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Editorial

İsmail Hakkı Erten a *

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Dear EJAL Readers,

Welcome to our latest issue. With this issue we are commencing our fifth year in publication. It has been six busy years since we decided to launch Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics (EJAL) in 2014 and here we have our Volume 5, Issue 1. EJAL has now grown into a well-developed journal with its own voice and preferences. To this end, it is our pleasure to learn that EJAL is now being covered by a number of different indexing and abstracting services around the globe. The latest addition is Elsevier’s Scopus that started indexing EJAL as of Volume 4 (2018).

Launched in 2015, EJAL has attracted an increasing number of submissions every year from diverse geographical contexts, making the task of reviewing manuscripts a real challenge. Our editorial team, nevertheless, have done a marvellous job processing all manuscripts through several rounds of meticulous review processes. For that matter, I need to acknowledge the efforts of my assistant editors Kadriye AKSOY and Arzu KANAT-MUTLUOĞLU, and editorial assistants Ramazan YETKİN and Semih EKİN for coordinating the review process and assisting our associate editors, Hüseyin ÖZ, Filomena CAPUCHO, Chi Cheung Ruby YANG, Gholam Hassan KHAJAVY, József HORVÁTH, and Ece ZEHİR TOPKAYA. Without the efforts of our editorial team, this issue would not have been the same and ready for a timely publication in such good quality.

EJAL will not feel complete if the efforts of our expanded editorial team are not duly acknowledged. We have a number of very talented copy editors. I need to acknowledge the input and feedback on the final preparation for the publication in this issue. I would like to thank Aycan DEMİR AYAZ, Cennet ALTINER, Mehmet ABİ, Nuray ÇAYLAK, Özge GÜMÜŞ, Saliha TOSCU, Sibel ÖZDEMİR ÇAĞATAY, and Zeynep ÖZDEM ERTÜRK for their invaluable support and contribution in Volume 5, Issue 1.

I also need to thank authors of articles and book reviews in this issue for their efforts and conforming to our expectations. They have been collaborative at each step.

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of the publication process and attended feedback from the reviewers and the editorial team.

Finally, I need to acknowledge the constructive input our authors received from our ANONYMOUS reviewers. We would like to thank them all for the hard work they did for the journal. We are fully aware of the value of their contribution and amount of effort they have invested. A huge THANK YOU to our reviewers.

One final reminder, with Volume 5 in 2019, EJAL has now moved to a triannual frequency of publication, dedicating its Issue 2 in July 2019 to a thematic special issue *ELF, Migration and English Language Education: Sociolinguistic and Pedagogical Issues* to be co-edited by Éva Illés of Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary, and Yasemin Bayyurt of Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Turkey. We are all thrilled about this new phase of the journal and are looking forward to it. Ahead of us is yet another busy term of preparing our next issue. We are truly enjoying the process and do hope you benefit from the journal as much we do enjoy preparing for you.

Happy reading!

İsmail Hakkı Erten

Editor-in-Chief
ARTICLES
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Effect of Input Mode on EFL Free-Recall Listening Performance: A Mixed-Method Study
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Abstract
This study conducted a mixed-method study of the influence of audio and video input mode on free-recall listening performance. It first explored quantitatively whether input mode significantly influenced 34 sophomores’ performance in general and across two genres (passage and long dialogue) and three ranks of idea units (the discourse topic, main point, and supporting detail). Then it investigated qualitatively how four of the participants interacted with the audio and video input. T-test results showed the video mode significantly facilitated listening performance in general and for long dialogue in particular, as well as the recall of supporting details for long dialogue. Qualitative findings revealed that the participants’ interaction with the video varied with their language proficiency and the visual-verbal relationship in the input, suggesting the threshold of language proficiency for the visuals to take effect and the intervening effect of visual input and task features.

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Keywords: input mode; audio-video input; free-recall listening

1. Introduction

In large-scale English proficiency tests nowadays, the input in the listening section is predominantly audio-mediated for both practicality and validity concerns. However, typical of TLU (Target Language Use) domain, video is not only popularly and effectively used in listening instruction (e.g., Cross, 2009; Feak & Salehzadeh, 2001; Mohamadkhani, Farokhi, & Farokhi, 2013) but also frequently present in the listening activity in real life. Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate visuals into the input to achieve the authenticity of the listening test task. Yet, on the other hand, there was still controversy concerning the construct (i.e. what is actually measured) of the listening test with visuals, which necessitates further study into the influence of visuals
on listening performance in terms of whether the influence is present and how the influence takes place.

2. Literature review

The past three decades have witnessed an abundant body of research on the influence of visuals on listening performance, which can be divided into three focuses.

2.1. Effect of visuals on listening test performance

As to whether visuals exert facilitative or inhibitory effects, there have been mixed results. Most studies showed that participants performed better in listening tests with visuals (Brett, 1997; Lesnov, 2017; Sueyoshi & Hardison, 2005; Wagner, 2010a, 2013), whereas several found the effect of visuals either negative (Ginther, 2002; Lenz, 2014; Pusey & Suvorov 2009) or absent (Lesnov, 2018). Some studies went further by introducing a variety of moderating variables such as genre (Batty, 2015; Ginther, 2002; Suvorov, 2009), the access to the test questions (Wagner, 2013), working memory (Pusey & Lenz, 2014), and proficiency level (Batty, 2015; Ginther, 2002; Pardo-Ballester, 2016; Sueyoshi & Hardison, 2005). Yet the findings lack consistency given the difference in specific variables and contexts.

To begin with, with regard to the interaction with proficiency level, Sueyoshi and Hardison (2005) found that when listening to academic lectures, advanced learners of ESL performed the best in visual condition with face image, while low-intermediate learners performed the best in visual condition with both gesture and face image. Similarly, in the case of Spanish passage listening, Pardo-Ballester (2016) concluded that the performance on inference items were better with video format for higher-proficiency learners, and the opposite was true for lower-proficiency ones.

Secondly, with respect to the interaction with genre, Suvorov (2009) identified a negative effect of video input on listening performance in lectures, and no effect of video input on performance in dialogues.

In addition, concerning the interaction with genre as well as proficiency level, Ginther (2002) found that both mini-talks and academic discussions with content visuals facilitated performance, while mini-talks with context visuals did not; and dialogues either with visuals or not had no effect on performance. Meanwhile, the effect of visuals did not differ between high- and low-proficiency groups. However, in Batty (2015)’s study, no significant interaction was identified between video/audio format on the one hand, and either three genres (monologue, conversation, and lecture) or four proficiency levels on the other hand.

Finally, no significant interaction effect was found between some other variables (e.g., the access to the test questions, working memory) and listening input mode on listening performance (e.g., Pusey & Lenz, 2014; Wagner, 2013).

To sum up, despite the absence of a consensus on the influence of visuals on listening performance in previous studies, one thing is certain that the influence depends on
specific contexts as well as other intervening factors (e.g., language proficiency of examinees, type of listening material, features of visual input, and type of listening task). Especially, the simple and intuitive division of visuals into either content or context ones failed to provide a finer-grained picture of the issue, which is one of the reasons behind the inconsistency in previous findings.

2.2. Examinees’ interaction with visuals

Studies on how examinees interact with visuals in listening comprehension are mainly conducted in two ways—qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitatively, think-aloud, observations and interviews were mainly used. For example, Ockey (2007) found that in computer-based listening tests examinees hardly had any engagement with still images but did interact with a video stimulus in different ways and to different extent. Whereas this study analyzed the data somewhat intuitively, others did it in accordance with a specified framework.

For instance, Seo (2002) examined how audio-only and audiovisual formats influenced participants’ use of strategies. It was found that more cognitive strategies (e.g., inferencing, elaborating, evaluating information) were elicited by audio-visual format, while audio-only format elicited more metacognitive strategies (e.g., identifying problems, self evaluating).

Similarly, Gruba (2004), in order to probe into how participants process visuals, developed a seven-category framework based on the constructivist perspective of comprehension. Using this framework, he analyzed the immediate retrospective verbal reports of L2 Japanese tertiary level students as they were viewing three authentic Japanese news broadcasts. Judging from the result that visual elements worked in a number of ways that go beyond merely ‘supporting’ verbal elements, he argued for considering visuals as integral resources to comprehension.

In the further and more elaborate follow-up study, Gruba (2006), based on the framework of media literacy for “playing the text”, conducted a descriptive case study of 22 participants’ thinking processes in watching three digitized news clips. As a result, nine different forms of interactions were summarized, which were respectively—making sense of setting and context, no longer attending directly and consciously to every single element, developing macrostructure, exploring ideas without commitment, playing without advance preparation, playing as joyfulness, recovering from comprehension failure, stalling decision making, and establishing signposts and boundary lines.

Quantitatively, there are two approaches. One focused on the viewing behavior of participants, and the other elicited views of participants on the effect of visuals by means of questionnaires. As regards the first approach, Wagner (2007, 2010b) investigated examinees’ behavior in terms of the amount of time they make eye contact with the video monitor as well as the rate they actually view the video texts. The result showed that examinees oriented to the video monitor 69% of the time in video format, and they tended to view the video at a higher rate when the dialogue rather than the
lecture was given; besides, there was a moderate negative correlation between viewing rate and test performance. Suvorov (2015), employing more precise measurement such as eye-tracking technology, explored the relationship between examinees’ viewing behavior in terms of fixation rate, dwell rate, and the total dwell time on the one hand and their performance in academic listening with two types of videos (context and content) on the other hand. Despite no significant relationship between the three eye-tracking measures and the test scores, fixation rates and total dwell time values were found to be significantly different between two types of videos.

As to the second approach, some studies (e.g., Pardo-Ballester, 2016; Sueyoshi & Hardison, 2005) identified participants’ general preference of visual format over audio one in listening tasks, and it was found that the main merit of multimedia format lay in its efficiency and ongoing feedback to listening tasks (Brett, 1997). Nevertheless, when relating participants’ preference for certain visual input to their performance, Suvorov (2009) observed they did not perform better with the visual input they preferred.

Taken together, notwithstanding either the much specified and elaborate qualitative analysis or the use of advanced technology (i.e. eye-tracking) in the quantitative analysis of examinee-visuals interaction in previous studies, most of them treated listening comprehension as a whole without considering the possibility that the interaction may vary by different levels of comprehension (e.g., grasping main idea, explicit details).

2.3. The construct of video-mediated listening assessment

Accompanying the mixed finding about the effect of visuals on listening comprehension, contention exists in terms of what is actually measured in listening assessment with visuals. While Shin (1998) found both concurrent and construct validity evidence for the videotape-formatted listening test as a measure of academic lecture listening ability, other researchers take the use of visuals into consideration in exploring the construct of video-mediated listening assessment.

For example, in the construct validation of a video-based listening assessment, Wagner (2002) provided quantitative evidence for a two-factor model of listening ability: ability to comprehend explicitly stated information and implicit information in aural texts, and some sort of method effect related to item type. By means of verbal report methods, Wagner (2008) found that the examinees attended to and utilized the nonverbal information in different manners and thus recommended not only integrating the ability to utilize the nonverbal information into the construct of listening ability but also classifying the ability of using visual information as a kind of pragmatic knowledge. Holding similar ideas, Cubilo and Winke (2013) recommended incorporating knowledge of how to interpret nonverbal cues into the construct of the listening-writing integrated task. Likewise, Lesnov (2017) argued for the consideration of understanding context video as part of the academic listening comprehension construct.
However, holding a more reserved point, other researchers (e.g., Lesnov, 2018; Li, 2013) called for more empirical research and theoretical thinking to further clarify the construct of video-mediated listening assessment. In this sense, more studies in the field would help to shed light on it.

2.4. Research questions

The above review has revealed the lack of conclusive evidence on the effect of visuals on listening performance, the predominant use of multiple-choice items, and the failure to probe into the specific feature of visuals and examinees’ interaction with the visuals on different levels of comprehension. In view of this, the present study is conducted.

Specifically, it provides a mixed-method investigation of the influence of input mode (audio vs. video) on free-recall listening performance in non-academic TLU domain. First, it explores quantitatively the effect of two modes on performance in general and across two genres (passage and long dialogue) and three ranks of idea units (the discourse topic, main point, and supporting detail). Then, it investigates qualitatively how participants interact with two modes of input through retrospective verbal reports and follow-up interviews. To be specific, the study examines the effect of input mode by addressing the following three research questions:

1. RQ1: Does input mode significantly influence free-recall listening performance in general and across two genres respectively?
2. RQ2: Does the influence vary across three different ranks of idea units in two genres?
3. RQ3: How do participants interact with visual and audio input in listening?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants consisted of an intact College English teaching class in a university in mainland China, totaling 34 sophomores majoring in humanities. Based on College English Test Band 4 (CET-4)† scores, two higher-proficiency participants (two females) and two lower-proficiency ones (one female and one male) were randomly chosen for the qualitative investigation. They are respectively Participant 1 (female, higher-proficiency), Participant 2 (female, higher-proficiency), Participant 3 (female, lower-proficiency), and Participant 4 (male, lower-proficiency).

3.2. Instrument

† College English test is a large-scale English language test which is administered by the National College English Testing Committee on behalf of the Ministry of Education of People’s Republic of China, aiming to examine the English proficiency of undergraduate students in terms of whether they reach the required English levels specified in the National College English Teaching Syllabuses. It consists of three tests: Band 4 (CET-4), Band 6 (CET-6), and the CET–Spoken English Test (CET-SET) (Zheng & Cheng, 2008).
To minimize the potential effects of construct-irrelevant factors, the difficulty of listening material, topic, speed, and the quality of video were taken into consideration in the selection. Thus, two videos were finally selected as below in Table 1.

Table 1. Listening material information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Speed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audio/Video 1</td>
<td>Facebook addiction</td>
<td>Passage</td>
<td>84s</td>
<td>182w/m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio/Video 2</td>
<td>Shopping for healthy food</td>
<td>Long dialogue</td>
<td>120s</td>
<td>258w/m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3. Research design and procedure

All participants were first asked to provide basic information of gender and CET 4 scores. Given the variation of individual examinees in terms of language ability, cognitive style, and the ability to utilize the non-verbal information (Wagner, 2008), the present study used the within-subjects design in which all participants were exposed to two modes of input, in order to avoid score variances caused by individual differences (Suvorov, 2009). Meanwhile, there could be the influence of listening material features (e.g., text type, topic, characteristics and relationship of interlocutors) on listening performance (Dunkel, Henning, & Chaudron, 1993; Rubin, 1994). Given this, it is tough, if not totally impossible to select fully comparable listening material for each of the video and audio mode. Such being the case, for the purpose of minimizing as much as possible the variances caused by different listening material in the experiment, the same materials were used for both modes. Nevertheless, the issue of memory effect would possibly come out of the repetitive use of the same material. To solve this problem, participants were given the listening task in the audio mode first in view of the transient nature of aural input, and then the same task in the video mode, with a one-day interval between the two. To lessen the memory effect, immediately after the completion of the listening task in the audio mode, an intervening procedure was introduced in the format of a new one in the same mode. This practice turned out effective to certain extent. For one thing, the participants claimed listening to the material assigned for the first time, when they were assigned the same material in the video mode the next day. For another, even after the researcher told them that they had listened to the same material as the day before, most of them said they barely had any memory of it, whereas several said they did have some impression, but did not think it helped greatly their free-recall performance. In all, the aforementioned measures were to isolate the independent variable of either audio or video mode in listening tasks. Specifically, the research design was organized this way:

- Participants first listened to the audio version of passage and long dialogue respectively, and immediately after this, finished a free-recall within 5 minutes for each, in which they were asked to write down whatever they got out of listening.
- The next day participants watched the video versions of the same material and again finished free-recall within 5 minutes for each in which they were asked to write down whatever they got out of viewing and listening.
Four of the participants agreed to give retrospective verbal reporting of the listening process and also to have a follow-up interview.

3.4. Analytic scoring of free-recalls and quantitative analysis

For each participant, there were two free-recall protocols for both passage and long dialogue listening in two modes. Yet, four of the participants either lacked one or two recall protocols or left blanks in the protocol, and thus their data were considered invalid. As a result, there were 120 free-recall protocols in total (30 × 4).

To score the free recalls, the two listening scripts in this study were first analyzed in terms of different levels of idea units—the discourse topic, main point, and supporting detail, as shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. A hierarchy of idea units in the passage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Idea</th>
<th>Discourse topic</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Main Points</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Level of Idea</th>
<th>Supporting Details</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Facebook addiction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Changing your profile picture too often</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-1</td>
<td>Worrying about your image</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Changing your status update too often</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-2</td>
<td>Unnecessary</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Access Facebook via mobile phone</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Thinking about it</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adorn your page with too many apps</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>Getting rid of them</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Being taken over by Facebook in vocabulary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>Spending time with friends in real life</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. A hierarchy of idea units in the long dialogue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Idea</th>
<th>Discourse topic</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Level of Idea</th>
<th>Main Points</th>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Level of Idea</th>
<th>Supporting Details</th>
<th>Mark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Shopping for healthy food</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Have an idea of a menu</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2-1</td>
<td>Take a look at what your plate looks like</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Have recipes and menus on the websites</td>
<td>2-1-1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2-1-1-1</td>
<td>Components of a plate</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Necessary to have lots of vegetables and fruits</td>
<td>2-1-2</td>
<td>2-2-1</td>
<td>2-2-1-1</td>
<td>Try different things in different ways</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Be creative</td>
<td>2-2-2</td>
<td>2-2-2-1</td>
<td>2-2-2-1-1</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specifically, first, the discourse topic refers to the gist or theme of the text, i.e., what is mainly discussed. For example, the passage centers on Facebook addiction while the dialogue focuses on how to shop for healthy food. Then, the main point refers to the aspects from which the topic is addressed, as exemplified by the five aspects to illustrate the phenomenon of Facebook addiction and the two key points for attention in food shopping. Third, the supporting detail refers to specific reasons or evidence to specify the main point. For instance, for each of the five aspects of the Facebook addiction, there is one or two backing evidence or further specification; and for each of the two notes in food shopping, there are three further details provided. Together, all these idea units constitute the meaning or content of the whole text.

The total mark was 10 for both materials. For each idea unit, the differential score value was assigned according to their levels, as illustrated in the two tables above. For example, in the passage, the discourse topic was assigned 2 points, five main points were respectively assigned 1 point, and six supporting details were respectively assigned 0.5 point. In the long dialogue, the discourse topic was assigned 2 points, and two main points were respectively assigned 1.5 points; for six supporting details, four of them with more content were respectively assigned 1 point, and two others with less content were respectively assigned 0.5 point. As a result, both a holistic score and analytic scores for each of the three ranks of idea units were generated.

Finally, the data was administered the paired-samples t-test to test whether performance significantly differed between two modes of input (i.e. audio vs. video) in general and across two genres (i.e. passage and long dialogue) and three different ranks of idea units.

3.5. Qualitative analysis of free-recalls and coding of retrospective verbal reports

Firstly, in accordance with the level of idea units presented in Tables 2 and 3, free-recall protocols of both passage and long dialogue from the four randomly-chosen participants were analyzed and compared in terms of which idea unit was recalled and which level it belonged to.

Table 4. Integration of verbal and visual information (Schriver, 1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Function</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Redundant</td>
<td>words and pictures convey identical content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary</td>
<td>words and pictures provide different content, with one mode presenting the main idea and the other mode supplementing it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementary</td>
<td>words and pictures provide different content, with both modes being necessary to understand the main idea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juxtapositional</td>
<td>words and pictures provide different content, with both modes presenting the ideas that clash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage-setting</td>
<td>words and pictures present different content, with one mode providing the content and another mode giving the main idea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondly, based on the five kinds of visual-textual integration (Schriver, 1997) in Table 4 above, two videos were analyzed in terms of the manner of integration between
concurrent visual and audio input, and the result of coding was presented in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5. A representation of audio-visual image in passage video (Analysis of 11 frames)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 2-1</th>
<th>Level 2-2</th>
<th>Level 2-3</th>
<th>Level 2-4</th>
<th>Level 2-5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage-setting</td>
<td>Stage-setting</td>
<td>Redundant</td>
<td>Stage-setting</td>
<td>Supplementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2-1-1</td>
<td>Level 2-2-1</td>
<td>Level 2-3-1</td>
<td>Level 2-4-1 &amp; 2-4-2</td>
<td>Level 2-5-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary</td>
<td>Supplementary</td>
<td>Supplementary</td>
<td>Redundant</td>
<td>Supplementary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. A representation of audio-visual image in long dialogue video (Analysis of 9 frames)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turn 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thirdly, to code how the participants processed the visual and verbal input in the listening process, Paivio (1986)'s Dual Coding Theory was drawn on. The theory, through assuming the co-existence of verbal and non-verbal cognitive processing subsystems, proposes three types of concurrent processing of two types of input, as presented in Table 7.
Table 7. Processing type of visual and verbal information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processing type</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. representational</td>
<td>the direct activation of verbal or non-verbal representations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. referential</td>
<td>the activation of the verbal system by the nonverbal system or vice versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. associative</td>
<td>the activation of representations within the same verbal or nonverbal system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, to supplement the retrospective verbal reports, a follow-up interview was given in terms of how participants processed audio and video inputs and why they got or missed certain idea units.

4. Results

4.1. Research question 1: Does input mode significantly influence listening free-recall performance in general and across two genres respectively?

Table 8 presents the descriptive statistics for the free-recall performance in the audio and video modes in general and for both passage and long dialogue.

Table 8. Descriptive statistics of listening performance in general and across two genres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>Min</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio 1</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video 1</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Dialogue</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Max</td>
<td>Min</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio 2</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video 2</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1—passage; 2—long dialogue

As is shown in Table 8, overall as well as for both passage and long dialogue respectively, performance in the video mode was higher than that in the audio one, suggesting that participants recalled better in the video mode; and the range was also wider in the video mode. Meanwhile, performance in the video mode spread out more widely than in the audio one.

Paired-samples t-test results suggested that performance in the video mode ($M = 2.91$) was significantly higher than that in the audio mode ($M = 2.43$) in general ($t(59) = -2.890$, $p = .005$, $r = .35$). The same was true for long dialogue ($t(29) = -2.142$, $p = .041$, $r = .37$). Both significant effects reached the medium size. However, there was no significant difference between performances in two modes for passage ($t(29) = -1.922$, $p = .065$). Put differently, the video mode facilitated free-recall performance in general and for long dialogue in particular.

4.2. Research Question 2: Does the influence vary across three different ranks of idea units in two genres?
Table 9 lists the descriptive statistics for the free-recall performance in the two modes on three ranks in both genres.

Table 9. Descriptive statistics of listening performance on three ranks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance on</th>
<th>Audio 1</th>
<th>Video 1</th>
<th>Audio 2</th>
<th>Video 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rank 1</td>
<td>Mean: 1.12, SD: .41</td>
<td>Mean: 1.37, SD: .67</td>
<td>Mean: 1.12, SD: .70</td>
<td>Mean: 1.08, SD: .78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank 2</td>
<td>Mean: .27, SD: .58</td>
<td>Mean: .45, SD: .65</td>
<td>Mean: .77, SD: .64</td>
<td>Mean: .97, SD: .82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank 3</td>
<td>Mean: .42, SD: .23</td>
<td>Mean: .38, SD: .22</td>
<td>Mean: 1.17, SD: .75</td>
<td>Mean: 1.57, SD: .92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1—passage; 2—long dialogue; Rank 1—discourse topic; Rank 2—main point; Rank 3—supporting detail

As Table 9 presents, in passage listening, mean scores in the recall of discourse topic and main points were both higher in the video mode, while the opposite was true for the recall of supporting details. In long dialogue listening, the mean scores in the recall of both main points and supporting details were both higher in the video mode, whereas the opposite was true for the recall of discourse topic. As to the dispersion of scores, for both genres and modes, performance on rank 2 spread out more widely than on the other two ranks.

Paired-samples t-test results suggested that performance on rank 3 for long dialogue in the video mode ($M = 1.57$) was significantly higher than that in the audio mode ($M = 1.17$) ($t(29) = -2.887, p = .007$) and the effect reached almost the large size ($r = .47$). However, there was no significant difference between performances in the two modes on rank 1 for either passage ($t(29) = -1.634, p = .113$) or long dialogue ($t(29) = .195, p = .847$), on rank 2 for either passage ($t(29) = -1.249, p = .222$) or long dialogue ($t(29) = -1.099, p = .281$), and on rank 3 for passage ($t(29) = .626, p = .536$). Put another way, the video mode only facilitated the recall of supporting details for long dialogue listening. It did not facilitate the recall of either the discourse topic or the main point across genres.

4.3. Research Question 3: How do participants interact with visual and audio input in listening? Ancillary analyses

4.3.1. Passage Processing Analysis

Table 10 demonstrates in detail which level of idea units the four participants recalled, as well as how they processed visual and audio input during passage listening.

Table 10. Passage recall protocol analysis and coding for input processing
13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>L1</th>
<th>L2-1</th>
<th>L2-2</th>
<th>L2-3</th>
<th>L2-4</th>
<th>L2-5</th>
<th>L2-1</th>
<th>L2-2</th>
<th>L2-3</th>
<th>L2-4</th>
<th>L2-5</th>
<th>L2-1-1</th>
<th>L2-2-1</th>
<th>L2-3-1</th>
<th>L2-4-1</th>
<th>L2-5-1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
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<td>Video</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Audio</td>
<td>√</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video</td>
<td>√</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Audio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Video</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Audio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Video</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Note: √— the presence of the idea unit on that level in the recall protocol; "a"—representational processing; "b"—referential processing; higher-level participants—1 & 2; lower-level participants—3 & 4)

As Table 10 shows, for Participant 1, there were three differences between the two modes. First, concerning Level 1, there was only “Facebook” in the audio mode while in the video one the expression “Facebook addiction” was complete. Second, as to Level 2-3, the idea unit was mentioned incompletely by the expression “access the Facebook” in the audio mode but completely in the video one. Third, for Level 2-5, the idea unit was missing in the audio mode.

Her retrospective verbal report shed some light on the differences. For Level 1, she said that she saw the words “what is Facebook addiction” at the beginning of the video and thus judged it must be concerned with the main idea. As to Level 2-3, she said that she saw the puppet was doing something with a cell phone in his hand and thus integrated this with the meaning she grasped by audio input. With respect to Level 2-5, she said that she judged from the words “I’m going to do some Facebooking” and the facial expression of the man and got the idea of “using too much Facebook in language”. Concerning all the missing idea units in both modes, she explained in the interview that she just missed them when listening, and when viewing she was totally distracted and confused by so many pieces of visual information that she could not absorb them at all.

For Participant 2, there were two differences. First, for Level 1, there was an incomplete idea unit as “Facebook” in the audio mode while in the video one the discourse topic was incorrectly summarized as “the function of Facebook”. Second, concerning Level 2-1, the idea unit was missing in the audio mode and was incomplete in the video one.

According to her verbal report, concerning Level 1, she said that she totally neglected the words at the beginning of the video and was not sure of what was talked about the Facebook. When listening, she made a guess by some key words and assumed it was about the popularity of Facebook; when viewing, she made a guess by some images and assumed it was about the influence of Facebook. When it came to Level 2-1, she said that when viewing she noticed something was constantly changing on the home page but missed what changed. For all the missing idea units in both modes, she explained
in the interview that she just missed them when listening, and when viewing she just got so blank-minded that she could not relate what she saw with what she heard.

For Participant 3, concerning Level 1, the idea unit was missing in the audio mode and incomplete in the video one. To explain this, she said in her verbal report that when listening, she understood it as the influence of modern technology on human life because she heard such words as “Facebook” and “cellphone” mentioned for several times. When viewing, she said that the words at the beginning on the screen gave her some clue. As to all the missing idea units in both modes, she honestly disclosed in the interview that she listened word by word and remembered general meaning of some sentences, but could only deliver it in the form of frequently-spoken words. When viewing, she just paid attention to such elements as subtitles, facial expression and movements.

For Participant 4, for Level 1, there was only “Facebook” in the audio mode while in the video one the expression was complete. For that, he gave similar explanations to that of Participant 3. As regards all the missing idea units in both modes, he said in the interview that he did not catch the words in detail but formed a general impression based on background knowledge and association. The only difference between the two modes was that he made associations by the key word heard in the audio mode but by the impressive image seen in the video mode.

As a whole, in passage listening, the interaction between the participants and the listening input seemed to vary with the listening proficiency of participants and the visual-verbal relationship. Specifically, on the one hand, while higher-proficiency participants were able to make use of visual input to access verbal information, lower-proficiency ones often failed to do so, being unable to undertake concurrent processing of two kinds of input. On the other hand, visual input tended to facilitate comprehension especially when they conveyed the same information as audio input or supplemented the main idea expressed by it.

4.3.2. Dialogue processing analysis

Table 11 demonstrates in detail which level of idea units the four participants recalled and how they processed visual as well as verbal input during dialogue listening.

Table 11. Dialogue recall protocol analysis and coding for input processing

As Table 11 shows, for Participant 1, there were two differences across two modes. First, concerning Level 1, the discourse topic was summarized incompletely as “healthy food” in the audio mode but completely as “take control of shopping for healthy food” in the video mode. Second, for Level 2-1-1, the idea unit was missing in the video mode.

In her retrospective verbal report, she said that for Level 1 she grasped the term “healthy food” stressed by the first speaker at the beginning when listening, and when viewing she noticed the caption introducing the topic at the bottom of the screen, which gave her a hint. As to Level 2-1-1, she said that she clearly heard the sentence “take a look at what the plate looks like”; but when viewing, she just focused on the image, without attending to what was said. When it came to all the missing idea units in both modes, she explained in the interview that she either missed it or failed to recall it when listening, and when viewing she got so attracted by the dishes of food on the desk that she failed to process other input.

For Participant 2, concerning Levels 2-1, 2-1-1, 2-1-1-1, the idea units were absent in the audio mode but present in the video one. Her verbal report shed some light on the difference. First, concerning Levels 2-1 and 2-1-1, she got some clue from the interaction (e.g., gestures, eye fixations) between the two speakers despite the lack of relationship between the verbal and the visual input. Concerning Level 2-1-1-1, she said that the video clearly illustrated the meaning of the words which helped her quickly grasped the audio information. Third, concerning the missing idea units of Levels 2-2, 2-1-2, 2-2-1 and 2-2-2-1, she gave a similar reason to that for passage listening.

For Participant 3, the idea unit on Level 2-1-1-1 was absent in the audio mode but present in the video one. To explain this, she said in her verbal report that she understood what she heard as soon as she saw the video which illustrated the content conveyed by the audio information. Concerning all the missing idea units, she gave a similar reason to that for passage listening.

For Participant 4, there were four differences. First, concerning Level 1, the discourse topic was summarized incompletely as “healthy eating and shopping make easy” in the video mode but missing in the audio one. Second, the idea unit for Level 2-2-2 was
present in the video mode but absent in the audio one. Third, as to Levels 2-1 and 2-2-1, the idea units were present in Chinese in the audio mode but absent in the video one.

According to his verbal report, for Level 1, he noticed the caption which introduced the topic at the bottom of the screen, but in the audio mode he missed the beginning because he couldn’t concentrate quickly. And he got the idea unit on Level 2-2-2 through the association of the image when viewing. As to Levels 2-1 and 2-2-1, he got both idea units through key word association in the audio mode, but in the video mode he just had no impression of them. Finally, with respect to all the missing idea units in both modes, he offered similar reasons to those for passage listening.

As a whole, similarly, in long dialogue listening, visual input tended to facilitate comprehension for both proficiency levels of participants especially when they illustrated or specified the main idea expressed by the verbal information. Meanwhile, higher-proficiency participants tended to make use of visual input to access verbal information more frequently, whereas lower-proficiency ones did not exhibit such tendency. Instead, they tended to exclusively rely on visual input to cope with failure in listening comprehension.

