialogue of speakers as the soundtrack (p. 8). As for Schroter (2005), subtitling is a form of translation called "additive translation"; featured with gestures, expressions, and utterances conveyed to captions (as cited in Zarei & Rashvand, 2011, p. 619).

Whereas in Turkey, there are recent turnouts on using videos with subtitles in teaching English. Yıldız (2017) believes that videos with or without subtitles are implemented more often, in order to enlighten search on subtitling and vocabulary learning. According to article studies used in this paper, other countries as Iran, Norway, and Brazil showed major interest in experiments and research on different kinds of subtitles in relationship to different components of language. This indeed indicates the importance of subtitling which was found discover-worthy in different countries and settings.

According to the research conducted, a good number of studies reported positive effect when it comes to subtitles and language learning. In general, subtitles were found to be advantageous in language learning in general, and vocabulary learning in specific. However, some studies or experiments were not very supportive in using subtitles due to multiple reasons. And some even suggested that subtitling has no use or effect on language learning (Naghizadeh & Darabi, 2015).

This study however shall determine the effectiveness of bimodal subtitling of English, with its relationship with vocabulary learning among adult EFL learners. In order to do so, a meta-analysis was conducted and guided by the following research questions.

1. Is using bimodal subtitles effective in teaching vocabulary for adult EFL learners?
2. What are previous studies and results reported in terms of methodology?
3. What is the overall effectiveness of the studies on bimodal subtitling and vocabulary learning among adult EFL learners?

Method

As this study takes the form of meta-analysis, it is essential to define what meta-analysis is and what it mainly aims at as a research methodology. Meta-analysis study was first conducted by Karl Pearson in 1904. It is defined as a sum of quantitative results, based on several studies of a specific topic, to reach the quantitative effect size using multiple calculations and findings (Çoğaltay & Karadağ, 2015). Some of the advantages of conducting meta-analysis studies include the significance in practical sum of findings. In other words, meta-analysis studies provide evidence to support or reject a specific practice. Additionally, meta-analysis can determine the overall relationship for effect size in other approaches, thus researchers are encouraged to use data for evaluation of their literature.

This study aimed to systemize previous literature which was conducted on bimodal subtitles along with vocabulary learning, from different settings and countries. As this meta-analysis explores the results of bimodal subtitles in relation to vocabulary learning, studies from different settings were concerned, within and outside the scope of Turkey. In order to collect data, different journal articles, master's theses, and doctorate dissertations related to the topic were used for the study. During the search, articles and dissertations with treatments associated with other types of subtitles were eliminated, and bimodal subtitling articles published within the last 20 years were selected. After the initial search, 44 studies met the criteria of the effect of bimodal subtitles on language learning. However, only 10 studies compiled with the researcher's strategy of the inclusion and exclusion criteria; indicating that two studies were believed to be efficient enough to avoid bias for a subject in meta-analysis studies (Valentine, Pigott, & Rothstein, 2010).

Following the implementation of inclusion and exclusion criteria, the meta-analysis resulted in investigating 10 studies; which were conducted between 2010 and 2016, on English adult learners aged above 16. Table 1 provides distribution and analysis of the ten studies that were involved in the methodological analysis of the meta-analysis; which underlines the importance of empirical studies made on the topic.

Table 1. *List of 10 Studies Included in the Meta-Analysis and Their Sources*

Title of study	*Authors*	*Type of Publication*	*Year of publication*	*Database*	*Country of publication*
The effect of viewing subtitles videos on vocabulary learning	Harji, Woods, & Alavi	Journal Article	2010	EBSCO/ERIC	Malaysia
Effectiveness of using subtitled videos in learning English: a study on Iranian learners	Alavi	Master Thesis	2011	BAU Academic Library/Pro Quest Theses & Dissertations	Malaysia
The impact of watching subtitles animated cartoons on incidental vocabulary learning of ELT students	Karakaş & Sarıçoban	Journal Article	2012	ULAKBIM	Turkey
The effects of captioning texts and caption ordering on l2 listening comprehension and vocabulary learning	Roohani, Domakani, & Alikhani,	Journal Article	2013	ULAKBIM	Iran
The difference between the effectiveness of authentic and pedagogical films in learning vocabulary among Iranian EFL students	Soltani & Soori,	Journal Article	2015	ERIC	Iran
Authentic video and subtitles on English vocabulary enhancement	Rizkiani	Journal Article	2015	BAU academic library	Indonesia
The effect of movies with different types of subtitles on incidental English vocabulary learning of Iranian high school EFL learners	Mardani & Najmbadi	Journal Article	2016	ULAKBIM	Iran
Effects from using subtitled audiovisual material in second language acquisition	York	Master Thesis	2016	ULAKBIM	Norway
The impact of subtitles in second language acquisition	Eye	Master Thesis	2016	ULAKBIM	Norway
Watching subtitled films can help learning foreign languages	Birulés-Muntané & Soto-Faraco	Journal Article	2016	BAU Academic Search Complete (EKUAL)	Spain

Studies in this meta-analysis were given codes to establish some kind of mutual measurement criteria for the effect size which the bimodal subtitling can leave learners of EFL. In regard to the studies distribution and data, each study provided sample size,

conditions, and measurement tools to evaluate the effect of its own empirical research. Stata 14 software was used for the evaluation, to test the relationship between the effect of bimodal subtitling as an independent variable and vocabulary learning as the dependent variable. As the ten studies vary in the sample size, this Meta-analysis program provided estimation of the effect size; in order to avoid errors in the results measured.

Results

To examine the effect of bimodal subtitling on vocabulary learning among adult EFL learners, 10 articles were reviewed for the study. In order to answer the research questions addressed, detailed analysis was given through meta-analytic tests performed by professional statisticians. It is significant to point here that the three research questions are jointly related, and are answered through the different tests applied in this analysis. Therefore, the results and discussion chapters are supposed to follow arguments and evidence coherently. Table 2 reflects the general meta-analytic results of the 10 studies with a summary of the significance level of each study.

Table 2. *Summary of the studies used in the Meta-analysis*

Type of Effect	Effect Type	Number of Studies
Statistically significant Effect of Bimodal Subtitling on Vocabulary learning	Positive Effect	6
	Negative Effect	1
Statistically non-significant effect of Bimodal Subtitling on Vocabulary learning	Positive Effect	2
	Negative Effect	1

Table 3 presents results of the meta-analysis, which were used to examine the effect of bimodal subtitling on vocabulary learning among adult EFL learners of the studies. As observed from the analysis conducted on the articles reviewed, the Heterogeneity test reflected the dimension of variability among the articles reviewed. The heterogeneity was estimated by examining whether the treatment effect employed in the articles experiences variability within the studies. Since the test of heterogeneity was tested to be statistically significant as it is computed; p-value less than 0.05, (< 0.0001), then the random effect model was considered.

From table 3, it can be observed that the Q-value and I-Squared statistics were used to determine the statistical heterogeneity among the articles being studied. The Q-value examined the variation between the treatment effect as well as the common effect exceeding the expectation by chance. The Q-statistic was computed as Q = 248.75, p <.0001. This showed statistical significance as it is an indication that the studies used in this paper to examine the effect were heterogeneous in nature. I-Squared was also used to measure the heterogeneity for the study, as it sought to measure the heterogeneity level and how it is presented among the studies. I-Squared ranges between 0 to 100%, and it examines the percentage of variations of the reviewed articles (Israel & Richter, 2011). From the analysis conducted, it was observed that the I-Squared was computed to be equal to 96.4%, which showed that the level of heterogeneity was considerable because I-Squared was greater than 75%.

Table 3. *Results of meta-analysis of the 10 studies conducted*

Model	*Estimates*	*Fixed*	*Random*
Effect size and 95% confidence interval	Number of Studies	10	10
	Point Estimate	-1.207	-1.207
	Lower Limit	-1.870	-1.870
	Upper Limit	-0545	-0.545
Test of null (2-Tail)	Z-value	14.52	3.57
	P-value	<0.0001	>0.0001
Heterogeneity	Q	248.75	
	df(Q)	9	
	p-value	<0.0001	
	I-Squared	96.4	
Tau-Squared	Tau-Squared	1.0693	
	Standard Error	3.57	
	Variance	11.289	
	Tau	1.0341	

As this study comprised of 10 articles to examine the effect size of bimodal subtitling and vocabulary learning, the main focus was the mean difference in the vocabulary skill of the students; who were included in the treatment after being exposed to the bimodal subtitling. The analysis focused on the standardized mean difference (SMD) by estimating the random effect model. The random effect model considered in this study indicated that there was a significant effect of bimodal subtitling on vocabulary learning among adult EFL students. This was as observed from the standardized mean difference (SMD) computed by the meta-analysis considered in the study (SMD) = -1.207; z = 3.57, p < 0.0001 (See Table 4).

Table 4. *Summary of SMD estimate across articles with 95% Confidence Interval*

Study	*SMD*	*[95% Conf. Interval]*		*% Weight*
J. Birulés- & Muntané	-0.330	-0.690	0.031	10.36
Madhubala et al	-1.245	-1.561	-0.929	10.43
Somayeh & Afshin	-0.691	-1.213	-0.170	10.02
Ali & Arif	-0.263	-0.693	0.166	10.23
Siska Rizkiani	-6.249	-7.323	-5.175	8.34
Henrik Eye	0.240	-0.367	0.847	9.81
Ali Roohani et al	-1.003	-1.211	-0.795	10.57
Erlend Urkedal	0.739	0.165	1.313	9.89
Mahdi & Abedin	-3.554	-4.132	-2.977	9.88
Zhinoos	-0.622	-0.918	-0.326	10.46
D+L pooled SMD	-1.207	-1.870	-0.545	100.00
D+L pooled SMD	-1.207	-1.870	-0.545	100.00

To assess the small-study reporting bias in the meta-analysis, a contour-enhanced funnel plot was used to illustrate the statistical significance of the study effect. See figure 1 as a graph on the significance of this study's effect estimated. The estimates displayed raised concerns that small-study effects; as given in this analysis, question the correct

interpretation of the overall effect. To explore the apparent associations between the effect size and the study size, graphical approaches and statistical tests were employed. The funnel plot presented can be interpreted to be asymmetric, which indicates that smaller studies tend to give solid results emphasizing the effect of bimodal subtitling on vocabulary learning among adult learners of English. The plot revealed that smaller studies were not only found in the areas of statistical significance given by the shaded areas, but also in the areas of non-significance which is given by the non-shaded areas. Therefore, the level of asymmetry might have been caused by several factors and not solely by publication bias.

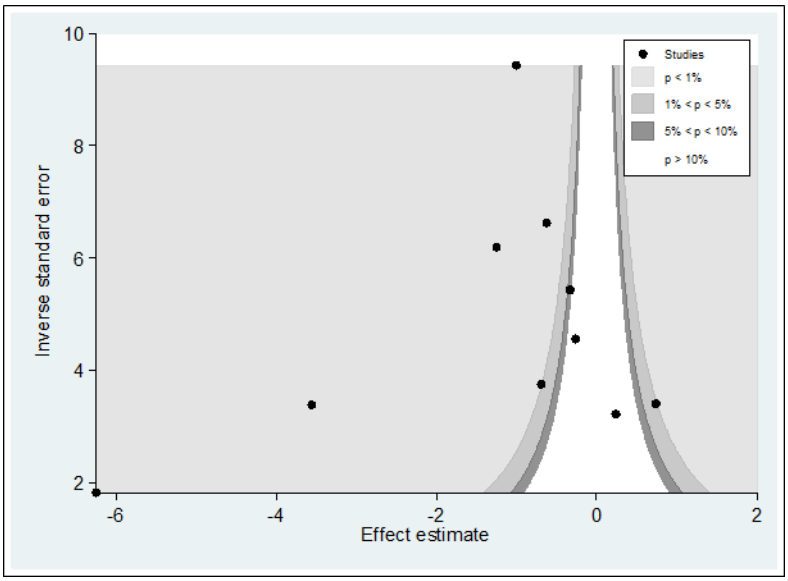

Figure 1. Statistical significance of the study effect

All the calculations above assessed that despite having a small meta-analysis study; comprising of 10 studies, the number of studies used were enough to claim the measurement of the addressed effect. In other words, the plot provided evidence of the asymmetry of study to have used sufficient number of studies, to find an overall significant effect of bimodal subtitling on vocabulary learning among adult EFL learners.

Discussion

As mentioned earlier, the main aim of this meta-analysis study was to evaluate the effectiveness of implying new interventions in English Education. The first goal of this study explored to what extent bimodal subtitles would be advantageous in acquiring new language terminology in the language learning process. To answer this question, each one of the 10 studies was analyzed and interpreted in terms of results and findings. Among 10, 6 studies were to provide statistically positive significant influence of the effect of bimodal subtitling on vocabulary recognition (Alavi, 2011; Birulés-Muntané & Soto-Faraco, 2016; Mardani & Najmbadi, 2016; Rizkiani, 2015; Soltani & Soori, 2015; York, 2016). On the other hand, a study reported bimodal subtitling has statistically significant negative effect

on vocabulary learning of English students (Harji et al., 2010). Some studies reported non-significant change after implying bimodal subtitling on students, with one of negative insignificant effect (Roohani et al., 2013), and two with an estimation of positive insignificant effect (Eye, 2016; Karakas & Sariçoban, 2012).