5. Discussion

5.1. Effect of input mode on listening performance

The study revealed a significantly facilitative effect of video input on listening performance in general, which echoes the findings in previous studies (e.g., Brett, 1997; Lesnov, 2017; Sueyoshi & Hardison, 2005; Wagner, 2010a, 2013). When this overall significant effect was further probed into, it was found that the video mode significantly facilitated the general performance for long dialogue instead of passage listening. This contradicts the previous finding that the video input had no significant effect on performance for dialogue listening (e.g., Batty, 2015; Ginther, 2002; Suvorov, 2009). The contradiction would probably be related with different situational contexts (daily vs. academic context) or the authenticity of the video (real-life vs. acted). Moreover, when this significant effect of video input on performance in long dialogue listening was more deeply looked into, it turned out that the video mode only significantly facilitated the recall of supporting details rather than either the discourse topic or the main point. This adds the indirect evidence to the finding that in listening tests administered in the traditional audio mode, participants generally performed worst on detail items than the main idea and inference ones (Shang, 2005).

To explain the absence of the significant video effect on the recall of either the discourse topic or the main point, it is necessary to draw on the research concerning the nature of listening comprehension. Specifically, Rost (1990) argues that listening is essentially an inferential process in that it includes constructing propositional meaning through supplying relational links and assigning underlying links in the discourse. Similarly, Field (2008) states that listening involves not only extracting raw information from the speech, but also dealing with it by means of selecting what
information is relevant, monitoring the information to ensure it is consistent with what has gone before, integrating the information into a representation of what has been said so far, and building an information structure of macro- and micro-points. Hence, the problem of the participants can be diagnosed as the failure to handle idea units in the sense of forming a mental model of hierarchical ideas based on the links among them. Simply put, they were unclear if not totally ignorant of the relationship among the separate ideas they got, and so they only recalled separate minor details which were not logically inter-related in their mind, as was indicated in their recall protocols in which the idea units recalled were just piled up rather than organized logically.

The above suggests the threshold of language proficiency in video-mediated listening: visual input would take effect substantially only when listeners are able to deal with audio input within a global network. This lends support to the finding that examinees made use of the nonverbal information in different manners (Wagner, 2008) and that video format only facilitated listening performance on inference items for higher-proficiency learners (Pardo-Ballester, 2016). Yet it contrasts with the absence of interactions of participants’ proficiency levels with visuals found in previous studies (e.g., Batty, 2015; Ginther, 2002).

5.2. Processing of visual input

As regards processing of visual input, it can be influenced by input and task features. To begin with, input features refer in this context to the verbal-visual relationship. There are three kinds of relationship in both the passage (i.e. redundant, supplementary, and stage-setting) and the dialogue (i.e. stage-setting, supplementary, and no relation). A close look at the free-recall performance revealed that participants employed redundant visual input to access verbal information in both genres. However, higher-proficiency participants were found to be more capable of this than lower-proficiency ones. On the one hand, this is similar to the finding that content instead of context visuals in mini-talks and academic discussions improved listening performance (Ginther, 2002). On the other hand, it lent support to the aforementioned threshold of language proficiency. Meanwhile, the use of supplementary and stage-setting visual input depended on the degree of the understanding of simultaneous audio input. If participants failed to catch the latter, the former wouldn’t play a role. Furthermore, the no-relation visual input in the dialogue did not hamper participants’ recall in general probably because the apparently unrelated visual input provided a transitional point or a cognitive buffer for them to better organize the just-heard information. Yet, for two higher-proficiency participants, much concentration on visual input tended to distract them to some extent, which lends support to the finding that the longer the participants viewed the video, the poorer their listening performance was (Wagner, 2007, 2010b).

Then, task features refer to the way comprehension is measured. Unlike selected task types such as multiple-choice and true-or-false question, free-recall task is constructed in that it requires the construction of the response in a subjective way, and so it is more cognitively demanding (Bachman & Palmer, 2010). Specifically, the recall of
information would bring about heavy memory load and may interfere with attending to some minor details (Shang, 2005). As revealed by retrospective verbal reports, participants mainly conducted referential processing. In other words, they used video input to compensate for the inadequacy in processing audio input or to help them recall some unclear information through schemata-activated association.

Taken together, it suggests that the effect of visuals in listening would vary with visual input and task features: the effect of visuals would be facilitating if it is consistent with audio input; referential processing would be conducted if the task is demanding. The former one is similar to Grimes (1991)'s “belongingness” hypothesis that auditory-visual redundancy would be treated as conveying one message and won’t cause attentional capacity exhausted.

5.3. Reflecting on the construct of video-mediated listening assessment

In view of the aforementioned findings, it is possible to provide an attempt to answer the call for a rethinking of what is measured by video-mediated listening assessment (e.g., Lesnov, 2017, 2018; Li, 2013). In accordance with the Interactionalist perspective on construct definition (Chapelle, 2002), there are three essential elements in the construct of listening tests with visuals: trait, context and metacognitive strategies. To begin with, trait includes not only linguistic knowledge but also paralinguistic knowledge and visual literacy. Defined in ACRL Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (2011), visual literacy refers to "a set of abilities enabling an individual to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use, and create images and visual media". However, as it is a broad concept and varies across disciplines, how to define visual-related competence relevant to listening comprehension is a question to be considered. Then, context refers to environmental conditions under which performance is observed. As language use happens in diversified contexts, it is not sufficient to only mark the general TLU domain in the construct. Instead, the most typical features (e.g., location, participants, and channels) of the most representative TLU domains should be incorporated into the construct. For example, even in the same domain of academic listening, seminar and lecture differ in the degree of visual involvement and type of visual input, the processing of which definitely requires different visual skills. Therefore, to specify typical contextual features in the construct definition would be conducive not only to the operationalization of the construct but also to the controlling for visual skills to ensure consistency and fairness. The last factor—metacognitive strategies help examinees apply their linguistic knowledge, paralinguistic knowledge, and visual literacy to specific listening context. Thus, more process-oriented studies, based on visual grammar (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006) and multi-modal discourse analysis (O’Halloran, 2004), can be carried out to systematically explore how different examinees process different kinds of visual input. As a whole, it suggests that the specification of the construct of video-mediated listening assessment should take into consideration of not only language knowledge required, but also contextual features typical of the represented TLU domain and any visual skills and metacognitive strategies involved in input processing.
6. Conclusions

To conclude, with a view to probing into the influence of input mode on listening performance, and to further clarifying the interaction between listeners and the input with visuals, as well as to shedding light on the construct of video-mediated listening assessment, the present study has conducted a mixed-method investigation of the influence of audio and video mode on free-recall performance of passage and long dialogue listening. Quantitative results showed the video mode significantly facilitated listening performance in general and for long dialogue in particular, and the recall of supporting details for long dialogue. Qualitative findings revealed that the participants’ interaction with the video input varied with their language proficiency and the visual-verbal relationship in the input, suggesting the threshold of language proficiency for the visuals to take effect and the intervening effect of visual input and task features.

Given the limitation of the within-subjects design used in this study, it is suggested that the future research could either provide a longer interval between the audio and video presentations or alternate the presentation order (audio-first and video-first), to better control for the memory or order effect. Nevertheless, this study has shed some light on the influence of visuals on listening performance. There are three implications as follows.

Firstly, considering listening as a communicative activity which involves interpretation of the intricate interplay of verbal, paralinguistic and visual information (Suvorov, 2009), it is necessary to incorporate these non-verbal information into the construct for the assessment of real-world listening ability (e.g., Li, 2013; Wagner, 2008). However, the audio-mode listening test is still useful when the ability to understand verbal language purely is the focus. Meanwhile, to further probe into the effect of video on listening performance, attention could be paid to not only the visual-verbal relationship in the video input, the specific listening task assigned, and the language proficiency of students, but also how students make use of the specific video input and whether it facilitates or inhibits listening comprehension.

Secondly, as to listening instruction, considering the pervasiveness of visuals in the modern hi-tech electronic era, training of visual-related skills is not only a need for students to cope with listening comprehension but also a necessity to engage capably and participate fully in a visual culture. In this sense, it is necessary for language teachers to treat visual input not just as a physical medium but as a mode which generates meaning as much as the audio mode, and thus to develop students’ visual literacy by teaching them how to process visuals based on visual grammar and multimodal discourse analysis.

Thirdly, with respect to methodology, considering the fact that the mixed-method research has been established as the third paradigm since 1990s, it is high time that more researchers in this field could apply mixed methods to the investigation of the complex construct of listening comprehension with visuals. Jang, Wagner, and Park (2014) appealed for more diversified and integrated use of MMR design rather than the
simple juxtaposition of quantitative and qualitative methods. For example, various MMR designs (e.g., expansion, development and initiation) (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989) can be used for different research purposes. In all, the above implications point out directions for future research in this area.

References


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Using Humor in Language Classrooms: Greasing the Wheels or Putting a Spanner in the Works? A Study on Humor Styles of Turkish EFL Instructors

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Abstract

Humor has often been seen as an important element in the learning process, facilitating both teaching and learning. Nevertheless, the utilization of humor in the educational setting has had its opponents. In recent years, many attempts have been made to conceptualize the various forms of humor implemented in the practice of education. Despite a myriad of studies aimed at linking humor with personality traits, there seem a dearth number of research studies addressing the multifaceted humor styles of EFL instructors while interacting with the students in the classroom. There have been a number of scales thought-up in order to best assess the humor styles of the individual. However, the one identified by Martin et al. (2003) attempts to deal with the functions of humor, rather than particular personalities it may or may not represent. The four specific humor styles identified in this scale encompass two benign (affiliative and self-enhancing), and two injurious (aggressive and self-defeating) humor styles. The present study seeks to examine the humor styles adopted by English language instructors in Turkey by investigating (1) whether there is a difference between male and female instructors with regard to employing humor, (2) whether the educational level of the participants influences their tendency to use humor while interacting with the students in the classroom, and (3) whether the age of the instructors is an influential factor in adopting various styles of humor. A total of 64 English language instructors working at private and state universities in Turkey completed a standardized form of the Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) online. Results indicated no significant difference between male and female instructors with regard to adopting humor styles in the classroom. Nor were there any differences between instructors of varying educational level in terms of the use of humor styles. In addition, no differences were seen according to age.

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Keywords: EFL classroom; Humor styles; the Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ)

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1. Introduction

The foreign language teaching classroom possesses a fundamentally different nature vis-à-vis most other classrooms, in that the teaching language – merely a tool used to convey the subject in most examples – in the language teaching environment is both the medium of instruction and the content to be learnt in and of itself (Huy Hohang & Petraki, 2016). McNamara (2004) similarly refers to the undeniable role of a language teacher beyond teaching subject matter, stating that teaching communicative skills incorporates the whole personality of the teacher. He adds that personality traits as rapport and humor are significant in creating collaborative environment for learning in the classroom and excluding them are less likely to pave the way for the learners to willingly interact in the classroom. This is owing to that fact that successful communication is a mutual responsibility on the part of both speaker and listener, and the personality traits of the speaker may be a triggering factor for the listener’s preparedness to understand. Therefore, humor, as an intrinsic component of the human language, can be used to teach the language itself besides being utilized to cater for an environment which fosters learning.

2. Literature review

2.1. Definition of humor

Humor has traditionally been conceived as a mechanism for coping with life’s difficulties and situational problems (Thorson & Powell, 1993). There are many different definitions of humor. Merriam-Webster’s dictionary interpretation, for instance, summarizes the phenomena as simply “the ability to be funny or to be amused by things that are funny”. Over three decades ago, meanwhile, Martin and Lefcourt (1984) defined a sense of humor in terms of the frequency with which a person smiles, laughs, and otherwise displays happiness or laughter in different situations. Concerning its usage in language teaching, humor can be defined as teacher- or student-triggered efforts to provoke laughter and amusement in the classroom. These attempts can result from the classroom interactions, teaching materials, the lesson content, and eventually lead to laughter or smiling (Huy Hoang & Petraki, 2006, p. 2). Humor, as Garner (2005, p. 1) puts, “is most effective when it is appropriate to the audience, targeted to the topic, and placed in the context of the learning experience”.

2.2. The effect of humor on language learners

In his book, Professors are from Mars, students are from Snickers, Berk (1998) accentuates the psychological and physiological effects of humor on the language learners. He clarifies that classrooms in which humor is integrated in the process of learning are likely to lower anxiety, relieve stress, develop self-esteem, and build up self-motivation. With regard to the physiological effects of humor, he points out that humor and laughter can maximize learning through promoted respiratory efficiency
and blood circulation, lower pulse rate and blood pressure, increased oxygen levels in the blood, and eventually causing endorphins to be released into the bloodstream. Given any technique which reduces stress and learner anxiety in the classroom can be considered an invaluable resource for promoting a good classroom atmosphere, humor certainly proves its technical worth (Huy Hoang & Petraki, 2006). A great number of scholars (e.g., Askildson, 2005; Garner, 2003; Harmer, 2007; Oxford, 1999) similarly assert the importance of humor and its ability to pave the way for enhancing learning and reducing anxiety, and argue in favor of a relaxing and psychologically secure, and supportive classroom atmosphere that is likely to reassure risk-taking, and enhance learners’ motivation and self-confidence. Dornyei (2001, p. 29) also advocates the integration of humor in the process of teaching and the establishment of an enjoyable classroom atmosphere and considers it one amongst “motivational teaching practice”. Similarly, Garner (2003) maintains that the application of contextually suitable humor has been indicated to improve the classroom atmosphere and ease the process of language learning, paving the way for the individuals to perceive information or circumstances with a new perspective perhaps leading to fresh insights.

2.3. Cautions against using humor

Despite the above-mentioned facilitating effects of using humor in language teaching, another group of scholars (e.g., Garner, 2003, 2006; Gonzalez, 2014; Steele, 1998; Sudol, 1981) urge caution against the potential consequences of using humor in the classroom. Garner (2003, p. 4), for instance, urges caution against tendentious humor, warning that humor should be used with care, as humor can “be highly personal, subjective, and contextual”. Therefore, teachers cannot always predict the way it will be interpreted. The words that an individual might consider ironic, funny, or humorous are likely to be interpreted or understood by others as banal or malicious. This is due to the fact that “everyone has a unique perception as to what is humorous”, so consciousness and meticulousness should be the guiding principle while using humor. Gonzalez (2014) also posits that so much as an ill-timed smile on the part of the teacher may go so way to distracting the students, thus derailing the learning process for a period. She emphasizes that to make the classroom more enjoyable, the instructor can indicate to their students they have a sense of humor while appreciating theirs; however, all must learn there is an appropriate time and place for it. Echoing Garner (2006), Gonzalez (2014), Steele (1998), and Sudol (1981) highlight that content-irrelevant humor in a classroom setting can be distracting and irrelevant. Thus, humor should be related to the lesson. Huy Hoang and Petraki (2016) similarly emphasize that taboo topics in humor should be avoided, and the content of humor should be appropriate to students’ levels, personalities and ages. They advise that teachers establish good rapport and mutual trust with students, so that humor is more likely to be welcomed, and less likely to be threatening when it fails! Huy Hoang and Petraki (2016, p. 12) also add that humor “should not be used as a form of criticism, no matter whether against an individual student, a group of students, departments, schools, or society in general”.

2.4. Studies on humor in the language classroom

A plethora of studies conducted to investigate the pedagogical implications and invaluable effects of using humor in language teaching underline the benefits accrued by the use of humor (e.g., Berk, 1998; Dornyei, 2001; Garner, 2003, 2006; Huy Hoang & Petraki, 2006). One of the first empirical studies arguing in favor of the benefits of using humor in the process of teaching is Ziv’s (1988) study examining the test results of two groups of undergraduate students taught by one teacher using relevant humor and one using no humor. According to the results, the first group learning with humor achieved higher test results. The jokes and humor used in the lectures for the second group was totally related to the learning materials and highly relevant to the course content. Three to four instances of humor (jokes, cartoons or anecdotes) per hour were set as ideal. Garner’s (2006) study revealed that the participants in the humor group had higher ratings for overall opinion of the lesson, and they recalled and retained more information regarding the topic. Huy Hoang and Petraki (2016, p. 9) examined the use of humor in the Asian language classroom. The results of their study indicated that humor plays a significant role in the classroom. More than 76% (23 out of 30) of teachers participating in their study “made explicit attempts to use humor while the remaining seven teachers claimed during the interviews that they did use humor in their teaching, at least occasionally, depending on the context”. However, no significant difference was reported between groups based on race or gender.

In order to examine the benefits of humor in the language classroom, Askildson (2005, p. 1) asked a number of language students and teachers to evaluate the employment of humor in their classrooms. The effectiveness of humor in “learning and instruction” in the classroom was strongly confirmed in his study. Abraham, et al. (2014, p. 2) similarly investigated students’ perspective on the integration of humor in the classroom. According to the results, nearly all students (n = 157; 97.5%) stated humor, if included relevantly in teaching practices in the classroom, is beneficial and also useful in better retention of the topic being taught (n = 141; 75.15%). Most of the students (n = 158; 98.12%) stated that employment of humor in teaching practices paves the way for “a good teacher-student relationship”. Most of them (n = 146; 90.67%) also stated that “a good sense of humor is an attribute of an effective teacher”.

2.5. Development of humor scales

A number of humor scales, such as The Situational Humor Response Questionnaire (SHRQ), Coping Humor Scale (CHS), Sense of Humor Questionnaire (SHQ), and Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) have been designed to presumably measure adaptive aspects of humor. These humor measures have been extensively utilized in past research on life events (Kuiper, Martin, & Dance, 1992), well-being (Martin & Lefcourt, 1984; Thorson, Powell, Sarmany-Schuller, & Hampes, 1997), and coping with stress (Kuiper, Martin, & Olinger, 1993; Overholser, 1992).
“SHRQ and CHS are self-report measures of different aspects of sense of humor that were developed in the context of an investigation of the stress-moderating effects of humor” (Martin, 1996, p. 3). SHRQ measures the degree to which individuals tend to laugh or smile in different circumstances, while CHS is a measure to investigate how individuals rely on using humor while confronting stress. The focus of SHQ is to assess one’s tendency to perceive and enjoy humor in their daily life. MSHS, meanwhile, has been produced to observe a wide range of humor-associated behaviors and perceptions. This measure is beneficial for comparing groups’ use of humor to determine how sense of humor is likely to be correlated with different personality traits.

A myriad of studies has implemented the abovementioned measures, including SHRQ, CHS, SHQ, and MSHS, to investigate the use of humor on life events (Kuiper, Martin, and Dance, 1992), well-being (e.g., Martin & Lefcourt, 1984; Thorson et al., 1997), and coping with stress (Kuiper, Martin, & Olinger, 1993; Overholser, 1992). However, none of these self-report measures and scales, according to Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir (2003), consistently addresses the particular ways through which individuals employ or incorporate humor. The only exception, as they maintain, can be CHS, which does prioritize the application of humor as a coping strategy. So, eventually the developed measures fail to specifically evaluate utilisations of humor that are “potentially detrimental to psychosocial well-being, such as aggressive or avoidant humor”. To give an example, Martin et al. (2003, p. 5) analyze a couple of typical humor scale items from the MSHS, thoroughly indicating that items such as “Uses of humor help me master difficult situations” or “I can often crack people up with the things I say”, which are presumed to measure adaptive types of humor, are also likely to be incorporated by “individuals who frequently engage in potentially deleterious forms of humor such as sarcasm, disparagement humor, or humor used as a form of defensive denial”.

Regarding the SHRQ and the CHS, Martin (1996, p. 16) points to the potentially culture specific items of the SHRQ and advises researchers to modify the items while administering the scale to the ones from the other cultures and to the different age groups. He also considers that the CHS is a limited “measure of the degree to which individuals make use of humor in coping with stressful situations, rather than as a general measure of the sense of humor”. He suggests that “researchers considering using the SHRQ or CHS in their own study should bear in mind their range of applicability, as well as their limitations”.

2.6. The Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ)

In an attempt to develop a measure that would take the various functions of humor into account, rather than particular personalities, Martin et al. (2003, p. 51) developed the Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ). Different from the aforementioned measures, in the HSQ “the interpersonal and intrapsychic functions of humor” used by individuals in their everyday lives are taken into account. According to them, these functions are particularly believed to be related to psychosocial well-being. Assessing
different functions of humor, the HSQ is expected to encompass “greater proportion of the variance in aspects of mental health and well-being than previous self-report humor scales” (p. 51). As Schermer, Martin, Martin, Lynskey, & Vernon (2013, p. 1) state, the HSQ measure “is based on the assumption that humor is not unique to particular personalities, but rather that individuals express humor in their daily lives in ways that reflect their broader personality traits”.

The HSQ consists of 32 items, and concerns four different functions relating to individual differences in employing humor: affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating. Two of these dimensions (Self-enhancing and affiliative) are considered to be conducive to psychosocial well-being, while the other two dimensions (aggressive and self-defeating) are hypothesized as less gracious and potentially even detrimental to well-being. These four specific humor styles identified by Martin et al. (2003) are elaborated as follows:

2.6.1. Affiliative humor

Affiliative humor refers to the benign one aiming to strengthen the individual’s social relationships with others. Based on narrating humorous remarks, cracking jokes and being involved in spontaneous humorous speech to entertain others, this type of humor is benignly adopted to reinforce relationships and enhance group cohesion without being malicious to oneself or others. To give an example, one is likely to use humorous language or funny narration to relieve any increasing tension. Therefore, this style of humor is a substantially favorable, tolerant utilization of humor affirming which aims to reinforce “interpersonal cohesiveness and attraction. This style of humor is expected to be related to extraversion, cheerfulness, self-esteem, intimacy, relationship satisfaction, and predominantly positive moods and emotions” (Martin et al., 2003, p. 7).

2.6.2. Self-enhancing humor

The self-enhancing dimension refers to another benign use of humor with the intention of enhancing the self. This type of humor acts as a confronting medium to make ones feel better about themselves. The individuals preferring to adopt this style of humor usually take a humorous attitude to life, and prefer to be frequently amused by the disparities in life, regardless as to how stressful the situation becomes. As a result, someone is likely to employ humor as a resource to handle stressful or tense situations or cope with negative or destructive emotions. In comparison to affiliative humor, as Martin et al. (2003, p. 8) underline, self-enhancing use of humor “has a more intrapsychic than interpersonal focus, and is therefore not expected to be as strongly related to extraversion. Given the focus on the regulation of negative emotion through humorous perspective-taking, this dimension is hypothesized to be negatively related to negative emotions such as depression and anxiety and, more generally, to neuroticism, and positively related to openness to experience, self-esteem, and psychological well-being.”
2.6.3. Aggressive humor

In contrast to affiliative and self-enhancing styles of humor, the aggressive dimension of humor is the first of two classified as injurious in style. This harnesses humor in order to enhance the self at the expense of others. Someone employing the aggressive humor style is likely to ridicule or deride others with the goal of self-enhancement. However, it is noteworthy that individuals who use an aggressive humor style may not be fully cognizant of the potentially harmful or negative consequences of this type of humor style. This style of humor may be also employed to manipulate other people by implying a threat while ridiculing (Janes & Olson, 2000). Generally, this type of humor refers to the tendency of an individual to use humor without considering its potentially injurious effect on others, and involves compelling and irresistible utilization of humor. This type of humor is, according to Martin et al. (2003, p. 8), expected to be “positively related to neuroticism and particularly hostility, anger, and aggression, and negatively related to relationship satisfaction, agreeableness, and conscientiousness”.

2.6.4. Self-defeating humor

The final form of humor is used to enhance relationships at the expense of oneself. According to Martin et al. (2003), this is the self-defeating dimension of humor. This humor style involves an individual employing humor to belittle themselves. To give an example, an individual may disparage or ingrati ate himself or make fun of his own intelligence with the intention of receiving the approval of others. Hence, this injurious style of humor may result in pleasing others, but the approval comes at a price. The individual may laugh along with others when being derided or ridiculed. This style of humor is hypothesized “to be positively related to neuroticism and negative emotions such as depression and anxiety, and negatively related to relationship satisfaction, psychological well-being, and self-esteem” (Martin et al., 2003, p. 8).

2.7. Studies on humor using HSQ

Schermer et al. (2013, p. 2) maintain that affiliative humor, or employing humor to improve social relationships, has been indicated “to correlate positively with extraversion and openness”. Self-enhancing humor, or employing humor to lessen “personal stress, has generally been found to be positively associated with extraversion, agreeableness and openness, and negatively with neuroticism”. Aggressive humor, as the first injurious humor style, referring to deriding others in a belittling manner, meanwhile, has been reported “to be positively correlated with extraversion and neuroticism and negatively correlated with agreeableness, conscientiousness, and honesty–humility. Self-defeating humor, or using excessively self-disparaging humor in an attempt to ingratiate oneself with others, has been found to be positively associated with neuroticism and negatively with conscientiousness”.

Researchers in the field conducted numerous studies searching into the relationship between humor styles and numerous variables (e.g., Ford, McCreight, & Richardson,
The results of the studies indicated that humor styles had correlation with personality (Martin et al., 2012; Schermer et al., 2013; Veselka et al., 2010) depressive symptoms, life satisfaction (Dyck and Holtzman, 2013; Tucker et al., 2013).

The studies conducted in the Turkish context where the current study was carried out also investigated the correlation between humor styles and various variables. In one of the studies conducted by Bilge and Saltuk (2007), Turkish college students’ subjective well-beings, trait anger and trait anxiety based on their humor styles were investigated. Their results indicated that the subjective well-beings of participants who preferred affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles were higher. In contrast, they also obtained lower trait angry and anxiety scores. The results also indicated that the trait anger scores of the participants adopting aggressive humor styles were higher, while their subjective well-being scores were lower. The trait anxiety of the participants preferring self-defeating humor style appeared to be higher. In addition, socio demographic variables, loneliness, self-esteem and their relation to humor styles were investigated in the studies carried out by Tumkaya (2011), Cecen (2007), and Ozyesil (2012). In Tumkaya’s (2011) study, the use of aggressive and self-defeating humors were reported to be significantly greater in male students than female students. In contrast, the use of affiliative and self-enhancing humors was not found to be significantly different between the two groups of the participants. Moreover, in Cecen’s (2007) study, it was found out that there were strong negative correlations between loneliness and affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles, and moderate positive correlations between loneliness and self-defeating humor style. In Ozyesil’s (2012) study, self-esteem was reported to be positively correlated with positive affection, while self-esteem was found to be negatively correlated with negative affect.

Despite numerous studies on employing humor as a tool in teaching English in different parts of the world, studies on the humor styles of teachers themselves are scarce. Studies which have made enquiries about teachers’ humor styles are limited to areas such as primary school teaching, early childhood education, or psychological counseling and guidance (Altinkurt & Yilmaz, 2011; Aydin, 2015; Tras, Arslan, & Tas, 2011) in Turkey.

This paper thus attempts to bridge the gap in exploring the humor styles of teachers of EFL teachers in Turkish context. As to provide some in-depth perspectives on teachers’ humor styles and contribute to the related literature on humor studies, this study examines the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference between male and female instructors with regard to the humor styles they adopt?
2. Does the educational level of the Turkish EFL instructor affect their preference of humor styles while interacting with the students in the classroom?
3. Is the age of the instructor an influential factor in their adoption of humor styles?
3. Method

The study was conducted on a total of 64 instructors who were randomly selected from the total population of Turkish EFL teachers working at various universities in Turkey. The data for the current study was gathered through the Humor Styles Questionnaire as devised by Martin et al. (2003). In the analysis of quantitative data, t-test and one-way ANOVA were used.

3.1. Participants

The instructors participating in this study were purposefully selected from the total population of Turkish EFL teachers teaching at different private and state universities in Turkey. A total number of 64 instructors voluntarily took part in the study. All participants had stated that they used humor as a part of their teaching practice. In addition, the participants stated that they had no knowledge of their own humor style at the time of the study.

3.2. Materials

In this study, data was collected through the use of a questionnaire (Humor Styles Questionnaire). In order to explore the humor styles of EFL teachers, English version of The Humor Styles Questionnaire identified by Martin et al. (2003) was used as the data collection tool. In their study, the scale indicated adequate internal consistencies ranging from .77 to .81. A Turkish version was used, as developed by Yerlikaya in 2003. The Cronbach alpha coefficient scores of the questionnaire were reported to be ranging from .67 to .78. Both English and Turkish versions were shared though an online questionnaire developing website (www.surveymonkey.com). The Humor Styles Questionnaire is a 32 item self-report scale addressing four styles of humor: affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating. Items in the questionnaire are structured in 7 point Likert scale format. A t-test was run in order to find out whether gender plays a significant role in terms of using humor. Added to that, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to investigate the possible role of age and educational background of the instructors in their preferred use of humor in the classroom.

4. Results

The first question aimed to see whether there was any difference between male and female participants in terms of using humor styles. In so doing, the male and female participants’ answers to four-style questionnaire identified by Martin et al. (2003) were held to close scrutiny. In order to compare the scores obtained from the male participants with those of the female ones, a t-test was conducted to investigate the possible difference between them. Descriptive statistics for the two groups presented in Table 1 showed that the male participants had a higher mean in affiliative ($M = 40.61$, $SD = 7.86$), self-enhancing ($M = 29.11$, $SD = 4.60$), and self-defeating ($M = 31.66$, $SD = 3.97$) in comparison to the female participants, while it was in aggressive humor style that the female participants scored a higher mean ($M = 28.89$, $SD = 7.28$) than male participants ($M = 27.66$, $SD = 6.08$).
Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Gender’s Humor Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humor Style</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affiliative</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40.61</td>
<td>7.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>39.69</td>
<td>8.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-enhancing</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29.11</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28.36</td>
<td>3.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27.66</td>
<td>6.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28.89</td>
<td>7.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-defeating</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31.66</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>29.32</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results obtained from the t-test run (Table 2) indicated no significant difference between the scores of male and female participants in use of affiliative \( t(62) = .38, p < .70 \) or self-enhancing humor \( t(62) = .73, p < .43 \). Neither was any significant difference confirmed between the scores of male and female participants with aggressive \( t(62) = -.63, p < .53 \) and self-defeating humor styles \( t(62) = 1.68, p < .097 \).

Table 2. T-Test Results between the Male and the Female Groups’ Humor Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humor Style</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affiliative</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-enhancing</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>-0.63</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>-1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-defeating</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second question addressed the effect of the instructors’ educational level (bachelor’s, master’s, and doctorate) on their preference of employing humor styles. As indicated in Table 3, the results obtained from the one-way ANOVA for the affiliative humor style indicated no significant difference among the scores of instructors holding a bachelor’s \((M = 39.57, SD = 7.67)\), those with a master’s \((M = 39.69, SD = 9.34)\), or those with a doctorate degree \((M = 42.42, SD = 5.91)\), \( F(2, 61) = .332, p > .05 \). In terms of self-enhancing humor style, neither was there a significant difference among the scores of instructors with the bachelor’s \((M = 28.42, SD = 3.07)\), master’s \((M = 28.83, SD = 4.06)\), or doctorate degree \((M = 27.71, SD = 2.62)\), \( F(2, 61) = .303, p > .05 \).
Table 3. One-Way Anova for the Educational Level of the Instructors Adopting Affiliative and Self-Enhancing Humor Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humor Style</th>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affiliative</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>39.57</td>
<td>7.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>39.69</td>
<td>9.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>42.42</td>
<td>5.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-enhancing</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28.42</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28.83</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27.71</td>
<td>2.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4, participants with a doctorate degree obtained the highest score ($M = 42.42$) with regard to use of affiliative humor, while participants with a master’s degree received the highest score ($M = 28.83$) in adopting self-enhancing humor.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for the Educational Level of the Instructors Adopting Affiliative and Self-Enhancing Humor Styles

The results obtained from the one-way ANOVA (Table 5) for the aggressive humor style showed no significant difference between instructors with a bachelor’s ($M = 28.09$, $SD = 5.02$), those with a master’s ($M = 29.19$, $SD = 7.88$), and those with a doctorate degree ($M = 26.57$, $SD = 7.16$), $F(2, 61) = .476$, $p > .05$. With regard to employing self-defeating humor style, similarly, no significant difference was seen between the scores of instructors with a bachelor’s ($M = 30.95$, $SD = 5.03$), those with a master’s ($M = 29.33$, $SD = 5.26$), and those with a doctorate degree ($M = 30.42$, $SD = 4.19$), $F(2, 61) = .699$, $p > .05$.