There are many research studies made on different types of subtitles in accordance to different aspects of language in general, and vocabulary learning in particular. During the literature search, it was found that subtitling is enlarging by interests of language researchers and instructors. This does not necessarily mean effectiveness in language aspects only; but also includes motivation, anxiety, and important components of the learning process. Regardless, some other research studies; that did not meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria, were not included in this meta-analysis study but did support our hypothesis of the effectiveness of bimodal subtitling on vocabulary learning. Some studies suggested that bimodal subtitling does not have any implications or effects at all.

As for the results of this meta-analysis, the 10 studies together reported an overall positive effect of bimodal subtitles on vocabulary learning. The results supported the assumption of the significant relationship between bimodal subtitling and vocabulary learning, which in turn supported our hypothesis. The random effect indicated statistically significance from the standardized mean difference (SMD) = -1.207, $p<0.0001$. This is after considering the heterogeneity level of the studies, which makes the data and meta-analysis reliable for publishing.

Conclusions

There is still a need for wider research with more varieties in the samples. It is especially that some studies were eliminated if no effect or low effect size was found in the study. In addition, this study is conducted on papers that were collected by the researcher. Some other papers were unavailable or believed to be unreliable enough, that the researcher had to eliminate from the study. Other studies were eliminated as they did not meet criteria of the age of the participants. Other limitations of the study included the impossibility to find studies which used same test and/or data measurements. Also, researchers criticized meta-analysis due to the potentiality of error, bias, and effort needed which is considered problematic. Additionally, studies with poor methodological quality can be confusing, as well as using multiple findings of the same study for the analysis (Shelby & Vaske, 2008, p. 105-106).

Following the limitations during the search of this study, direction for further studies was made. Future work is always a good idea to draw the attention and interest on a specific topic. As the studies of subtitles in language learning open up for new questions to be investigated by language researchers, studies in specialized areas in language education can be further addressed. For example, fields as in CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) and ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in Education can be integrated with bimodal subtitling in language education. Moreover, subtitling can be a topic of interest in relation to language awareness and analysis, and how incidental language learning is linked to the language awareness process. Additionally, exploring different types of subtitles on different aspects of language can be targeted as well.

Qualitative data can be collected through the perceptions of students and teachers; hence implications can be drawn in guidance with the recommendations. In the present study, the results met the expectations of the effectiveness of bimodal subtitles on vocabulary learning of English adult learners. However, it is crucial to apply this kind of studies on different levels of participants, in order to enlarge studies and draw conclusions in accordance. This is achievable by conducting meta-analysis studies on different addressed groups, settings, and with different comparisons of subtitles in Turkey and abroad.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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Effects of writing portfolio assessment at tertiary level intensive English program: An action research

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ABSTRACT

Evaluation is essential to any learning and teaching process. Writing portfolio assessment has become increasingly used for evaluating learners' writing processes. Several scholars have proved that portfolio assessments have a positive impact on learners' learning process, especially on enhancing students' involvement and providing learners opportunities to learn from their own errors in writing. This study determined students' attitudes toward the use of writing portfolio assessment and examined the effects of writing portfolio in a module course. Students' opinions of portfolio assessment in the School of Foreign Languages of a south-eastern state university in Turkey were also studied to determine whether the portfolio assessment model was successful in helping learners to improve their writing abilities. The results revealed that most students generally possessed positive attitudes toward the use of portfolio. They claimed that portfolio assessments were very useful in assisting them in developing their writing skills, as well as positively affected their writing performances in quizzes and exams. In addition, a positive correlation was also identified among the scores of the portfolio, quizzes, and exams. This suggested that students with high scores on portfolio tended to achieve higher or similar scores on their writing quizzes and exams, and vice versa. This also indicated that performances on writing portfolio assessments may be predictive of students' writing performance on writing exams.

Keywords:

evaluation
writing portfolio
assessment
writing performance

Introduction

Assessment is significant for the learning and teaching process, and there are different types of assessments for evaluating the knowledge and skills acquired by learners, for example formative assessments and summative assessments (Dixson & Worrel, 2016). Among all skills, writing is regarded as the most difficult one to assess since it involves subjectivity (Nezakatgoo, 2011). Traditional ways such as large-scale standardized tests, impromptu writing samples and multiple-choice tests are not effective, as they do not match with the objectives and purposes of writing assessment (Nezakatgoo, 2011). Therefore, a new alternative is needed for evaluating writing.

It is a well-known fact that writing is a time-consuming process which involves much drafting and editing before possessing a final product. Porfolio assessment, an alternative assessment method for evaluating learners' writing processes is viable method of evaluation. Indeed, it has become increasingly used in assessing writing. It is 'a selection

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of assignments' that a student has consciously assembled from a number of pieces produced over a certain period of time (Crouch & Fontaine, 1994). Portfolio have been suggested by many researchers to be a more authentic way of viewing learners' writing capabilities and improvement over time.

While examining portfolio, teachers consider various language contexts and skills over a certain period of time rather than relying on one or two pieces of writing (Chung, 2012). On the other hand, learners have to complete drafts of portfolio and keep records of their writing processes. It has been claimed that portfolio are valid and reliable testing tools, as they utilize a combination of assessment instruments (Chung, 2012). Portfolio also provide learners opportunities to learn from their own errors in writing. Learners are involved in the revision process, which facilitates their thinking and organizational skills. Reflection is very crucial here as it contributes to students' 'real' learning. Learners can reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their writing with the use of portfolio assessments. In this respect, portfolio assessments serve as a learning tool as well as an assessment tool.

Many scholars have proven that portfolio assessments have a postive impact on students' learning processes. Genesse and Upshur (1996) state that the revision process of portfolio can enhance students' involvement in their assessment and learning and as well as assist them in becoming autonomous learners. Many learners have expressed favourable attitudes towards the use of portfolio assessments. They believe that portfolio are more effective than traditional assessment methods in terms of reducing their anxiety and enhancing their performance.

In this study, the primary goal is to determine students' attitudes toward the use of writing portfolio assessment and to examine the effects of writing portfolio assessment in a module course. Students' opinions of portfolio assessment in the School of Foreign Languages were also studied in order to determine whether the portfolio assessment model was successful in helping learners to improve their writing abilities.

Literature Review

Portfolio Assessment

According to Genesee and Upshur (1996, p.99), a portfolio is 'a collection of students' work' from a course which is useful for demonstrating their development. In other words, portfolio involve the consciously assembly of a selection of assignments from a number of pieces produced over a semester or some other period of time (Crouch & Fontaine,1994). Using portfolio as a tool in performance-based assessment is not a new concept (Goctu, 2016, p.10). Portfolio are most commonly associated with writing, but can be used to assess speaking as well (Carr, 2008, p.42). Compared to traditional evaluation, writing portfolio assessments provide a more comprehensive portrait of a student's writing ability. Writing portfolio usually consist of three stages: pre-writing (outline), first draft and final draft. Whereas traditional evaluation limits the performance of learners to single timed occasions, portfolio assessments offer learners more time to engage in their drafting and editing processes. As a consequence, the development of a student's writing ability, strength and depth can be represented gradually through the collection of his or her work.

As indicated above, several researches have examined the effects of writing portfolio. Moreover, many benefits as well as drawbacks have been found. Regarding the advantages of writing portfolio use, it has been concluded that portfolio accomplish the following:

1. facilitate critical thinking, self-assessment, and revision (Goctu, 2016, p.109),

2. promote leaners to act and learn autonomously (Elango, Jutti & Lee, 2005, p.1),
3. allows learners to assess their strengths and weaknesses (Elango, et al., 2005, p.1),
4. enable learners to avoid plagarism (Nezakatgoo, 2011),
5. reduce learners' anxiety levels, and (Öztürk & Çeçen, 2007)
6. provide more tangible evidence of a student's work (Goctu, 2016, p.109).

On the other hand, the following disadvantages have been determined:

1. evaluating writing portfolio can be time-consuming, and (Elango, et al, 2005, p.1)
2. writing portfolio do not reveal anything about how well a student performs within a limited time (Carr, 2008, p.42).

To understand the effectiveness of portfolio assessment, it is important to take students' attitude towards the use of portfolio assessment into consideration. For instance, Elango et al.'s (2005) study concerning students' perceptions of portfolio as a learning tool, a great number of students expressed favourable attitudes towards the use of portfolio and believed them to be a good learning tool.

Several other studies have also examined the effects of portfolio assessment (Goctu, 2016; Nezakatgoo, 2011; and Taki & Heidari, 2011). Goctu's study (2016) involving a group of prep-school students at International Black Sea University evaluated students' perceptions of writing portfolio assessment. The results revealed that students were more favourable to portfolio assessment than traditional forms of assessment. Students tended to be less anxious and were able to perform better on their writing portfolio assessments. The participants concluded that portfolio helped them improve their writing skills gradually.

Nezakatgoo (2011) conducted a study to determine whether portfolio-based writing assessment had any impact on the final writing examination scores of EFL students. Two conditions were established in this study to assess students' work: (1) a traditional evaluation system and (2) a portfolio system. The findings suggested that portfolio had improved students' writing, who were able to gain higher scores on final exams following portfolio assessment than on exams within a traditional evaluation system. Taki & Heidari (2011) investigated the effectiveness of writing portfolio assessment in an Iranian EFL context. They found that portfolio-based writing assessment had positively affected language learning and self-assessment. Moreover, it facilitates students' self-assessment, and the majority of the students stated their preferences toward portfolio assessment.

The above studies have proven that portfolio assessment has a positive effect on learners. Researchers have found that portfolio improve students' writing skills, yet few of them have dealt with the preparatory school level. Hence, it is necessary for further research at this level. This necessity motivated the action research of the present study, which investigated the writing portfolio assessments in a Turkish context as well as students' attitudes and opinions regarding the use of portfolio assessment in School of Foreign Languages of a South-eastern state university. More specifically, this study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are students' attitudes towards the use of writing portfolio assessment at the School of Foreign Languages?

2. Does portfolio assessment have an impact on students' writing performance and the means of the first and second drafts of first, second and third writing portfolio?
3. Is there any correlation between the scores on portfolio assessment, writing quiz and writing exam?

Method

For this study action research, both qualitative and quantitative methods were used for data collection. The data were gathered over a two-month period and accompanied by three writing portfolio assessments as well as one writing quiz. This process was followed by the administration of variety of quizzes and a final writing exam.

Context

The School of Foreign Languages where this study was conducted employ portfolio as a means for assessing students' writing abilities. Students learn to write in different styles of writing. In each module, students are required to complete three writing tasks for their portfolio together with a writing quiz and a writing exam. The use of portfolio and a writing quiz aim to assess students' writing ability over a period of time. Students are required to write a paragraph or an essay in accordance with the relevant objectives in each level. At the end of each module, students earn a grade equivalent to one quiz grade when they submit all three writing portfolio tasks. In addition, portfolio assessment does not abruptly end after each writing piece, as progress is continuously monitored and final assessment involves a writing quiz and an exit writing exam based on what students have learnt throughout each level of writing.

Participants and Sampling

This study was conducted among a total of fifteen students at the School of Foreign Languages of a state university in the south-eastern part of Turkey. Five participants (33.3%) were male and ten (66.7%) were female. The ages of the participants ranged between 18-24 years. The English proficiency level of the sample group was B2 (Upper Intermediate). The participants were enrolled in a mandatory preparatory course offered by the School of Foreign Languages prior to beginning their respective undergraduate programs at the university. A convenience sampling method was used because B2-level students were more sufficient in writing abilities and could better demonstrate writing texts. The participants had an intensive English program (5 days a week, 4 hours a day, so a total of 20 hours). The hours of instruction were distributed as follows: eleven hours as a main course, four hours as a reading course, three hours as a writing course and two hours as speaking. The duration of the module was almost 2 months (from 9th April to 1st June).

Data Collection Tools

1) A student portfolio was employed. The content of the portfolio included 5 items. The items consisted of 3 writing portfolio tasks, together with one writing quiz and a writing exam. Each writing portfolio task consisted of two drafts (first and final drafts) of 3 writing portfolio tasks, so 6 portfolio writings in total. Both drafts were scored. The types of text were cause and effect essay, compare and contrast essay, and problem solution essay.

2) An analytical scoring rubric used by the School of Foreign Languages of the university for assessing essays was employed (see Appendix 1). It consisted of descriptions along an ordinal scale consisting of five individual criteria: task achievement (30 pts), organization (20 pts), use of English (20 pts), vocabulary (20 pts) and punctuation, and spelling and mechanics (10 pts). For each category, score bands and a set of descriptors of student performance were listed and could be used to assign scores to an individual student's performance in a systematic way. All writing portfolio and portfolio quizzes were scored by using the same rubric and results were recorded.
3) Survey on the Effect of Writing Portfolio Assessment (SEWPA): The SEWPA consisted of three parts. The first part was adopted from Huang (2012). It aimed to assess students' attitudes toward the use of portfolio assessment. There were six items rated on a five-point Likert scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The second part of the survey was adapted from Aydin (2010). The reliability of was calculated as. 77 in this study. This part considered the effects of writing portfolio assessments on the students. In this part, there were a total of 28 items rated on a four-point Likert scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The last part of the survey was adapted from an action research by Goctu (2016). This part consisted of seven open-ended questions determine students' opinions of writing portfolio assessments and to determine whether the implementation of writing portfolio assessments had benefitted them (see Appendix 2).

Procedure

The study was conducted for approximately 8 weeks during the last module of 2017-2018 Spring Semester. Before the action research, the consent of the administration and students were obtained. The purposes of the study, how to prepare the writing portfolio, how the portfolio were structured and their duration were all explained to the students. Meanwhile, a writing process checklist was also used in observing the students' processes and improvement in the writing tasks.

The following six steps were involved in data collection:

Step 1: The Implementation of the First Writing Portfolio

Students were taught how to construct cause-and-effect essay during first and second weeks of the module. Then, on April 17th, participants created their first drafts of a cause and effect essay on one of the following topics: a) "What are the effects of unemployment?" and b) "What are the reasons of sharing a flat with a roommate?". Then, the participants received their first marked drafts with correction codes. Having received the oral feedback of their instructors, they independently had to correct all the mistakes they had made by themselves. They write their second drafts on April 20th.

Step 2: The Implementation of the Second Writing Portfolio

A compare-and-contrast essay was taught to students during the third and fourth weeks. Then, on April 30th, participants had to create their first drafts on one of the following topics: a) "Compare or contrast two cities," and b) "Compare or contrast two sports". After that, the participants received their first marked drafts with

correction codes. They needed to correct the mistakes and write their second drafts on May 4th after receiving their teachers' oral feedback.

Step 3: The Implementation of the Third Writing Portfolio

Students were taught a problem-solution essay during the fifth and sixth weeks. Then, on May 15th, they wrote their first drafts on one of the following topics: a) "What solutions can you think of reducing crime in big cities?" and b) "What are the solutions to the world energy crisis?". First marked drafts with correction codes were given to the participants, who corrected their errors and completed their second drafts on May 18th after receiving oral feedback from teachers.

Step 4: The Implementation of a Writing Quiz

A writing quiz took place on May 17th. Participants had to write an essay based on the essay types they had learned. For the quiz, students were required to write either a) a comparison and/ or contrast essay on two social networking sites or b) an essay giving the causes of living in a big city.

Step 5: The administration of the SEWPA

The SEWPA was conducted on May 21st to determine students' attitudes toward writing portfolio, the effectiveness of writing portfolio, and their opinions on writing portfolio at the School of Foreign Languages.

Step 6: The facilitation of a Writing Exam

Via a module writing exam administered on May 28th, participants performed a writing task based on one of the essay types they had learned. They had to write one of the following topics: a) a compare and contrast essay on two countries or b) a problem-solution essay giving the solutions to the problem of overpopulation in the big cities. The scores of the writing exam were recorded in order to check the inter-rater reliability and to determine whether there had been steady improvement in students' writing performance.

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative method in data analysis were employed, and the data were collected from three portfolio tasks, writing quizzes, writing exams, and the SEWPA then subsequently analyzed in terms of descriptive and inferential statistics. The statistics were computed via SPSS Version 21.0 software, and means as well as standard deviation were calculated from the data. A bivariate Pearson Correlation was then conducted among the scores of the portfolio tasks, writing quizzes and writing exams. While for the qualitative data, content analysis was employed to analyze the quanlitative data obtained from the third part of the SEWPA. In this research, themes and codes were achieved via content analysis. Furthermore, participants' statements or explanations were coded by highlighting the statements with similar topics. And then while coding the researchers chose some representational phrases among those highlighted sentences. Then, they clustered these codes for the purpose of identifying the relevant information effectively.

Research Findings

*Results for Research Question #*1 What are students' attitudes, opinion and the effectiveness on the use of writing portfolio assessments at the School of Foreign Language?

Research question 1 intends to examine students' attitudes and opinion toward portfolio assessment and the effects on writing performance. The first and third part of the SEWPA (see Appendix 2) were analyzed to determine students' attitude and opinion toward portfolio assessment. Table 1. below displays the mean and standard deviation of the data collected from the SEWPA. The mean was found to be 22.0667 (*SD*=2.89005). Moreover, findings indicated that 66.7 % of the participants considered that portfolio to be a more effective type of assessment compared to traditional assessment methods. A vast majority (86.6%) of the participants perceived portfolio creation as very beneficial to their learning experience, and 60% claimed that portfolio was very important. Only 40% wanted to continue with portfolio assessment in the future, while 60% regarded portfolio as a significant part of their learning experience. Finally, 60 % of students expressed that they were confident while completing the portfolio tasks.

Table 1. *Students' Attitudes Toward Portfolio Assessment (A-total) & The Effectiveness of Portfolio Assessment (E-total)*

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
A-total	22,0667	2,89005	15
E-total	86,3333	10,01903	15

The results indicated that students generally possessed positive attitudes toward the use of portfolio. Nevertheless, this was not an overwhelming rate, and still some students expressed their concerns and indecisiveness regarding portfolio assessment. The results also showed that students generally favored writing portfolio and found them to be beneficial. However, it should be noted that portfolio assessment was a mandatory component of these students' learning programs, which might have influenced negative attitudes toward it. Compared to traditional forms of assessment, portfolio writing enabled students to feel more free and more confident. They regarded portfolio as an important part of their learning experience.

In addition, the findings of the third part of the SEWPA (see Appendix 2) was also analyzed to examine participants' opinions of the portfolio assessment at the School of Foreign Languages and to determine whether they felt the implementation of writing portfolio assessments had benefitted them.

Findings to the first question indicated that less than half of the students (46.67%) liked keeping portfolio and found them useful. Slightly over half of the students (53.33%) expressed their negative feelings about keeping portfolio. They claimed that portfolio assessments were very difficult but mandatory at the School of Foreign Languages.

The second question revealed that a majority (80%) of the students thought that portfolio had achieved these objectives. They also felt that the high number and frequency of

portfolio writings and quizzes improved their writing ability. About 13.33% of the students expressed their uncertainty about the writing portfolio, while only 6.67% stated that portfolio was not beneficial.

Various opinions were expressed in response to the question investigating what students like most about portfolio. Of the fifteen participants, seven (46.67%) claimed that they learned new words and bolstered their English writing skills, five (33.33%) did not like anything from the portfolio, two (13.33%) said that they gained more information about topics and one (6.67%) enjoyed receiving teacher feedback.

Again, various opinions were expressed to the fourth question. Of the fifteen participants, five (33.33%) stated that they could learn more vocabularies terms via portfolio than with other traditional assessment methods. Two participants pointed out that organizational skills were required in portfolio and another two participants expressed that they could see their mistakes as well as improvement during the process of writing portfolio. Two claimed that the format of portfolio is quite different than those of other traditional assessments like multiple-choice tests, while one claimed that she could receive feedback from portfolio and another stated that writing portfolio increased her creativity. An interesting fact is that two participants did not perceive any difference between portfolio assessment and other traditional assessment methods.

The fifth question assessed the difficulties participants encountered when writing portfolio. 26.67% of the students found that organization was the most challenging part for them, while 20% found the most difficult part to be the use of suitable words for the writing topic context. Another 20% claimed that writing long paragraphs was the most difficult part, 20% stated that portfolio was very time-consuming, and 6.67% expressed that forming new ideas and writing in the suitable style of writing (e.g. compare/ contrast, problem-solution, cause/ effect, etc.) challenged them throughout the portfolio process. Did portfolio help you to take more responsibility for your study? Interestingly, responses to the sixth question were overwhelmingly in agreeance that portfolio had, indeed, encouraged them to become more responsible for their learning.

For the last question, most participants (N=12) felt prepared to present their portfolio to their parents, friends, and other teachers even though their writing performances were not the best. Only two participants were not ready and one remained indecisive. These findings were surprising because it was assumed that students would not feel confident in sharing writings that had received low mark.

Apart from students' attitudes, the second part of the SEWPA (see Appendix 2) was analyzed to examine the effects of portfolio assessments. Table 1 displays the mean and standard deviation of the collected data. The mean was found to be 86.3333 (*SD*= 10.01903).

The findings revealed that the majority of students agreed that portfolio assessment had contributed to their improvement in vocabulary and grammar knowledge, reading and research skills, organization of paragraphs and compositions, and punctuation and capitalization. Portfolio also assisted the participants in giving and receiving feedback.

Based on these findings, the effectiveness of writing portfolios can be summarized in the following six ways:

> **Vocabulary:** Participants improved their vocabulary knowledge (93.3%) as a result of portfolio writing. They could utilize suitable words in context (100%) and

employ a dictionary to find appropriate words for their writings (93.3%) . They were also able to use a wider range of words in correct form and usage (93.4%).

Grammar: Participants' grammar knowledge improved (80%) as a result of portfolio assessment. They were able to use grammar structures accurately in terms of forming more complex and compound sentences (93.3%) and in terms of using conjunctions as well as signal words when necessary (93.3%).

Reading skills: Portfolio writing promoted learners' reading skills. Participants had to read some texts in English given by their teachers in order to glean the main ideas and details of content which they subsequently utilized in their writings. They also gained information about the writing topics (93.3%).

Research skills: Portfolio also improved participants' research skills. As students needed to gather information about their writing topics, portfolio required them to discover reading texts related to their portfolio topics. Most participants were able to present a variety of ideas and related to their writing topics, and as a result, they were able to compose more coherent sentences (86.6%) and improve their writing skills (93.4%).

Organization of paragraphs and compositions: Portfolio assisted participants in organizing a paragraph and composition (86.7%). Before starting to write, portfolio helped students acquire information about paragraphs and compositions and some pre-writing strategies such as brainstorming, clustering, outlining, and planning (86.7%) (Aydın, 2010). Portfolio also helped participants to use punctuation and capitalization in correct usage (93.4%) via reading teacher feedback regarding correct or incorrect punctuation. Portfolio writing contributed to learners' understanding of paragraph and essay development methods (93.3%) such as organizing and outlining. They also learned the components of a paragraph and essay (100%). In addition, portfolio were an effective way for students to learn the features of a paragraph and essay (86.7%). Participants learned how to produce coherent paragraphs and essays (93.3%) as well as how to write a paragraph and essay in unity (100%). Participants also learned how to produce original papers (86.6%) and began to write creatively (80%). They also began to write in English without translating from Turkish (53.4%) and reflected their ideas, feelings and thoughts in their papers (86.7%).

Giving and receiving feedback: As a result of portfolio assessment, participants learned how to give feedbacks to their peers via identifying correction codes given by their teachers (80%). Yet, they encountered some difficulties in finding errors in a paper (60%). Most participants were able to classify mistakes in a paper (73.3%) after their mistakes had been identified by their teachers. They also learned how to use a scoring rubric when examining a paper (73.3%). In addition, they agreed that peer and teacher feedback helped them to notice and correct their errors (100%) as well as revise their papers (100%).

*Results for Research Question #*2. Does portfolio assessment have an impact on students' writing performance and the means of the first and second drafts of first, second and third writing portfolio tasks?

Based on the scores of participants in portfolio, findings revealed that an overwhelming number of students demonstrated steady improvement in the second drafts of portfolio after receiving teachers' oral feedback. Students were able to identify the errors they made in portfolio. Since students' performances were evaluated in an analytical way based on a scoring rubric for assessing essay, examining their scores was sufficient in rather than looking at other components such as types of mistakes, frequencies of mistakes, and frequencies of repeated mistakes. This suggested that when the scores improved, students' performance also improved.

Table 2. *Results of Three Writing Portfolio Tasks*

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
p11	77,3333	4,05615	15
p12	88,9333	3,45309	15
p21	85,8333	3,99851	15
p22	92,8333	3,21640	15
p31	85,4667	7,83642	15
p32	90,9333	6,09996	15

Meanwhile, the mean scores of students on the second portfolio were significantly higher than those on the first portfolio (see Table 2). For the first portfolio, the mean score of the first draft was 77.3333 (*SD*= 4.05615) and the mean for the second draft was 88.9333 (*SD*= 3.45309). For the second portfolio, the mean of the first draft was 85.8333 (*SD*= 3.99851), while the mean of the second draft was 92.83333 (*SD*=3.21640). For the third portfolio, the mean of the first draft was 85.4667 (*SD*=7.83642) and that of the second draft was 90.9333 (*SD*= 6.09996).