Table 5. One-Way Anova for the Educational Level of the Instructors Adopting Aggressive and Self-Defeating Humor Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humor Style</th>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F-value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>46.69</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23.33</td>
<td>.476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>2991.15</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>49.035</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3037.85</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-defeating</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>36.31</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18.159</td>
<td>.699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1584.66</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>25.978</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1620.98</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With regard to the use of injurious humor styles (aggressive and self-defeating), MA holders obtained the highest score \((M = 229.19)\) with regard to employing aggressive humor style. In contrast, BA holders had the highest score \((M = 30.95)\) in terms of using self-defeating humor style in the classroom (Table 6).

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for the Educational Level of the Instructors Adopting Aggressive and Self-Defeating Humor Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humor Style</th>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28.09</td>
<td>5.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29.19</td>
<td>7.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>26.57</td>
<td>7.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-defeating</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30.95</td>
<td>5.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>29.33</td>
<td>5.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.42</td>
<td>4.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third research question addressed the significance of the instructors' age (bachelor's, master's, and doctorate) on their preference of adopting different humor styles. Similarly to the first and second research questions, the results obtained from the one-way ANOVA for the affiliative humor style indicated no significant difference among the scores of the instructors who were between twenty to twenty five \((M = 37.75, SD = 13.27)\), those between twenty six to thirty one \((M = 37.23, SD = 9.56)\), those between thirty two to thirty seven \((M = 39.36, SD = 5.63)\), those between thirty eight to forty three \((M = 44.78, SD = 6.93)\), those between forty four to forty nine \((M = 41, SD = 10.12)\), and the final group who were between fifty to fifty nine years old \((M = 44), F(5, 58) = 1.54, p > .05. Consequently, no significant difference was seen among the above-mentioned aging groups in terms of employing the other humor styles: self-enhancing \(F(5, 58) = 2.31, p > .05\), aggressive \(F(5, 58) = .51, p > .05\), and self-defeating \(F(5, 58) = .48, p > .05\). The descriptive statistics of the different aging group is presented in Table 7.

As evident in Table 7, although there was no significant difference between the participants according to age, with regard to employing affiliative humor style participants aged 38 to 43 had a slightly higher than average scores \((M = 44.78, SD = 6.93)\) while participants aged 26 to 31 years old obtained somewhat lower than average scores \((M = 37.23, SD = 9.56)\). In contrast, 26 to 31-year-old participants obtained the highest score in self-enhancing humor style, while 20 to 25 year-old aging group received the lowest score in adopting self-enhancing humor style. Considering the injurious humor styles (aggressive and self-defeating), it can be seen that the participants aged 38 to 43 achieved the highest score \((M = 30.57, SD = 10.08)\), while the participants who were 50 to 55 years old obtained the lowest score \((M = 23, SD = 0)\) with regard to employing the aggressive humor style in the classroom. 32 to 37-year-old participants were the highest-achievers \((M = 30.84, SD = 4.31)\), while
participants aged 38-43 years old were the lowest-achievers in terms of using self-defeating humor style in the classroom.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics for the Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Humor Style</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affilative</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>37.75</td>
<td>13.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>37.23</td>
<td>9.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32-37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>39.36</td>
<td>5.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38-43</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44.78</td>
<td>6.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44-49</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>39.95</td>
<td>8.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-enhancing</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25.75</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30.19</td>
<td>4.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32-37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38-43</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44-49</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27.80</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.25</td>
<td>6.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28.95</td>
<td>5.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32-37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27.26</td>
<td>5.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38-43</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30.57</td>
<td>10.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44-49</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27.40</td>
<td>7.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>28.54</td>
<td>6.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-defeating</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29.25</td>
<td>7.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30.19</td>
<td>6.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32-37</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30.84</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38-43</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28.28</td>
<td>3.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44-49</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31.20</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50-55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>29.98</td>
<td>5.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Conclusion

This study investigated university instructors’ perceptions of the roles of humor in ELT classroom, their practices of humor in their classrooms, and teachers’ preferences in respect of using humor types in Turkey. In so doing, three research questions were developed to investigate whether university instructors’ gender, their educational level, and age play a significant role in employing Martin et al.’s (2003) humor styles.

A close scrutiny of the previous studies conducted in Turkey indicates a number of differences and similarities between this and previous research. For example, in a study to investigate humor styles of primary school teachers, Altinkurt and Yilmaz (2011, p. 1) used the HSQ scale and examined the humor styles of teachers and differences while considering a number of variables. According to the results of the study, the highest percentage of humor style in primary school teachers was reported to be closest to the “affiliative humor style, followed by self-enhancing, aggressive humor and self-defeating humor styles”. There was also a significant difference between the male and female participants in respect of employing the aggressive and
self-defeating humor styles. However, there was no significant difference based on the age of participants in terms of using humor styles. In contrast to our study, in which there was no significant difference between male and female participants (university instructors) with regard to adopting humor styles in the classroom, Altinkurt and Yilmaz (2011) reported a significant difference between the male and female participants (primary school teachers). As in our study, their investigation also found little evidence to suggest the age factor played a significant role in influencing the preference of the participants to use humor styles in the classroom.

In another study, Kilic (2016) investigated the percentages and frequencies of humor used by middle school Turkish teachers, and their beliefs and attitudes about humor. Results showed no significant difference among the opinions of teachers with regard to the employment of humor in middle school Turkish courses and their seniority in the profession. As in our study, in which there showed no significant difference between male and female university instructors with regard to adopting humor styles in the classroom, Kilic’s (2016) study indicated no significant difference between the opinions of the male and those of the female secondary school teachers in terms of using humor in the classrooms. Nor did the seniority in the profession play a significant role regarding the use of humor in the course. A different study conducted by Agcam (2017) also underlines the perception of Turkish instructors toward the employment of humor in the educational settings. Agcam’s (2017, p. 1) study, aiming to investigate the beliefs of English language instructors on the employment of humor in tertiary education, indicated that the instructors tended to possess “positive perceptions” with regard to the employment of humor in language classrooms; however, they displayed a slight reluctance with its employment.

As the underlying assumption of the current study indicates, humor should be regarded as an important tool in teaching and learning a language. In doing so, humor styles of teachers and learners should be considered as a part of the process of using humor in the language classroom. The current study, which looks into Turkish EFL teachers’ humor styles, serves to encourage teachers to gain an awareness of the effect of their own humor style, encouraging revision where needed. By becoming aware of their humor styles, teachers can develop better insights into how they can take advantage of the benefits the use of humor provides in the language classroom. Like exploring teachers’ various beliefs and strategies, researching humor styles should be an indispensable component of pre and in-service teacher training programs, teacher development workshops and teachers’ own attempts to develop themselves.

Despite the high educational level of the majority of the instructors, that is, 37 with masters’ and 7 with doctorate degrees in this study, there was little difference when it came to humor between them and those at a bachelor’s level. This is likely to illuminate lack of focus on personality traits in the curricula implemented at universities in their program. More emphasis needs to be given to educating and familiarizing instructors with the facilitating role of the humor in the classroom, the multifaceted nature of humor styles, and, of course, precautions that need to be
exercised. In the syllabi of courses which focus on teacher training, classroom managements, and other relevant courses, the integration of humor types and creating consciousness of their utilization carry significant importance. This is due to the fact that, as the literature review indicates, an infinite number of facilitating characteristics are attributed to using humor in the classroom (Garner, 2003; Harmer, 2007; Huy Hoang & Petraki, 2006; Oxford, 1999).

That age seemed to represent no contributing factor in using humor in the classroom was a surprising result. In this study, the younger instructors were hypothesized to be different from the senior ones, as a natural consequence of being more intimate to the student generation. This familiarity with the priorities of the students can be an invaluable facet in generating the learning opportunities and implementing the different humor styles. As a result, they are expected to rely more on humor styles than the elderly instructors.

The cognitive and affective benefits of using humor in the language classroom are undeniable, as most studies advocate that humor greases the wheels of the learning process in classrooms in general, and language classrooms in particular. The conclusions drawn from the findings suggest that the humor styles of instructors need to be put under closer scrutiny. The personality traits of the instructors (e.g., intelligence) as a determining factor in preferring humor styles also appear to be fruitful avenues for future research.

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Challenges of English Language Teaching in High Schools in Turkey and Possible Suggestions to Overcome Them

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Abstract

The English language curriculum prepared by the Ministry of National Education for high schools in Turkey seems to be satisfactory in theory, but the related studies about the attitudes of actual practitioners towards English classes in high schools are not detailed and comprehensive enough. This study aims to fill this gap. To do so, qualitative research was conducted with 13 English language teachers and 55 high school students from different parts of Turkey. They were asked for their opinions, applications, observations, and challenges of the English language teaching system in their high schools and some suggestions for the problematic issues were requested from them via open-ended questions. The data were analyzed descriptively; the results showed that most teachers are not satisfied with the coursebooks, crowded classes, quite limited class hours, and unmotivated students. Their main suggestions cover the privatization of education, having language libraries, labs, speaking clubs, and more lesson hours for English and decreasing the number of students in each classroom. Additionally, teachers want to attend international seminars to become aware of the latest methods/sources. Students have some valuable suggestions for the improvements as well. Nearly all of the students are unhappy about the coursebooks; thus, they suggest them to be revised. They also want to join international projects and improve their language skills. As a result of the study, suggestions covering many issues like coursebooks, assessment, teacher training, and European projects were proposed with an aim to diminish the gap between theories and applications in real classes.

Keywords: High school English classes; challenges; suggestions; attitudes of teachers and students

1. Introduction

High school education in Turkey corresponds to the last 4 years of the 12-year compulsory education (4+4+4). The students who follow the regular steps of national education start high school at the ages of 13 or 14 and graduate when they are 17 or 18. For some high schools that offer a one-year intensive preparatory class to teach a foreign language, the duration of that education rises up to 5 years in total. Turkey, with a large amount of youthful population, has six different types of high schools.
that are Science High Schools, Social Studies High Schools, Anatolian High Schools, Vocational and Technical Anatolian High Schools, Multi-program High Schools, and Religious Vocational High Schools (https://ogm.meb.gov.tr/).

High schools include the 9th to 12th graders who are selected according to their rank in national exams. The students who are placed in a high school are assumed to be homogenous groups of learners, but with no doubt, they show differences. Especially, their foreign language skills, motivation to learn foreign languages and desire to achieve it differ largely. In order to increase the efficiency of language courses, some measures need to be taken since language education, especially English language education, carries great importance in social, political and economic contexts (Aksoy, Bozdoğan, Akbaş, & Seferoğlu, 2018). Therefore, the government has made different reforms; the last one was prepared in 2014. This paper aims to analyze the expectations of both language teachers and students in high schools, to define their actual practices compared to the theoretical reforms, and to provide some suggestions following the presentation of the literature review.

1.1. The 9th – 12th grades English language curriculum

Based on the social, political and economic needs of the country and the world, English language teaching policies have been revised appropriately for years. In 1997, secondary school students started to take English Language Preparation Program. However, in 2006, the program was banned and then in 2013, compulsory education was adopted as the 4+4+4 system. According to this system, the students took English language education by starting at the 2nd grade and continued until they finished high school. Based on these reforms, high school English language program was also revised in 2014; however, they did not last for a long time because they could not help the students become global citizens in terms of their language knowledge and usage (Erarslan, 2018). Thus, the English Language Preparation Program was again put into practice in 2017. However, it has been planned to be given at the 5th grade (Aksoy et al., 2018).

The English curriculum that is implemented today in the high schools of Ministry of National Education (MoNE) was prepared in 2014 in parallel to the educational policy of Turkish National Education and No. 1739 of Basic Law of the National Education.

The main objective of the English language curriculum prepared for the 9th – 12th grades is to make them motivated, efficient and fluent language learners and users (Ministry of National Education Board of Education; MoNE-BoE, 2014). In this regard, the curriculum has been based on the principals of The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In 2014, some revisions and updates were done for the 2nd – 8th grades; therefore, a revision process became compulsory for the 9th – 12th grades as well. All of the revisions and updates that were done for the 2nd – 8th and the 9th – 12th grades were mainly for improving the communication skills of the learners. Furthermore, in the 9th – 12th grades, it was
aimed to give language skills in an integrative way rather than focusing on each skill separately. Also, the learners were aimed to be autonomous learners by making them aware of the language learning process, both in their mother tongue and in the target language.

While revising the curriculum, the authorities put great emphasis on the activities that trigger collaboration among the learners (MoNE-BoE, 2014); thus, peer and/or group working activities can be found in the coursebooks very often. Moreover, task-based and project-based activities are involved in the curriculum with an aim to increase the learners’ communicative competence, language skills, and autonomy.

Considering all these issues and the CEFR, the Ministry of Education (MoNE) has planned to use coursebooks at different commands in each grade. The 9th graders learn English at A1 and/or A2 level, and their proficiency level gradually increases each year. In the end, it is aimed that the 12th graders graduate by having knowledge at the B2 level, or sometimes, depending on the opportunity of getting extra one-year intensive language courses (preparatory class), the learners are supposed to graduate with a higher level of language use. In fact, according to the 2nd – 8th grades English curriculum, the students are expected to graduate at A1/ A2 level language command, but when they start high school, they take courses at the same level during the 9th grade. The MoNE gives the reason behind it as the importance of revision and recycling the content of previous years. In addition, it was mentioned in the outline of the latest curriculum prepared at the beginning of the year 2017 that although the students both in secondary schools and in high schools take the same level (A1 and A2), the content of courses differs to a great extent. More clearly, the 9th graders take courses at A1 and A2 level, but with more complex vocabularies and structures compared to the 8th graders. This may make the language learning process complicated and tough as everything is very clear and standard in the CEFR; the curriculum has some points that do not match the principals of the CEFR.

Undoubtedly, English language teachers have specific and vital roles in implementing the curriculum effectively; therefore, they are assumed to have the knowledge of English Language Portfolio (ELP) and use it to assess their target language knowledge as language users. By doing it, the language teachers can become familiar with the principles of the curriculum.

1.2. Instructional materials

All the instructional materials that are prepared for the 9th – 12th grades by the MoNE are based on the paradigm that the learners should learn by doing. In this sense, it is suggested in the curriculum that teachers employ Computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL), Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), and blended-learning (MoNE-BoE, 2014). Moreover, natural acquisition order has been adopted by the curriculum and each theme and unit has been prepared accordingly.

The Ministry of National Education plans the curriculum, prepares books, publishes and delivers them. Each year the books are given to the students free. Until
2016, all the grades were taught with the book titled “Yes You Can”. It has levels from A1 to B2, and apart from the student’s book, a supplementary book is given to the students for self-practice, which helps and guides the students to revise and practice related topics outside the classes. Moreover, the MoNE has some books that have been specifically prepared for vocational high schools. There are three books for three departments: accounting and finance, office management and information and communication technology.

1.3. Assessment of English in high schools

Assessment in the new 9th – 12th-grade curriculum has been designed by MoNE to represent the real-life use of language that is dynamic, communicative, and highly interactive. Therefore, a combination of alternative, electronic, and traditional types of assessment that also reflect the teaching processes in class is planned to be used. According to the curriculum, listening and speaking skills can be assessed during discussion times and by using video blogs. To evaluate all four skills together in an integrated way, the language teachers can use Tech Pack that is an online supplementary material provider, E-portfolios that include every kind of work or project produced by the learner, and traditional pen-and-paper exams. The levels of the tests have been specified in the program in line with the CEFR. Thus, the 9th graders have A1 and A2 levels of the tests, the 10th graders are assessed in A2+ and B1 levels, the 11th graders are planned to reach the B2 level at the end of the year and are assessed in accordance with it, and finally, the 12th graders have the B2+ level of tests. Since the MoNE does not suggest a standardized testing pack for the teachers, they are totally free while deciding on the content of these assessment tools. The curriculum also talks about different sources of feedback for the assessment. Similar to using various types of assessment, feedback is also planned to be in multiple ways, so it can lead to more permanent learning.

Although the curriculum requires using multiple forms of assessment and feedback via different channels, there is a need for research on the real-life applications of them in the schools of the MoNE. Because of various challenges such as unavailability of some resources (i.e. computers and internet connection to be able to use Tech Pack or E-Portfolio), or highly populated classes, reality may be very different from what is intended in the curriculum.

1.4. Teacher training

Teacher training processes are handled under two sub-sections: pre-service and in-service, referring to their formats and challenges. Pre-service teacher training is offered by the Faculties of Education of universities and it has been standardized by the Higher Education Council. These programs consist of both theoretical and practical courses in the area. To provide the theoretical information, methodology courses are offered, and then practical courses such as School Experience and Practice Teaching follow them. Although the flow of the program is quite reasonable, it is not
free of challenges. During the school experience courses, student-teachers visit language classes to observe their lessons, and for practice teaching courses, they need to teach some classes themselves. While some faculties give them the chance of visiting more than one level of classes to see different teachers and/or school settings, some others send the student-teachers to only one class in the same school taught by the same teacher. The study conducted with the 4th-grade practicum students by Seferoğlu (2006) revealed that student-teachers wish to visit as many different teachers, classes, and school settings as possible to familiarize themselves with various situations. They state that visiting the same environment causes demotivation for them. In addition, according to these participants of the study, the balance of theoretical and practical courses in their program is not well-established and they are not happy with overloaded theoretical courses some of which do not help with the practice. Moreover, they complain about visiting their schools only once a week, which hinders the continuity of their observations, and therefore not adequate for them. Student-teachers also think that they do not have enough real life like teaching experience to feel comfortable after graduation (Erten, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to provide them with longer periods of teaching which are practiced in environments similar to real life. Despite various problems of the practical courses, according to Seferoğlu (2006) and Kömür (2010), the students consider these experiences as the most significant parts of their pre-service education.

In-service teacher training is provided by MONE to the teachers who are already teaching. The aim of that practice is to improve their knowledge and skills in the profession besides adapting them to the advancements in the area (Bozkurt, Kavak, Yamak, Canbazoğlu-Bilici, Darici, & Ozkaya, 2012). Main themes on which the in-service training is to focus are how to teach English communicatively, student-centered classes, teachers’ guidance and so on; however, the training is lack of them (Kırkgöz, 2009). According to Bozkurt et al. (2012), who investigated secondary school teachers’ opinions about in-service training programs, although the teachers are quite positive about the importance of the training, they are not contented with the implementations. The participant teachers mention that inadequate amounts of training, unqualified trainers, unavailability of specific information regarding classroom practices, and poorly designed programs that lack needs analysis are the main reasons for their dissatisfaction. Since the pieces of training are mostly focused on theoretical information, majority of teachers cannot use this information in their classes because of the population, time constraints stemming from heavily loaded curriculums, lack of materials and tools, low proficiency levels of their students, classroom culture in Turkey, and management issues (Uysal, 2012). Therefore, the teachers want in-service training courses to be designed after conducting a well-planned needs analysis. Uysal (2012) also reveals that the courses are mostly trainer-centered and do not provide an environment for the teachers to discuss their problems and find solutions together. Moreover, professional teacher trainers do not design them, but the MONE assigns some teachers working at schools that are more prestigious with the task of organizing these courses and presenting them, which also
leads to many challenges. To conclude, it is certain that in-service training is highly crucial for the teachers for their professional development (Gültekin & Çubukçu, 2008), and therefore the training should be planned in advance by professional trainers after conducting the needs analysis for the specific teacher group they will work with.

Based on the literature described so far, this study aims to answer the following research questions:
1. What are the attitudes and opinions of English language teachers teaching in high schools on English language education in Turkey?
2. What are the attitudes and opinions of students studying in high schools in English language education in Turkey?

2. Method

2.1. The aim of the study

The objective of the study is to explore the ideas about English lessons and attitudes of English language teachers and students towards these courses in high schools in Turkey.

2.2. Participants

The study included 13 high school teachers (teaching at the 9th – 12th grades) working in different types of institutions in different parts of Turkey and 55 high school students from different cities and various types of high schools all around Turkey. Convenience sampling was used to choose these participants.

The teachers who participated in that research study had different years of teaching experience ranging from 1.5 to 16 years. Thus, both experienced and less experienced teachers contributed to the findings with different perspectives.

6 of the participant teachers in the study were working at Anatolian High Schools. The number of the Vocational High School teachers was 4, while equal numbers of teachers from High School of Fine Art, Multi-Program High Schools, and Medical Career High School (1 from each school) participated in the study. High school teachers from different regions and cities of Turkey were included in that research. The highest percentage of participants taught in Ağrı (30.7%) followed by Giresun (23%). There were also teachers who worked in Kastamonu, Kahramanmaraş, Erzincan, Sivas, and Ankara.

The student participants of the study were also from various types of high schools. The highest percentage of student participants were from Anatolian High Schools and Vocational High School students followed them. High School of Fine Arts, Science High School, Social Sciences High School, and Multi-Program High School students were also available in the study.
As for the cities of the student participants, while big numbers of them studied in Kastamonu and Erzincan, there were many from Giresun, Bursa, Ağrı, and Ankara as well. Small numbers of student participants from Rize, Bartın, and Mersin were also included in the study.

2.3. Instruments and data collection

The data were collected by using two questionnaires with open-ended questions prepared separately for high school teachers and students by the researchers. The questionnaires aimed to elicit data on participants’ demographic information, and their ideas and attitudes towards English language teaching and learning at high schools in Turkey. More specifically, the questions asked to the teachers were mainly about their teaching experience, the type of the high schools they worked at, the city they worked in, their ideas about coursebooks and syllabus, attitudes of students towards English lessons, and their suggestions about how to improve the quality of English language teaching at high schools in Turkey. The questionnaire which was conducted with 55 high school students from different cities contained the questions about the cities where they studied, the types of the high schools they studied, their ideas about coursebooks and materials, the attitudes of their English language teachers, their suggestions about English courses, the language skills which were important for them, attending international projects, whether learning English was important for them, and whether they wish they had prep year at high school. They were prepared using Google forms and conducted online.

Data were collected qualitatively and it was analyzed using descriptive analysis. The language of the questionnaires was Turkish, L1 of the participants and their answers were translated into English by the researchers to be reported in the findings section.

3. Results

3.1. Findings regarding English language teachers at high schools in Turkey

Findings regarding the coursebooks and sources used in lessons showed that only 2 of the teachers seemed happy about the coursebooks while 11 of them were unhappy mainly because of unequal sharing of skills in the books. In addition, the teachers explained that there were some listening parts in the coursebooks, but there were not any CDs or online platforms to access these records, so they had no chance to make their students practice listening exercises. Although they appreciated the communication-focused parts of the books, there were not enough parts about structure teaching or practices.

The question about the attitudes of the students towards English lessons indicated that high school teachers mainly complained about very crowded classrooms and unmotivated students. For example, participant teacher 3 (PT 3) explained the situation with these words:
“I am very unhappy with my classes because the classrooms are very crowded and the number of courses for each classroom is not enough. It is nearly impossible to create an interactive learning environment for the students.”

Only 2 of the teachers were content with their students’ attitudes toward learning the English language, and another teacher (PT 7) stated that they had positive attitudes only toward learning grammar:

“My students are not good at language skills, but when we practice grammar, they are fairly good at.”

The suggestions of the teachers who joined the study to improve the quality of English language teaching at high schools cover many topics. First of all, some teachers supported privatization of education, providing language libraries and labs for each high school, having speaking clubs or production-based activities and increasing the number of hours for English classes.

“Each and every school should have language libraries and labs. Also, the number of weekly English language courses should be increased. And in these courses, materials with full of activities that trigger language use in four skills should be utilized.” (PT 5)

In addition to the increase in the number of courses, a decrease in the number of students in each classroom was seen as a must by the teachers. And they emphasized the integration of four skills rather than pure grammar teaching. PT 3 gave specific suggestions on this point:

“It is an urgent need to decrease the number of students in each class. I think the maximum limit for each language class should be 20. Then, coursebooks and materials that are based on the integration of four skills and on communicative tasks should be used.”

Also, 2 of the teachers thought that prep years of high schools should not have been closed. One of the teachers, PT 10, wishes that the students could learn the basics of English at primary and secondary schools, and so they could practice more production activities at high school.

“I think that during primary and secondary education, English language teaching should be more emphasized and courses should be given in the target language. If we achieve this, the students can improve their communication skills more when they start high schools.”

Additionally, PT 13 wanted to attend international seminars to become aware of the latest methods and sources stating that:

“As teachers, we should improve our communication skills in the target language and should be aware of the target culture and the latest language teaching methods. The only way to do this is to attend international seminars, conferences or training. I think the MONE should support us and create opportunities for us.”

3 of the teachers underlined the need for students to understand the importance and the reasons for learning English. Finally, most of the teachers said that they had
smart boards at their schools, but the books were not suitable at all to integrate with those smart boards. For example, PT 11 summarized the situation with these words:

“Although there are smart boards at schools, the coursebooks that the MONE give are not suitable to be used on these boards.”

3.2. Findings regarding students at high schools in Turkey

The descriptive analysis of the answers showed that 25 students were not contented with the coursebooks that were provided by the government at all because they thought that those books were quite boring, repetitive, and they included many spelling mistakes. 6 students mentioned that their teachers did not want to use those books because of the same reasons. They indicated that they bought some other sources advised by their teachers. Although students liked those sources and found them useful, they thought that they were expensive and they never completed the whole book at all. Another challenge was about the 12th-grade students who were about to take the National University Entrance Exam. Most of the English teachers who taught the 12th graders let them study for other courses such as mathematics or science during English classes because they were not going to be tested with their English knowledge for the university entrance exam.

Findings revealed that 17 of the students seemed unhappy about the curriculum of English lessons. Even the students who were quite successful in international exams mentioned that they could not speak that language fluently and they did not feel comfortable about production activities. They attributed their feeling of incompetence in learning and speaking English to the language teaching system and curriculum in the country. They found the system quite problematic stating that there was not any development in their English level since primary school. While 11 students thought that their English language teachers were quite unmotivated to teach the language, 14 of the students were pleased with their language teachers and they thought that the teachers were quite knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their job.

The question about the prep year intensive language education indicated that 2 of the participants had already studied prep year at high school and they thought it was quite beneficial for them. 31 of the participants would prefer to study in a prep-class during their high school education so that they could improve their language skills.

The students were also asked their opinion about which language skill carried importance for them and most of them mentioned that they wanted to understand the spoken language and to interact with the people through the target language. However, the students could not practice listening and speaking skills enough in the classroom; rather, they generally focused on grammar, vocabulary, and reading, with which the students did not seem to be satisfied.

The investigation of assessment procedures revealed that 34 participants were not pleased with their language exams. They complained about being tested only for grammar, and they wanted to be tested from speaking and listening, too. However,
the ones tested from listening mention that they did not do enough listening practices during the lessons and their teachers spoke only in Turkish. The only thing wanted from them was to memorize their notes taken during the lessons, and they seemed to have great difficulty in understanding the instructions. While 15 students did not have any negative feedback about the assessment procedures, 6 students stated that with some changes they would be more effective.

According to the results, only 2 students had international projects at their schools, and they underlined that they could not join them because of the high prices needed for such activities. However, all the participants (except the one who thinks Turkey is the best and enough for him/her) want to join international projects and see other countries so that they can improve their language skills.

The question about their ideas about the importance of English language showed many pleasant results. All of the participants think that English is vital for today’s world. Their reasons are mainly it’s being the world’s common language, expanding their general culture, searching information from different sources, traveling more safely and confidently, having international friends, becoming more successful and prestigious, and having more job opportunities.

Finally, the question asking for suggestions from the students revealed many useful ideas which may help to improve the language education in Turkey. For example, most of the students stated that they wanted to speak in English and they believed that if they were able to speak the language, it would be more meaningful for them. Therefore, during the national exams, they wanted to be tested with speaking skill as well. Participant student 4 (PS 4) summarized it as follows:

“We only learn grammar rules; however, we cannot speak any word in English. I want to communicate in English, understand foreign movies and listen to foreign songs. If I do this, it will be more meaningful for me to learn English.”

Some of them mentioned that they wanted to study preparatory class at high school with national and international teachers.

“I wish we could have a chance to study preparatory class at high school as it is the only way to improve our language skills. I think taking English courses both from native speaking and non-native speaking teachers in an intensive way will contribute a lot.” (PS 21)

2 students thought that English language teaching should start at much earlier ages, 9 of them explained that teachers should use the target language all the time in class, and they need to be much more informed about English language teaching methods. In addition to these, 3 students thought that schools and teachers should explain the importance of English and motivate students to choose language departments at high schools. 4 participants wanted to watch short movies in English classes to be exposed to authentic language use and to feel more motivated. PS 37 specifically highlighted it:
"I see many good movies on the internet and I want to watch and understand them in English. However, as our courses are mainly focused on grammar, I cannot do that. I think our teachers can use short movies in classes. Many of us will be motivated in this way."

Lastly, a student supported the idea of making English lessons elective so that only motivated ones would join the lessons and there would not be any disruptive students.

"I am aware of the importance of English today, but not all of my classmates. Therefore, even if I am motivated to learn it, there may be some students in my class who are unmotivated and they disrupt our classes. Therefore, I think language courses should be elective and the students who really want to learn that language should choose the course." (PS 12)

4. Discussion

This paper aimed to present the challenges of language education in high schools of Turkey by touching upon the English language teaching curriculum, the coursebooks and the assessment procedure in practice. This research study mainly revealed that, in the Turkish context, there is a discrepancy gap between the language education policies at the macro level and their classroom implications in the micro level, which has been suggested by Kırkgöz (2009) as well. Although everything seems to be satisfactory in theory in the Secondary Education Institutions English Curriculum (9th-12th Grades) (MEB, 2014; MEB, 2017), when the questionnaires, which were conducted on English language teachers in high schools and the 9th to 12th graders, were analyzed, it was detected that there occurred a gap between practice and theoretical frame.

First of all, it was stated in the related curriculum that the main objective of language education in high schools of Turkey was making the learners motivated, fluent and efficient language learners and users (MEB, 2014). However, the findings of the study revealed that teachers were mainly unsatisfied with the motivational levels of their students. The students also stated that they could not feel as fluent and efficient language users as they only focused on learning grammar. The gap between the objectives of the curriculum and the situation in classroom practice can be attributed to some other challenges reported in the literature and stated by the teachers and the students of the study. For example, coursebook was one of the biggest problem sources in high schools. The 2014 English language teaching program by the MONE focused on the communicative nature of the language more, shifting from grammar-based methods to communicative teaching and that was reflected in the coursebooks as well (Erarslan, 2018). It was declared in the curriculum by the MONE that four skills and language structures were presented in an integrated way in the coursebooks (MEB, 2014). However, teacher participants of the study explained dissatisfaction with the books mainly because of unequal sharing of the skills in them. A great amount of peer and group activities and lack of structure teaching and practice sections in the coursebooks were among the issues to be solved according to
the teachers. Since the classes in Turkey were highly crowded, it was not realistic to include that many interactive activities that would not work in real classes. Lack of technological equipment for the listening sections of the coursebooks was also a significant challenge for the teachers. Since they could not focus on the communicative sections of the books, they had to work on reading and grammar, and the students felt incompetent about listening and speaking skills. As revealed in that study, the MONE was not successful in designing appropriate materials and delivering them to the users, the reason for which was suggested by Erarslan (2018, p. 341) to be “top-down curriculum design policies of Turkey”.

Reasons for low levels of student motivation vary in the literature. According to Kırkgöz (2009) who also handled the issue in the Turkish context, motivational sources of students were mainly instrumental such as getting higher grades and having better job opportunities, while the importance of speaking English in a globalized world to socialize and reach information was discarded by the students. Therefore, students in Turkish school context had limited motivating factors. The effect of learning conditions on learner motivation was also emphasized in studies (Nikolov & Mijalyevic Djigunovic, 2011; Read, 2003). And besides deficits in terms of language development and content knowledge, these problems also result in psychological disadvantages on the part of the learners such as loss of motivation.