The above findings suggested that students were able to continually improve their writing skills and performances throughout the portfolio process. However, while there was an increase in the mean scores of first and second drafts between the first and second writing portfolio, the means of first and second drafts between the second and third writing portfolio were not maintained. Of fifteen participants, only seven students were able to maintain their improvement. Another seven students actually regressed in terms of improvement during the third writing portfolio, while one participant did not experience any improvement between the second and third writing portfolio.

*Results for Research Question #*3. Is there any correlation between the scores on portfolio, writing quiz and writing exam?

As indicated by Table 3, Pearson product-moment correlation of the collected data revealed a positive correlation among the scores of portfolio, portfolio quizzes, and writing exam (.102<|r| <.969, p>.001). The correlation between portfolio tasks (p1.1, p1.2, p2.1, p2.2, p3.1 and p3.2) and portfolio quiz (PQ) (.506< |r| <.730) was stronger than that between portfolio and writing exam (WE) (.347<|r| <.606). These results imply that students performed better on writing quiz following portfolio completion, receiving higher

or similar scores on the quiz. The correlation between writing quiz and writing exam was found to be the strongest (r =.826), which implies that performance on writing quiz may be a predictor of performances on writing exam.

Table 3. *Correlations Among Scores on Three Portfolio Tasks, Writing Quiz and a Final Writing Exam*

		p1.1	p1.2	p2.1	p2.2	p3.1	p3.2	WQ	WE
p1.1	Pearson Correlation	1	,603*	,102	,347	,544*	,525*	,506	,347
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,017	,718	,205	,036	,045	,054	,205
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
p1.2	Pearson Correlation	,603*	1	,328	,652**	,434	,468	,633*	,546*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,017		,233	,008	,106	,079	,011	,035
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
p2.1	Pearson Correlation	,102	,328	1	,856**	,236	,278	,541*	,423
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,718	,233		,000	,396	,316	,037	,116
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
p2.2	Pearson Correlation	,347	,652**	,856**	1	,460	,516*	,727**	,606*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,205	,008	,000		,085	,049	,002	,017
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
p3.1	Pearson Correlation	,544*	,434	,236	,460	1	,969**	,730**	,369
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,036	,106	,396	,085		,000	,002	,176
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
p3.2	Pearson Correlation	,525*	,468	,278	,516*	,969**	1	,701**	,324
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,045	,079	,316	,049	,000		,004	,239
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
PQ	Pearson Correlation	,506	,633*	,541*	,727**	,730**	,701**	1	,826**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,054	,011	,037	,002	,002	,004		,000
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
WE	Pearson Correlation	,347	,546*	,423	,606*	,369	,324	,826**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,205	,035	,116	,017	,176	,239	,000	
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion and Conclusion

The primary purpose of this study was the exploration of students' attitudes, and opinions toward the use of portfolio assessment as well as the effectiveness of portfolio on students' language improvement. The findings for the first research question have disclosed that portfolio assessment is essential to foreign-language teaching and learning. The analysis revealed that students at the School of Foreign Languages generally demonstrated favorable attitudes toward the use of portfolio assessment, perceiving it to be a useful

learning and assessment tool. This further gave support to Goctu's study (2016) involving a group of prep-school students at International Black Sea University, which also revealed that students were more favourable to portfolio assessment and concluded that portfolio helped them improve their writing skills gradually.

Moreover, the findings of this study are also consistent to the study conducted by Yurdabakan & Erdogan (2009). The results of this study indicated that portfolio assessment had a significant effect on writing skills. Meanwhile, this study is similar to the results as that of Fahed Al- Serhani (2007), demonstrating that portfolio assessment had a significant positive impact on students' writing performance in general and subskills of purpose, content, organization, vocabulary, sentence structures and mechanics.

The second research question in this study aimed to determine whether portfolio assessments have an impact on students' writing performance and the means of the first and second drafts of first, second and third writing portfolio. The results of this analysis suggested that there was a significant increase in their writing performances, and the analyses confirmed that there was a significant improvement in students' writing performances. Findings of this study corroborated those of Nezakatgoo (2011) and Ruetten (1994), which found that portfolio assessment was, indeed, very useful for EFL students and assisted them in developing their writing skills. Students were also aware of the differences between portfolio assessment and other traditional forms of assessment. Lucas (2007) and Nezakatgoo (2011) similarly claimed that portfolio assessment benefitted EFL students' writing skills. In the current study, it was determined that writing portfolio had positively affected students' performance on writing quizzes and exams and had benefitted them in numerous ways. For example, portfolio improved students' grammar and vocabulary knowledge, developed their writing skills, and encouraged a sense of responsibility for their learning. They also provided an accurate means of assessing improvement over a period of time, and enabled students to engage with their knowledge via identifying and self-correcting their mistakes. What is more, portfolio enhanced their independent research skills and improved their skills in other language domains such as reading. These findings are also echoed by those of Karatas, Alci, Yurtseven and Yuksel (2005), who observed that providing feedback helped students to identify their mistakes and become more autonomous in their learning. Nevertheless, despite these benefits, some students still encountered some difficulties in finding their own mistakes and correcting them accordingly.

In addition to evaluating the effectiveness of portfolio assessment on students' language-learning, the third research question of this study investigated whether there was a correlation among students' performance on portfolio, portfolio quizzes and writing exams. A Pearson Bivariate correlation was employed to determine the existence of such a relationship. According to the results, most students demonstrated gradual improvement in their portfolio on their second drafts. Based on the results of portfolio quizzes and writing exams, a positive correlation was identified among the scores of the portfolio, quizzes, and exams. The correlation between portfolio-quiz scores and writing-exam scores was found to be the strongest. This demonstrates that performances on portfolio quizzes may be predictive of performance on writing exams. This means that students with high scores on portfolio quizzes tend to achieve higher or similar scores on their writing exams, and *vice versa*.

In short, this study underlines several pedagogical important implications. First, this study suggests that portfolio may be an effective learning tool among EFL students, as many

benefits have been observed. The implementation of portfolio assessment within the School of Foreign Languages has proven quite effective, and most participants have expressed positive opinions towards its use as a learning tool; and a positive correlation was also found in this regard. Hence, instructors in EFL classes can utilize writing portfolios in order to promote overall writing performance as well as sub skills of writing. Second, the fact that students at the School of Foreign Languages favoured portfolio assessments may suggest that portfolio can be used as a model for other types of more interactive assessment such as ePortfolio and speaking portfolio, which give students greater responsibility for their learning. In addition, other opportunities for students to self-correct and give self as well as peer-feedback via the use of the Mahara ePortfolio System can be employed.

Yet, the present study has a number of limitations. First, the time of the study was short as the length of this study was approximately eight weeks. This might have affected the learners' writing performances though it was impressive to observe students' improvement within such a short period of time. Had the study extended a longer period of time, more statistically significant results might have been obtained regarding the improvements in students' writing performances. Also, students can be more aware of their types of errors they had made in order to avoid repeating them on future portfolio and, thus, improve their writing scores. This may also suggest that a higher number and frequency of portfolio may be able to improve students' writing performances within a shorter period of time.

Second, in this study, the participants were chosen on the basis of convenience sampling at only one proficiency level, which might have affected the results. In future studies, a random sampling method consisting of different proficiency groups could be employed. Moreover, the sample size was small, with only fifteen participants; hence cannot be a generalization for the School of Foreign Languages. Future studies might employ a larger scale of sample consisting of preparatory schools in different parts of Turkey for more accurate results.

In the light of research findings, the following recommendations and suggestions could be considered. Though the current study has proven portfolio to be an effective assessment method among EFL learners, future studies might examine the precise differences between portfolio and other types of writing assessment to determine if one is more effective than the other in enhancing students' writing skills. Moreover, future studies might need to be experimental in nature in order to examine more closely the type of improvment in student performance among portfolio, quizzes, writing exams.

In order to improve students' writing performance and to sustain this improvement throughout their language learning, more efforts should be made to encourage both students and teachers to take advantage of the portfolio, as well as other types of more interactive assessment such as ePortfolio and speaking portfolio.

Disclosure Statement

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Appendix 1. Scoring Rubrics for Assessing Essay

GAZİANTEP UNIVERSITY HIGHER SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

ESSAY RATING SCALE

TASK ACHIEVEMENT (30PTS)		ORGANIZATION (20PTS)		USE OF ENGLISH (20PTS		VOCABULARY (20PTS)		PUNC./SPELL./MECHANICS (10 PTS)	
23-30 pts.	-task fully achieved -great variety of ideas -very good knowledge of subject -entirely relevant to topic -appropriate format, length and register	16-20 pts.	Appropriate thesis statement; effective introductory paragraph ;topic is stated; suitable transitional expressions; conclusion logical and complete	16-20 pts.	Accurate use of grammar and structures; hardly any errors of agreement; tense, word order articles, etc. ;meaning clear; being able to use complex structures; great variety of ideas	16-20 pts.	-wide range of vocabulary and very good choice of words -accurate form and usage -meaning clear	16-20 pts.	-hardly any spelling mistakes -left and right margins, all needed capitals, paragraph indented and punctuation; very neat
16-22 pts.	-task adequately achieved -adequate variety of ideas -adequate knowledge of subject -some gaps or redundant information -acceptable length and register -e few irrelevant ideas	11-15 pts.	Thesis statement Body paragraph and Concluding paragraph are acceptable but some ideas aren't fully developed; Body paragraph may not fully support the thesis statement and problems of organization occur	11-15 pts.	Adequate use of grammar and structures; some errors of agreement, etc.; meaning almost clear; some mistakes in use of complex structures	11-15 pts.	-adequate range of vocabulary and choice of words -some errors of form and usage -meaning sometimes not clear	11-15 pts.	-few spelling misiakes -some problems with margins , capitals and punctuation -paper is legible
8-15 pts.	-task achieved only in a limited sense -limited variety of ideas (development of ideas not complete) -limited knowledge of subject - frequent gaps - often inadequate length and register -some irrelevant ideas	6-10 pts.	Poor introduction; too many problems with ordering of ideas; poor supporing ideas and conclusion	6-10 pts.	Limited use of grammar and structures; numerous errors of agreement, etc. Which has a negative effect of communication -limited use of structures	6-10 pts.	-limited range of vocabulary and choice of words -frequent errors of form and usage -meaning often not clear	6-10 pts.	-frequent spelling mistakes -senous problems with margins , capitals and punctuation -parts of essay not legible
0-7 pts.	-task poorly achieved -poor variety of ideas -major gaps and pointless repetition -no apparent effort to consider the topic carefully -too many irrelevant ideas	0-5 pts.	Absence of introduction; or conclusion; no apparent organization of body meaningful paragraphing; nearly impossible to read	0-5 pts.	- poor use of grammar & structures -meaning very often not clear -reader can't understand what the writer was trying to say -poor variety of structures	0-5 pts.	-poor range of vocabulary and choice of words; repetitive -too many errors of form and usage -meaning not clear -mainly translation from mother tongue	0-5 pts.	-severe spelling mistakes -poor usage of capitals and punctuation -no essay format (margins)

Appendix 2. Survey on the Effect of Writing Portfolio Assessment at School of Foreign Languages

Part 1 Background

1. Name:_____
2. Student No.:_____
3. Gender : Male/ Female
4. Age : _____

Part 2 Student's attitude toward portfolio assessment

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Portfolio as a more effective assessment compared to traditional assessment					
2. Creating portfolio is very helpful beneficial learning experience					
3. Creating portfolio is very important to me					
4. I like to keep portfolio in the future					
5. I like to regard portfolio as a part of my learning experience					
6. I have confidence in completing the portfolio tasks					

*Taken from Huang, J. (2012). The implementation of portfolio assessment in integrated English course. Canadian Center of Science and Education. *English Language and Literature Studies*, 2 (4), 18.

Part 3. The effect of writing portfolio assessment

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I improved my vocabulary knowledge.				
2. I learned to use words in context.				
3. I learned how to use a dictionary to find appropriate words.				
4. I learned to use a variety of words.				
5. I improved my grammar knowledge.				
6. I learned to produce complex and compound sentences.				
7. I learned to use linking and signal words when I combine the sentences.				
8. I learned to write more fluent sentences.				
9. I improved my reading skills.				
10. I gained information about the topics I wrote about.				
11. I learned how to organize a paragraph and composition.				
12. I learned brainstorming and clustering before starting to write.				

13. I learned how to use punctuation and capitalization.				
14. I learned how to give feedback.				
15. I learned to find the mistakes in a paper.				
16. I learned to classify mistakes in a paper.				
17. I learned to use a checklist when I examine a paper.				
18. Peer and teacher feedback helped me to notice and correct my mistakes.				
19. Peer and teacher feedback helped me to revise my papers.				
20. I had information about paragraph and essay development methods and techniques.				
21. I learned the parts of a paragraph and essay.				
22. I learned the characteristics of a paragraph and essay.				
23. I learned how to produce coherent paragraphs and essay.				
24. I learned how to write a paragraph and essay in unity.				
25. I learned how to produce original papers.				
26. I began to write creatively.				
27. I began to write in English without translating from Turkish.				
28. I learned to reflect my ideas' feelings and thoughts in my papers.				

*Taken from Aydin, S. (2010). A qualitative research on portfolio keeping in English as a foreign language writing. *The Qualitative Report*, *15*(3), 483.

Part C. Students' opinion towards the use of portfolio at School of Foreign Languages

1. What do you think about keeping portfolio? Do you like it or not?
2. Did the portfolio application help you to write better and get better organized?
3. What do you like most about portfolio?
4. How is portfolio assessment different from other traditional assessments (e.g. tests and exams)?
5. What challenged you during the portfolio study?
6. Did portfolio help you to take more responsibility for your study?
7. Are you ready to present your portfolio other than teacher? Why (not)?

Taken from Goctu, R. (2016). Action research of portfolio assessment in writing in English as a foreign language while teaching preparatory school in Georgia. *Journal of Education in Black Sea Region*, *2*(1), 111-112.

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Learning in scaffolded autonomous e-learning environments amongst EAP students in a UK university

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ABSTRACT

As learners are working individually in e-learning environments, research has moved to focus on providing guidance for learners and helping them to take responsibility for their own learning. Therefore, this study aimed to shed light on both learner autonomy and scaffolding in e-learning environments. 35 international English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students who were taking a course supported with online learning resources (OLRs) including the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Toolkit participated in the study voluntarily. Before taking the course, they filled a pre-questionnaire about their perceptions of learning, whilst a post-questionnaire at the end of the course. In the meantime, they were observed three times while carrying out activities in the Toolkit, and interviewed afterwards. Data from observations, interviews and questionnaires have shown that e-learning through scaffolding facilitates EFL learners' language learning and scaffolding has a significant impact on learner autonomy and vice versa. This study sets the grounds for learners to use scaffolding, teachers to implement scaffolding, institutions to provide a scaffolded autonomous e-learning environment and designers to set up that kind of environment in order to enable the educational equality and opportunity for all learners.

Keywords:

scaffolding
e-learning
learner autonomy
EFL learners
the EAP Toolkit

Introduction

The diversity in learners has caused institutions to implement advanced e-learning tools in order to enhance language learning. Bray, Brown and Green (2004) argue that cultural differences have a great impact on English language learning, especially in terms of learners' socioeconomic status, to use the technology. Mahinda (2014) furthers that both cultural and linguistic diversities can be detrimental in a shared language learning classroom. Without regard to these differences, all learners can benefit from the technology in the same way, for instance, to access an online material or play video games (ibid.), when they are provided with an e-learning tool in a virtual e-learning environment. Therefore, higher educational institutions have started offering virtual self-access centres (VSACs) that are institutional websites to facilitate 'independent language learning' (Gui & Northern, 2013, p.1). VSACs are effective because it provides the following:

- 'resources for self-study' (ibid., p.1),

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- 'forums or message boards to encourage interaction' (ibid., p.1),
- 'affordances for autonomous learning' (Reinders & White, 2011, p.1),
- an environment, where a learner can plan, improve and assess his or her learning (Lázaro & Reinders, 2007),
- scaffolding for learners not to 'feel isolated and lost' (Shen, Cho, Tsai & Marra, 2013, p. 10).

According to Universities UK (2018) report, there is a high demand of international students in coming to study in the UK. Having left their countries, students from different backgrounds, cultures and languages become minority in the country where the language is spoken. In this kind of a learning environment, educational institutions should prepare them for the diverse and advanced learning challenges ensuring 'equitable access to technology' (Chisholm, 1998, p.250). By this way, students can have the equal opportunity to reach the knowledge and information.

Kelly (1991) puts forward two views on education. One states that 'education is access to that which is worthwhile in a culture or an opportunity to develop one's intellect and extend one's scope' (ibid., p.30). This ensures educational access and opportunity to all students. The other view discusses that it cannot be available for everyone but for capable students, especially when it is in its initial stage as these students can make a profit. The present study does not regard the discrimination of the students coming from different backgrounds and cultures and embraces all students equally to see their process in language learning.

Considering the discussion about the social equality in education (Kelly, 1991) and technology access (Chishom, 1998) above, this paper deals with language learning of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners in a scaffolded e-learning environment. The aims of the study are to see what actions each student carried out in the EAP Toolkit and other OLRs, examine what students thought of the learning online, and look at their autonomous learning.

This paper covers the description of scaffolding in e-learning environments and its relationship with learner autonomy as well as the discussion of Laurillard's Conversational Framework. Netx, it introduces empirical findings from EFL learners' learning of OLRs. Ultimately, the findings from this study will help to conceptualize how e-learning environment can contribute to different newcomer students' language learning when provided with equal and accessible technology.

Literature Review

Scaffolding in E-learning Environments

E-learning environments is advantageous as it provides learners to collaborate, interact and learn synchronously or asynchronously, and teachers to adapt their teaching methods considering convenient accomplishment of the task (Mouzakitis, 2010; Pandey, 2013), different learning styles, 'timing, delivery, and accessibility' (Johnson, Hornik & Salas, 2008, p.357). However, they potentially impede learning since learners may be alone, feel isolated and encounter inappropriate contents with regard to their culture and inappropriate learning approaches (Pandey, 2013). This makes learners need supporting and guiding, especially when they work and handle their learning alone. Correspondingly, this has led to draw attention to scaffolding in e-learning environments.

Scaffolding in the educational sense is referred to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD), which is related to the distance between what learners can do independently and with guidance from teachers or peers (Vygotsky, 1978 cited in Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). With the advance of the technology and change of learning, scaffolding has evolved in e- learning environments (Puntambekar & Hübscher, 2005). In this evolved sense, scaffolding can be permanent, whereas it fades in the original or traditional sense as learners become more capable of independent learning. Scaffolders can be provided by tools or resources in the former while teachers or peers provide scaffolding in the latter. Blanket scaffolding, which is the same for every student, and passive support, which does not spot mistakes apparently, can be offered, while the latter gives dynamic scaffolding with an ongoing diagnosis and adaptive scaffolding with a calibrated support. As there may be no human helper, a student forms a shared understanding with authentic tasks in the former, whilst teachers or peers do in the latter.

Researchers (i.e. Azevedo, Cromley, Thomas, Seibert & Tron, 2003; Hannafin, Land & Oliver, 1999; Tait, 2000; Yelland & Masters, 2007) have also grouped scaffolding. Yelland and Masters (2007) categorise scaffolding into three types. Cognitive scaffolding is linked to 'those activities which pertain to the development of conceptual and procedural understandings which involve wither techniques or devices to assist the learner' (ibid., p.367). Technical scaffolding refers to using computers. Affective scaffolding refers to motivational help to further learning and increase learning abilities. Hannafin et al. (1999) give a deeper categorisation: Conceptual scaffolding helps 'what to consider' (ibid., p.132). Metacognitive scaffolding tells 'how to think during learning' (ibid., p.132). Procedural scaffolding shows the ways to implement resources. Strategic scaffolding guides to analyse, plan, make strategies and decide learning. These types have a possible impact on the learner motivation to use materials and tools (Tiantong & Teemuangsai, 2013).

Learner Autonomy and Scaffolded E-learning Environments

Learner autonomy has been accepted as the ability to take responsibility for one's learning (Benson, 2011; Dickinson, 1987; Holec, 1981; Little, 1991). This paper draws on the relationship between learner autonomy and its dimensions such as learning strategies, self-management, self-regulation and motivation in terms of attribution theory and self-efficacy (Benson, 2007). Therefore, this section first discusses these dimensions and then deals with learner autonomy in scaffolded e-learning environments.

Self-regulated learners can work independently by implementing, adjusting and preserving their learning ways in both collaborative and individual learning situations (Zimmerman, 2002). Similarly, self-managed learners can handle their learning by planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning processes (Lamb, 2010). Learning strategies regarded 'as the operations or processes which are consciously selected and employed by the learner to learn the TL [target language] or facilitate a language task' (White, 2008, p.9) can enable learners to accomplish the activities independently (Cohen, 2011). Oxford (2011) classifies learning strategies: Cognitive strategies are related to implementing learning by such as 'repetition, resourcing, translation, grouping, note taking, deduction, recombination, imagery, auditory representation, key word, contextualization, elaboration, transfer, inferencing' (Hismanoglu, 2000, n.p.). Metacognitive strategies refer to cognitive processes which is to plan' monitor, evaluate and manage learning, identify the problems

and pay attention to the problem (O'Malley & Cohen, 1990 cited in Benson, 2011). Social/affective strategies are the ways to contact with others such as collaborating with others or decreasing anxiety or supporting oneself for affective strategies (ibid.). These learning strategies can encourage learners to realise their learning (Allwright, 1990 cited in Oxford, 2003; Little, 1991). Besides, learners' attributions to success and failure (i.e. Attribution theory) and beliefs and confidence in their learning (i.e. self-efficacy) can affect them to handle the tasks on their own (Aliegro, 2006; Bandura, 1986; Banks & Woolfson, 2008).

Although there has not been enough research on the relationship between the concepts of e-learning, scaffolding and learner autonomy (Jarvis, 2012; Yelland & Masters, 2007), some studies have looked at them to some extent (Chen & Law, 2016; Delen, Liew & Willson, 2014; Nielsen, 2012). A study by Nielsen (2012) examined e-learning tools to foster learner autonomy in foreign language learning by conducting a case study to 24 international students. Data from the use of e-learning tools (i.e. individual plans, self-assessment, portfolio and online tests) showed that foreign language learning classrooms should include e-learning tools compulsorily for the student participation into learning. It also indicated the contrast use of tools between different backgrounds and genders. It concluded that the more they used the tools, the more autonomous and motivated they became.

Delen et al. (2014) explored the impacts of e-learning but in terms of the use of videos and made a comparison between scaffolded and unscaffolded online video learning platforms. Data from a Self-Regulation Strategy Inventory survey, a recall test and the frequency of students' use of the functions showed that the scaffolded online video learning platform with 'note-taking, supplemental resources, and practice questions' (ibid., p.314) increased participants' learning performance. The students in the scaffolded group outperformed others in the unscafffolded group. Delen et al. (2014) showed the scaffolding functions in e-learning environments. However, Chen and Law (2016) put stress on the comparison between collaboration and individual learning. The performance test and intrinsic motivation survey-indicated that 'scaffolding had an impact on students' motivation and learning performance' (ibid., p.1201) without regard to their individual or collaboration studies. Although these studies are crucial to see learner autonomy and scaffolding in e-learning environments, they do not give a knowledge of these concepts together in e-learning environments in terms of learning design. Therefore, Laurillard's Conversational framework has been discussed and used to implement scaffolding and in turn, promote learner autonomy in these environments.

Laurillard's Conversational Framework

Laurillard (2012) designed the Conversational Framework based on learning as conversation. This framework intends to promote the understanding of 'how to design teaching and learning now that digital technologies are making more impact on education' (ibid., pp. 94-5). According to the Conversational Framework, learning takes place via the interaction between the teacher and learner, or the learner and peer (ibid.). The framework was established on the research of Laurillard (1998, 2002) and highlights four essential components as follows:

- '*Discussion* between teacher and learner at the level of descriptions;

- '*Interaction* between the learner and some special aspect of the world defined by the teacher;
- '*Adaptation* of that special world by teacher, and of action by learner;
- '*Reflection* on learner's performance by teacher and learner' (Laurillard, 1998, p.230).

Laurillard's Conversational Framework has been used by a number of researchers looking at the interaction between peers or peers and their teacher (see Fotouhi-Ghazvini, Earnshaw, Robison, Moeini & Excell, 2011; Neo, Neo & Lim, 2013; Quinn & Reid, 2003). However, the present study is significant as it investigates the interaction learners and a tool when there is no any human helper in a learning environment. Therefore, this paper answers the following research questions:

1. What actions do EFL learners carry out in the EAP Toolkit and other OLRs?
2. What do EFL learners think of learning in scaffolded e-learning environments?
3. What is the relationship between scaffolding and learner autonomy in e-learning environments?

Research Methodology

Participants

Thirty-five international students aged between 20 and 45 years old volunteered to take part in the study. They came from the Middle Eastern (i.e. Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Yemen and Libya) and Central Asian countries (i.e. China and Thailand). Despite these differences, they shared the same aim: They left their countries for the U.K. first to have and develop their academic skills and language learning and then to undertake undergraduate or postgraduate studies there. Their countries and institutions supported all of them except some Chinese students economically in order for them to study in the English for Academic Study (EAS) course at the University of Southampton and further their study if they could pass the course. During their course, they were supported to use the EAP Toolkit, so these participants were chosen.

The researcher contacted them in person. Before conducting the study, all of the participants were informed about the study and its aims. Each of them agreed and volunteered in the participation by signing the consent form. The anonymity was assured by excluding any question asking their name. The data were kept safe in password-protected devices and platforms.