Contrary to the 1997 and 2006 English language teaching programs in Turkey, the 2013 program aimed at moving from traditional pen and paper-based testing of receptive skills to alternative assessment types focusing on productive skills too (Erarslan, 2018). The 2014 high school language program designed in parallel to the principles of 2013 program also had the same purposes; however, the assessment was revealed to lead to a gap between the theory and practice in high schools. Although the MONE theoretically aimed to administer receptive and productive based exams in a semester, they were not done in practice. As reported by the student participants of the current study, tests were based on receptive skills and productive skills were not included in them. Thus, the purpose of learning a language as a tool for communication was discarded.

Teacher education also appeared to be a significant topic to be discussed as a source of the gap between macro and micro levels of high school language education. When the students’ expectations and the related literature under this title were analyzed, it can be easily seen that some measures need to be taken. Clearly, as the participant students mentioned, language teachers should also be motivated to teach the language effectively, which can be provided only by effective pre-service and in-service teacher education programs. Around 20 percent of students complained about unmotivated language teachers in their schools. The teachers’ lack of motivation may be attributed to their feelings of inability to teach the language as they had more theoretical courses than practical ones (Seferoğlu, 2006) and as they did not have enough real life like teaching experience to feel comfortable after graduation (Erten, 2015). Adding more practical courses to pre-service programs and planning in-service
training programs after conducting neat needs analysis on the target group could be considered by the faculties of education and the MONE as a possible solution.

As indicated by various studies in Turkish context (Arıkan, 2015; Arslan, 2012; Gursoy, Korkmaz, & Damar, 2017), improvements on teacher education, instructional methods, curriculum, and language teaching materials were urgently required. Thus, revising the coursebooks, assessment procedures, and teacher education programs could be considered by the MONE. In addition, it is a clear fact that in Turkish state schools, learners are not exposed to adequate language input to prepare them for the globalized world (Aksoy et al., 2018). Thus, although it requires sound planning, increasing the number of class hours for more exposure to L2 and more practice through interactive lessons should be targeted to increase learner achievement and motivation (Aksoy et al., 2018). Finally, having more international projects for both teachers and students may possibly be solutions for increasing the motivational levels of both parties and helping them to be more effective language teachers and learners.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, it is highly visible that high schools in Turkey suffer from various challenges regarding the implementation of the curriculum, course materials, testing and assessments procedures in practice, though everything seems to be quite successful in theory. Thus, there is an urgent need to take action to reduce the huge discrepancy between them and increase the quality of language education in Turkish high schools. Rather than top-down policy and program design, the MONE should integrate all stakeholders into that process (Erarslan, 2018). Students and teachers are the two most important parties of the high school education system, and listening to their voices and caring for them should be the starting point for the solutions.

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Appendix A.

A.1. Attitudes and opinions of English language teachers teaching in high schools on English language education

1. E-mail?
2. Years of experience?
3. What type of high school do you teach at and in which city is your school?
4. What do you think about the language coursebooks and other materials and resources that you use in your classes?
5. What are the things that you like and dislike in your school about English language education and curriculum?
6. How are your students’ attitudes towards the English language?
7. What do you think should be done to improve the quality of English language education in high schools?

A.2. Attitudes and opinions of students studying in high schools on English language education

1. E-mail?
2. What type of high school do you study at and in which city is your school?
3. What do you think about the English language coursebooks and other materials and resources that are used in your classes?
4. What are the things that you like and dislike in your school about English language education, curriculum?
5. How are your teachers’ attitudes towards teaching English?
6. Do you think that compulsory preparatory class education system for high schools (one-year intensive language education) should be practiced? Would you like to study in pre-class?
7. Which skills are more important for you while learning English?
8. Do you think that your English language exams in school test your language knowledge and skills? What kinds of changes would you suggest for the tests?
9. Do you have international projects at your school to go abroad? Would you like to take responsibility for the preparation process of these projects and go abroad?
10. Do you think that speaking English is important? Why?
11. What do you think should be done to improve the quality of English language education in high schools?

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A Proverb Learned is a Proverb Earned: Proverb Instruction in EFL Classrooms

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal the situation about proverb instruction in EFL classrooms by seeking future English teachers’ opinions. It is based on the argument that proverbs are an important part of cultural references, figurative, functional and formulaic language; thereby, they lend themselves well to enhancing communicative competence. This study investigates what EFL student-teachers think and feel about English proverb instruction, how they conceptualize proverbs, how they define their knowledge and use of English proverbs, and what they think about the extent to which their English teachers and coursebooks at high school taught English proverbs. In doing so, a questionnaire was designed and administered to freshman EFL student-teachers and semi-structured interviews were conducted with volunteers. The findings revealed that despite those student-teachers’ positive attitudes towards proverb instruction, they did not view their knowledge of English proverbs as well as the teaching of proverbs by their English teachers and coursebooks at high school sufficient enough. Furthermore, traditional definitions were reflected in the participants’ conceptualization of proverbs. The study has important implications for curriculum and syllabus design in which knowledge of phraseology in general and proverbs in particular should be incorporated as an important component of learners’ language competence.

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Keywords: Proverb instruction, phraseology, communicative competence, EFL student-teachers

1. Introduction

Phrasemes are expressions which first become conventionalized and then are reproduced as a “prefabricated unit of language” in discourse (Dobrovolskij & Piirainen, 2005, p. 31). Research in the field (especially recent corpus-based studies) demonstrates the high frequency with which these phraseological units are utilized in natural language by native speakers of English (Ellis, 2008). Proverbs are among the communicative phrasemes which are used to express attitudes or feelings towards a propositional content and to affect the interlocutors (Granger & Paquot, 2008). The

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proverbial repertoire of the language is also constantly renewed and modified to better reflect the current contexts more successfully. As Hernadi and Steen (1999) acknowledge, there is no one single culture whether in the past or in the present that “is reported to have gone without them [proverbs]” (p.2).

Since proverbs have many and diverse essential aspects (Taylor, 1931), various schools of thought defined them differently (see D'Angelo, 1977; Dundes, 1975; Harnish, 1993; Milner, 1971; Mieder, 2004; Norrick, 1985; Ulusoy Aranyosi, 2010); but in this study, due to its aims and scope, the definition proposed by Mieder (2004), which is more inclusive and empirically derived has been adopted:

A short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorisable form and which is handed down from generation to generation. (p.3)

Considering Bachman’s model of communicative competence (1990) which consists of organizational (i.e., grammatical and textual competence) and pragmatic competence (i.e., illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence), proverbs can be incorporated in language classrooms to contribute to the development of each sub-competence all of which eventually constructs communicative competence. This argument is based on Littlemore and Low’s discussion (2006a, 2006b) that the role of figurative language, particularly metaphors goes beyond the ability to interpret cultural references and figures of speech as they constitute an important part of each component in Bachman’s framework. The same argument holds true for proverbs, which are an important part of such figurative language, because “proverbs and the metaphors contained in them comprise a microcosm of what it means to know a second language”. That is, proverbs require the knowledge of not only the linguistic structure but also the sociolinguistic and discourse factors that are necessary to recognize and use them appropriately. (Nuessel, 2003, p.158).

To start with those aspects of proverbs that can be deployed to contribute to the development of sociolinguistic competence, proverbs are an important part of cultural references and figures of speech, which require an ability to interpret them as constitutive of one’s sociolinguistic competence. Proverbs are cultural references because they are traditional and a part of cultural literacy that expresses the shared knowledge, experiences, values, history and thoughts of a nation (Alkaya, 2001; Hirsch, Kett, & Trefil, 2002; Mieder, 2007). The study of proverbs can, therefore, help to improve cultural and intercultural competence by allowing learners to gain insights into how native speakers conceptualize experiences, things and events in their language (Al-Issa, 2005; Bessmertnyi, 1994; Ciccarelli, 1996; Richmond, 1987; Yano, 1998). As part of figurative language, many proverbs are metaphorical and contain prosodic devices (D'Angelo, 1977; Lakoff & Turner, 1989; Mieder, 2004; Norrick, 1985; Ridout & Witting, 1969), which means that they can be used to prompt figurative thinking and enhance metaphorical competence (Littlemore & Low, 2006a). On the other hand, as part of formulaic language, the use of proverbs can enable fluent and natural language production (i.e., sensitivity to naturalness), which is another
component of sociolinguistic competence (Sinclair, 1992; Prodromou, 2003; Wray, 2000; Yorio, 1980). Even though language learners prefer literal and direct language items to idiomatic expressions (O’Keeffe, McCarthy, & Carter, 2007), “avoiding the use of idioms gives language a bookish, stilted, unimaginative tone” (Cooper, 1999, p.258). Research also shows that native speakers use proverbs as “a significant rhetorical force in various modes of communication” such as friendly chats, political speeches, best-seller novels and the influential mass media (Mieder, 2004, p.1). Therefore, the teaching of proverbs in relation to their use in different contexts can enhance learners’ sensitivity to dialects and registers, which forms another element of sociolinguistic competence. Apart from sociolinguistic competence, proverbs manifest themselves as valuable resources for developing illocutionary competence. Because they may be used to perform many communicative functions especially indirect speech act as a politeness strategy, they are an important part of functional language (Mieder & Holmes, 2000; Norrick, 2007; Searle, 1975). In sum, teaching the above mentioned aspects of proverbs in context can contribute to the improvement of language learners’ illocutionary and sociolinguistic competences and eventually, their pragmatic competence (Charteris-Black, 1995).

As well as the importance of proverbs for pragmatic competence, they also appear as valuable phrasemes for organizational competence that is composed of grammatical and textual competences. For example, they can be used as practical tools for instructional purposes such as teaching vocabulary, exemplifying and practicing grammar points, illustrating the creative use of language, and teaching and practicing pronunciation due to their musical quality (Holden & Warshaw, 1985; Nuessel, 2003; Yurtbaşi, n.d.). That is, when utilised appropriately, proverbs can pave the way for the improvement of language learners’ grammatical competence. Proverbs can also play a role in the development of textual competence since they are powerful rhetorical devices and have salient communicative features whose usage can lead to effective spoken and written communication (McWilliam, 1997; Vanyushkina-Holt, 2005). They are also regularly used by competent writers/speakers in topic transition sequences and/or at the beginning and the end of their text to introduce or summarise an idea (Drew & Holt, 1998; Irujo, 1986; Littlemore & Low, 2006a; Obeng, 1996). For these reasons, teaching all the aforementioned aspects of proverbs can improve both organizational and pragmatic competence and eventually communicative competence of learners.

It should also be noted that learning proverbs is not easy without explicit instruction in the language classrooms particularly in EFL settings. It is not always easy to comprehend proverbs as they require background knowledge and familiarity due to their cultural, often figurative and indirect nature. Besides, native speakers do not always use proverbs in their full units, expecting the hearer to identify them as the common knowledge of a society (Bessmertnyi, 1994; Mieder, 2004). For instance, they usually play with the language of proverbs to create humour, irony and jokes (i.e., anti-proverbs) (Litovkina & Mieder, 2006), which could only be understood if the hearer or the reader knows the proverb. Because of these reasons, proverbs are quite
difficult to learn without explicit instruction in the EFL classroom. Despite the necessity of explicit instruction on proverbs, proverbs are rarely incorporated in the language classroom and are usually used as “time-fillers” and not studied in context (Litovkina, 2000). Proverb instruction is even more vital for future language teachers. With regard to this, Thomas (1987) points out that since language teachers’ goal is to help their learners gain language competence, they “should themselves have language competence to a greater degree than that expected of their learners” (p.34).

2. Literature review

The literature is quite vast when considering the studies on a wide range of idiomatic expressions. Therefore, the review here is mostly limited to the literature on proverbs. A great deal of research has been carried out on proverbs in the field of psycholinguistics (e.g., Cruz, 1995; Kemper, 1981; Kowbel, 2005; Nippold, Allen, & Kirsch, 2001; Temple & Honeck, 1999; Turner, 1995; Vulchanova, Vulchanov, & Stankova, 2011). Among the few studies on proverbs in foreign language teaching are the ones conducted related to the place of proverbs in textbooks, dictionaries or reference books (Alexander, 1984; Lazar, 2003; Turkol, 2003; Vanyushkina-Holt, 2005). The common finding in these studies is that proverbs constitute a very small part of foreign language teaching materials regardless of the language being taught. Lazar’s (2003) findings seem to include a few exceptions in that the book (i.e., Mirrors and Windows) he introduced is an intercultural communication textbook that includes examples of proverbs as well as idioms and sayings from various cultures for comparison in the language section of each unit to show the reflection of culture in language. Besides material analysis, a few other studies used questionnaires to examine teachers’ or learners’ attitudes to proverbs or idiomaticity. To illustrate, administering a questionnaire to the teachers, Hanzen (2007) found out that the teachers had a positive attitude towards the use of proverbs in teaching English. Likewise, using two questionnaires, Liontas (2002) investigated second language learners’ notion of idiomaticity. Some of his findings are that most of the respondents (1) had not received explicit instruction on idioms despite their strong desire and interest in learning idioms, (2) thought that the idioms should be incorporated as an essential component of their language and culture learning, (3) recognized the important role of idioms in natural and real-life communication, and (4) were not content with their present knowledge of idioms. Different from these studies, Turkol (2003) examined familiarity and interpretation of proverbs by non-native speakers of English and her results revealed that though the subjects’ familiarity with the proverbs was lower than expected, their interpretation of these proverbs was quite accurate.

As for those studies conducted in the context of Turkey, Çakır, (2010) examined proverb instruction indirectly by quantitatively analysing the cultural expressions and references such as idioms, proverbs and superstitions in three English coursebooks studied in primary schools in Turkey. He reported that very few cultural elements were included and that proverbs were almost non-existent in these
coursebooks. Similarly, Arıkan and Tekir (2007) assessed the quality of a local English coursebook used in Turkey for 7th grade by seeking the opinions of teachers and students through questionnaires. As part of their study, the teachers, who had negative feelings about the coursebook, indicated that the coursebook should contain more cultural expressions and vocabulary such as proverbs and idioms. A few other studies offered activities to promote the use of proverbs in developing foreign language skills and to raise awareness of the arbitrary nature of such figurative expressions (Çakır, 2016; Gözpınar, 2014). Other studies in the context of Turkey are concerned particularly with idioms; for example, the frequency of idiom use by foreign language learners (Kaya & Yılmaz, 2018), analysis of idiom use in instructional materials (Khan & Can, 2014), idiom processing in L2 (Bulut & Çelik-Yazıcı, 2004; Elkılıç, 2008) and the pedagogical approaches to teaching idioms (Göçmen, Göçmen, & Ünsal, 2012).

As can be seen, to the best knowledge of the authors, only a few studies have been conducted about proverb teaching in foreign language classrooms and there is almost no empirical study with respect to proverb instruction particularly in Turkish context. There seems to be a need to go beyond material analysis and the suggestions about the ways of teaching proverbs to what the learners’ overall experiences of learning proverbs are. The case of proverb instruction in foreign language instruction needs to be empirically and thoroughly understood from the perspective of learners themselves so that we can uncover their needs and offer suggestions accordingly.

2.1. Research questions

This study is expected to contribute to filling an important gap in the literature with respect to the study of proverbs in foreign language education. Keeping this in mind, in general, this study aims to provide a vivid picture of proverb instruction in Turkish EFL classrooms so that stakeholders’ awareness can be developed about proverb instruction and some useful suggestions can be made accordingly.

The research questions of this study are:

What are EFL student-teachers’
(1) conceptualization of proverbs?
(2) attitudes towards learning and teaching English proverbs?
(3) thoughts about their knowledge and use of English proverbs?
(4) perceptions about their high-school English teachers’ practices in teaching proverbs in the classroom?
(5) perceptions about the sufficiency of the English coursebooks they used at high school in dealing with proverbs?
3. Method

3.1. Participants

In this study, EFL student-teachers’ opinions were sought in order to reveal the situation about teaching proverbs in English language classrooms. In total, 187 student-teachers studying in English Language Teaching Departments (ELT) in some of the top universities in Turkey filled in the questionnaires. As students of English, who were going to become English teachers, they were assumed to have gained a high level of proficiency in English. The aim was, thus, to see if they had received sufficient proverb instruction in their language classrooms at high school. Of these participants, only the students who were in their first year at their university were particularly selected because it was thought that as new graduates of high school, it would be easier for them to remember their experiences back in high school. Therefore, the sample consisted of students who directly started their first-year at the ELT Department without being required to attend the English preparatory school and thus, those students who had attended a year-long English preparatory program before starting their departments were excluded from the study. In a similar vein, the sample also included those studying in preparatory school in their first year at the funiversity, excluding those who were repeating their preparatory classes. At the time of the data collection procedure, 72 of the participants (38.5%) were preparatory school students while 115 (61.5%) were freshmen in the Departments of ELT in three public universities in Ankara. The latter group of students were allowed to move to their departments since they had taken and passed the English proficiency exam administered at the beginning of the academic year. Regarding the gender of the participants, the majority of the participants were female with 78.1% while the remaining 21.9% were male. The high number of female students reflects the gender distribution at the Faculties of Education in Turkey.

3.2. Instrument and analysis

A questionnaire was designed to find answers to the research questions. The studies that were taken as the springboard were Hanzen (2007), Turkol (2003) and Liontas (2002).

The questionnaire was designed in several stages. In the first stage, an item pool was created based on the literature review and then the most vital and relevant items (N=80) were chosen in line with the specific research questions. As suggested by Dörnyei (2003), the items that deal with the same topic were categorized to have a systematic and clear structure. In doing so, four sub-sections were constructed based on the research questions. Apart from these, Likert scale was used as the most commonly employed scaling technique due to its simplicity, versatility, and reliability (Dörnyei, 2003, p.36). Besides, sections related to the background and foreign language learning experiences of the participants were also added to the questionnaire to get some demographic information about the participants.
In ordering the subsections, order effects, in particular the consistency and redundancy effects (Foddy, 1993; Schuman & Presser, 1996) were taken into consideration. The items in each section were grouped from general to more specific to eliminate order effects. For example, the section on participants’ attitudes towards learning and teaching proverbs precedes the other sections so that their attitudes were revealed without any influence of the other sections which are more factual and behavioural. Additionally, the items on participants’ thoughts about their knowledge of proverbs appears before the items asking about their experiences of learning proverbs at high school to reduce consistency effects. For example, if a respondent reflects on his/her experiences of learning proverbs at high school in the first place, and indicates that his/her teachers and coursebooks did not deal with English proverbs sufficiently, then when responding to items about his/her proverb knowledge, s/he might have the tendency to express lack of competence in proverbs in an attempt to appear consistent.

In the second stage, the questionnaire underwent an initial piloting with four experts to ensure high reliability and validity. Making the necessary changes based on the results of the initial piloting, the questionnaire was improved and prepared for final piloting in the third stage. For final piloting, the questionnaire was administered to a representative group of 23 first-year students in the ELT Department in one of the top universities. In line with the feedback obtained from them, the necessary amendments and improvements were made in the questionnaire.

Finally, internal consistency for the whole questionnaire was found to be highly reliable with a Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of 0.94. However, despite the high Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient, those items which generated corrected item–total correlation of less than 0.3 were further examined. In doing this, an interview was carried out with four volunteers, who were selected from among the ones having completed the questionnaire previously and who were asked questions about these items. It was seen that the items which the participants found too general, ambiguous or abstract had low correlation and thereby, they were transformed into more concrete and specific items. To illustrate, the item that stated “I know what a proverb is” was decided to be turned into an open-ended question asking the participants to briefly define what a proverb is. Consequently, some improvements were made on these items.

Having undergone all these processes, the questionnaire was eventually finalized and prepared for actual administration. After all the changes, it had a total of 77 items with other open-ended questions (See Appendix A). Part A consisted of an open-ended question that asked about the participants’ definition of a proverb. Part B was composed of items regarding the participants’ attitudes towards proverb instruction (items 1-20). Items 21-35 constituted part C on their knowledge of proverbs. Lastly, part D was designed to investigate their experience of learning English proverbs at high-school with items 36-77 preceded by an open-ended question about the materials their teachers had used to teach proverbs.
In analysing the questionnaires, descriptive statistics was used. While discussing the results, for each item, the degree of (dis)agreement was calculated by adding percentages from the ‘strongly (dis)agree’ and ‘(dis)agree’ categories to “ascertain an overall indication of disagreement and agreement” and thus, to yield a general picture of the results (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 510). The open-ended question soliciting for a proverb definition was analysed using the “Computerized Language Analysis Child Language Data Exchange System” (CLAN CHILDES).

In order to triangulate the data, a semi-structured interview was conducted with those participants (N= 21) who had given their consent to participate in the interview after completing the questionnaire. Depending on the participants’ consent, the interviews were audio-recorded and/or video-recorded. The interview questions were formulated with reference to the items in the questionnaire and piloted several times. In analysing the interviews, the audio and/or video recordings of twenty-one interviews were transcribed by means of a transcription software and the transcriptions were coded for recurring themes and analysed by employing inductive data analysis method (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

4. Results and discussion

4.1. What are EFL student-teachers’ conceptualization of proverbs?

Student-teachers were asked to write their definitions of what a proverb is so as to reveal their understanding of a proverb. Of the 187 participants, 157 could define a proverb or list key words that they associated with proverbs. The key words that most commonly appeared in the data were identified and coded into categories (See Appendix B).

The findings show that in their definitions, the participants mostly referred to the cultural aspects of proverbs. For example, they most frequently associated proverbs with the old times (55%). The long history of proverbs makes them anonymous and this was the third most commonly indicated aspect of proverbs in the definitions (22.3%). The definitions point out that the experiences of the folk throughout a society’s history have led to the emergence of proverbs. Apart from the cultural aspects of proverbs, the participants also referred to some of their formal aspects in the definitions. The fixed form of proverbs was, for instance, the second most frequent characteristic included in the definitions. As for the pragmatic features of proverbs, the didactic and guiding functions of proverbs appeared in 17.2% of the definitions. Finally, of the literary features of proverbs, the metaphorical nature of proverbs was the frequently stated literary aspect (16.6%).

Overall, it can be seen that the participants’ definitions mostly included some of the cultural and formal aspects of proverbs. Due to the variety in the forms of proverbs, there is not an exact and inclusive definition that can enable one to identify them with any certainty. The features indicated in the definitions are not necessarily a part of every proverb nor are the other features apparent in some proverbs a part of the
available definitions. The definitions show that the participants had traditional views of proverbs. The instruction they had received at school especially in their Turkish language classes might have affected their conceptualization of proverbs. In the Turkish context, students are expected to possess a proverb dictionary since primary school and to know what proverbs are. Therefore, they are exposed to some standard definitions of proverbs one of which is given below:

Proverbs are sentences that were produced based on long-term experiences and observations and have become fixed and the property of the folk. A considerable part of proverbs are written in present tense or in imperatives. Proverbs are usually fixed expressions which give advice or message (Eker, 2006, p. 479).

As this definition illustrates, the participants’ definitions seem to correspond with such a standard definition. However, many researchers nowadays have questioned these traditional definitions with counter examples of proverbs proving the insufficiency of the traditional definitions (e.g., Norrick, 1985, 2007; Mieder, 2004; Ulusoy Aranyosi, 2010). With the new developments and changes in technology and the nature of communication, proverbs also undergo certain modifications (Ulusoy Aranyosi, 2010), which shows their dynamic nature. Unlike what the participants stated in their definitions, proverbs do not always reflect old times and have a fixed form. While some proverbs are forgotten, new ones are created or the old ones are adapted (Litovkina & Mieder, 2006). Besides, the formation of anti-proverbs, defined as proverb variations (e.g., If at first you don’t succeed, give up), provides strong evidence for the dynamic nature of proverbs (Mieder, 2004). In addition to anti-proverbs, the reduced forms of proverbs (i.e., truncated proverbs) are also widely used in everyday communication (Mieder, 2004) which demonstrates that proverbs do not always appear in their fixed forms. Thus, “the fixed form of proverbs does not appear to be as sacrosanct anymore today as it might have once been” (Mieder & Holmes, 2000, p.90). Furthermore, as opposed to the idea in the traditional definitions that proverbs express general truths, anti-proverbs prove that those truths can be challenged and questioned. Considering these changes in the understanding of proverbs, the proverb definitions presented to the students need to be renewed and updated to provide a more accurate picture of proverbs in modern times. In this respect, it is necessary for the stakeholders to question “the taken-for-granted” definitions of proverbs and adapt them in the light of current research.

4.2. What are EFL student-teachers’ attitudes towards learning and teaching English proverbs?

To find out EFL student-teachers’ attitudes towards learning and teaching English proverbs, they were asked to respond to items 1-20 based on a Likert scale. The majority of the participants (strongly) agreed that learning proverbs is an important part of English language learning experience (item 1, 81.2%, $M = 4.08$) and that it is needed for effective communication in the target language (item 2, 78.6%, $M = 4.01$) (See Table 1). The reasons for why item 2 about the necessity of proverbs for effective
communication received the highest percentage of agreement can be explained with responses to other items as follows: (1) becoming familiar with the English figurative expressions (item 11, 96.3%, $M = 4.54$) and using them (item 12, 93.6%, $M = 4.43$), (2) making sense of humours in English (item 10, 91.4%, $M = 4.36$), (3) perceiving the cultural similarities and differences better (item 9, 90.9%, $M = 4.39$) and understanding the target culture (item 8, 90.4%, $M = 4.40$), and (4) comprehending listening (item 7, 90.3%, $M = 4.35$) and reading (item 6, 89.7%, $M = 4.32$) texts more easily. A majority of them found ‘learning how to use proverbs’ important for developing their speaking skills (item 3, 83.9%, $M = 4.06$), for making their speech more effective in oral presentations (item 4, 81.2%, $M = 4.07$) and for understanding the everyday language better (item 13, 83.2%, $M = 4.06$), while a relatively lower percentage of the participants considered it essential for improving their writing skills (item 5, 69.6%, $M = 3.80$).

Table 1. EFL student-teachers’ attitudes towards learning and teaching English proverbs

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<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
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<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>3 Neutral</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>5 Strongly Agree</th>
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Interview results are found to be consistent with the questionnaire data. Of the 21 interviewees, 15 stated clearly that learning English proverbs is important for a wide range of reasons (e.g., for an easy and effective communication). Regarding the participants' need for learning proverbs, one of them said the following:

Because we have very limited knowledge about this topic (proverbs), we can't even make sense of the jokes in our English coursebooks. Not being able to capture their perspectives results in our not being able to learn their culture. This results in obstacles in our learning the language. (S1)

With respect to the necessity of learning proverbs, some of the interviewees have emphasized such a need particularly for those who are planning to go abroad or have jobs that require an active use of English. On the other hand, the other interviewees thought that it was difficult to learn English proverbs in Turkish language education system which focused on teaching grammar and test-taking strategies. Some even considered the learning of English proverbs extra in the early stages of English language education and found it significant and relevant only for advanced levels after students gain some practice with English.

Besides the significance of learning English proverbs, most of the participants thought that it is important to teach proverbs in English classrooms (item 16, 78.6%, $M = 4.04$) and to incorporate them in English coursebooks (item 18, 81.9%, $M = 4.05$). However, a relatively lower number of the participants thought they would definitely teach English proverbs when they became an English teacher (item 17, 72.7%, $M = 3.89$) and that proverbs should take place in the English language curriculum at high school (item 19, 69.5%, $M = 3.83$). The interview findings further explain the participants’ positive attitudes towards proverb teaching as some of the interviewees who gave importance to proverb teaching ($N=5$) indicated that they did not want to make the same mistake as their teachers had done and hence commented:

I would definitely teach (proverbs). After coming here (starting university) we realize this, we wish our teacher had focused more on them (proverbs). (S3)

Despite many participants' positive attitudes towards the teaching of English proverbs in the classroom, the percentage of agreement with regard to the necessity of teaching English proverbs is not as high when compared to the necessity of learning them. This can be explained by the interview findings. Though the interviewees all wanted to have some room for proverb instruction in the classroom, when they were asked about how they would teach proverbs, their explanations revealed that they considered proverbs as something additional rather than an integral component of the lessons. To exemplify, they wanted to teach proverbs when an opportunity arose by encountering them in the coursebooks, to assign them as a self-study, write them on the board for peripheral learning or present them as an extra-curricular activity for entertainment purposes. Furthermore, of these interviewees who expressed preference for the teaching of proverbs, four were thinking to allocate only a short time for proverb teaching because they had to give priority to other primary language components and skills. The language education system which prioritized grammar,
reading skills and test taking strategies might have caused them to regard proverbs as additional. For example, one of the students stated:

Certainly (I would teach proverbs) but I would of course not spare a great deal of the classroom time for this (proverb teaching) but I would certainly want to give place to them, for instance, for an hour a week. (S2)

Additionally, some respondents’ neutral attitude towards the teaching of proverbs might be due to their lack of command of English proverbs, which was acknowledged by some of the interviewees, who noted that they themselves needed to learn proverbs to be able to teach them. Based on this, those participants’ neutral and negative view about teaching proverbs can be explained by the respondents’ definitions, which mostly referred to proverbs as reflecting old times (See Section 4.1) and thus, such an understanding of proverbs might have caused the participants to consider proverbs less worthwhile to teach in modern times.

Overall, the participants adopted a positive attitude towards learning and teaching English proverbs and thought that proverbs would improve their language skills and make their communication easier in many respects. The results in this section seem to be in line with the findings of Liontas’s study (2002) where the majority of the learners also expressed a desire and interest in learning idioms as they recognized the importance of idioms for natural and real-life communication and thus, wanted them to be an integral part of their language and culture learning. Moreover, similar to the result in this study that learning proverbs was considered to be important by most of the participants for using figurative language and understanding humours in English, in Turkol’s study (2003), too, proverbs were preferred to be used by all the subjects in informal situations for joking and for indirect and practical uses of language. Consequently, the positive results in this section can be encouraging for teachers, material writers and curriculum designers to give place to proverbs in language classrooms.

4.3. What are EFL student-teachers’ thoughts about their knowledge and use of English proverbs?

Considering the responses to the items regarding EFL student-teachers’ thoughts about their knowledge and use of English proverbs, many of the respondents thought that they had no knowledge about the cultural, literary, formal and semantic aspects of English proverbs (See Table 2). The interview results validate the finding that student-teachers (90%) did not possess much knowledge about English proverbs. When all the 21 interviewees were asked to give examples of English proverbs, 13 of them could not come up with any English proverb. Three of the interviewees confused them with idioms and gave examples such as put someone to sleep and it’s raining cats and dogs. The proverbs only a few interviewees could remember (N=5) were – like father like son, what goes around comes around, better late than never, and an apple a day keeps the doctor away - though they did not all appear in the right structure. Nevertheless, the interviewees all expressed their wish to have known more English proverbs. On the other hand, a relatively higher number of the participants agreed
that they knew in what situations (item 25, 29.9%, $M = 2.94$), and for what purposes (item 26, 51.4%, $M = 3.35$) to use English proverbs, which could have been influenced by their knowledge and use of Turkish proverbs. This is also acknowledged by the interviews in which they could mention a wide range of situations and purposes such as (1) communicating with native speakers better, (2) creating humour, (3) supporting the arguments, and (4) beautifying and embellishing the language.