Context of the Research

The EAS course aims to improve international students' academic language, for example, by increasing overall IELTS score of 4.5 or 5.5 to 6.5 or 7.0 to enter the university in the UK. Depending on their level of English, students take the course for either one semester (14 weeks) or two semesters (28 weeks). The participants in this study mostly took one semester although a few of them were mixed. They had a blended learning approach. During the course, they were encouraged to use online facilities suggested by teachers or decided on their own and in the University's language resources. They had a compulsory module named as Independent Study, where they were introduced the EAP Toolkit and other OLRs (online learning resources). Although the course was aimed at fostering independent learning and making them understand its place and importance in the British

education system, they were free to choose this way and this potentially depended on the student's choice.

The EAP Toolkit was designed to potentially scaffold learning (Watson, 2010). Therefore, this Toolkit was chosen for the study. Based on the literature review and the researcher's analysis of the Toolkit, there were some scaffolders and scaffolding types found as explained below:

- The introduction section as a scaffolder first helps the user to have the basic idea about the learning topic.
- The explanation/information section as a scaffolder gives a detailed knowledge about what to grasp.
- The instruction section as a scaffolder tells how to perform and benefit from the activities.
- The feedback section provides explicit or implicit replies as a scaffolder.
- The self-scaffolder happens (Holton & Clarke, 2006) when the user gives scaffolding to her or his learning on her or his own.
- Conceptual scaffolding is supplied when the Toolkit guides users to deal with problems by telling 'what to consider' (Hannafin et al., 1999, p.132).
- Metacognitive scaffolding gives an assistance on 'how to think during learning' (ibid., p.132).
- Procedural scaffolding gives the ways on how to carry out the activities (ibid.).
- Technical scaffolding is related to the guidance from e-learning tools (Yelland & Masters, 2007). Web links, dictionary and glossary in the Toolkit can be examples of this scaffolding type.

As for the potential use of other OLRs, the participants were provided freely by accessing them in both the University laptops and at home. Apart from the advice by the University and teachers, there was a potential help from World Wide Web (Kirkwood, 2008).

Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

This study used a mixed methods approach to collect and analyse data. In order to increase the validity and reliability of the research and research instruments (Dörnyei, 2007), the study first conducted a pilot study to 12 students who took an EAS course at the University of Southampton during the summer term. As research instruments of the pilot study, a questionnaire and observation were trialed in the pilot study. Data from the pilot study showed that some questions needed adding and revising in the questionnaire, and a pre- and post-questionnaires were necessary, whereas observation needed to be recorded rather than directly observing. Considering the results from the data in the pilot study, the main study was conducted as follows:

As a quantitative research instrument, a questionnaire consisting of five sections (i.e. Background Information, Rating the EAP Toolkit and Online Language Learning Resources, Attribution Items, Self-efficacy Items and Learner Autonomy and Support Scale Items) was prepared based on the literature review. It was conducted to 35 students in the beginning and end of the academic semester with the aim of understanding students' beliefs about learning in a scaffolded e-learning environment.

As for qualitative research instruments, direct observation with the think-aloud protocol method and the digital screen capturing with video, and follow-up interviews were implemented to 10 volunteers of 35 students in the beginning, middle and end of the academic semester. 'A pre-task orientation' (Gibson, 1997, p.58) was given to the students to be familiarised with the study (Van Someren, Barnard & Sandberg, 1994). Each of them was told which activities in the EAP Toolkit to carry out in the first and second observation times but were free in the last one. The researcher directly observed by sitting behind each of them without intervening in them when they were doing the activities in the Toolkit for half of an hour. As resulted from the pilot study, noting their behaviours when they were performing the activities distracted them, so this was excluded. A silent room was prepared with a laptop to ensure them to feel comfortable like home. During the learning process, each of them was captured via Camtasia because of its easiness and efficiency (Lauffer, 2002; Silva, 2012). Camtasia recorded the full screen of the laptop, the webcam, elapsed time and the audio including the think-aloud protocol verbalisations. During observation sessions, the think-aloud protocol methods were applied in order to have an in-depth data about their learning (Blummer & Kenton, 2014). The researcher told each of them to speak aloud what they were thinking and doing and stated that this study did not focus on whether they succeeded or failed but how they went through the information while doing the activities. After the observation, follow-up interview questions were asked to each student to understand their feelings, perceptions and use of OLRs.

As for data analysis, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program helped to analyse quantitative data with descriptive statistics (i.e. frequencies and percentages of the variables) and inferential statistics (i.e. Spearman's rank-order correlation, McNemar's Test and Wilcoxon signed-rank test) to see the relationship between the variables and whether there was a statistical change in pre- and post-questionnaires.

Qualitative data was analysed within both deductive and inductive approaches based on pre-defined codes and codes generated from data through 'opening (unrestricted) coding' (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid & Redwood, 2013; p.3), respectively. The interviews and observations of each student were transcribed. In total, 29 interview transcripts and 29 observation transcripts including both think-aloud protocols and Camtasia recordings were collected from 10 students. As one of the students (Tase) could not attend the last interview and observation sessions, the number was 29 instead of 30. She was included in the study because her data seemed valuable. Each transcript was stored in NVivo software and analysed with codes generated based on the literature review and research aims. Intercoder reliability (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman & Pederson, 2013; Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracken, 2010) was assured with the discussion and agreement on the codes with two experts and one supervisor.

Results and Discussion

Learning Actions in Scaffolded E-learning Environments

Data from qualitative and quantitative research instruments showed that there were different learning actions in a scaffolded e-learning environment. They differed in using scaffolding types, scaffolders, spending time in the activities and performing the activities.

Corroborating the analysis of the EAP Toolkit which provided different scaffolding types based on the studies (Azevedo et al., 2003; Hannafin et al., 1999; Tait, 2000; Yelland & Masters, 2007), it was observed that the participants used procedural, metacognitive,

strategic, conceptual, technical and motivational scaffolding. Participants used at least three scaffolding types in one observation time. The most used ones were metacognitive, procedural and conceptual scaffolding, which was dependent on not only what the Toolkit offered but also their preferences. It seemed that there was no motivational scaffolding but participants self-scaffolded themselves motivationally by thinking aloud. For example, they used the utterances such as '*Good! I did very well*.' or '*Congratulation for myself!*' independently from the Toolkit.

More than half of them improved their learning through strategic scaffolding. For example, they compared their understanding and reply with the one shown in the feedback and told the future behaviour to themselves. However, all of them used procedural scaffolding to understand how they could accomplish the tasks. Some showed their understanding by speaking aloud '*I understand it really*.' In addition, they used conceptual and metacognitive scaffolding to further in the activities. For instance, they expressed their understanding of learning objects and corrected their misknowledge. The way they told themselves how to think, for instance, to select crucial words to grasp the topic shows metacognitive scaffolding. Even though one of them used technical scaffolding provided in the Toolkit, nearly half of them preferred to go beyond this help and used other OLRs such as Google and online dictionaries for further information. This shows that scaffolding types can help learning (Tiantong & Teemuangsai, 2013). Although the Toolkit does not provide motivational scaffolding, the study argues that self-scaffolding can lead to motivational scaffolding. Additionally, learners can handle their learning on their own through scaffolding instead of teachers or peers (Hannafin et al., 1999; Luckin, 2001; Wood & Wood, 1996).

Likewise, they differed in using scaffolders during the observations. All of them used at least three scaffolders. The most used were the information/explanation section, the instruction section and feedback. By this, they could have the further information about the activity and the ways to perform the activity and evaluate their learning (Puntambekar & Hübscher, 2005). None of them used hyperlinks and dictionaries except one of them but other OLRs when they needed help. The use of feedback increased over time as seen with the comparison between the pre- and post-questionnaires. They also put stress on feedback as the most helpful scaffolder (Pea, 2004; Quintana, et al., 2004) in the interview sessions.

Also, all of them showed contrasting learning preferences in terms of spending time on the activities in the Toolkit based on their answers to the questionnaire. However, all of them spent less than 20 minutes during the observation sessions despite the differences and stated the same in the questionnaires contrasting with the study by Watson (2010), which claims that learners can spend between 20 and 40 minutes for one learning activity. This should be taken into account that they might be affected negatively when spending more time.

Learning differences happened in a scaffolded e-learning environment because of their learning preferences. Data from observations showed that they sometimes skipped the activity without completing it. Or they sometimes just read scaffolders without performing the activity or read them again and again to take the grasp of the information in the activity. Some behaved like that because they were affected with 'frustration, anxiety and confusion' (Zhang, Zhao, Zhou & Nunamaker, 2004, p.76). This shows that the interaction between a learner and a tool depends on the learner himself or herself. However, it draws

the attention to the design that is constructed with 'an integration of learning styles and preferences with strategies' (Sadler-Smith & Smith, 2004, p.408).

Data from questionnaires showed that they performed more activities over time. McNemar's test indicated that there was a significantly statistical change in the EAP Toolkit use between questionnaires with .004 of p-value, but not in the use of other OLRs with .625 of p-value. The Wilcoxon signed-rank test also showed the significantly statistical change in less time spent on the activities. They mostly preferred writing and vocabulary activities as shown in data from both questionnaires and observations.

All of them also uttered the use of other OLRs, most of which were EngVid, TED.com, the British Council resources including Word on the Street, apps on mobile phones, online journals and newspapers, e-books, Google and Google Scholar (Meri-Yilan, 2017).

Questionnaires indicated that the decrease of the daily use of other OLRs but the increase of the weekly use of OLRs over time. As stated by them, the decrease in use happened because of the homework load and hectic exam period in the classroom. However, participants mostly preferred to use scaffolding OLRs with subtitles, instruction and information. They pointed out the need and improvement of speaking activities. Therefore, a few of them uttered that they used discussion forums, social networking websites and communicating with native people such as 'a driver' in daily conversations.

Learners' Beliefs about their Learning in Scaffolded E-learning Environments

Data from open-ended questions in each questionnaire and interview questions show that participants had both positive and negative beliefs about learning in scaffolded e-learning environments. The data from both instruments indicated similar views, so they were not categorised based on data from either questionnaires or interviews. However, their views on learning via the EAP Toolkit and other OLRs differed, as shown in Figures 1 and 2 illustrated below respectively.

Figure 1 shows their positive and negative views according to three interview times. The figure also indicates that the participants expressed more positive views than negative ones about learning in the EAP Toolkit.

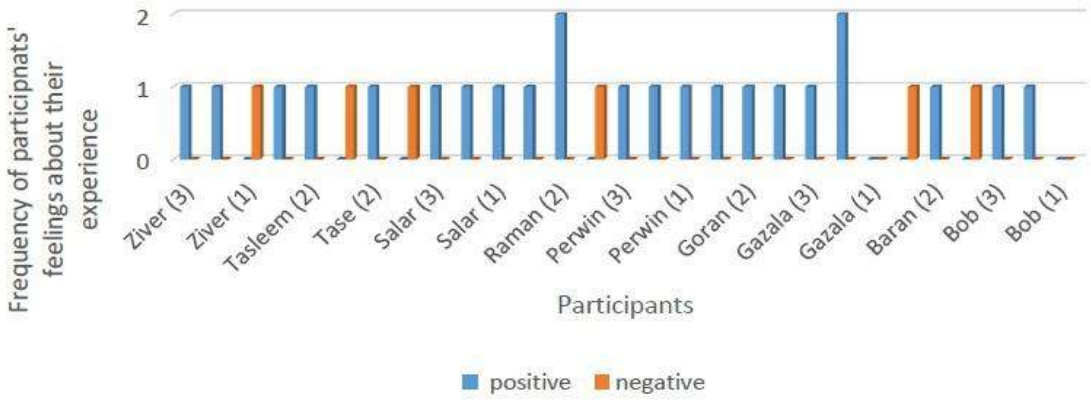

Figure 1. Participants' feelings about their experience of learning in the EAP Toolkit from interview data

However, they seemed to have both positive and negative views on learning through other OLRs equally. Figure 2 illustrates their perceptions of other OLRs stated during all three interview times.

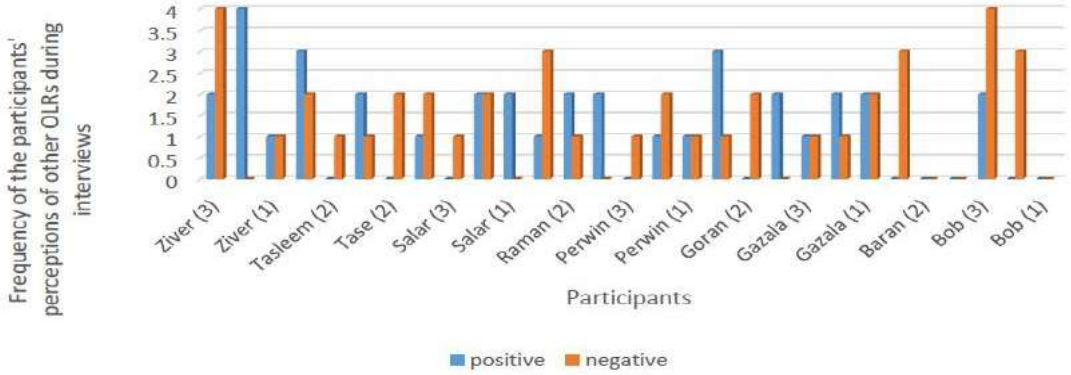

Figure 2. Participants' perceptions of other OLRs reported in Interviews

All in all, they believed that they increased their learning because of the following features of OLRs:

- the replacement and representation of the tutor (Hannafin et al., 1999; Luckin, 2001; Wood & Wood, 1996);
- the interactivity;
- independent learning (Watson, 2010);
- learning skills except speaking skills;
- the provision of a variety of resources; and
- learning anytime and anywhere.

They thought that they could increase their learning if OLRs:

- provided more scaffolding and scaffolder but enough scaffolding and unclear scaffolder;
- enabled collaboration;
- included more resources which can be adaptable to different learners (Conole & Dyke, 2004); and
- considered intercultural differences and academic skills.

The above mentioned suggestions can be seen as a criticism for OLRs to cover scaffolding, cooperation, engagement and diversity.

Indication of the Relationship between Learner Autonomy and Scaffolding in E-learning Environments

Based on the findings from both qualitative and quantitative data, this study discusses the relationship between scaffolding and learner autonomy in e-learning environments (Meri-Yilan, 2017). Data present that students exercised their autonomy with its related dimensions in e-learning environments. As shown in observations, they regulated and managed learning with the plan, goal making and assessment, evaluation, adjustment and implementation of learning independently.

The findings from all instruments indicated their internal attributions towards their success and failure. Gobel, Thang, Sidhu, Oon & Chan (2013) suggest that they are autonomous if students make internal attributions such as strategy, effort and ability. In this sense, they looked like to have learner autonomy. A Spearman's rank-order correlation showed a positive correlation between self-efficacy and attribution theory in the use of the Toolkit bot not in the use of other OLRs. Success, interaction and scaffolding seemed the preceding factors for confidence. Nevertheless, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed no difference between their feelings about online learning resources, their confidence in computer use, their daily computer uses and their use of computer and online applications between questionnaires.

Above all, they were observed that scaffolding from OLRs facilitated their learning, so participants:

- planned, paid attention, organised, obtained and used resources, monitored and evaluated their knowledge metacognitively,
- covered knowledge with their prediction and inference, conceptualised gradually with summarisation, gave a deductive and inductive reasoning and made a use of feelings for understanding cognitively,
- planned, paid attention, organised, obtained and used resources, monitored and evaluated feelings meta-affectively,
- activated encouraging feelings and perceptions affectively,
- planned, obtained and benefited from facilities for connection and cultural purposes metasociocultural-interactively,
- interacted to gain knowledge and connect sociocultural-interactively.

The analysis of pre- and post-questionnaire items in Learner Autonomy and Support Scale section finds out that scaffolding had an effect on learner autonomy. Referring to interviews, as well, participants needed a help from the tutor in e-learning environments due to the lack of scaffolding, particularly, which indicates the relationship between learner autonomy and scaffolding in e-learning environments. Based on the findings, Figure 3 shows the adapted model of Laurillard's (2012) Conversational Framework to consider this relationship.

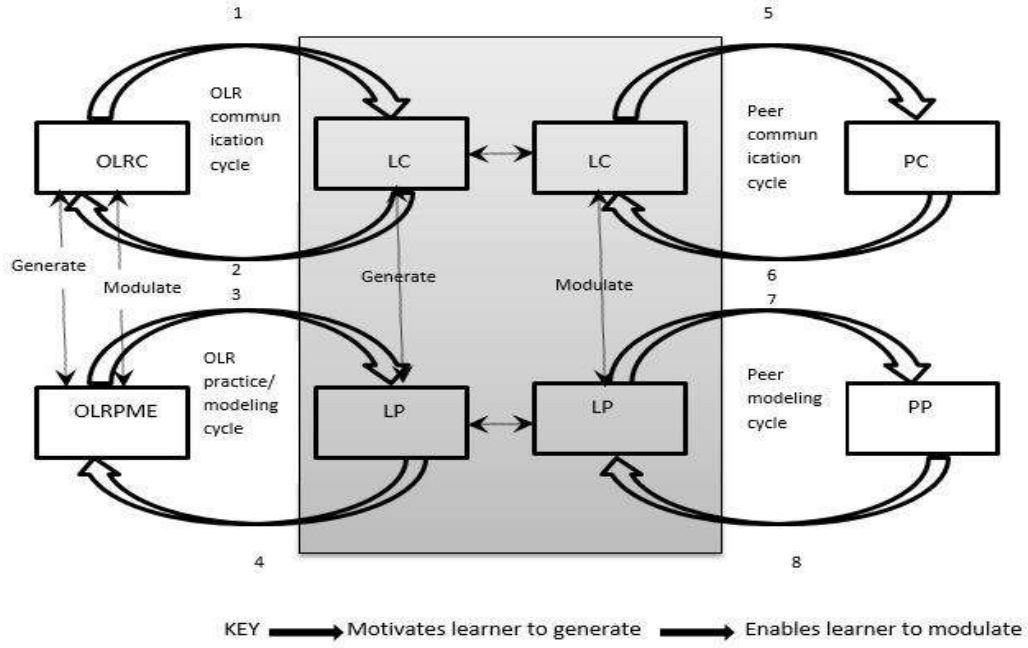

Figure 3. The adapted model of Laurillard's Conversational Framework (Meri-Yilan, 2017)

The exercise of learner autonomy without any help from a tutor or peers but scaffolding from OLRs discusses that learning can take place through adaptation of learning on one's own and interaction between a learner and OLRs as shown in Figure 3. In this sense, scaffolding can serve as a tutor (Luckin, 2001; Wood & Wood, 1996). It can be inferred from the model that the more they interact with OLRs, the more they adapt themselves to learning and the more learning takes place.

Conclusion

This research has shed light on learner autonomy, scaffolding and their relationship in e-learning environments where EFL learners aimed to improve their academic English without the help of any human. Scaffolding has a significant effect on learning accomplishment and enhancement, especially when learning alone without the support from any human beings. This also promotes learner autonomy, by which they can interact and adapt their learning with different learning strategies. This paper shows that what learners can do at the moment is facilitated through scaffolding types, scaffolders and self-scaffolding in order them to gain the understanding of what they can do independently in the future.

Therefore, this paper suggests for learners to consider the use of scaffolding in e-learning environments. The teachers should implement more scaffolding to decrease the tutor need in the classroom or online learning. The institutions should integrate more OLRs, particularly for their minority or international learners to enable the educational opportunity and equality. However, the designers have a big responsibility, as they are the ones who decide what to include and how to design. They should take into account the provision of different learning activities, learning skills and learning styles, appropriate colour of OLRs (Weinreich, Obendorf & Lamersdorf, 2001), flexible learning, different scaffolding and scaffolders and implicit and explicit feedback.

This study, however, focused on international EFL learners in the UK, but its findings and research instruments can be adapted in a further dataset and different context in order to see the relationship between scaffolding learner autonomy in e-learning environments where learners study individually and alone.

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How effective is TPRS for adult EFL learners with limited English proficiency?

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of 'Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling' (TPRS) on students' grammar and vocabulary performance as well as their attitude toward learning English. The participants are 38 freshmen, 14 in experimental and 24 in control group, studying in the department of tourism and hospitality services of a 2-year vocational school at a state university in Turkey. A pre-test including grammar and vocabulary questions as well as an attitude questionnaire was used as pre-test and post-test in the beginning and end of a four-week intervention as the data gathering tool. TPRS technique was implemented for four sessions in the experimental group to teach target vocabulary and structures. While The Mann-Whitney U test was run to find out the differences between pre-test and post-test scores of control and experimental groups, Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was employed to find out the differences between the pre-test and the post-test scores of experimental group. The results indicated that TPRS technique had positive impact on students' grammar and vocabulary performance as the students in the experimental group outperformed the ones in the control group in the post-test. TPRS technique was also found to be effective in creating positive attitudes toward learning English. Some implications to employ TPRS in English classes as well as suggestions for further research were also provided.

Keywords:

attitude toward language learning
grammar
'Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling'
vocabulary

Introduction

Finding an effective teaching method has always been a hard task for language teachers. 'Teaching Proficiency through Reading and Storytelling' (hereafter TPRS), once known as 'Total Physical Response Storytelling', has been one of the most popular recent attempts of the endeavor to find an effective language teaching method (Li, 2013). This technique was developed by a Spanish teacher Blaine Ray in California in 1990s to let the students master the basic vocabulary and structures of the target foreign language with the ultimate aim of fluency and accuracy in language learning (Ray & Seely, 2012).

Considering these two elements of language learning, Turkish university students have had several problems. They consider themselves as unsuccessful in being accurate and fluent in learning English despite spending several years of study (Yurtsever Bodur & Arıkan, 2017). This failure stems from various reasons, such as inability of students' parents to

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speak English, lack of English programs on TV or radio, or lack of chance to go abroad to practice it (Yurtsever Bodur & Arıkan, 2017). The students also criticize the fact that specifically speaking skill is mostly ignored in English classes (Yurtsever Bodur & Arıkan, 2017).

Despite mostly attributing their failure in fluency and accuracy to external factors, Turkish university students predominantly have moderate or high motivation to learn English (Başaran & Hayta, 2013; Bektaş Çetinkaya & Oruç, 2010). Therefore, employing an intriguing method in foreign language teaching classes may be a step toward success of the learners. TPRS, which does not only focus on developing learners' fluency and accuracy through comprehensible and interesting stories, but also helps students to have more positive attitudes toward language learning (Türkeş, 2011). Although a consensus has not been reached among the scholars for TPRS method to be the best compared to other existing ones, a brief overview of the existing literature gives us insight that it increases the likelihood of having better results on several aspects, such as vocabulary acquisition (Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019; Türkeş, 2011), speaking skill (Muzammil & Andy, 2017), listening (Susan, 2013), and lexical competence (Demir & Cubukçu, 2014).

It cannot be claimed that this newly emerging technique has come to light suddenly and expanded rapidly. It has roots in universally accepted language teaching methods. Specifically, TPRS is based on the principles of Asher's Total Physical Response (hereafter TPR) and Krashen's Natural Approach (hereafter NA). Asher first demonstrated TPR in 1965 (Ray & Seely, 2012). This approach as a method for language teaching predominantly focuses on developing learners' listening skill through modelling and uttering the commands which is followed by students' imitation of the action and repetition of the word (Harrasi, 2014). However, the effectiveness of TPR was highly controversial as there was a general consensus that all abstract ideas cannot be taught (Byram, 2004).

Although Blaine Ray had positive results with the use of TPR in his Spanish classes initially, students' motivation and willingness to attend the command-based activities showed a decrease (Ray & Seely, 2012). In order to overcome this major challenge, Ray attempted to combine this method with NA through which language is aimed to be acquired subconsciously (Ray & Seely, 2012). In this approach, learners learn second language as children learn their first language (Krashen & Terrel, 1983). Five hypotheses of NA affected TPRS (Shrum & Glisan, 2005). These are as follows:

- 'The acquisition-learning hypothesis' explains acquisition as the subconscious form of learning which allows learners to communicate spontaneously and creatively.
- 'The monitor hypothesis' states that with the acquisition of the language, students have oral production fluently and, at this point, learning monitors and corrects the production with the conscious learned rules of the language.
- 'The natural order hypothesis' claims that learners follow a predictable sequence of acquisition.
- 'The input hypothesis' states that learning occurs when the learners receive comprehensible input that is slightly beyond their level of comprehension.

- 'The affective filter hypothesis' claims that learning can occur in a stress free atmosphere where learners' affective filter is low.

Both TPR and NA are acquisitionist approaches, in that they focus on meaning rather than form (Nunan, 2005). These two approaches have received considerable criticism with the changes in language teaching. As the educators' individual creativity and beliefs play a vital role in the development of classroom practice, varieties in individual practices exist and TPRS is one example of these varieties (Alley & Overfield, 2008). Ray was satisfied with the results of neither TPR nor NA, hence he combined these two approaches and created a unique method (Ray & Seely, 2012).

TPRS relies on the common and familiar communicative device of the story which is a way for the learners to engage with each other (De Costa, 2015). The input in TPRS technique should be 'comprehensible' to internalize the language, 'interesting' to expand the attention span of the learners, and 'repetitive' to help the retention of the structures (Ray & Seely, 2012).

Taking its roots from these two approaches, The TPRS method has three main steps to follow in its unique way (Ray & Seely, 2012):

'Establishing the meaning'- In this step, the new target vocabulary or structures are introduced to the learners through gestures, personalized questions, and translation. Translation helps learners to check the meaning if they forget. The teacher practices the structures and the vocabulary until the students become familiar with them (Ray & Seely, 2012). One of the main aims of this step is to create a stress-free atmosphere where the learners would feel comfortable enough to respond the questions (De Costa, 2015).