Table 2. Knowledge of English proverbs

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<td>108</td>
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<td>31†</td>
<td>42</td>
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<td>2.46</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides their knowledge of English proverbs, more than half of the respondents thought that they could recognize English proverbs in listening (item 28, 51.8%, $M = 3.27$) and reading texts (item 30, 62.4%, $M = 3.51$) even if they did not understand them but fewer of them agreed that they could both recognize and understand English proverbs in listening and reading texts. Compared to the participants’ recognition and understanding of English proverbs in *listening* texts (item 27, 15.6%, $M = 2.72$), a greater number of them felt more confident in identifying and understanding them in *reading* texts (item 29, 31.9%, $M = 2.98$) (See Table 2). In a similar vein, almost two thirds of the participants thought that they had difficulty understanding proverbs in English songs and movies (items 31 and 32). This is an expected outcome considering the fact that a more complex cognitive process is involved in trying to understand a listening text (Vandergrift, 1999). Reading is also a demanding task: however, readers always have the opportunity to go back and forth to read any incomprehensible part over and over again (Lund, 1991). The interview results further verify the finding with respect to the participants’ recognition and understanding of English proverbs.

* Items 31 and 32 are reversed.
since the interviewees have also revealed that they could recognize English proverbs but had difficulty in making sense of them. The interviews have also revealed those aspects of proverbs that helped the participants to identify them. Many of the interviewees (75%) indicated that it was mainly the metaphorical and fixed nature of proverbs as well as their unusual structure that enabled them to identify the proverbs.

As for the use of English proverbs, the majority of the participants did not consider that they could use proverbs in writing (item 33, 56.6%, \( M = 2.46 \)) and in speaking (item 34, 69%, \( M = 2.15 \)) in English, which are the productive skills (See Table 2). However, compared to the number of the participants who were able to use English proverbs in speaking (7.5%), the number of those who could use them in writing was relatively higher (17.7 %). This is an expected outcome because speaking was usually the most neglected skill in language classrooms in Turkey (Ozsevik, 2010; Yıldırım, 2010). Besides, unlike writing, speaking is more spontaneous allowing no time for reviewing and revision. Likewise, most of the participants did not find their knowledge of English proverbs sufficient for their teaching of English effectively (item 35, 75.4%, \( M = 2.05 \)).

In brief, although a majority of the participants knew for what purposes to use English proverbs and could identify them in listening and reading texts even if they were unable to comprehend them, it can be concluded that many of them did not have a good command of English proverbs. This is the case in Liontas’s study (2002) which revealed that many of the second language learners were not satisfied with their knowledge of idiomatic expressions. Similarly, Turkol (2003) who more directly investigated proverb familiarity of Turkish non-native speakers of English found their lack of familiarity with proverbs. Considering the role of English classrooms as the main input provider in EFL contexts such as Turkey, insufficient knowledge of proverbs could be the result of poor proverb instruction at high school.

4.4. What are EFL student-teachers’ perceptions about their high-school English teachers’ practices in teaching proverbs in the classroom?

A majority of the participants thought that their English teachers at high school had not taught English proverbs sufficiently (item 36, 73.8%, \( M = 2.10 \)) and hence, did not use to refer to their syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and literary aspects (See Table 3). That is only 8% of the participants considered their teachers’ practice of teaching proverbs as sufficient. However, with respect to the items 37-42 about the aspects of proverbs studied, a relatively higher number of the participants were of the opinion that their teachers used to refer to the importance of English proverbs for communication (item 37, 28.3%, \( M = 2.56 \)) and focus on their meanings (item 39, 26.4%, \( M = 2.53 \)).
As for the high school English teachers’ use of proverbs in teaching various language skills and components, more than half of the respondents indicated that their teachers had not used English proverbs much in the teaching of all the language skills and components, in particular in the teaching of listening skill (item 47, 80.2%, \(M = 1.97\)), pronunciation (item 45, 73.3%, \(M = 2.15\)), speaking skill (item 48, 71.1%, \(M = 2.19\)), grammar (item 43, 66.8%, \(M = 2.22\)) and writing skill (item 49, 67.9%, \(M = 2.23\)). On the other hand, it is found that some of respondents’ teachers had taught English proverbs by comparing them with Turkish proverbs (item 51, 31.7%, \(M = 2.69\)), in teaching vocabulary (item 44, 29.2%, \(M = 2.70\)), culture (item 50, 22.5%, \(M = 2.47\)) and reading skill (item 46, 18.2%, \(M = 2.28\)) (See Table 3) with vocabulary component having the highest mean in terms of proverb teaching. The interview results also verify that a relatively more proverbs had been encountered in the teaching of vocabulary and reading skill. This is convincing because the teaching of other skills had usually been neglected in their English classrooms as one of the students pointed out:

I developed only the skills of answering multiple-choice questions and reading at high school. I don’t think enough resources on speaking and listening skills were provided for us. (S4)
With respect to the teachers’ efforts in dealing with English proverbs, the bulk of the respondents thought that no special time had been allocated by their English teachers for the teaching of English proverbs (item 52, 80.7%, M = 1.87). For instance, many of them did not agree that their teachers had adapted the coursebooks and made the necessary modifications to make them more suitable and effective for the teaching of proverbs (item 53, 65.2%, M = 2.24). Besides, only 36 of the student-teachers (19.7%) reported that their English teachers had made use of materials other than the coursebooks to teach proverbs (Part D, question 1) but according to some of the interviewees (N=4), the extra materials (e.g., proverb lists) had been mostly used for self-study without explicit instruction. Regarding the supplementary materials used, the students indicated that their teachers had mostly used materials from real life (10.4%), worksheet (8.7%), texts (8.2%) and dictionaries (7.1%) (Table 4).

Interview findings support the questionnaire results with respect to the student-teachers’ perceptions about their English teachers’ practices in teaching proverbs in the classroom. 17 of the 21 interviewees stated that their teachers had almost not taught any English proverbs and attributed this to the exam and grammar oriented instruction in the classroom. In relation to this, one of the interviewees said:

Language education at high and middle schools is devoted to grammar. We were always reminded of the exams that we were supposed to take and our desire to learn speaking was ignored. We had 13 hours of English. One hour of this can easily be allocated for English proverbs, one hour for everyday language and speaking practice using English proverbs. (S5)

According to four of the participants, despite some of their teachers’ attempt to allocate some time for proverb teaching, it was still insufficient due to the priority given to grammar teaching. Even when the teachers tried to draw the students’ attention to some proverbs and other idiomatic expressions encountered in their lessons, the students whose focus was on the exams used to find it unnecessary, which was made clear by one of the interviewees as stated below:

One of our teachers was actually preparing us for university but we did not like him/her much; in other words, we wanted other teachers to come because others prepared us for the exam. We wished that we had done more tests but now I realize... now I say that I wish we had known the value of that teacher. (S6)
As some of the interviewees (N=12) have reported, their high school teachers’ most common practice was talking about the proverbs when encountered in texts either by comparing them with the Turkish proverbs or by simply telling their meaning.

The results obtained in this section confirm the findings in other studies (Coşkun, 2011; Kızıldağ, 2009; Özsevik, 2010; Yıldırım, 2010) which have shown that the English language exam has a negative impact on classroom practices. In addition, the finding that the participants’ teachers had paid scant attention to proverbs that appear in materials is similar to the finding of Hanzen’s study (2007) where some of the teachers also pointed out that they used proverbs as time-fillers in class when there was some extra time left. Even though the education system did not seem to allow for instruction on proverbs in the case of the participants’ high school teachers, the literature review on various features of proverbs has revealed that proverbs can contribute to the development of not only pragmatic competence but also organizational competence. That is to say, teaching proverbs does not mean disregarding the teaching of traditionally emphasized language components and skills such as grammar and reading. On the contrary, it can play a role in their teaching while at the same time helping to move beyond to other components in second language teaching by integrating culture, figurative language and functional language.

4.5. What are EFL student-teachers’ perceptions about the sufficiency of the English coursebooks they used at high school in dealing with proverbs?

A majority of the respondents thought that their high school coursebooks had not dealt with English proverbs adequately (item 57, 81.3%, $M = 1.89$) (Table 5). In comparison with the responses to item 36 about the adequacy of English teachers’ practices in dealing with English proverbs, it is seen that the number of the respondents agreeing on the sufficiency of their coursebooks in terms of proverb instruction is relatively lower. Likewise, responses to item 56 show that only 14.4% ($M = 2.19$) of the participants thought that they had learned most of the English proverbs from the coursebooks they studied at high school whereas 35.3% thought that they had learned most of them not from the coursebooks but only from their English teachers at high school (item 54, $M = 2.70$). As a result, it can be concluded that despite the respondents’ view with regard to the inadequacy of both their English teachers and coursebooks in dealing with English proverbs, it was still their teachers from whom they reported to have benefited comparatively more in terms of proverb instruction.

In relation to the aspects of English proverbs covered in the English coursebooks, the majority believed that their coursebooks had not made reference to the various features of English proverbs (items 59-64) in particular the literary (item 62, 81.3%, $M = 1.84$) and syntactic (item 60, 77%, $M = 1.92$) aspects of proverbs. This is consistent with the finding regarding the practices of the participants’ English teachers in dealing with the aspects of the proverbs in the classroom as shown in
Table 3 since they had also particularly disregarded the literary and syntactic aspects of proverbs as reported by most of the participants. On the other hand, when the percentages of agreement with respect to their English coursebooks (11%, See Table 5) and their English teachers (19.45%, See Table 3) are compared in terms of their focus on the various aspects of English proverbs, a relatively higher percentage is obtained in the latter case (i.e, English teachers). This can be explained by some of the teachers’ tendency to present more than what the coursebooks had offered.

As for the ways the English coursebooks dealt with proverbs, most of the participants thought that their coursebooks had not presented proverbs in any of the ways specified in the items 65-68. To illustrate, 76.5% of the respondents indicated that their coursebooks had included no activities designed specifically for the purpose of teaching English proverbs and for reinforcing proverb knowledge (item 68, $M = 2.01$). On the other hand, a relatively higher number of them thought that their coursebooks had presented English proverbs in texts (item 66, 26.5%, $M = 2.57$) and introduced them by means of materials from real life (item 67, 19.8%, $M = 2.41$). However, it is not clear whether an explicit instruction had been provided on the proverbs encountered in texts or whether those proverbs were inserted into the texts particularly for the purpose of teaching them.

As presented in Table 5, according to the respondents’ views, the coursebooks used by the majority incorporated proverbs in the teaching of not all the language skills and components (items 69-72). Similar to the student-teachers’ views about their English teachers’ practices, the coursebooks were reported to have employed relatively more proverbs in the teaching of vocabulary (item 70, 23.5%, $M = 2.42$), culture (item 76, 16.8%, $M = 2.25$) and reading skill (item 73, 14%, $M = 2.18$). As the mostly emphasized language skill and component in the Turkish context, the English coursebooks involved relatively more use of proverbs in the teaching of reading skill and vocabulary, whether included for a an instructional purpose or not. In addition, despite the importance also given to grammar, the respondents reported that their coursebooks had not made use of proverbs in grammar teaching (item 69, 74.3%, $M = 2.00$), which might be because grammar and proverbs were usually seen at the two opposite ends of the continuum and heavy grammar instruction was viewed as the main obstacle to teaching proverbs by many participants. It appears that students, teachers and coursebook writers were not aware of the role proverbs can play in grammar teaching as well as in the teaching of other language skills and components.

### Table 5. Teaching of English proverbs in English coursebooks used at high school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
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<th>2 Disagree</th>
<th>3 Neutral</th>
<th>4 Agree</th>
<th>5 Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
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<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
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<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
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<td>17.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>66</td>
<td>35.3</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interview findings further explain the questionnaire results in relation to the student-teachers' perceptions about the sufficiency of their English coursebooks in dealing with proverbs. Unexpectedly, 5 of the 21 interviewees had not followed any main coursebook at all but instead used test and grammar books and thus, they could not comment much on the quality of the coursebooks in terms of proverb instruction. Considering those who used coursebooks at high school as the main source in their classes, most of them (40%) studied only the parts required for the exam and hence, left out listening, speaking and writing sections. With regard to the proverb instruction in the coursebooks used by the interviewees, 16 of them indicated that they had rarely encountered proverbs in their coursebooks while some of them explained that their coursebooks had usually included proverbs as additional components and at random. According to most of these participants, proverbs appeared at the end of the units in their coursebooks which were sometimes accompanied by mechanic exercises such as fill-in-the-blanks or which were presented simply in lists and sometimes used not for a teaching purpose but for fun. Proverbs were also reported to have been incorporated in texts and vocabulary sections in some of the coursebooks used by the participants. In relation to this, one of the interviewees stated:

Not much place was given (to proverbs in the coursebooks). Sometimes I used to see them in texts but we didn’t feel the need to pay attention to them which means that there weren’t many of them. In other words, if there had been many, we would have felt the need to learn them in order to understand. (S7)

Regarding the issue about the place of proverbs in the English coursebooks, Vanyushkina-Holt (2005) describes proverbs given in lists as “homeless orphans” because “they do not belong anywhere and their future is hopeless” (p.123). Even when proverbs appear in texts and titles, in many cases they just seem to be there
without any explicit focus on them by means of some activities. They are only used to strengthen the ideas in the passage. This is also found to be the case with the proverbs in Russian textbooks examined by Vanyushkina-Holt (2005), who argues that students will either not recognize them or skip them as unimportant details, which then makes the use of proverbs suitable only for native speakers who can automatically identify and comprehend them. Furthermore, when proverbs are encountered in such cases, it depends on the student’s interest and teacher’s attitudes to explicitly focus on them.

When the interviewees were asked about whether the coursebooks should integrate proverbs, they all expressed a wish for a place of proverbs in the coursebooks as shown in the following comment:

Yes, they (coursebooks) should give place (to proverbs). Someone who is going to graduate from foreign language departments and who is going to work as an English teacher or as a translator certainly needs to learn proverbs. As a result, English will be a part of his/her life and proverbs are a part of English... (S8)

The findings in general confirm the result of Driscoll, Earl and Cable’s study (2013) which revealed that although cultural dimension in language teaching is considered important, it is not integrated systematically.

5. Conclusion

Considering the importance of proverbs for the development of student-teachers’ communicative competence and hence, for their professional development, this study reveals the extent to which proverbs had been taught to EFL student-teachers to help them build on their communicative competence. The findings show that the majority of the EFL student-teachers had positive attitudes towards learning and teaching English proverbs but at the same time they thought that they did not have a good command of English proverbs and that their English teachers and coursebooks at high school had not taught proverbs sufficiently. Besides, it is found that the participants’ conceptualizations of proverbs reflect traditional definitions, which suggests that the definitions of proverbs as presented in instructional materials and the examples provided should be updated to keep up with the recent developments in proverb use as a result of the changes in the nature of communication. The results of this study have, thus, highlighted the need for proverb teaching in EFL classrooms with reference to the natural language use in various forms of communication. To meet this need, when designing materials and planning lessons, it should be kept in mind that knowledge of English phraseology and proverbs in particular constitutes an important component of learners’ language competence because as part of cultural references, figurative, functional and formulaic language, proverbs can help to enhance both organizational and pragmatic competence as included in Bachman’s model. In an EFL setting such as Turkey where there is limited exposure to English outside the classroom, English language teachers and coursebooks carry an utmost importance in teaching English proverbs. This implies a need to train prospective teachers and design instructional materials and curriculum in a way that encourages
the integration of various aspects of English proverbs to contribute to the development of learners' communicative competence. Even if the heavily-loaded programs and grammar-oriented exams are seen to be an obstacle to the teaching of cultural and pragmatic aspects of English in high schools, proverbs can then be suggested as practical language tools to introduce language structures, vocabulary, culture, non-literal language and pragmatics at the same time. Therefore, despite the importance of exam results and competition among the students who are to take the university entrance exam, “teachers should remember the features ‘creativity and flexibility’ usually listed among the features associated with ‘good teachers’ and should try to find ways to presenting students with the cultural information” (Hatipoğlu, 2009, p. 356).

All this suggests that there should be collaboration among researchers, coursebooks writers, curriculum designers, administrators, teachers and students. This study can serve as a guideline for these stakeholders in writing the curriculum, designing the instructional materials and planning lessons. Moreover, when educating student-teachers, proverbs can be incorporated in the language classrooms to contribute to the development of their language competence and awareness. In this way, these student-teachers can first of all enhance their own communicative competence and then know what aspects of language and culture to transfer to language learners and use their proverb knowledge in designing instructional materials and adapting textbooks that are insufficient in terms of proverb instruction.

Acknowledgement

This study comes from a master's thesis that was submitted by the first author to Middle East Technical University (Can, 2011).

References


Hatipoğlu, Ç. (2009). Do we speak the same culture?: Evidence from university students in the Foreign Language Education Departments. Proceedings of the International Congress of Comparative Literature and the Teaching of Literature and Language: We Speak the Same Culture, 29 April-1 May 2009, Gazi University, Ankara, Turkey, pp. 343-357.


Appendix A. The questionnaire designed for this study

PART A: YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF PROVERBS

Briefly, write your definition of a proverb. If you think you can’t write a definition, write down the words that come to your mind when you hear the word “proverb”.
_______________________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________________

PART B: YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS LEARNING AND TEACHING OF ENGLISH PROVERBS

Some of the English proverbs: *No pain, no gain; Better late than never; An apple a day keeps the doctor away; Beauty is only skin deep; Don't judge a book by its cover; A friend in need is a friend indeed.*

Please read the statements below and tick (✓) the most appropriate option. Make sure that your responses reflect your true and sincere thoughts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING AND TEACHING OF ENGLISH PROVERBS</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I believe learning English proverbs is an important part of English language learning experience.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Learning to use English proverbs is necessary for achieving effective communication.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Learning to use English proverbs in oral communication is necessary for developing my speaking skills.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Using proverbs when I give oral presentations in English will make my speech more effective.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Learning to use English proverbs in written communication is necessary for developing my writing skills.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Knowing English proverbs is important for me to comprehend the reading texts better.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Knowing English proverbs is important for me to comprehend the listening texts better.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Knowing English proverbs is important for me to understand the target culture better.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Knowing English proverbs is important for me to perceive the cultural differences and similarities better.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Knowing English proverbs is necessary for me to make sense of the humours generated in English.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Learning English proverbs is important for me to get</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
familiar with the English figurative expressions.

12. Learning English proverbs is important for me to develop my skill of expressing myself by using figurative language in English.

13. Knowing English proverbs is necessary for me to understand the everyday language better.

14. We might need to use English proverbs when we have to communicate in English outside the classroom.

15. We might need to recognize and understand English proverbs when we have to communicate in English outside the classroom.

16. I think it is important to teach English proverbs in English classrooms.

17. I will definitely teach English proverbs when I become an English teacher.

18. I believe it is necessary to incorporate English proverbs in English coursebooks.

19. I think English proverbs should be a part of the English language curriculum at high schools.

20. I think it is important to encourage English language learners to learn proverbs for effective communication.

If you have different opinions regarding the teaching and learning of English proverbs, please specify them:

PART C: YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF PROVERBS
Please read the statements below and tick (✓) the most appropriate option. Make sure that your responses reflect your true and sincere thoughts.

YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF PROVERBS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21. I have knowledge of the typical structures of English proverbs.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I have knowledge of the semantic features of English proverbs (e.g., their themes, synonymous and antonymous proverbs etc.).</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I have knowledge of the literary aspects of English proverbs (e.g., use of metaphors, rhyme etc.)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I have knowledge of the cultural aspects of English proverbs.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I know in what situations to use English proverbs.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I know for what purposes to use English proverbs.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. I can recognize and understand English proverbs in listening texts.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. I can recognize English proverbs in listening texts even if I</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. I can recognize and understand English proverbs in reading texts.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I can recognize English proverbs in reading texts even if I do not understand them.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. I have difficulty comprehending the proverbs I come across in English songs.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. I have difficulty comprehending the proverbs I come across in English movies.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. I can use English proverbs in writing in English.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. I can use English proverbs in speaking in English.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. I think I know proverbs enough to contribute to my teaching of English effectively.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART D: YOUR EXPERIENCE OF LEARNING ENGLISH PROVERBS**

1. Did your English teachers at High School employ materials other than coursebooks to teach English proverbs? □ Yes □ No

2. If your response to question 1 is YES, indicate what kinds of materials your English teachers used when teaching English proverbs. Tick (√) the appropriate options given below.
   - Dictionary
   - Proverb Lists
   - Worksheet on Proverbs
   - Texts (reading and listening)
   - Materials from everyday life (e.g., cartoons, advertisements, newspaper articles, songs)
   - Others: ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Please read the statements below and tick (√) the most appropriate option. **Make sure that your responses reflect your true and sincere thoughts.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36. My English teachers at high school taught English proverbs sufficient enough.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. My English teachers at high school used to mention the importance of English proverbs in communication.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. My English teachers at high school used to dwell on the structures of English proverbs.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. My English teachers at high school used to dwell on the meanings of English proverbs.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. My English teachers at high school used to teach in what situations to use English proverbs.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
41. My English teachers at high school used to teach for what purposes to teach English proverbs. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 
42. My English teachers at high school used to refer to the literary aspects of English proverbs. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 
43. My English teachers at high school used to employ English proverbs in grammar teaching. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 
44. My English teachers at high school used to employ English proverbs in vocabulary teaching. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 
45. My English teachers at high school used to employ English proverbs in pronunciation teaching. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 
46. My English teachers at high school used to employ English proverbs in the teaching of reading skill. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 
47. My English teachers at high school used to employ English proverbs in the teaching of listening skill. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 
48. My English teachers at high school used to employ English proverbs in the teaching of speaking skill. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 
49. My English teachers at high school used to employ English proverbs in the teaching of writing skill. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 
50. My English teachers at high school used to employ English proverbs in culture teaching. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 
51. My English teachers at high school used to teach English proverbs in comparison with Turkish proverbs. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 
52. My English teachers at high school used to allocate special time for the teaching of English proverbs. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 
53. My English teachers at high school used to complete and make the parts that they found to be insufficient regarding proverb teaching in coursebooks more effective and meaningful. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 
54. I learnt most of the English proverbs not from the coursebooks we used but only from my teachers at high school. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 
55. I still use the proverbs I learned from my teachers in English classes at high school in communication. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 

**TEACHING OF ENGLISH PROVERBS BY YOUR ENGLISH COURSEBOOKS AT HIGH SCHOOL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
56. I learned most of the proverbs I know from the coursebooks I studied at high school. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
57. The coursebooks we studied at high school used to dwell on English proverbs sufficiently. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
58. The coursebooks we studied at high school used to dwell on English proverbs sufficiently but my teachers were skipping the parts related to proverbs. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
59. The coursebooks we studied at high school used to refer to English proverbs as effective communication strategies. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
The coursebooks we studied at high school used to dwell on the structures of English proverbs.

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to dwell on the semantic aspects of English proverbs.

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to refer to the literary aspects of English proverbs.

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to teach in what situations to use English proverbs.

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to teach for what purposes to use English proverbs.

The coursebooks we studied at high school most often presented English proverbs as a list.

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to teach English proverbs in texts.

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to present English proverbs in context by means of materials from real life (e.g., cartoons, advertisements, newspaper articles, songs etc.).

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to include activities for the purpose of teaching English proverbs and reinforcing the knowledge of proverbs.

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to employ English proverbs in grammar teaching.

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to employ English proverbs in vocabulary teaching.

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to employ English proverbs in pronunciation teaching.

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to employ English proverbs in the teaching of listening skill.

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to employ English proverbs in the teaching of reading skill.

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to employ English proverbs in the teaching of writing skill.

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to employ English proverbs in the teaching of speaking skill.

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to employ English proverbs in culture teaching.

The coursebooks we studied at high school used to encourage us to compare the English proverbs they presented with the ones in our culture.

If there is extra information regarding your experience of learning English proverbs at high school, please specify them here:
Appendix B. Features in the Participants’ Proverb Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories: Proverbs are...</th>
<th>English Translations of the Key words</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From old times/traditionality</td>
<td>in the old days</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>beforetime</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in the past</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>old</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>from the past</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for years</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>has survived till today</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>has come to this day</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>CULTURAL ASPECTS</th>
<th>Anonymous</th>
<th>Experience-based</th>
<th>Ancestors’ words</th>
<th>Oral tradition</th>
<th>Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>anonymous</td>
<td>experience</td>
<td>ancestors</td>
<td>from mouth to mouth</td>
<td>culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>unknown originator</td>
<td>experience</td>
<td>ancestors</td>
<td>from generation to generation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>event</td>
<td>the elderly</td>
<td>word of mouth</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>experience + event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>event + situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORMAL ASPECTS</th>
<th>Fixed</th>
<th>Short</th>
<th>Memorable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fixed</td>
<td>short sayings</td>
<td>memorable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>can’t be changed + fixed</td>
<td>pithy sayings</td>
<td>lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>can’t be changed</td>
<td>short + pithy sayings</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cliché</td>
<td>conventional</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>conventional</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRAGMATIC ASPECTS</th>
<th>Guiding/Didactic</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lesson + advice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lesson + advice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lesson + didactic</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>lesson + message</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>advice</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>advice</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>educating</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>guiding</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stylistic Aspect</td>
<td>Expression</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LITERARY ASPECTS</td>
<td>moral message</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought-provoking</td>
<td>thought-provoking</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironic</td>
<td>sarcastic irony</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous</td>
<td>funny entertaining</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphorical</td>
<td>metaphorical</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhyming</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEMANTIC ASPECTS</td>
<td>Expressions of traditions, emotions and thoughts</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>traditions emotion</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>emotion + thought thought</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>idea + thought belief</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful</td>
<td>meaningful</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Processing Instruction Revisited: Does it Lead to Superior Performance in Interpretation and Production?

Majid Farahian a *, Farnaz Avarzamani a †

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APA Citation:

Abstract

There have been plenty of research studies which have demonstrated the efficacy of focus on form (FonF) approach in language teaching. However, processing instruction as a kind of FonF approach has not been given due attention. As such, the present study is an attempt to shed more lights upon the effects of the processing instruction (PI) on EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners’ acquisition of passive voice by comparing PI to dictogloss and an output instruction. The participants recruited for the study were 51 pre-intermediate level EFL students. The pretest revealed that there was no significant difference between the groups regarding passive voice knowledge. As to the treatment, the first group (n=17) received processing instruction, the second group (n=17) was exposed to dictogloss tasks, and the third (n=17) was given meaningful output instruction. In the immediate posttest, two types of tasks (interpretation and production) were used to assess the participants’ English passive voice comprehension and production. The findings indicated that the processing instruction group outperformed dictogloss and meaningful output instruction in both tasks, and thus it had a significantly positive effect on the comprehension and production of the English passive voice.

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Keywords: processing instruction; dictogloss; meaning-based output instruction; English passive voice

1. Introduction

The field of the second language (SL) and foreign language (FL) acquisition pedagogy is witnessing an increasing interest in the idea of FonF and the suggestion that attention to form should be encouraged in L2 classrooms (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Ellis, 2016). In fact, to focus on form in classrooms is to “overtly draw students’ attention to linguistic elements as they arise incidentally in lessons whose overriding focus is on meaning or communication” (Long, 1991, pp. 45-46). The related literature has indicated that FonF improves the L2 acquisition of morpho-syntactic forms (Qin, 2008). While the wind shifted in favor of the focus on form, researchers have sought to

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examine whether there are particular types of focus on form instruction which are more beneficial than others. Among various forms of the FonF instruction, PI, as an input-based instruction, has been compared with output-based approaches such as traditional grammar instruction (TI) (Cadierno, 1995), dictogloss (DG) (Qin, 2008), and meaning-based output instruction (MOI) (Benati, 2005; Farley, 2001, 2004).

As highlighted by Benati (2005), the primary role of input in the L2 acquisition had often been emphasized in VanPatten’s works (e.g. VanPatten, 1996) and a less fundamental role has been assigned to output. Although VanPatten (1996) highlights the fundamental role of input, for him, mere exposure to input does not guarantee to learn (Sheen, 2007). As VanPatten (1996) suggested, learners may use inefficient strategies to process input; therefore, they should be trained on how to process input properly in order to better acquire grammar forms. This type of teaching is known as processing strategy (VanPatten, 1996). It is important to disentangle PI from input processing (IP). As Sheen (2007) explains, while IP is related to VanPatten’s (1996) theoretical model and assumption about what goes on in the brain when perceiving the input, PI refers to the things that instructors do to bring the grammar of the input to learners’ notice. He argues that explicit types of instruction like PI help learners process information via comprehension practice and might be more effective than the ones which require learners to produce language too prematurely. In this regard, some studies (Cadierno, 1995) have compared PI to TI which provides an explanation of L2 forms accompanied by some type of practice such as mechanical, meaningful, and communicative output-based practices (VanPatten, 2004a). Because of the nature of TI which is based on mechanical drills and repetition, it is not discussed in the present study, and it is replaced by another output-based instruction, namely, meaning-based output instruction (MOI). Unlike TI, the activities in MOI are based on the tenets of structured-output activities and no mechanical drills are used in MOI instruction and it includes only output based activities (Lee & VanPatten, 1995). Therefore, this meaningful type of instruction was considered to address the shortcoming.

The other choice for explicit grammar instruction is Dictogloss (DG). DG consists of four stages: preparation, dictation, reconstruction, and analysis with correction (Wajnryb, 1990). Dictogloss tasks require learners to focus their attention on form as they reconstruct the text. Besides, DG allows learners to engage in meaningful negotiation and at the same time, they attend to linguistic forms. This is based on the idea of noticing (Schmidt, 1990) and noticing-the-gap process (Shack, 2004) since dictogloss overtly diverts learners’ attention to the differences between their interlanguage and the target language. It is noteworthy that Qin (2008) prefers DG to MOI and mentions different advantages for it. Firstly, as he claims, it addresses teaching language in discourse and emphasizes the whole language view. Secondly, much research has shown that similar to PI, DG may result in attention to language form in meaningful contexts. These, as maintained by Qin (2008), can help learners to be exposed to the L2 and, at the same time, reconstruct the language for themselves.
Although the benefits of PI have been highlighted many times, results are yet to be conclusive. For example, the findings of studies conducted by Qin (2008) and VanPatten, Inclezan, Salazar and Farley (2009) were not consistent. Qin (2008), who compared PI to DG found that both groups showed significant improvement in the posttest, while in VanPatten et al. (2009), the researchers reported that PI was notably superior to the DG group. In addition to the previous comparisons between PI and DG instructions in the literature, the present study differs in that it included MOI so as to examine PI efficacy more closely against meaning-based and output-oriented types of grammar instruction on the sentence level (see Table 3). Furthermore, different participants were recruited since Qin’s (2008) study was conducted at schools where the learners’ motivation may not be as high as the learners who have voluntarily attended language institutes. Therefore, school learning may not represent the real condition in which L2 learners interact to learn the language (Ellis, 2003).

The present study intended to reveal possible strength of PI instruction for grammar and for this purpose the English passive voice was chosen due to some legitimate reasons. This grammatical feature, especially for Iranian students, poses problems both in comprehension and production, and thus it is considered to be a difficult grammar feature by learners and teachers (Vahedi-Langrudi, 1996). Consequently, it seemed worthwhile to see if FonF instruction was efficient enough in the acquisition of this grammatical feature. Another major reason for choosing the passive voice for the present study was one of the principles (First Noun Principle) in VanPatten’s model (2005) which suggests that L2 learners adopt ineffective processing strategies while learning and, in the case of passive voice, they may tend to process the first noun as the agent in all cases. Having this (and the aforementioned research gap) in mind, we aimed to see whether PI is a superior type of grammar instruction in our context. In the following section, the background of the present study and the previous research are presented in more details.

2. Review of literature

Over the past couple of decades, there have been a number of thorough reviews which have revealed the vital importance of focusing on form and its facilitative role in SL and FL learning (Ellis, 2002; Ellis, 2016; Norris & Ortega, 2000). Apart from advocating the FonF method of teaching, there has been a debate regarding the impact of it on the target language learning. Ellis (1994) proposed a hypothesis, called ‘Selective Attention’. This hypothesis claims that formal instruction acts as a facilitator of acquisition and prepares learners for acquiring the input. As Ellis (1994) asserts, “instruction works by helping learners to pay selective attention to form and form-meaning connections in the input. It provides learners with tools that help them recognize those features in their interlanguages which are in need of modification” (p. 656). Ellis (1994) considers the Selective Attention Hypothesis as the most ‘tenable’ hypothesis concerning the role of instruction. In the same vein, Sharwood-Smith (1993) who coined the term ‘input enhancement’ suggested that through an external
attempt some features of the input can be more noticeable to the learners. This is in keeping up with the tenets of PI (VanPatten, 1996).

### 2.1. Theoretical background

PI provides opportunities for learners to attend to form even though it does not consider this to be sufficient for acquisition to take place (VanPatten, 1996). Such emphasis on attention has not been without critics (Iwanaka, 2007). Some argue that the way attention has been dealt with has gone beyond bringing forms into learners’ attention. They state that PI can be more of focus on forms (FonFs) since there is a nonspontaneous explicit expression of form in such instruction (Sheen, 2007). In contrast, there are others who consider it as a type of focus on form instruction and claim that PI “does not prescribe any role for explicit knowledge…processing instruction is concerned with delivering form meaning connections as intake to the developing system” (VanPatten, 1996, p. 85). In addition, PI is not “sacrificing either communication or learner centered activities” (Lee & VanPatten, 1995, p. 94). As the latter group believes, although there is an explicit instruction of grammar in PI, learners’ attention is drawn to form in a meaningful context.

In this regard, VanPatten (2004a) explains that input processing refers to the learners’ initial attempts to connect grammatical forms with their meanings. As he states, the input alone may not be sufficient for language acquisition and there is a need for the input to be structured and purposeful. According to Lew (2008), the PI attempts to respond to the question “how can input processing be manipulated to fuel the development of an implicit linguistic system?” (p. 2). Therefore, it is thought to be more effective as it provides a more direct route to convert the input to intake because it helps learners to recognize target grammatical features more efficiently without any pressure from the teacher to immediately use the target form. One should be cautious when considering the role of PI in the acquisition of grammar points since, as Sheen (2007) argues, it is not easy for learners to get the input and recognize the structure in it. What is needed to help them effectively process the underlying grammar form is frequent practices. According to Benati (2005), in VanPatten’s model, PI must provide learners with the following: 1) explicit information about the target form that they are learning and particular processing strategy that may affect the way they process the target form during comprehension. 2) The teacher should also provide the type of comprehension practice (structured input activities) that leads learners to process the target form in the input and to make form-meaning connections. VanPatten (2004b) did not agree with the claim that “using a form in one’s output is a direct path to acquisition” (p. 27) and rejected the idea that acquisition depends on the output (VanPatten, 2004a).

It should be stated that there are at least two perspectives that assume a more fundamental role for output in SLA (Second Language Acquisition). One perspective has suggested that both input and output develop corresponding comprehension and production skills (DeKeyser, 1997, 2001). The second point of view, namely the output
hypothesis (Swain, 1998), holds that although input is essential to SLA, it can also bring about mental processes that affect language acquisition. Research motivated by this hypothesis has supported a positive role for output practice in conjunction with input (Izumi, 2002). On the other hand, VanPatten and Cadierno (1993, p. 240) showed that “instruction is apparently more beneficial when it is directed at how learners perceive and process input rather than when it is focused on practice via output.” Although the researchers did not reject the role of output activities in instruction for developing fluent and accurate production, they claimed that output practice cannot change the nature of interlanguage (VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993, p. 46). Unlike TI which puts emphasis on the output, PI attempts to change the way learners process the received input, and thus it has an effect on L2 learners’ underlying developing system which, in turn, may have an effect on their output. As VanPatten (1996, 2000) claims, this effect may not be achieved by any type of output-based instruction.

Interestingly, recent studies advocate the critical role of the output tasks provided that they serve a purpose. As a clarification, in a recent paper by Benati (2017), the role of structured output tasks was highlighted as he stated “structured output tasks should follow structured input tasks to ensure learners develop the abilities to interpret and produce sentences and discourse containing a target linguistic feature” (p. 391). Furthermore, in a recent meta-analysis by Shintani, Li, and Ellis (2013), they found that both production-based and comprehension-based grammar instructions are advantageous “for both receptive and productive knowledge” (pp. 322-323). The point here is that the way and the situation in which teachers use either input or output tasks is crucial. In this regard, current studies (Ellis & He, 1999; Mackey, 1999; Swain, 2000) are mostly dealing with the appropriate occasions in which either of the above-mentioned task types should be employed, rather than the superiority of any of the instruction or task types in general.

All in all, a debate has been ongoing on whether PI is a better alternative for TI. In this regard, citing the work of DeKeyser and Sokalski, Qin (2008) argues that the differences in the interactional effect may have been due to the mechanical drills. In response to such reaction, some studies compared PI to MOI; however, the results were not conclusive and were, in some cases, contradictory. For instance, as Benati (2005) reported, compared to MOI, PI results in learners’ superior comprehension of target forms; however, both have a similar effect on learners’ production of target forms. This was in line with an earlier study by Farley (2001). However, in a further study, it was shown that PI and MOI had the same effect on learners’ comprehension and production of L2 forms (Farley, 2004). In another study by Qin (2008), it was demonstrated that in the delayed posttest, the DG which is an output-based instruction had the same effect as the PI group on learners’ grammar acquisition and this was revealed in both the interpretation and production tasks. However, as he demonstrated, the PI group outperformed the DG in the immediate posttest. Since the effectiveness of dictogloss has been investigated by different research studies (Shack, 2004) a number of reasons have been proposed to encourage the use of dictogloss such
as its attention to both form and meaning and also its underlying discourse-oriented approach to language (Qin, 2008). Moreover, while learners reconstruct the text in a dictogloss task, they produce an output. Notwithstanding, the advantages of DG have not always been supported (Alderson, 1997). As an instance, VanPatten et al. (2009) argued that DG benefits may not remain over time and in their reconstruction measure, they found no advantage for DG. On the other hand, they revealed that PI was beneficial both in short and long-term.

As such, the present study aims to find out whether PI is significantly superior to DG and MOI when dealing with teaching new complicated structures like the English passive voice to pre-intermediate Iranian EFL learners. In general terms, this is an attempt to find out if PI can significantly turn FL input into intake in the acquisition process of unfamiliar target language structures. Accordingly, the present study can contribute to the PI research by seeking answers to the following questions.

1. Does the PI significantly improve EFL learners’ comprehension of English passive voice compared to DG and MOI?
2. Does the PI significantly improve EFL learners’ production of English passive voice compared to DG and MOI?

3. Method

3.1. Research design

The design used in this study was quasi-experimental, and a pretest-posttest design was used. Two weeks before the instruction, the pretest was given to the participants. The treatment lasted twelve sessions and each session was one hour and a half. An immediate posttest was carried out to compare the performance of the participants.

3.2. Participants

The participants who took part in this study were 51 (ranging in age from 13 to 15) grade 8 pre-intermediate learners studying English as their FL in a language school in Kermanshah, a city in the west of Iran. They were roughly considered as pre-intermediate based on the exam and interviews conducted by the language school in the previous term. Based on their teacher’s report (there was just one teacher involved in the treatment classes), the participants had no prior knowledge of English passive voice.

3.3. Treatments

Three types of grammar instructions (PI, DG, & MOI) were employed as the treatments. The preparation and organization of the processing instruction materials, dictogloss tasks, and testing materials were adapted from Qin (2008), and the meaningful output activities were developed by the authors. It should be noted that since teachers had little information regarding processing instruction, the necessary
information was given to them at the office of the language department by the authors in two sessions. To do so, the researchers exemplified each step the teachers required to take and also the necessary strategies they might need. It should be noted that the researchers were cautious not to give a further explanation regarding the tenets of form-focused instruction and not to favor one instructional method.

3.3.1. Processing instruction materials

Based on the guidelines presented in Wong (2004) and Qin (2008), the PI materials were presented in the following way. First, the passive voice and its structure were explicitly introduced to the participants. Next, the participants were made aware of some helpful processing strategies in order to remember the first noun as the subject of the sentence without enough attention to the rest of the structure.

Two different types of structured input activities were used in the study: referential and affective. In the former, students were required to attend to the forms in order to get their meanings, and in the latter, the learners were required to express their own personal ideas and opinions. As the final step, structured input activities were presented during the treatment sessions to the subjects. Table 1 presents the order and type of activities in brief.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Activities and their features in Processing Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Processing Instruction Tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The students pair each drawing with a sentence from 12 available sentences (6 active and 6 passive voice).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The students choose the correct form of the verb for each sentence in a story context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The students answer the questions based on a story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The students respond to a series of statements by the teacher and with Yes or No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The students respond to a series of statements by the teacher and with Yes or No.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that the teacher feedback was available through the activities. The materials of the administered tasks are available in Appendix A.

3.3.2. Dictogloss tasks material

Because of the awareness-raising nature of DG tasks, the explicit explanation was provided in this type of treatment. The DG material presented to the participants were fairly the same as PI materials to make sure that the differences in treatment were only because of the treatment. Table 2 provides information about DG stages. In addition, the sample of story passages is presented in Appendix B.
Table 2. Dictogloss Stages and their Purposes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dictogloss Steps</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The teacher describes the main idea of a story and gives its copies to the students</td>
<td>Preparation and content comprehension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The teacher asks the students to read the story and attend to both meaning and form (passive forms).</td>
<td>Comprehension of the meaning and the agent or patient of sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The teacher asks the students to work in pairs and recreate the text that they have just read.</td>
<td>Reconstruction of both meaning and form (with an emphasis on passive sentence production)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The teacher gives back the copies and asks the students to compare and contrast their passages with the original one.</td>
<td>Reflection on the reconstructed passages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3.3. Meaningful output instruction materials

The way that MOI was presented is based on the study conducted by Benati (2005) (Table 3). The learners in this group were first exposed to the same instructional materials as the other groups. Firstly, there was explicit information about the grammatical features. Later, they received information about strategies, and at last, they were exposed to structured output activities. Therefore, the only difference which caused this type of treatment to be different with that of PI group was that the participants were required to access the particular form or structure in order to express meaning and produce language. As stated by Benati (2017, p. 390), structured output activities have two important features: “They involve the exchange of previously unknown information, and they require learners to access a particular form or structure in order to process meaning.”

Table 3. Stages of Meaning-based Output Instruction and their Purposes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps in Meaning-based Output Instruction</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The teacher explicitly teaches the passive voice.</td>
<td>Provide explicit knowledge as a preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The teacher equips students with useful strategies.</td>
<td>Awareness raising for the production process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The teacher engages students in structured and meaningful output-oriented tasks</td>
<td>Practice target feature via meaningful activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4. Data collection and procedure

A pretest which was the interpretation task was administered a few weeks before the beginning of the instructional period. It was also used to eliminate subjects from the original pool. Anyone who scored 60% or above on the assessment measure was not included in the final pool. The test included two types of questions: interpretation and production.
The first and second task (see Appendix A) included five sentences which required the learners to identify the agent and the patient of the sentences. The third task asked the participants to choose the appropriate answer, keeping in mind that the type of voice they choose is important. As to the fourth task, the participants were asked to choose the sentence with an appropriate voice based on the given situation. All in all, there were 17 items which assessed the participants' comprehension of passive voice.

To test the participants' production, the fifth, the sixth and the seventh tasks (see Appendix A) were employed. The fifth task asked the subjects to translate four simple English sentences into Farsi. There were five sentences in the sixth task and participants were asked to fill in the blanks with suitable voices. In the seventh task, the participants were supposed to read the story and fill in the blanks. Key vocabulary items with clear definitions were written on the board beforehand. The difference between the sixth and the seventh task was that the seventh task was more contextualized and had larger discourse. On the whole, there were 17 items in the production section. Contrary to Qin's (2008) study in which the participants were asked to translate a story to their mother tongue, the translation was not used in this study as a testing tool since the learners were not proficient and experienced enough to do the translation on the discourse level. There was also the concern that their ability to write passive sentences to be affected by their inefficiency to translate the story.

3.5. Data analysis

In the comprehension section, each question received one point. The score was zero for incorrect answers. This type of scoring was done in the production section as well. On the whole, these tasks received 17 points. Each item in the sixth task received one point. In the sixth task, the participants were asked to read the sentences and fill in the blanks. There were five verbs in this part, and the learners were required to read the story once to get the main idea, and then fill in the blanks using the appropriate voice.

In order to compare the treatment groups, we employed one-way ANOVA (F-critical = 3.14) and as a post-hoc test, we used the Tukey's HSD test (q critical value = 3.40). All the statistical analyses were conducted via the SPSS (ver. 22) software with a significance level of 0.05 for all the analyses.

4. Results

4.1. Results of the pretest

The performance of PI, DG, and MOI on the pretest was compared. Based on table 4, the three groups' means are not notably different. In fact, the EFL learners in the present study were similar in their lack of knowledge of how to discern and use
English passive voice at the beginning of the study. Table 5 presents the inferential statistics in this regard.

To test the significance of the difference, a one-way ANOVA was performed (Table 5). Since the value of $F$-observed (.512) is lower than that of $F$-critical (3.14), it can be concluded that there was no significant difference in terms of the groups’ performance on the pretest. Therefore, the three groups were relatively homogeneous before the treatment. Note that since the participants were pre-intermediate EFL learners without any notable knowledge of English passive voice, we merely used the interpretation section of the tasks as the pretest.

Table 4. Mean scores of the groups on the pretest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>7.99</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG</td>
<td>7.95</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOI</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. ANOVA for comparing the performance of the three groups on the pretest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Variance</th>
<th>sum of squares</th>
<th>df.</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>10.36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>478.11</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>8.123</td>
<td>.512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>489.83</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$F$-critical = 3.14  level of probability: $p = 0.05$

4.2. Results of the posttest

As can be implied in Table 6, the mean of PI is higher than the others. In other words, students who were exposed to the PI treatment did better in comprehending the English passive voice statements and its components. To test the significance of this difference, we conducted ANOVA. Table 7 demonstrates that the value of $F$-observed (11.74) exceeds that of $F$-critical (3.14). Thus, there is a meaningful difference between the means of the three treatment groups. The Eta squared effect size (.34) indicates that 34% of the total variance is accounted for by the effect of PI treatment.

Table 6. Mean scores of the groups on the posttest (interpretation task)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>14.48</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG</td>
<td>11.12</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOI</td>
<td>10.90</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. ANOVA for comparing the performance of the three groups on the posttest (interpretation task)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Variance</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df.</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>199.48</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>423.71</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>6.79</td>
<td>11.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>583.11</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F- critical = 3.14  level of probability: p = 0.05

Table 8. Tukey's HSD (interpretation task)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatments</th>
<th>Tukey’s HSD (q)</th>
<th>Cohen's d Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PI &amp; DG</td>
<td>9.20</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI &amp; MOI</td>
<td>9.81</td>
<td>.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG &amp; MOI</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The critical values for q corresponding to alpha = .05 is 3.40

As a post-hoc test, the Tukey's HSD was conducted to find the area of difference. The test indicated that the effect of instruction was due to the following contrasts: the PI was significantly different from the DG group and the MOI group with almost small effect sizes. There was no difference between the MOI and DG group (Table 8). As can be implied, the difference found between PI and MOI is slightly larger than the one between PI and DG.

Table 9. Mean scores of the groups on the posttest (production task)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>10.10</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG</td>
<td>8.98</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOI</td>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>3.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table 9, the mean of PI is again higher than the others. In fact, the participants in this group outperformed others in the DG and MOI groups in terms of the ability to produce English passive voice statements. Table 10 indicates whether this difference is statistically significant or not. The ANOVA conducted on the posttest shows that there is a meaningful difference between the means of all the three groups. Based on the Tukey's HSD test, the difference was due to the following contrasts: The PI significantly outperformed the DG and MOI groups. The calculated effect sizes are in the range of small effect (Table 11).
Table 10. ANOVA for comparing the performance of the three groups on the posttest (production task)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Variance</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df.</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>201.12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>99.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>591.73</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>6.81</td>
<td>5.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>611.38</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F-critical = 3.14  level of probability: p = 0.05

Table 11. Tukey's HSD (production task)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatments</th>
<th>Tukey’s HSD (q)</th>
<th>Cohen’s d Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PI &amp; DG</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI &amp; MOI</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG &amp; MOI</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The critical values for q corresponding to alpha = .05 is 3.40

5. Discussion

As to the first question of the study which sought to compare PI to two other types of grammar instruction (DG & MOI) in terms of their impacts on learners’ comprehension of passive voice, the result of the statistical analysis indicated that the participants in the PI treatment group significantly outperformed DG and MOI on the interpretation task. This is in line with the findings on the effects of PI discussed in the review of the literature (VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993; VanPatten et al., 2009) and also the findings of other researchers (Benati, 2005; Qin, 2008) who reported the positive effect of PI as altering and readjusting learners’ default processing strategy. Furthermore, the findings showed that PI can be a useful form-focused activity which helps learners make form-meaning connections in the process of grammar acquisition. The evidence collected here shows that PI may not only be an effective instructional treatment compared to DG but also to MOI. To put it another way, the MOI did not bring about the same results as PI did. Based on the findings, it can also be concluded that although all three groups received the same kind of explicit information, perhaps, the structured input activities which aimed to alter L2 learners’ inefficient processing strategies might be responsible for a better performance.

As an answer to the second research question, the findings of the present study support the effectiveness of PI in improving learners’ performance in production tasks. It concurred with Williams and Evans’ (1998) findings in that DG, which is a sort of awareness-raising instruction, did not help the participants to do well in the posttest study. On the other hand, it is in contrast to Qin’s (2008) finding in which DG group improved significantly both in the comprehension section and the written production section. Although the DG group’s performance improved in the production tasks, the result was not significant in our study. Perhaps, DG was not responsible for
changing the underlying language processing of FL learners since, as was proposed by Alderson (1997), DG “may not be so effective with lower level learners” (p. 365).

Regarding output-oriented instructions, VanPatten (2004b) argued that the output may have some effects on the acquisition by making input more manageable and by “moving elements into more salient positions” (p. 27). Notwithstanding, as he argues, the mere output is not responsible for the implicit system. In our study, DG and MOI, as output-based instructions, improved participants’ interpretation, and production after the pretest, however, the result was not statistically significant. It should be noted that the PI improved participants’ performance on the interpretation tasks much more than their performance on the production tasks (See Tables 7 and 10). Here, a caveat is in order. Although we found that PI was superior to both DG and MOI, this does not mean PI altered the innate processing strategies (Sun, 2008) and is the best instructional type in all situations when it comes to grammar. In fact, language production in output-oriented instructions which include teacher feedback and scaffolding (our study did not include them) may help learners even more in terms of grammar acquisition due to lowering cognitive burden on one hand and raising the chance of output modifications and language development on the other hand (Toth, 2006).

6. Conclusions

As pointed out by SLA researchers (Benati, 2017; Ellis, 1981; VanPatten, 2000, 2007), it is evident that input is necessary. Nevertheless, the way learners are exposed to it may be of a greater importance. More specifically, Benati (2016) asserts that there is a shift of focus in ELT (English Language Teaching) from the original question “does instruction make a difference?” to the more specific question “does manipulating input make a difference?” (p. 65). On the other hand, motivated by the efficacy of FonF approach to teaching grammatical structures, PI has attracted renewed interest in recent years. It has been argued that PI “would increase intake from the input and ultimately improve acquisition” (Husseinali, 2016, p. 115).

Moreover, the power of PI is not only due to its attention to language form but also the strategies in the process of PI by which learners can retain and thus use new grammatical structures during both L2 interpretation and production tasks. Accordingly, it may be the case that PI facilitates L2 grammar acquisition since it includes a combination of elements which is effective for L2 production as well as comprehension (Dekeyser & Botana, 2014), especially for the learners in lower proficiency levels. Therefore, from the vantage point of PI components, SLA scholars should reinvigorate this research stream, especially in different contexts using various linguistic features so as to achieve a broader and deeper understanding of the polyvalent character of this type of L2 instruction. As Dekeyser and Botana (2014) stated, “PI research, if conducted carefully, can provide a better understanding of basic psycholinguistic questions about second language acquisition (the role of
enhanced input, explicit learning processes, or different kinds of practice in skill development)” (p. 2).

The pedagogical implication of the study is that PI, as a FonF instruction, may contribute to drawing learners’ attention to target forms while they engage in meaningful activities. The study also suggests that learners’ early plunging in output practices may be of less benefit since they may not have received the appropriate intake to use it in the process of output practice. Having said that, both input and output-based instructions are advantageous and may be of greater value if they are employed properly as complementary methods in L2 classrooms (Shintani et al., 2013; Toth, 2006). The present study also suggests the view that DG as a form of consciousness-raising activity may have a greater instructional value if learners are proficient and that early demand on learners to reconstruct a text may not contribute to making the form-meaning connection. However, future studies can shed some lights on the issue.

Although the present study implies that PI is an effective instructional approach to FL learners in the Iranian context, as already discussed, there is a dispute whether PI can be considered as a FonF approach since “both explanation and practice occur outside of what are normally understood to be communicative activities, making the technique more a ‘focus on forms’ rather than a ‘focus on form’ one” (Sheen, 2007; p. 162). Additionally, ‘drawing sweeping conclusions’ about the role of PI is ‘premature’ since, as DeKeyser, Salaberry and Robinson (2002) argue, learning and processing a new structure depend on various factors such as “the transparency of the form meaning connection, the abstractness of the structure involved, the similarity with the native language, and the nature of the skill required” (p. 820), we should be cautious not to draw a hasty conclusion that PI as a FonF instruction alter the way the participants process a foreign language.

As the limitation of the study, it should be noted that the present study had no delayed posttest (because at the end of the semester the majority of participants were no longer available) to measure long-term effect of the treatments. Another limitation of the study was the fact that it was not possible to randomly assign the participants to three groups since they had already enrolled in the appropriate classes based on the institute’s instructions and rules.

Last but not least, another limitation of the study lies in the fact that although the teacher had students work in groups, the meaningful output activities used in the present study were not communicative in nature. The reason for choosing such tasks was that there was an attempt to make all the instructional material the same and make sure that the differences in treatment were only because of the treatment themselves (not the different discourses). In fact, production-based practices can be more effective depending on the way they are implemented to foster meaning and communication among L2 learners (Dekeyser & Botana, 2014; Shintani et al., 2013; Toth, 2006).
Eventually, future studies with larger samples and delayed posttests would illuminate the systematic differences between grammar instruction types in a more specific and accurate manner. Moreover, the consideration of the prominent role of language functions along with the forms may give scholars new insights regarding both theoretical views and pedagogical implications of this field of study. This may encourage curriculum developers and teachers to design integrative and flexible grammar teaching methods so as to raise the effectiveness of EFL learners’ learning process, especially regarding more complicated structures such as passive voice.

References


Appendix A. Samples of structured input activities in processing instruction materials

I. Look at the following six drawings. Choose a sentence that matches the meaning of each drawing.

……….1  a) John invites Mary to a party.  b) John is invited by Mary to a party.
……….2  a) The boy chases the dog.  b) The boy is chased by the dog
……….3  a) The old woman fed the child.  b) The old woman was fed by the child
……….4  a) The bad boy beat Ralph  b) The bad boy was beaten by Ralph
……….5  a) The spider caught the big insect  b) The spider was caught by the insect
……….6  a) He pinched the child  b) He was pinched by the child

(Pictures provided on a separate sheet)

II. The following is a story about a farmer and a snake. Choose a sentence that fits the meaning of each context. (Please refer to Dictogloss Task Passage 2 in Appendix B for the complete story.)

On a cold day in winter, a snake is very hungry.

1. The snake (go) out for food.  a) goes  b) is gone
2. It is snowing. The snake (freeze) on a road.  a) freezes  b) is frozen
3. The snake (pick up) by the farmer  a) picks up  b) is picked up
4. At that time a farmer (pass) by.  a) passes  b) is passed
5. The snake (find) by the farmer  a) finds  b) is found
6. The farmer (bite) by the snake.  a) bites  b) is bitten
7. The farmer (ask) the snake ‘why did you hurt me?  a) asks  b) is asked
8. The snake (leave) the farmer.  a) leaves  b) is left

III. You will hear a story about a tiger and a rabbit. Then answer the following questions:

1. Who sees the ball?
2. Who pushes the ball?
3. The ball is stopped by what?
4. Who pulls the rabbit?
5. Who killed the tiger?
6. Who holds the rabbit?
(Please refer to Dictogloss Task Passage 1 in Appendix B for the complete story.)

IV. Listen to the instructor making a series of statements. Check whether you have seen these things before or not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>7.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
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</table>

Instructor’s script
1. A thief followed a policeman.
2. A cat was chased by a dog.
3. A car collided with a tree or a wall.
4. You were asked to stay in your bed because you were sick.
5. A student was taught by a classmate.

V. Listen to the instructor making a series of statements. Check whether you have experienced these things before or not.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Instructor’s script
1. You were invited by a friend to dinner.
2. You were helped by others.
3. You were bitten by an insect.
4. You were treated with an injection.
5. You were advised to study hard.
Appendix B. Dictogloss task passages

1 Dictogloss task passage 1
One day a tiger is hungry. He goes out for food.\ldots the story of the tiger and rabbit was adapted from Qin (2008).

2 Dictogloss task passage 2
On a cold day in winter, a snake is very hungry.\ldots The story of snake and farmer was adapted from Qin (2008).

Appendix C. Meaningful output activities

I. Look at the following eight drawings and complete the sentences.

1. a. John\ldots\ b. Mary\ldots
2. a. The boy\ldots\ b. The dog\ldots
3. a. The old woman\ldots\ b. The child\ldots
4. The bad boy\ldots\ b. Ralph\ldots
5. The big insect\ldots\ b. The spider\ldots
6. The child\ldots\ b. He\ldots

(Pictures provided on a separate sheet)

II. After reading the story about a farmer and a snake, fill in the blanks. You have 10 minutes time to read the story and return the paper to your teacher. (The following sentences were on a separate sheet).

1. The snake (go) out for food.
2. It is snowing. The snake (freeze) on a road.
3. The snake (pick up) by the farmer
4. At that time a farmer (pass) by.
5. The snake (find) by the farmer
6. The farmer (bite) by the snake.
7. The farmer (ask) the snake 'why did you hurt me?'
8. The snake (leave) the farmer.

III. You will hear a story about a tiger and a rabbit. Then complete the following sentences.

1. The ball hits a stone and \ldots the stone.
2. The ball \ldots by the rabbit.
3. The tiger \ldots by a gun.
4. The rabbit tries to pull the ball, but the ball\ldots
5. Then the ball \ldots and the rabbit \ldots.

IV. Listen to the instructor making a series of statements. You may have experienced or heard about the following situations. You complete the second sentences using passive voices.
1. If you speed up in the streets, you (given - a ticket - by – a policeman - are)
2. You are an old man and standing up on a crowded bus, (a seat - by - given – you - are - a polite young man)
3. Your friend Reza and you are walking out of the language institute, you both feel hungry, (Invites - you - to a sandwich - Reza)
4. When the country was at war with the enemies, (were - killed - a lot of soldiers - by - the enemy planes)
5. You studied hard. You took the exam. (given - you - are - a good mark - the teacher - by)
6. You were sick. You were taken to the hospital. (given - you - are - an injection)

Appendix D. The test

I. Underline the doer of the action of the following sentences. If you cannot find the doer put N (not mentioned) in front of the sentences.

1. Every day the milkman delivers milk to the neighbors.
2. All the students were taught English.
3. The driver was stopped by a policeman on the street.
4. Sam bought Bob a present.
5. We were told to open our books.

II. Underline the recipient of the action of the following sentences.

1. The dog saw Tom.
2. The workers are paid by the company.
3. It was invented 100 years ago.
4. Blueberries grow on trees.
5. Sue was invited to the party.

III. Choose the correct answer that responds to the following dialogues appropriately.

1. Who ate the apple?
   A. The apple ate by Tom.
   B. The apple was eaten by Tom.

2. Who prepares the breakfast?
   A. The breakfast is prepared by my mother.
   B. The breakfast prepares by my mother.

3. Who repaired the watch?
   A. The watch was repaired by Jim.
   B. The watch repaired by Jim.

4. Who was taken to the park?
   A. The father was taken by the little child.
   B. The little child was taken by his father.
IV. Choose a sentence that fits the contexts provided.
   1. A cow is hungry and wants to eat an apple in the tree. Then the apple falls to the
      ground.
         a) The cow hits the apple. b) The cow is hit by the apple.
   2. A cat hurts a dog. The dog is mad. Then the cat says, ‘That hurts!’
         a) The cat is bitten by the dog b) The cat bites the dog.
   3. There is an accident. One of the drivers is injured.
         a) An ambulance is taken to the hospital by the injured man. b) The
            ambulance takes the injured man to the hospital.

V. Translate the following English sentences into Farsi.
   1. A group of students is followed by a teacher.
   2. Casey gave a gift to a teacher, but the gift was broken.
   3. Ralph was ordered to leave the class.
   4. The table was broken into pieces.

VI. Based on the contexts, fill in blanks with the verbs provided in an appropriate
    voice.

   1. A monkey climbs up onto a tree and sees a bird’s nest. The monkey wants to get
      the nest. The bird is mad. Then, the bird -------- (bite) the monkey. And the
      monkey has to run away.
   2. A cat steps on a dog’s tail unintentionally. The dog feels pain and is mad. Then,
      the cat------- (kick) the dog. The cat says, ‘That hurts!’
   3. The thief breaks into the house. The policeman watches him. The thief --------
      (arrest) by the policeman.
   4. The baby cries. Mother knows that she is hungry. The baby -------- (feed) by
      her mother.
   5. Lisa is happy. It is her birthday. She is given -------- (give) a lot of presents.

VII. Fill in the blanks with the passive or active voice of the verb in parentheses. Use
     an appropriate tense.

   A few weeks ago, while I   was shopping at the supermarket near my house,
   I (1) _________ (rob). I   was at the checkout counter, paying my
   groceries. When
   I (2) _________ (give) my change by the cashier, I (3) _________ (put) it
   in my purse. As I (4) _________ (walk) out of the store, I (5) _________
   (feel) a pull at my purse. Suddenly, I (6) _________ (see) a man run past
   me. I ran back into the store and (7) ____________ (tell) the manager what
   happened. The manager called the police immediately. When the police
arrived, I told them “My wallet (8) __________ (steal)”. Actually, the thief got on the train and disappeared.
The Role of Vocabulary vs. Syntactic Knowledge in L2 Reading Comprehension
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Abstract

Research in literature reports the importance of L2 vocabulary and syntactic knowledge on the learners’ reading comprehension. In this regard, the current study investigated the role of vocabulary knowledge that is disunited into depth and breadth dimensions and syntactic knowledge in the reading comprehension scores of an advanced cohort of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. In particular, this study examined the relationship of vocabulary knowledge (with its two dimensions) and syntactic knowledge with reading comprehension scores of 30 Turkish EFL learners and the extent to which these knowledge types explain the variance in reading comprehension scores. Measures of vocabulary breadth, vocabulary depth, syntactic knowledge and reading comprehension were used. The data analysis procedure included the descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlations and multiple regression analysis. The results showed that the depth of vocabulary knowledge predicts the L2 reading comprehension the best when the effect of vocabulary size and syntactic knowledge is controlled. These findings are discussed at the end of the study with future research suggestions and limitations.

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Keywords: Vocabulary knowledge; syntactic knowledge; vocabulary breadth; vocabulary depth; EFL reading comprehension

1. Introduction

1.1. The scope

Reading, in basic terms, was defined as “dealing with language messages in written or printed form” (Urguhart & Weir, 2014, p.14). Fundamentally, this definition seems to go for both reading in one’s native language and in a foreign or second language (L2). Grabe (2009), however, asserted that being a proficient reader in the contemporary societies of today, in most cases, is equivalent to reading in an L2 (English is referred here) since the number of students who are expected to learn English is measured with millions. Grabe (2009) went on mentioning the reasons why so many individuals are supposed to be competent at reading in English;

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† seraytanyer@gmail.com
• The high English proficiency levels required by academic objectives can be achieved whereby adept reading skills.
• It creates better opportunities of job, communication, travel and educational advancement.
• It allows the individuals to be more knowledgeable about other cultures and provides access to refined studies for career improvement.