'Asking the story'- Before starting this step, the teacher needs to be sure that all the structures and vocabulary have been written on the board or provided to the learners with the translations. In this step, the teacher creates a story or brings a story including the target structures and vocabulary that serves as a guide for that class. The stories are mostly bizarre and exaggerated (Alley & Overfield, 2008). The story provides three locations. In the first location, a problem that could be solved is presented. In the second location, the character is not able to solve the problem. In this point, either the problem is changed or the information regarding why the problem cannot be solved is provided. Finally, the problem is solved in the last location (Ray & Seely, 2012). Providing different locations helps students remember the details in the story. The teacher asks several different questions in this step, such as 'yes-no questions', 'either/or question', and 'wh question'. The teacher uses false statements to encourage engagement as well.

'Reading'- During this step, learners read and translate the story into their native language. With the younger learners, the teacher may ask the learners to draw the story as well.

During all these steps, the teacher needs to make it sure that all the students in the class, even the middle or low-performing ones in the 20th to 40th percentile, have comprehended the language used. The pace of the class could even be set according to these lower level students (Ray & Seely, 1998). According to the criteria of the TPRS class, the input should

be comprehensible, repetitive, and interesting which would help learners feel comfortable in the class so that they have more benefits with higher motivation, joy, and fun (Williyanti, 2008).

A brief overview of the related literature addressing the impact of TPRS on different language skills of the learners in the context of Turkey shows that the implementation of this method has been mostly preferred for younger learners. These recent studies have been conducted in the context of young learners in Turkey investigating whether TPRS should be employed with the young learners or not (Demir & Cubukçu, 2014), the effect of TPRS on vocabulary acquisition (Çubukçu, 2014; Kara & Eveyik-Aydın, 2019; Türkeş, 2011), and oral performance of the students (Yıldız Akyüz, 2018).

The effects of TPRS method have been examined in different contexts with the adult learners as well. Muzammil and Andy (2017) investigated TPRS in a quasi-experimental quantitative study using pre-test and post-test design with the freshmen at university in Indonesia in order to compare traditional method and TPRS in terms of developing speaking skills of the learners. They found out that the experimental group outperformed the control group in speaking performance. The results also indicated that while the implementation of the method made students happy, encouraged them to listen to partner's story and communicate using English in class, it was also a source for lecturers to make the class livelier to introduce new vocabulary.

In another study, Braunstein (2006) investigated adult Latino ESL learners' attitudes toward TPR and TPRS in class. The students received five-hour teaching combined of TPR and TPRS. Despite the students' expectations for more traditional approaches for language learning, they showed positive attitudes toward these two methods. They felt interested and happy in their TPRS classes. Specifically, about learning nouns and verbs, listening comprehension, and understanding the story when it is acted out impressed the learners.

The other study comparing the effectiveness of TPRS and Grammar Translation strategy in vocabulary acquisition among Hispanic adult ESL learners was conducted by Castro (2010). 25 participants took three classes. Pre-test and post-test comparison of the two techniques in vocabulary acquisition and retention showed that, contrary to other studies favoring TPRS, students who had Grammar Translation strategy outperformed the ones received TPRS training.

De Costa (2015) also investigated the effectiveness of TPRS and a method which does not include story context in a French immersion classroom. This quasi-experimental quantitative study using pre-test and post-test design measured French listening, vocabulary, culture, grammar, and writing improvements of the students in two groups. The results showed that in all aspects there was an improvement for both groups. However, although in vocabulary and culture there was not a statistically significant difference between the groups; in listening, grammar, and writing there was significant difference.

An overview of the existing literature shows that despite the abundancy of studies investigating TPRS from different perspectives, there has been a shortage on the studies examining TPRS with the adult learners in Turkish context. Moreover, the studies conducted with the young learners in Turkish context largely confined to vocabulary

acquisition and oral performance of the students. The effect of TPRS on the other elements of language learning, such as grammar and listening have been neglected.

Therefore, this study addresses the following research questions:

- How does TPRS affect adult EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition and grammar performance?
- What are the experimental group students' attitudes toward the use of TPRS?

Method

Setting and Participants

The participants of the present experimental study were two classes of the department of tourism and hospitality services of a 2-year vocational school at a state university in Turkey. These two freshman intact classes were randomly assigned as 'control group' and 'experimental group'. The control group and the experimental group consisted of 24 (14 females and 10 males) and 14 (8 females and 6 males) participants respectively. The ages of the participants ranged from 19 to 24.

The students of this department do not have a year-long-preparatory English language program before they start their first year. The students receive compulsory General English classes in the first year for four hours for 28 weeks with a total of 112 classes. The aim of the General English class is to let the students have elementary level English language skills.

Design of the Study

This experimental study was conducted in two intact classes that were regarded as control and experimental groups. A pre-test was administered in the beginning of the 4-week treatment to both control and experimental groups. The pre-test, which was also used as post-test in this study, included 30 questions in total. The questions were prepared in line with the target structures and vocabulary included in 4 stories that served as a guide in TPRS classes. While the vocabulary section consisted of 20 questions, grammar section included 10 questions. Vocabulary and grammar sections included fill in the gaps and matching type questions. Students' attitude was also measured along with the pre-test through the use of attitude questionnaire including 10 items (Pae & Shin, 2011). The attitude-related items used in the study of Pae and Shin (2011) were translated into Turkish and the internal consistency of the scale was α= .90.

The target vocabulary and structures aimed to be taught with TPRS method and distribution of them through the weeks are illustrated in Table 1 below:

Table 1. *The stories and the target vocabulary and structures*

	Week 1	**Week 2**	**Week 3**	**Week 4**
Name of the story	Movie Star	Fat Man	Green Tea	Baseball Pig
Target vocabulary and structures	Movie star, bump into, delayed, pissed off, recognize, book, boarding pass, gate, catch your flight, security	Frustrated, exhausted, give up, date, make a difference, really, in fact, extremely, thrilled	Safe, first-class, shop, get into, are you crazy?, why don't you..?, for sure	Direct flight, get a grip, hire, raise, reject, come on, find out, big hitter, home run, try out for, impressed with
Total number of target structures or vocabulary	10	9	7	11
Total number of words in the story	376	234	286	245

The treatment was integrated into the regular English classes the students were receiving for four weeks. In each week, the students in the experimental group received three hours of TPRS technique. The learners in the control group learnt the same structures and the vocabulary following pre-reading, on reading, and post-reading activities.

The treatment in the experimental group, data collection and data analysis of the study were carried out by the researcher of the present study. The use of TPRS in this study followed the three main steps of this technique.

Step 1: Establishing the meaning

The target vocabulary and the structures were introduced to the students in the experimental group by writing them on the board and showing the pictures on the screen. The translations of them were also provided on the board. Following this, personalized questions were employed to help the learners internalize them. Some personalized questions were used in the classes, such as "who is your favorite movie star?" or "when are you frustrated?". The words and the structures were repeated several times in this step.

Step 2: Asking the story

The stories served as a guide in all four weeks. They included the target vocabulary and the structures. The stories involved bizarre information to take students' attention, such as 500 pounds as the man's weight or 85 cups of tea drunk by a frog every day. The stories were asked in three locations. In the first location, the problem was introduced (The fat man wants to lose weight, but he cannot). In the second location, the character tries to find a solution for the problem (he tries to go on a diet and do exercise). The third location offers a solution to the problem (he meets a girl and she cooks healthy food).

During this step, before moving to the question phase, the stories were listened three times in the class. Following listening, the teacher asked several questions to encourage the learners to speak, such as "is the man fat?", "does he want to lose weight or eat more?",

and "what does he eat in his diet?". The details were asked repetitively. The students can also create a parallel story that resembles to the main story in this step.

Step 3: Reading

In this step, the students read the story along with the teacher. They translated the story into Turkish on a pair work. The volunteer students acted out the story to have fun in the class as well.

A post-test including the same questions with the pre-test as well as the attitude questionnaire used before the treatment were administered in both experimental and control groups at the end of the 4-week implementation of TPRS technique with the experimental group learners.

Data Analysis

As the participants in the groups were not randomly assigned to the groups and the sample size was small, non-parametric tests were employed in this study (Tailor, 2005). The Mann-Whitney U test was run to find out the potential differences between pre-test and post-test scores of the control and experimental groups. Similarly, Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was also conducted to find out the differences between the pre-test and the post-test scores of the experimental group.

Results

Firstly, in order to assess the knowledge of both control and experimental groups prior to the treatment in the experimental group, a pre-test, which was also used as the post-test, was administered. An attitude questionnaire added at the end of the pre-test was also conducted to check the current feelings of the students toward English language. The mean ranks of the groups and The Mann-Whitney U test results are presented below in Table 2.

Table 2. *Pre-test results of the experimental and control groups*

Tests	Groups	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	U	p
Pre-test (grammar)	Experimental	18.57	260.0	155.000	.692
	Control	20.04	481.0		
Pre-test (vocabulary)	Experimental	18.64	261.0	156.000	.723
	Control	20.00	480.0		
Attitude questionnaire	Experimental	23.00	322.0	119.000	.141
	Control	17.46	419.0		

The results concerning the differences between the control and the experimental groups showed that there was not a significant difference between these two groups in the pre-test ($U = 155.000$, $p = .692$ for grammar; $U = 156.000$, $p = .723$ for vocabulary; and $U = 119.000$, $p = .141$ for attitude questionnaire). Therefore, it could be claimed for both groups to have statistically equal knowledge regarding the target vocabulary and structures.

In order to assess the impact of TPRS on the students in the experimental group compared to the learners in the control group who were trained with the Communicative Approach as

they were used to, The Mann-Whitney U test was run one more time for the post-test scores after the treatment with the experimental group for four weeks. The results as presented in Table 3 above indicated statistically significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in terms of grammar (U = 48.000, p = .000), vocabulary (U = 54.000, p = .000), and their attitude toward learning English (U = 3.000, p = .000).

Table 3. *Post-test results of the experimental and control groups*

Tests	Groups	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	U	p
Post-test (grammar)	Experimental	28.07	393.0	48.000	.000
	Control	14.50	348.0		
Post-test (vocabulary)	Experimental	27.64	354.0	54.000	.000
	Control	14.75	387.0		
Attitude questionnaire	Experimental	31.29	438.0	3.000	.000
	Control	12.63	303.0		

As both groups were statistically equal in both vocabulary and grammar knowledge as well as their attitude toward English language learning in the beginning of the study as the pre-test results indicated, Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test results comparing the potential differences between pre-test and post-test performances of the students in the experimental group showed significant changes. The implementation of TPRS in the experimental group for four sessions elicited significant change in grammar, Z = -3.466, p = .001, vocabulary performance Z = -3.858, p = .000, and their attitude toward learning English, Z = -5.007, p = .000.

Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study supported the effectiveness of TPRS on the vocabulary and grammar performance as well as developing positive attitudes of elementary level adult EFL learners' toward learning English. Considering the existing literature in the context of adult learners, the results of this study regarding the impact of TPRS on learners' grammar performance are in line with those of De Costa (2015). Although his study was conducted in a French immersion classroom, the scores of the learners in the experimental group were statistically different from the ones in the control group as in the present study. His findings also indicated improvement in the vocabulary performance of the learners in the experimental group as well, but there was not a statistically significant difference between the groups which contradicts with the results of the current study concerning vocabulary acquisition.

Regarding the findings about learners' attitude toward learning English, the results of this study are in accordance with those of Braunstein (2006). The adult Latino ESL learners' attitudes were positive toward TPRS implementation in the class. The interest and happiness of the learners in Braunstein's study (2006) were also observed in the experimental group learners in the present study. Specifically, personalization, which is provided through the personalized questions during 'establishing the meaning' step of TPRS, helps learners to establish interest, curiosity, and stimulation (Ray & Seely, 2012). The comprehensible input that the students receive through the stories and the questions

are considered interesting by the learners and their positive attitude toward the class becomes immediately apparent. As the TPRS method is based on the use of stories in EFL classes to develop fluency with the help of grammar structures and vocabulary learnt by getting exposed to comprehensible, repetitive, and interesting input, the learners in TPRS classes have fun and learn in a natural and inductive way (Ray & Seely, 2004).

Therefore, as it is presented in the literature section above, the studies addressing the issue of the impact of TPRS on several language skills and the attitudes of the learners presented mostly positive results as in this study. Considering the results of this study as well as the ones in the literature, TPRS method may be used in EFL classes with the learners who perform poorly due to their limited English proficiency to let them fully engage with the topic and enhance their learning. As it is an intriguing method, it may also be employed with the learners who are not much interested in English classes to develop their performance by eliminating the distractors and to let them focus on the story.

Some limitations of the current study need to be addressed in further research. To start with, both groups in this study were intact classes. Although not typical of experimental research, these classes may have the advantage of enhancing face validity, but at the same time, as it is universally accepted, randomization enhances the experimental validity of the study (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Hence, further research may involve randomly assigned groups with larger samples to assess the impact of TPRS on adult learners' language learning with a higher experimental validity. A delayed-post-test may be employed to examine the longitudinal effect of TPRS on different skills. Moreover, instructors' views through interviews and students' ideas through journals may provide significant results for the researchers.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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