Therefore, it is understood that achievement in L2 reading comprehension is of great significance for the learners (Chen, 2009). Likewise, the question of what predicts L2 reading comprehension has become a matter to be discovered and been researched from a wide range of perspectives. To be more specific, the relationships between metacognitive strategies and L2 reading (e.g., Boulware-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhill, & Joshi, 2007; Schoonen, Hulstijn, & Bossers, 1998), between topic familiarity and L2 reading (e.g., Lee, 2007; Peretz & Shoham, 1990), between some affective factors, language proficiency, gender and L2 reading (e.g., Brantmeier, 2003; Cutting & Scarborough, 2006; Sellers, 2000; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997) have been thoroughly studied. In addition to these factors, vocabulary and syntactic knowledge have also been claimed to play some roles in reading comprehension (Grabe, 2009; Laufer, 1997), which makes the attempt to examine these roles a valuable one.

1.2. Literature review and aim

There are a number of research studies in the literature reporting the importance of L2 vocabulary knowledge on the learners' reading comprehension. Research suggests that vocabulary knowledge plays a major role in the achievement of good language skills and language competence (Laufer, Elder, Hill, & Congdon, 2004).

Laufer (1997) asserted that understanding the given vocabulary in any text is the strongest prerequisite for text comprehension. Verhoeven (2000) reached a positive and moderately strong relationship between L2 reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge in young learners ($r = .63$) and advised that reading instruction should take the learners' vocabulary knowledge into serious consideration. Likewise, with young Dutch learners of English again, Schoonen, Hulstijn, and Bossers (1998) reported a higher positive correlation ($r = .76$) between vocabulary knowledge and reading abilities. As understood, these two researches did not differentiate between the proposed traits of vocabulary knowledge. However, vocabulary knowledge, to be specified, is designated to be a multifaceted construct (Boulware-Gooden, Carreker & Thornhill & Joshi, 2007, Cutting & Scarborough, 2006; Schoonen, Hulstijn, & Bossers, 1998; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997). Two of the most significant traits in the vocabulary knowledge that have been widely discussed in the literature are described as the breadth and depth dimensions of vocabulary knowledge (Kaivanpanah & Zandi, 2009; Shiotsu & Weir, 2007; Zhang, 2012).

Breadth dimension of the vocabulary knowledge, in simple terms, is characterized with regard to the sheer number of the words known by the learners (breadth), while
the depth dimension is related to the quality of this knowledge. Vocabulary depth, that is to say, is concerned with the extent to which learners;

• know with what words the known words mostly correlate,
• have an expertise on the different semantic properties of the words (Qian, 1999).

The assumption surrounding the breadth of vocabulary is that in order for the learners to soundly comprehend a text, they need almost 5,000 words (Laufer, 1997), and some researchers took it even a step further by concluding that foreign language learners need as many words as they do in their first languages (L1) (Goulder, Nation, & Read, 1990). As for numbers forming the breadth of the vocabulary knowledge, another suggestion came from Nation (2006). He asserted that foreign language learners are in need of “8,000 to 9,000 word family vocabulary” “for unassisted comprehension” of a text (p. 59). In comparison with depth trait of vocabulary knowledge (as well as syntactic knowledge), breadth of vocabulary was found to be one of the biggest contributory constructs to the L2 reading comprehension (Chen, 2009). The depth of vocabulary, as mentioned earlier, is regarded as possessing a broader scope of knowledge including the ability to distinguish the different semantic and morphological features of a single known word and identify and use it in different contexts appropriately (Qian, 1999). According to Qian (1999, p. 284), the depth trait of vocabulary knowledge entails the knowledge of “pronunciation, syntactic and morphological properties, meaning, frequency and register” (p. 284). Qian (1999; 2002) highlighted the exclusive contribution of depth of vocabulary knowledge to the L2 reading comprehension when the effect of breadth of vocabulary was controlled, thus asserting the relatively more notable effect of the depth aspect of the vocabulary knowledge.

Apart from the effect of vocabulary, the literature also discusses the importance of the syntactic knowledge in L2 reading comprehension. Grabe (2009) wrote that “time, certainty, location, identifiability, event relations and noun linkages” (p. 203) are among the merits offered by the syntactic knowledge to be exploited in the L2 reading comprehension. Shioutsu and Weird (2007) conducted three successive studies with tertiary level Japanese learners of English both in England and in Japan. The findings of all three studies revealed that the syntactic knowledge provided relatively better predictive insights into the reading comprehension of learners as compared with vocabulary knowledge. Similarly, in Iran, Kaivanpanah and Zandi (2009) studied the correlations between syntactic knowledge, vocabulary knowledge and L2 reading achievement of a group of 57 EFL learners. Their findings uncovered that syntactic knowledge contributed significantly more to the reading comprehension than vocabulary knowledge did. Although Kaivanpanah and Zandi’s study (2009) acknowledges the significance of depth of vocabulary knowledge, it also emphasizes the correlation between syntactic knowledge and collocation knowledge. In contrast, Zhang (2012) more recently carried out a study with 190 proficient Chinese learners of English. After having measured the learners’ vocabulary and syntactic knowledge and the reading comprehension rates, he concluded that the syntactic knowledge did
not predict the reading comprehension as much as the vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, Zhang (2012) also found that the vocabulary knowledge alone, with the syntactic knowledge being statistically controlled, contributed significantly to the reading comprehension; however, the same was not applicable for the syntactic knowledge.

As understood, the hierarchy in the nature of these correlations in terms of predictive power is complex. Although both vocabulary and syntactic knowledge are acknowledged to have a part in L2 comprehension, the predictive powers of these two variables vary. In a study, for example, Bossers (1992) ended up with only an insignificant difference between vocabulary and syntactic knowledge in terms of their predictive capacity of L2 reading. On the other hand, Yamashita (1999), in a large scale study, concluded that vocabulary predicted L2 reading comprehension much better than syntactic knowledge. In contrast, Van Gelderen, Schoonen, de Glopper, Hulstijn, Simis, Snellings and Stevenson (2004) found that syntactic knowledge is associated with reading comprehension more than with vocabulary knowledge. Although we have so far presented a part of literature reporting the inter-correlations between vocabulary knowledge, syntactic knowledge, and L2 reading comprehension, it seems that the findings do not unite in a certain point; instead they diversify. Thus, in the light of the literature reviewed, the present study aims to examine whether there is an effect of vocabulary knowledge (e.g. breadth and depth) and syntactic knowledge on L2 reading comprehension of a cohort of Turkish advanced learners of English. The present study is governed by the following research questions to achieve the purposes;

1. How well do vocabulary knowledge (i.e. breadth and depth) and syntactic knowledge predict L2 reading comprehension?
2. Which one predicts L2 reading comprehension better: vocabulary or syntactic knowledge?

2. Method

2.1. Participant characteristics

The participants of the present study were 30 university students majoring at the English Language Teaching (ELT) Department of a Turkish public university. All the participants speak English as a foreign language, having Turkish as the native tongue. The participants are supposed to have relatively high language proficiency since the university mandated a language proficiency examination upon their entrance. The students were expected to either pass this examination or complete a one-year comprehensive language preparatory program before starting to follow the ELT degree program. The participants were selected through the convenience sampling method in which the greatest consideration is the ease of access to the participants (Creswell, 2012).
2.2. Instruments

Data for this study were collected by means of four different tests:

- a standardized English reading comprehension test,
- a vocabulary breadth (size) test,
- a vocabulary depth test and 4) a test of syntactic knowledge.

2.2.1. Reading comprehension test

The reading comprehension test (RCT henceforth) was selected from a TOEFL IBT training book (i.e., McGraw, 2009; p. 69-78). The reading passage handles its subject from various points of views. It requires the learners to distinguish between facts and details and between important and minor ideas as well as to infer about the implied information. Due to time limitation, only one reading passage that had 13 comprehension questions was decided to be given. The comprehension questions had been provided in three formats; a) 11 multiple choice questions with only one correct option out of 4, b) a question that requires the learners to ‘insert a sentence’ (McGraw, 2009, p. 9) where it fits the best and, c) a question with more than one possible correct option (see Appendix A). Each correct answer corresponds to 1 point in the test. Therefore, the maximum score that can be gained from the test is 13.

2.2.2. Vocabulary breadth (size) test

The vocabulary size test (VST henceforth), utilized in this study, was the revised version (Schmitt, Schmitt, & Clapham, 2001) of an earlier test of vocabulary. Schmitt et al. (2001) found a reliability over point of .90 for each word family level. Qian (1999) reported a reliability at the point of .92 for the test. The VST is comprised of five-word family levels; a) 2000 and 3000-word family levels which include the highly frequent words, b) 5000-word family level which includes words falling into a frequency between low and high, and c) 10000-word family list which includes low frequent words, and d) the academic word list which consists of the specific words that are commonly needed for the academic studies. As seen in Figure 1, each of the five-word family level has 10 items with 6 words to be correctly placed onto the definition slots given at the right side. An example VST item is as follows (see Appendix B). Each correct matching in fifty slots makes 1 point and the possible highest score in VST is 150 points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 business</th>
<th>2 clock</th>
<th>part of a house</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 horse</td>
<td>4 pencil</td>
<td>something used for writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 shoe</td>
<td>6 wall</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. An example matching slot from the VST (Schmitt et al., 2001)
2.2.3. Vocabulary depth test

The Word Associates Test, aimed to assess the depth dimension of vocabulary knowledge (Vocabulary Depth Test; VDT henceforth), was originally developed by Read (1993). The test then was refined and revised by Read (2000). This revised version was utilized in the present study which consisted of 40 items with an adjective given at the first place and 8 following words, four of which are somehow related to the given adjective. The learners were expected to circle these four semantically related words and given 1 point for each correct circling. Therefore, the highest possible score at the test was 160. The four related words are present both in the right and in the left box. However, the number of the related words in each box is variant each time to reduce the chance of guessing. An example item from the test is: (see: [http://www.lextutor.ca/tests/associates/](http://www.lextutor.ca/tests/associates/)).

| sudden | beautiful | quick | surprising | thirsty | change | doctor | noise | school |

Figure 2. An example slot from the VDT (Read, 2000).

2.2.4. Test of syntactic knowledge

The structure and written expression part of a TOEFL practice test, found on the web, was utilized for this study as a measure of syntactic knowledge ([http://alvand.basu.ac.ir/~amozesh/English%20Language/ETS%20TOEFL%20Preparation%20kit%20Volume%202%20(reading%20and%20structure).pdf/Practice%20Structure%20H.pdf](http://alvand.basu.ac.ir/~amozesh/English%20Language/ETS%20TOEFL%20Preparation%20kit%20Volume%202%20(reading%20and%20structure).pdf/Practice%20Structure%20H.pdf)). The test had 15 grammar questions in the multiple-choice format with four options and 25 sentences with four underlined phrases one of which was erroneous. The learners were expected to find and circle the error in the given sentences. Each correct option corresponds to 1 point and the possible highest score that can be achieved is 40.

2.3. Data collection and analysis procedure

Data collection lasted for two weeks, the participants were first given the vocabulary breadth and depth tests and the following week they were given the reading comprehension and syntactic knowledge tests. The data collection procedure was carried on during the regular class hours and the participants were informed of the volunteer participation. Those who didn’t take the tests given in the 2nd week were excluded from the study.

The data analysis procedure included the descriptive statistics, correlations and multiple regression analyses. The descriptive analysis revealed the mean scores, standard deviations, maximum and minimum scores achieved in each test. Pearson correlations were computed to explore the relationships between the variables and additionally, a regression analysis was conducted to find out the unique contribution of each independent variable (i.e., vocabulary knowledge and syntactic knowledge) to the dependent variable of the study (i.e., L2 reading comprehension). The statistical analysis was conducted on the Statistical Software Package, SPSS 20.
3. Results

As the first step, a test of normality on the variables were conducted. As suggested in the literature (Demir, Saatçioğlu, & İmrol, 2016; p. 134), if the sample size is less than 35, the Shapiro-Wilk test (Shapiro & Wilk, 1965) can be run. For this reason, Shapiro-Wilk test was used to assess normality in this study. Given that \( p = .474 \) for vocabulary breadth, \( p = .996 \) for vocabulary depth, \( p = .857 \) for syntactic knowledge and \( p = .121 \) for reading comprehension, we concluded that the data in each four variables were normally distributed. As the assumption of normality has been met for this sample, the researchers used parametric tests for analyses.

Table 1 displays the number of participants, mean values, minimum and maximum scores achieved by the participants in four variables. It is noteworthy to remind that the maximum possible scores in each variable measure are different. While the possible highest score in vocabulary breadth test is 150 points, it is 160 in vocabulary depth test, 40 points in the syntactic knowledge test, and 13 points in the reading comprehension test.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>MIN.</th>
<th>MAX.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Breadth</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>132.43</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Depth</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>116.47</td>
<td>9.97</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic Knowledge</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31.80</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.93</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To answer the research questions which seek to reveal if there is any relationship between the vocabulary knowledge measured by two different constructs (depth and breadth), syntactic knowledge, and L2 reading comprehension, a Pearson’s Product-Moment correlation analysis was computed (see Table 2 below). The correlation findings uncovered a significant strong positive correlation between the depth dimension of vocabulary knowledge and L2 reading comprehension (\( r = .718, p < .01 \)), which means a direct relationship between the two variables pointing that those who get higher scores in the vocabulary depth test also get higher scores in the reading comprehension test. Our correlation analysis could not find strong or significant correlations between the vocabulary breadth and reading comprehension (\( r = .353, p > .05 \)), and between the syntactic knowledge and reading comprehension (\( r = .295, p > .05 \)).

Table 2. Intercorrelations between the variables of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Vocabulary Breadth</th>
<th>Vocabulary Depth</th>
<th>Syntactic Knowledge</th>
<th>Reading Comprehension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>-</td>
<td>.426</td>
<td>.218</td>
<td>.353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Depth</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>.567*</td>
<td>.718*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntactic Knowledge</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
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Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*
Though not within the scope of this study, the correlational analysis revealed a relationship between the two independent variables of the study, namely between vocabulary depth and syntactic knowledge. As can be seen from Table 2, there is a moderately strong and significant relationship between vocabulary depth and syntactic knowledge ($r = .567, p < .05$), meaning those who had a higher syntactic knowledge tend to have a higher vocabulary depth.

Table 3 below displays the results of the hierarchical multiple regression analysis between the dependent variable of ‘reading comprehension’ and three independent variables whose unique contributions in explaining the variance in the reading comprehension were examined. As can be seen in the table, the R square of the regression model was found to be .536, which means that the three independent variables, altogether, explains the 53% of the variance in the reading comprehension, and this finding was found to be statistically significant [$F(3,26) = 4.23, p < .05$].

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<th>R</th>
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<th>Adjusted R²</th>
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<td>4.23*</td>
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*F is significant at the .05 level

When the model is further examined so as to see the unique contribution of each variable, it can be seen that ‘syntactic knowledge and vocabulary breadth neither have a significant relationship with the reading comprehension nor they have any significant unique contribution to the variance in the reading comprehension. On the other hand, the third variable in the model, vocabulary depth knowledge, has a significant R square change value of .361, which means that controlling for the other variables, it significantly explains the 36% of the variance in L2 reading comprehension scores.

4. Discussion

The purpose of this study has been to investigate whether there is an effect of vocabulary knowledge (e.g. breadth and depth) and syntactic knowledge on the L2 reading comprehension of a cohort of Turkish ELT students. To do so, in our study, we computed correlational and regression analyses between vocabulary/syntactic knowledge scores and L2 reading comprehension scores obtained. As our results indicated, although the three-faceted regression model significantly explains 53% of the variance, the strongest predictor of the L2 reading comprehension was found to be the knowledge of vocabulary depth.

The Pearson correlation coefficient scores were higher than .60 ($r = .718, p < .01$) merely for the vocabulary depth variable, which means that there is a positively
strong and statistically significant relationship between vocabulary depth and L2 reading comprehension scores. This finding pointed out that a higher level of vocabulary depth knowledge is likely to lead to higher scores in an L2 reading measurement. Moreover, the hierarchical regression analysis also revealed that 36% of the total variance in the L2 reading comprehension scores, over and beyond the vocabulary breadth and syntactic knowledge, can be significantly explained by the depth dimension of vocabulary knowledge alone. However, we found only a weak and non-significant relationship between vocabulary breadth and L2 reading comprehension and it only explained less than 1% of the variance. The results of the current study, thus, provided support for the claims of divisibility of depth and size dimensions as two distinct and independent constructs within the broader zone of vocabulary knowledge (Kaivanpanah & Zandi, 2009; Read, 2000; Shiotsu & Weir, 2007; Zhang, 2012).

These findings regarding the effect of vocabulary on L2 reading achievement is interesting in that the inefficiency of the breadth dimension of vocabulary knowledge put forward in this study is in contradiction with previous studies considering the vocabulary breadth as the best predictor of L2 reading comprehension (e.g., Chen, 2009; Laufer, 1997; Zhang, 2012). The high predictive power of vocabulary depth, on the other hand, is in accordance with other previous research which (e.g., Qian, 1999; 2002) reported that vocabulary depth is a better predictor of L2 reading success than vocabulary breadth or syntactic knowledge. The relatively higher contribution of vocabulary depth to the L2 reading comprehension might be resulting from its more complicated nature as a construct. The depth of vocabulary, as mentioned earlier, is regarded as possessing a broader scope of knowledge including the ability to distinguish the different semantic and morphological features of a single known word and identify and use it in different contexts appropriately (Qian, 1999). According to Qian (1999), the depth trait of vocabulary knowledge entails the knowledge of “pronunciation, syntactic and morphological properties, meaning, frequency and register” (p. 284). Qian (1999; 2002) highlighted the exclusive contribution of depth of vocabulary knowledge to the L2 reading comprehension when the effect of breadth of vocabulary was controlled, thus asserting the relatively more notable effect of the depth aspect of the vocabulary knowledge. As proposed in the literature (Qian, 1999), the vocabulary depth entails knowledge of syntax and morphology. This characteristic of vocabulary depth knowledge might explain the moderate and significant positive relationship that our results reveal between syntactic knowledge scores and depth of vocabulary dimension \( r = .576, p < .05 \).

Although Shiotsu and Weir (2007) named the syntactic knowledge as “one of the deciding factors” in L2 reading comprehension, our results, in contrast, found neither any strong nor a significant relationship between the syntactic knowledge and L2 reading comprehension \( r = .295, p > .05 \) nor could we provide support to the claims that syntactic knowledge explains a significant amount of variance in L2 reading comprehension (Kaivanpanah & Zandi, 2009; Van Gelderen et al., 2004). This could be because the reading comprehension in an L2 is a multi-faceted and complex zone
where a high number of factors play a role apart from syntactic and lexical knowledge one holds in the target language. The present study focused only on the alleged contribution of lexical and syntactic knowledge to the prediction of L2 reading comprehension. However, it is well-known that a considerable amount of variance in L2 reading comprehension could be explained by either learner-related or language related elements. To be more specific, the relationships between metacognitive strategies and L2 reading (e.g., Boulware-Gooden, Carreker, Thornhill & Joshi, 2007, Schoonen, Hulstjiin, & Bossers, 1998) between topic familiarity and L2 reading (e.g., Lee, 2007; Peretz & Shoham, 1990) between some affective factors: language proficiency, gender and L2 reading (e.g., Brantmeier, 2003; Cutting & Scarborough, 2006; Sellers, 2000; Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997) have been thoroughly studied and some links between these factors and L2 reading comprehension have been uncovered. Therefore, it should be noted that any research design which aims to explore one or two virtual factors in predicting the L2 reading comprehension will not be able to pose a whole picture. To do so, studies which are determined to explore as much variance as possible coming from different sources are needed to extend our understanding.

5. Conclusions

All in all, in this study, we presented previous research reporting the importance of vocabulary knowledge – positioning either breadth or depth dimension as more explanatory in L2 reading comprehension- and the importance of syntactic knowledge. Considering the complex nature and inter-correlations between these variables and not without limitations, our study showed that the depth of vocabulary knowledge predicts the L2 reading comprehension the best when the effect of vocabulary breadth and syntactic knowledge is controlled. We should note that the results of the current study are confined to the small number of participants. Therefore, it is best not to conclude that vocabulary breadth and syntactic knowledge is unimportant, instead, our results should be viewed as a hierarchy of variables (e.g., vocabulary and syntactic knowledge) in terms of importance and contribution to the L2 reading comprehension.

The results of the current study may reveal some helpful inferences for the EFL teachers. A clear understanding of EFL students’ vocabulary knowledge may guide EFL teachers -as test developers- to develop reading tests which are more suitable to their students’ competence. As Qian (1999; 2002) proposed, vocabulary depth as a vital dimension of vocabulary knowledge entails different semantic and morphological features of a single known word and identify and use it in different contexts appropriately. With this respect, EFL teachers and course book writers should consider these dimensions of vocabulary knowledge and weigh polysemy, synonymy, and collocational patterns of vocabulary items in their teaching and learning materials. The fact that vocabulary depth has shown the strongest correlation with reading comprehension as well as its significant explanation of variance shows that besides the fundamental meaning of a word, “pronunciation, syntactic and morphological properties, meaning, frequency and register” (Qian, 1999; p. 284) should not be overlooked in teaching EFL reading contexts.
Although our study provides evidence to the notion that vocabulary is the essence of language (Zimmerman, 1997), the results should be taken with a great deal of caution as the number of our participants is limited to make wide-range generalizations related to the roles of vocabulary and syntactic knowledge on reading comprehension. The future studies should include a much greater number of participants to increase the generalizability scope. Another recommendation is concerning the administration of the vocabulary, syntax and reading comprehension measures. We gave out two measures at once in one week—breadth and depth measures and two others—reading comprehension and syntax measures—in the following week, yet, since the administration of two measures at once takes lots of time, the participants might be distracted. We already shortened the reading comprehension measure, however, if it had been longer, it could have yielded more sound comprehension results. In conclusion, the ease of administration should be assured in future research designs.

References


Appendix A. Sample extracts from reading comprehension test (McGraw, 2009; pp. 69-78)

**PRACTICE SET 2**

**DESSERT FORMATION**

The deserts, which already occupy approximately a fourth of the Earth’s land surface, have in recent decades been increasing at an alarming pace. The expansion of desert-like conditions into areas where they did not previously exist is called *desertification*. It has been estimated that an additional one-fourth of the Earth’s land surface is threatened by this process.

*Desertification is accomplished primarily through the loss of stabilizing natural vegetation and the subsequent accelerated erosion of the soil by wind and water. In some cases the loose soil is blown completely away, leaving a stony surface. In other cases, the finer particles may be removed, while the sand-sized particles are accumulated to form mobile hills or ridges of sand.*

Even in the areas that retain a soil cover, the reduction of vegetation typically results in the loss of the soil's ability to absorb substantial quantities of water. The impact of raindrops on the loose soil tends to transfer fine clay particles into the tiniest soil spaces, sealing them and producing a surface that allows very little water penetration. Water absorption is greatly reduced, consequently runoff is increased, resulting in accelerated erosion rates. The gradual drying of the soil caused by its diminished ability to absorb water results in the further loss of vegetation, so that a cycle of progressive surface deterioration is established.

In some regions, the increase in desert areas is occurring largely as the result of a trend toward drier climatic conditions. Continued gradual global warming has produced an increase in aridity for some areas over the past few thousand years. The process may be accelerated in subsequent decades if global warming resulting from air pollution seriously increases.

There is little doubt, however, that desertification in most areas results primarily from human activities rather than natural processes. The semiarid lands bordering the deserts exist in a delicate ecological balance and are limited in their potential to adjust to increased environmental pressures. Expanding populations are subjecting the land to increasing pressures to provide them with food and fuel. In wet periods, the land may be able to respond to these stresses. During the dry periods that are common phenomena along the desert margins, though, the pressure on the land is often far in excess of its diminished capacity, and desertification results.

Four specific activities have been identified as major contributors to the desertification processes: overcultivation, overgrazing, firewood gathering, and overirrigation. The cultivation of crops has expanded into progressively drier regions as population densities have grown. These regions are especially likely to have periods of severe dryness, so that crop failures are common. Since the raising of most crops necessitates the prior removal of the natural vegetation, crop failures leave extensive tracts of land devoid of a plant cover and susceptible to wind and water erosion.

The raising of livestock is a major economic activity in semiarid lands, where grasses are generally the dominant type of natural vegetation. The consequences of an excessive number of livestock grazing in an area are the reduction of the vegetation cover and the trampling and pulverization of the soil. This is usually followed by the drying of the soil and accelerated erosion.
Firewood is the chief fuel used for cooking and heating in many countries. The increased pressures of expanding populations have led to the removal of woody plants so that many cities and towns are surrounded by large areas completely lacking in trees and shrubs. The increasing use of dried animal waste as a substitute fuel has also hurt the soil because this valuable soil conditioner and source of plant nutrients is no longer being returned to the land.

The final major human cause of desertification is soil salinization resulting from overirrigation. Excess water from irrigation sinks down into the water table. If no drainage system exists, the water table rises, bringing dissolved salts to the surface. The water evaporates and the salts are left behind, creating a white crustal layer that prevents air and water from reaching the underlying soil.

The extreme seriousness of desertification results from the vast areas of land and the tremendous numbers of people affected, as well as from the great difficulty of reversing or even slowing the process. Once the soil has been removed by erosion, only the passage of centuries or millennia will enable new soil to form. In areas where considerable soil still remains, though, a rigorously enforced program of land protection and cover-crop planting may make it possible to reverse the present deterioration of the surface.

The deserts, which already occupy approximately a fourth of the Earth's land surface, have in recent decades been increasing at an alarming pace. The expansion of desertlike conditions into areas where they did not previously exist is called desertification. It has been estimated that an additional one-fourth of the Earth's land surface is threatened by this process.

Directions: Mark your answer by filling in the oval next to your choice.

1. The word threatened in the passage is closest in meaning to
   - restricted
   - endangered
   - prevented
   - rejected

Even in the areas that retain a soil cover, the reduction of vegetation typically results in the loss of the soil's ability to absorb substantial quantities of water. The impact of raindrops on the loose soil tends to transfer fine clay particles into the tiniest soil spaces, sealing them and producing a surface that allows very little water penetration. Water absorption is greatly reduced, consequently run off is increased, resulting in accelerated erosion rates. The gradual drying of the soil caused by its diminished ability to absorb water results in the further loss of vegetation, so that a cycle of progressive surface deterioration is established.

2. According to paragraph 3, the loss of natural vegetation has which of the following consequences for soil?
   - Increased stony content
   - Reduced water absorption
   - Increased numbers of spaces in the soil
   - Reduced water runoff
### Appendix B. Vocabulary size test – Version 2 (Schmitt et al., 2001; pp. 82-87)

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**Academic Vocabulary**

<p>| 1 area              | 1 alter              |
| 2 contract          | 2 coincide           |
|                     | 2 change             |</p>
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<th>say something is not true</th>
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| 1 debate                    |                                     | 2 correspond           |                                          |
| 2 exposure                  | plan                                | 3 diminish             | keep                                      |
| 3 integration               | choice                              | 4 emerge               | match or be in agreement                 |
| 4 option                    | joining something into a            | 5 highlight            | with                                      |
| 5 scheme                    | whole                               | 6 invoke               | give special attention                    |
| 6 stability                  |                                     |                         |                                          |

| 1 access                    |                                     | 2 bond                 |                                           |
| 2 gender                    | male or female                      | 3 channel              | make smaller                              |
| 3 implementation            | study of the mind                   | 4 estimate             | guess the number or size                  |
| 4 license                   | entrance or way in                  | 5 identify             | of something                              |
| 5 orientation               |                                     | 6 mediate              | recognizing and naming                    |
| 6 psychology                |                                     |                         |                                          |

| 1 accumulation              | collecting things over time         | 2 final                | last                                      |
| 2 edition                   |                                     | 3 negative             | stiff                                     |
| 3 guarantee                 | promise to repair a broken          | 4 professional         | meaning 'no' or 'not'                      |
| 4 media                     | product                             |                         |                                          |
| 5 motivation                | feeling a strong reason or          | 5 rigid                |                                          |
| 6 phenomenon                | need to do something                |                         |                                          |
|                             |                                     | 6 sole                 |                                           |

| 1 adult                     |                                     | 2 abstract             |                                           |
| 2 exploitation              | end                                 | 3 adjacent             | next to                                    |
| 3 infrastructure            | machine used to move                | 4 controversial        | added to                                   |
| 4 schedule                  | people or goods                     | 5 global               | concerning the whole world                |
| 5 termination               | list of things to do at             | 5 neutral              |                                           |
| 6 vehicle                   | certain times                       | 6 supplementary        |                                           |
One Hand Washes the Other and Both Wash the Face: Individuality versus Collaboration in L2 Writing

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Abstract

The aim of this pre-experimental study is twofold: (1) to investigate the comparative effectiveness of individual, pair, and group writing conditions in L2 writing classes, and (2) to explore students’ perceptions about each of these conditions. The participants were university-level Turkish EFL learners studying in the English Preparatory Program of a state university. The data for investigating the effectiveness of these writing conditions came from in-class paragraph writing tasks whereas students’ perceptions were investigated through an open-ended questionnaire and semi-structured focus group interviews. The quantitative data were analyzed by running descriptive statistics analysis, Wilcoxon signed-rank test, and the Friedman test, and the qualitative data were content analyzed. As the findings indicated, when the participants wrote in groups they outperformed those who worked individually or in pairs regarding the (a) fluency, (b) accuracy, (c) complexity, (d) length, and (e) overall score of the paragraphs. Besides, perceived advantages and disadvantages of both collaborative writing (i.e., pair and group writing) and individual writing were pointed out by the participants. Based on the findings, some pedagogical implications and suggestions for further research are presented.

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Keywords: Collaborative writing; individual; group; pair; EFL; writing

1. Introduction

Writing in a second and/or foreign language (L2) is oftentimes considered a challenging, complex, arduous, and a “laborious” process (Nguyen, 2015, p. 707) since it has conventionally been perceived as an individual (in other words, a solitary) activity. In so doing, improving the L2 “writer” has long focused on the individuality of the “writer” per se, and individual writing activities -rather than collaborative activities- have long dominated L2 writing classrooms. Needless to say, a variety of...
challenges which might then create learning barriers for L2 writers might be confronted in individual writing not only in the pre and post writing but also in the while-writing stages.

With respect to the pre-writing stage, when L2 learners write individually, they might have difficulties while brainstorming and organizing their ideas. Especially in cases where learners do not have background knowledge of a given topic or when they cannot activate their schemata, coming up with ideas and then organizing them might pose a problem. During the construction of the text, they may not write fluently or accurately, or they may not use the time effectively. Considering these challenges of individual writing, collaborative writing (i.e., pair and group writing) might provide several opportunities for students to develop the writing ability to write in L2.

For a long time, many teachers drew upon collaboration—that is, pair and group work—mostly in L2 reading and speaking classrooms. Over the years, however, there has been a greater interest in the use of collaboration in L2 writing classrooms, and L2 classroom writing practices have witnessed a shift from individualized writing to collaborative writing. Collaborative writing refers to “the co-authoring of a single text by two or more writers, where the coauthors are involved in all stages of the composing process and have a shared ownership of the text produced” (Storch, 2013, as cited in Storch, 2018, p. 1), and differs from brainstorming in pairs and/or groups and from peer feedback in terms of the active involvement of the coauthors throughout the entire writing process rather than in the pre or post writing stages (Storch, 2018). Using collaborative writing is considered useful for several reasons; nevertheless, most importantly, it increases learning opportunities (Zhang, 2018).

However, in the L2 writing literature, even though there is an array of research which investigated a number of issues including the effects of brainstorming in pairs or in groups, the effect of peer feedback and many others, empirical data are scant regarding the use of collaborative L2 writing. In this regard, this study aims to shed light on the effects of collaboration (pair and group writing, more specifically) on the several areas of a writing product. For the purposes of the study, paragraphs written by Turkish EFL university students are evaluated in terms of the (a) fluency, (b) accuracy, (c) complexity, (d) length, and (e) overall score of the paragraphs. The study also investigates their perceptions toward collaborative and individual writing in L2 writing classrooms.

2. Review of literature

Writing is a sociocultural process as much as it is a cognitive one, and review of the literature indicates that collaborative writing provides remarkable benefits for L2 writers. The benefits of collaboration in writing classes can be viewed from two key perspectives: from (1) a theoretical perspective and (2) a pedagogical perspective (McDonough, 2004). From a theoretical or a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978), social interaction and collaboration are of paramount importance for learning. Thus, collaborative writing helps achieve learning in a social context by highlighting
the distance between the actual and the potential development (ZPD, the zone of proximal development) with appropriate assistance provided “...in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). From a pedagogical perspective, on the other hand, pair or group writing facilitates the development of learner autonomy and self-directed learning in addition to creating a learning atmosphere in which learners can feel more confident and less anxious while interacting with their peers (McDonough, 2004).

Given these two frames of mind, collaboration brings several advantages. For example, learners who are engaged with collaborative activities exercise autonomy by having some degree of control over their own learning (Benson, 2011); learn from each other as a result of the interaction with their peers; and learn in a more stress-free atmosphere. The other benefits of collaboration (of pair or group work) in language classrooms could be juxtaposed as “...enhancing student interaction, lowering the anxiety associated with completing tasks alone, raising students’ self-confidence, and increasing motivation, risk-taking, and tolerance among learners” (Mulligan & Garofalo, 2011, p. 5).

Based upon the effects of collaboration, the following sections present the review of literature under three main sub-headings: (1) individual versus pair writing, (2) pair versus group writing, and (3) individual versus pair versus group writing.

2.1. Collaborative versus individual writing

Building on different perspectives, an array of research studies investigated the effects of collaborative and individual writing activities as well as students’ perceptions toward them. Among these studies, some of them investigated the effects of individual and pair writing activities in L2 classrooms. In a prominent study, Storch (2005) investigated the effects of individual and pair writing comparing the texts written in these two different writing conditions in addition to student reflections on collaborative writing. The comparison of the products showed that pairs produced shorter texts which were better in terms of grammatical accuracy, complexity and task fulfillment. In addition, students’ reflections on collaborative writing were mostly positive even though some of them expressed reservations. Likewise, Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) examined the effects of pair writing and individual writing in two different groups in a larger scale study (N = 96). To this end, the students were asked to write an essay either in pairs or individually, and their performances were compared in terms of fluency, complexity, and accuracy. As illustrated by the findings, pair writing activities enabled students to compose more accurate texts when compared to individual writing; nevertheless, collaboration had no effect in terms of fluency and complexity. In a similar study by Shehadeh (2011), the effects of pair and individual writing were examined in terms of content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics as well as students’ perceptions towards these writing conditions. The findings indicated that collaboration significantly helped students improve their overall writing skills in L2 even though it
had various effects on various writing skills, meaning that it contributed to the areas of content, organization, and vocabulary whereas it had no effect on mechanics and grammar. With regard to their perceptions, the findings showed that the majority of the students supported the use of collaborative writing stating that collaboration contributed to promoting self-confidence, improving writing skills, generating ideas and pooling the ideas together, discussing, planning, and generating the text collaboratively, and providing immediate feedback.

2.2. Pair versus group writing

Other studies, on the other hand, focused on the effects of pair writing and small group writing and learners' perceptions. For instance, McDonough (2004) studied the learner-learner interaction during pair and small group activities. The study investigated whether actively participating in these activities contributed to the production of the target forms or not in addition to exploring both instructors' and learners' perceptions. As indicated by the findings, actively participating in these pair and small group activities facilitated the production of the target forms. However, the students pointed out mostly negative opinions as to the usefulness of these activities in terms of learning grammar. They, nevertheless, expressed that peer interaction was beneficial for practicing oral communication skills. Likewise, Fernández Dobao and Blum (2013) explored learners' attitudes and perceptions towards pair writing and group writing. The students either worked in pairs or in groups of four. Students' attitude towards collaborative writing was overall positive and they stated that collaboration was helpful for L2 learning. Out of fifty-five students, only one expressed that he did not find working in pairs helpful whereas working in groups was helpful for him. With reference to their perceptions, a high number of students believed that collaboration had a positive effect on the vocabulary and the grammar of their writing. In addition, the majority of the students enjoyed collaboration whereas only four of them stated that they would prefer working individually.

2.3. Individual versus pair versus group writing

In another line of research, Fernández Dobao (2012) examined the benefits of collaborative writing comparing group, pair and individual work in terms of fluency, complexity, and accuracy of the written products. The findings demonstrated a positive impact for collaboration on linguistic accuracy. In terms of length, however, those working individually produced longer texts than those working in pairs or in groups. However, no remarkable differences were found with regard to syntactic and lexical complexity.

2.4. Statement of the problem and research questions

Succinctly, the empirical data from the literature illustrate that the use of collaboration in L2 writing classrooms yields mostly positive results. Given the studies presented above, it can be put forth that scant knowledge is available
regarding the potential effects of collaborative writing in the L2 learning domain. Furthermore, the effectiveness of individual writing versus pair writing (e.g., Storch, 2005; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009), or pair writing versus group writing (e.g., Fernández Dobao, 2012) has much been investigated, yet to the best of the researchers’ knowledge, there is solely one study comparing the effectiveness of individual, pair, and group writing conditions on L2 writing (only Fernández Dobao, 2012), and it was conducted with American university level students learning Spanish as a foreign language (SFL). So, it means that no studies have attempted such a comparison in the EFL domain. With respect to this, this study is considered to make a contribution to the EFL literature. Finally, despite the abundant research published on writing in a foreign language, there is still a dearth of empirical studies which should document the effects of individual, pair, and group writing on EFL learners’ L2 writing accuracy, fluency, length, complexity, and their overall score—especially in the Turkish EFL context.

Bearing these in mind, this study aimed to address this lacuna by (a) bringing the (in)effectiveness of three writing conditions—namely individual, pair, and group writing—into light by focusing on the accuracy, fluency, length, complexity, and overall score of the paragraph writing tasks, and (b) elucidating the perceptions of EFL learners regarding these three writing conditions. Specifically speaking, this study sought to address the following research questions:

R.Q.1. Is there any significant difference among the participants’ individual, pair, and group writing conditions regarding the
   (1a) fluency,
   (1b) accuracy,
   (1c) complexity,
   (1d) length, and
   (1e) overall score of the paragraphs?

R.Q.2. What are the perceptions of the participants towards individual, pair, and group writing activities in L2 writing classrooms before and after the treatment?

3. Method

This study employed an embedded mixed methods design (Creswell, 2014) in which the effects of individual, pair, and group writing on the accuracy, fluency, length, complexity, and overall score of the paragraph writing tasks were investigated, which was followed by the qualitative exploration of students’ perceptions towards these three writing conditions.

The study is also a pre-experimental study adopting a posttest-only design (Creswell, 2014). More information has been presented below with respect to the participants and setting, data collection instruments and procedure as well as data analysis.
3.1. Participants and the setting

The participants were 47 Turkish EFL learners (30 female, 17 male) who were enrolled in the English Preparatory Program at a state university in Turkey. They were majoring in ELT and were sampled using convenience sampling. The participants were intermediate level freshmen students at the time of data collection and their ages ranged between 17 and 30 ($M = 18.89$). Originally, there had been more participants enrolled in the course; nevertheless, the international students who had different L1s were excluded from the study for the purposes of the research.

This study was conducted in the English Preparatory School program of a state university in Turkey. In the English Preparatory Program from which the participants were sampled, the students received intensive English instruction adopting a skill-based approach. The class hours for each skill - reading, writing, listening, and speaking- comprised six hours per week; i.e., a total of 24 hours per week. The Writing Skills course was taught by one of the researchers, and the two following course books were used for writing instruction throughout the semester: Great Writing 2 & 3 (Folse, Muchmore-Vokoun, & Solomon, 2010) and Writing to Communicate 2 (Boardman & Frydenberg, 2010).

3.2. Data collection instruments

The data in the present study were triangulated by three data collection instruments: an open-ended questionnaire exploring the participants’ preferences for individual or collaborative writing activities, in-class writing tasks (i.e., paragraph writing tasks), and semi-structured focus group interviews.

The demographic information of the participants was collected through a background questionnaire. Following that, an open-ended questionnaire which was developed by the researchers was distributed to them. It included two main questions about the participants’ preferences for working individually, in pairs, or in groups in foreign language classes and in foreign language writing classes successively. The questions were followed by a prompt asking further explanations or clarifications for the preferences they stated.

In-class writing tasks consisted of three different paragraphs written by the participants individually, in pairs, and in groups. In fact, starting from the first week of the 14-week semester, the participants were assigned paragraph writing tasks and wrote them in the classroom environment as a course requirement throughout this time period; i.e., they wrote 14 paragraphs throughout the semester. However, the data for this study were collected only from the last three paragraphs which were written individually, in pairs, and in groups consecutively (for the details, please see the Procedure section). For both pair and group writing activities, the participants were matched randomly. For each paragraph writing condition, the participants were given a prompt (see Appendix A for the paragraph writing prompts) and they were
required to narrow down the topic discussing with their friends (especially for collaborative writing activities).

In addition, semi-structured focus group interviews (see Appendix B) were further conducted in order to obtain in-depth information about learners’ perceptions towards both individual and collaborative writing in L2 writing classrooms.

3.3. Procedure

This study was conducted over a 14-week semester in the Writing Skills course in the English Preparatory School program. At the beginning of the semester, the instructor had an orientation session with the students by informing them about the course content and materials, and took their consents for the study during the first week. For conducting pair and collaborative writing tasks in the classroom, necessary instructions regarding collaborative writing tasks were also provided by the instructor, and she answered the students’ questions regarding these conditions. Prior to the study, the participants were then given an open-ended pre-questionnaire in order to explore their perceptions about writing individually, as a pair, and as a group. The participants were told that they were free to express themselves in any language that they felt comfortable with, and all of them responded to the questions in Turkish.

Afterward, the instructor started the course which she taught over a 14-week semester. In accordance with the course syllabus prepared by the instructor, the participants had a paragraph writing task each week. The in-class writing tasks were written in three different conditions -namely individually, in pairs, and in groups- continuously throughout the semester. The participants wrote paragraphs during an academic term -for 14 weeks- and they continuously worked in three different conditions. The instructor also made sure that each group member actively took part in the writing process when they worked in pairs and in groups, by actively monitoring and guiding them. All the students enrolled for the course \((N = 47)\) were required to carry out the activities provided by their instructor during the regular classroom hours, and all the writing tasks were a part of their course requirements; however, only the data obtained from the participants who had provided their consents were used for this study. Data collection for this study started during the 12th week of the semester so that the participants were familiar with each other (for collaborative writing) and got used to working as pairs or groups. Throughout all the sessions -i.e. individual, pair and group work- in the semester, the same routine in a cyclical way was followed and guided by the instructor: Time allotted for brainstorming of the ideas and outlining was 10 minutes, and approximately 40 minutes were allocated for composing the paragraph in the classroom environment.

After gaining experience with these three different writing conditions for a period of 11 weeks, the participants were asked to write a paragraph individually, in pairs and in groups respectively for assessment purposes for the last three consecutive weeks throughout the end of the semester (Week 12: individual; Week 13: pair; Week
14: group). They were asked to write a descriptive paragraph in each condition, and these three paragraphs written by the participants were evaluated analytically by two trained researchers in terms their accuracy, fluency, length, complexity, and their overall score. At the end of the semester, the participants were given a post-questionnaire, and focus-group interviews with randomly chosen participants ($n = 39$) were implemented by two trained researchers. In addition, the interviews were administered in their mother tongue -Turkish- in an informal and a candid atmosphere so that the participants could express themselves freely.

3.4. Data analysis

The quantitative data which came from paragraphs written individually, in pairs, and in groups were analyzed through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Software (SPSS). More specifically, descriptive statistics analysis and a non-parametric Friedman test followed by a post hoc analysis with Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were used. On the other hand, the qualitative data obtained through focus-group interviews were analyzed using pattern-coding (Dörnyei, 2007). The focus-group interview recordings were transcribed by two trained raters and then coded by using the contextual themes, which were then sorted under certain headings.

The paragraphs written by the participants were analyzed in terms of their fluency, accuracy, complexity, length and overall score. First of all, the sentences and T-units were identified by the researchers, by administering a T-unit analysis (Hunt, 1965). A T-unit refers to “an independent clause and all its attached or embedded dependent clauses” (Storch, 2005, p. 171), and is used for measuring the syntactic complexity. The fluency of the paragraphs was analyzed by the total number of words divided by the total number of sentences in the paragraphs (number of words/number of sentences); that is, the number of words per sentence was measured (as in Fernández Dobao, 2012). The accuracy -linguistic accuracy- was analyzed by counting the number of mistakes in each paragraph. The complexity of the paragraphs, as stated above, was analyzed by dividing the total word count by the number of T-units; that is, T-units per paragraph were found. The length was calculated by the total word count in the paragraphs. Lastly, the overall score was calculated by using a 20-point customized analytic rubric with four categories (grammar, vocabulary, organization, content), developed by the researchers (see Appendix C), in Hamp Lyons’s (2016) words by multiple-trait scoring (Hamp-Lyons, 1986, 1991 as cited in Hamp-Lyons, 2016, p. A1). There were four sections in the rubric as grammar, vocabulary, organization, and content- all of which were scored out of five points. That is, all the paragraphs were scored out of 20 points in total.

In order to investigate the differences across the performances that the participants demonstrated while writing individually, in pairs, and in groups, the Friedman test - the non-parametric equivalent of one-way ANOVA- was used due to the non-normal distribution of the data. If a statistically significant difference was
The results of the Friedman test, to further investigate which writing conditions differed from each other, a Wilcoxon-signed rank test was conducted.

For the purpose of inter-rater reliability and in order to determine if there was agreement between the two raters’ judgments regarding the paragraphs written by the participants, all the paragraphs were first blind-scored by the raters, and afterward these two raters came together in a meeting in which they discussed if there was agreement between the two raters’ judgments regarding the paragraphs written by the participants. All the analyses were made by using blind review; that is, there were no names on the paragraphs while the researchers were scoring the paragraphs.

4. Results

4.1. Results of the open-ended questionnaire

The first item in the open-ended questionnaire aimed to reveal the participants’ preferred working style in foreign language classes. As demonstrated by the pre-questionnaire results, prior to the study, the majority of the participants preferred group (n = 12) and pair (n = 10) work whereas a considerable number of participants preferred to work individually (n = 8). The post-questionnaire results, on the other hand, differed from the pre-questionnaire results. At the end of the study, the majority of the participants preferred individual work (n = 13) whereas the others preferred pair (n = 11) and group (n = 10) work.

The second item aimed to find out participants’ preferred working style, with a specific focus on their preferences in foreign language writing classes. The pre-questionnaire results illustrated that more than half of the participants (n = 20) preferred to work individually, and the others stated that they preferred group (n = 8) and pair (n = 4) work. At the end of the study, the preferences of the participants did not change much, and the results of the post-test showed that the majority of the participants (n = 21) stated that they preferred working individually. The other participants stated that they preferred to work in pairs (n = 7) and in groups (n = 5).

4.2. Results of the paragraph writing tasks

The participants wrote a total of three paragraphs: individually, in pairs, and in groups for a consecutive three-week timespan. Of all the participants, only the paragraphs of the participants who wrote all three paragraphs were included (n = 23) for this analysis. The paragraphs were analyzed in terms of their fluency, accuracy, complexity, length and overall score. Table 1 illustrates the descriptives of these components:
Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the analysis of the paragraphs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Descriptive Statistics</th>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td>14.05</td>
<td>(4.09)</td>
<td>13.95</td>
<td>(2.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy*</td>
<td>10.57</td>
<td>(5.61)</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>(2.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity*</td>
<td>23.78</td>
<td>(8.28)</td>
<td>34.12</td>
<td>(11.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>141.26</td>
<td>(33.38)</td>
<td>147.35</td>
<td>(37.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score*</td>
<td>12.34</td>
<td>(2.06)</td>
<td>15.19</td>
<td>(1.45)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Fluency = the number of words per sentence, Accuracy = the number of mistakes, Complexity = T-units per paragraph, Length = the total word count, M = mean, SD = standard deviation.

*significant difference at the p < 0.05 level

4.2.1. Fluency

As demonstrated by the results of the descriptive statistics analyses, the fluency mean scores were the highest when the participants wrote in groups (M = 15.54, SD = 2.66). The paragraphs written individually and in pairs, on the other hand, had a mean score of 14.05 (SD = 4.09) and 13.95 (SD = 2.90) respectively. In order to investigate whether these differences were statistically significant, a nonparametric Friedman test was conducted, yet the analysis revealed there was not a statistically significant difference among three writing conditions, $\chi^2(2) = 5.429, p = 0.066$.

4.2.2. Accuracy

In order to explore the accuracy of the paragraphs, descriptive statistics analyses were initially performed. First of all, the total number of mistakes in each paragraph was calculated by both researchers and cross-checked for any disagreements that might have occurred. As demonstrated by the results, the participants had the highest number of mistakes; that is, their accuracy was the lowest when they wrote individually (M = 10.57, SD = 5.61). They had comparatively fewer mistakes when they wrote in pairs (M = 5.13, SD = 2.73), and relatively fewer when they wrote in groups (M = 3.48, SD = 1.92). As revealed by the results of the Friedman test, there was a statistically significant difference in the number of mistakes depending on the writing condition, $\chi^2(2) = 22.652, p = 0.000$. To further investigate the differences among the conditions, a post hoc analysis with Wilcoxon signed-rank test was conducted, and all the differences were significant between individual and pair writing ($Z = -3.220, p = 0.001$), between individual and group writing ($Z = -3.974, p = 0.000$), and between pair and group writing ($Z = -2.021, p = 0.043$) conditions.

Furthermore, the accuracy of the paragraphs was also analyzed by calculating the rate of mistakes in terms of word count. In other words, the total word count was divided by the number of mistakes for each paragraph. The rate of accuracy was the highest in group writing condition (M = 66.34, SD = 49.44) when compared to pair (M = 38.18, SD = 27.05) and individual (M = 18.54, SD = 14.03) writing conditions. The results of the Friedman test also demonstrated that there was a statistically
significant difference regarding the rate of accuracy among three writing conditions, $\chi^2(2) = 24.609$, $p = 0.000$. The results of the post hoc analysis with Wilcoxon signed-rank test indicated a statistically significant difference between individual and pair writing ($Z = -3.102$, $p = 0.002$), and between individual and group writing ($Z = -3.924$, $p = 0.000$) conditions. However, the difference between pair and group writing ($Z = -1.916$, $p = 0.055$) conditions was not statistically significant.

4.2.3. Complexity

The syntactic complexity of the paragraphs was analyzed by dividing the total number of words included in the paragraph by the number of T-units. The results of the descriptive statistics analyses illustrated that participants produced syntactically more complex paragraphs when they wrote in groups ($M = 34.91$, $SD = 20.96$) and in pairs ($M = 34.12$, $SD = 11.95$). The least complex paragraphs, on the other hand, were written when the participants wrote individually ($M = 23.78$, $SD = 8.28$). As the Friedman test results indicated, the difference among individual, pair, and group writing conditions was also statistically significant $\chi^2(2) = 11.626$, $p = 0.003$. A post-hoc analysis with Wilcoxon signed-rank test indicated whereas there was a statistically significant difference between individual and pair writing ($Z = -3.133$, $p = 0.002$), and between individual and group writing ($Z = -1.947$, $p = 0.050$), it did not demonstrate a statistically significant difference between pair and individual writing conditions ($Z = -0.578$, $p = 0.563$).

4.2.4. Length

The results of the descriptive statistics demonstrated that participants wrote a mean of 151.87 words ($SD = 28.61$) in groups whereas they wrote a mean of 147.35 ($SD = 37.69$) and 141.26 ($SD = 33.38$) words in pairs and individually respectively. That is, the longest paragraphs were written in a group, which was followed by the pair and individual writing conditions. To further investigate whether the differences in the mean scores were statistically significant, a Friedman test was conducted, and the results did not indicate a statistically significant difference among different writing conditions, $\chi^2(2) = 2.222$, $p = 0.329$.

4.2.5. Overall scores

The overall scores of the paragraphs were calculated by using an analytic rubric while analyzing the paragraphs. The descriptive statistics results showed that the paragraphs written in groups had the highest mean score ($M = 16.60$, $SD = 1.33$), which was followed by the pair ($M = 15.19$, $SD = 1.45$) and individual ($M = 12.34$, $SD = 2.06$) writing conditions. The results of the Friedman test showed that there was a statistically significant difference among three writing conditions in terms of the overall score, $\chi^2(2) = 36.662$, $p = 0.000$. The results of the post hoc test with Wilcoxon signed-rank test also showed that there was a statistically significant difference between individual and pair writing ($Z = -4.212$, $p = 0.000$), between individual and group writing ($Z = -4.111$, $p = 0.000$), and between pair and group writing ($Z = -3.189$, $p = 0.001$) conditions.
4.3. Results of the interviews

Semi-structured focus group interviews administered at the end of the treatment were initially transcribed and then analyzed by content analysis. First of all, the participants were asked in which writing condition they felt more comfortable. One of the participants stated that he/she preferred individual writing because he/she considers writing from an individual perspective:

*I think that writing is something idiosyncratic. Each individual has a different writing style.* (Interview, Extract 1)

Besides the idiosyncratic nature of writing, other reasons in favor of individual writing included the preference for independent writing. One of the participants stated the following:

*I do not like the effect of someone else while writing something.* (Interview, Extract 2)

Another participant similarly stated that “I would like to tell my ideas with my own words and sentences” (Interview, Extract 3), similar to the participant who stated that he/she can save time when he/she writes individually:

*Individual writing is more practical while putting the ideas on paper, but in terms of finding the ideas, I enjoyed pair work.* (Interview, Extract 4)

When further asked the advantages and disadvantages of writing individually, the participants stated advantages such as self-improvement and monitoring their self-improvement. Moreover, they think when L2 learners write individually, they can manage their time more effectively. Since they write faster, they think it is time-saving when compared to writing collaboratively. They also stated that they can write effectively and independently, and organizing the writing process is easier this way, as one of the participants maintained: “*Individual writing is more practical while putting the ideas on paper*” (Interview, Extract 4).

The perceived disadvantages of individual writing, on the other hand, are that the participants feel they are more prone to making mistakes while writing. Besides, they stated that they have neither counter ideas, nor a control mechanism when they write individually, adding that they have difficulties while brainstorming. Moreover, they put forward that they might experience some difficulties while writing about topics they are not familiar with, which presents another disadvantage for them to write individually in L2 writing classes.

The participants who stated that they felt more comfortable while writing in pairs pointed out a number of advantages. One of the participants, to exemplify, stated that exchanging information is one advantage of pair writing:

*When you don’t have an idea about what you are going to write, you can exchange information. You can endorse your ideas in a more comfortable and detailed way.* (Interview, Extract 5)
Some others who feel more comfortable with pair writing stated that they could correct each other’s mistakes while writing in pairs. Another participant stated that working with a pair helps her/him improve her/his writing:

_Sometimes, it might be difficult to get feedback from our instructors. When I worked with my pair, I could improve myself. However, choosing your partner is of crucial importance._ (Interview, Extract 6)

When the participants were further asked about the advantages and disadvantages of writing in pairs, the number of advantages stated by the participants outweighed the disadvantages. They stated that writing in pairs helps them to exchange information, make fewer mistakes, brainstorm, and learn from their pairs. Especially in the process of brainstorming and the development of ideas, they think pair writing is advantageous since they think they can become more creative and thereby think and write more creatively. As one noted, “_When you don’t have an idea about what you are going to write, you can exchange information. You can endorse your ideas in a more comfortable and detailed way._” (Interview, Extract 5). Moreover, some participants stated that they alleviate any time pressure when they write in pairs. Most importantly, they stated that they could find each other’s mistakes when they write in pairs since they have a chance to correct each other’s mistakes. For example, one of them noted the following: “_Sometimes, it might be difficult to get feedback from our instructors. When I worked with my pair, I could improve myself._” (Interview, Extract 6). On the other hand, regarding the perceived disadvantages of pair writing, the possibility of a clash of ideas, conflicts, and discrepancies, and ineffective time management were among the points raised by the participants in the interview sessions. A participant, for example, stated that pair writing can be “time-consuming” due to the fact that they spend more time in brainstorming sessions.

Apart from those who preferred individual or pair writing, there were also some participants who stated that they feel much more comfortable when they write their paragraphs as a group. Regarding the advantages of writing as a group, the participants stated that they could write more creatively and harmonize different ideas. “_Everyone comes up with a different idea, and these ideas are synthesized_” (Interview, Extract 7) said a participant during the interview. Similarly, another participant stated that while writing in groups, “_One can create a much more pleasant paragraph by blending everyone’s ideas._” (Interview, Extract 8).

The majority of the participants also stated that when they write in groups, they make fewer mistakes, write in a shorter time, and they use a wider range of vocabulary. Besides, they stated that they can learn vocabulary from each other. However, as one of the participants noted, learners can benefit from group writing only if the labor is divided effectively among the group members. In terms of the disadvantages of group writing, among the commonly stated disadvantages were potential conflicts among group members and the unequal distribution of roles within the group. As one of them noted, they might feel dissatisfied due to playing an inactive role within a group. Moreover, they stated that having many different ideas
within the group could be one of the disadvantages of writing as a group. For example, one of the participants stated that “As the number of group members increases, so does the number of problems” (Interview, Extract 9). Some other participants also stated that it can be time-consuming because of ineffective time management.

All in all, the results of the current study have provided evidence on the effectiveness of the aforementioned writing conditions - individual, pair, and group - as well as revealing learners’ perceptions in terms of their preferences for writing in a foreign language.

5. Discussion

In this section, the results of this study are discussed in accordance with the research questions respectively. The first research question addressed whether there would be any significant difference among the participants' individual, pair, and group writing conditions regarding (1a) fluency, (1b) accuracy, (1c) complexity, (1d) length and (1e) overall score of the paragraphs. Regarding fluency, when the participants wrote in groups, they produced more fluent texts when compared to pair or individual writing. This finding contradicts earlier studies (Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009), where they stated that collaboration did not affect writing fluency. However, this finding can be explained with the benefits that the participants indicated such as thinking and brainstorming collaboratively, exchanging ideas, helping each other with the units of language such as grammar, vocabulary, et cetera. Due to these benefits, the participants might have written more fluently when they collaborated in groups. With respect to accuracy, we found that the rate of accuracy was the highest when participants wrote collaboratively in groups. Our results are also in line with their previous research (Fernández Dobao, 2012; Fernández Dobao & Blum, 2013; Storch, 1999, 2005; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009) in which they similarly found that collaborative writing helped learners demonstrate better performance in terms of accuracy on the contrary to individual writing. Likewise, the qualitative data are in line with this finding since the majority of the participants uttered that they can control each other's writing, and they learn from each other. Therefore, it is potential that they benefited from each other and wrote more accurate paragraphs. On the other hand, regarding complexity, unlike the results of Fernández Dobao’s (2012) study where she could not find any clear differences, the findings of our study demonstrated a statistically significant difference among individual, pair, and group writing conditions in terms of complexity. In her study, despite some improvements in accuracy and fluency, no difference was reported for syntactic complexity. However, our participants produced more complex paragraphs when they wrote collaboratively in groups. According to Storch (2005), better accuracy and complexity might be explained by the nature of collaboration since the participants had several chances to give and receive immediate feedback on language while working in groups. Moreover, it must be noted that “pooled knowledge acts as an enabler in collaborative writing activities, allowing learners to produce more accurate texts as a result of shared knowledge”
In terms of the length of the paragraphs, the participants similarly produced longer paragraphs when they wrote in groups. This finding contradicts the earlier findings (Fernández Dobao, 2012; Storch, 2005) who posited that the learners who wrote individually produced longer texts. However, as Storch (2005) put forward, “pairs produced shorter texts, but texts had greater grammatical accuracy and linguistic complexity, and were more succinct” (p. 168). Indeed, what we expect from L2 writers is not the quantity, but rather the quality of the texts. Therefore, considering that we expect more “succinct” (Storch, 2005, p. 168) texts from our students, long or short pieces of writing is not the focal concern of the activities employed for the present study. Regarding overall score, the participants similarly received highest overall scores on their paragraphs when they wrote in groups when compared to the scores they received in the pair and individual writing activities, showing an advantage for collaboration.

The second research question concerned the attitudes of the participants towards individual, pair, and group writing activities, and whether they had attitudinal changes before and after the treatment. It also aimed to reveal whether there would be any significant difference among the preferences of participants regarding individual, pair, and group writing at the end of the semester. The results illustrated that at the end of the semester, the majority of the participants were supportive of individual writing rather than pair or group writing, yet there is not a statistically significant difference in their preferences after the treatment. The results also demonstrated that collaborative writing helped participants generate and share different ideas, learn from each other, and provide feedback to each other. These results corroborate with the findings of earlier studies in the literature. For example, Storch (2005) also found that collaboration helped students to interact on different aspects of writing and to generate and discover ideas as well as to give and receive immediate feedback on language. Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) also demonstrate that collaborative writing encourages learners to generate ideas and exchange these ideas. According to Shehadeh (2011), collaborative writing helps learners “to generate ideas, pool ideas together, discuss and plan, generate their text collaboratively, provide each other with immediate feedback, and put their text in better shape” (p. 296). As also stated by Fernández Dobao and Blum (2013), collaborative writing helps learners share and exchange their ideas and knowledge which leads to “higher creativity and a more accurate use of the language” (p. 375). With respect to their attitudes toward collaborative writing, participants held positive views toward it, yet they valued pair writing rather than group writing due to the disadvantages enunciated by them. On the other hand, regarding individual- or solitary- writing, some participants found it advantageous in terms of time management, writing effectively, independently and faster, and for monitoring their self-improvement. However, as also demonstrated by the analysis of the paragraphs, individual writing is the least effective writing condition since when participants wrote collaboratively—either in groups or in pairs—, they outperformed the performance they individually demonstrated.
All in all, it should be noted that collaborative writing was a new experience for the participants; that is, all the participants were accustomed to individual writing. Moreover, they only produced one type of writing (i.e., descriptive) and these results might, to some extent, have been obtained because of this specific type of writing practiced by the participants. Therefore, the results of this study should carefully be interpreted and considered more suggestive than conclusive. Even though the participants stated the advantages and disadvantages of each writing condition, the results overall demonstrated that collaborative writing is a more effective means for L2 writing.

6. Conclusions and implications

Raising an important question, “Why write...together?” asked Ede and Lunsford (1990, p. ix) nearly three decades ago, and we believe we could answer their question to some extent. With this question in mind, this study basically aimed to compare the effectiveness of individual and collaborative writing in an L2 writing classroom at the tertiary level. The findings indicated that group writing was the most effective condition on all measures - fluency, accuracy, complexity, length, and overall score- which was then followed by the pair and individual writing conditions. Also, the participants overall held positive views toward collaborative writing, yet enunciated some of its disadvantages in the L2 writing classroom- which can be handled in classroom contexts. These so-called disadvantages or concerns can be eliminated through carefully structuring collaborative tasks, and this can be done by ensuring that the elements of group work are integrated into these tasks. Collaboration and cooperation should be promoted since ineffective group work might “…hinder student learning and create disharmony and dissatisfaction” (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p. 68). Simply asking the students to work in group does not mean that they are going to do so; thus, the five basic elements of cooperation (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, pp. 70-71) should be included in collaborative tasks: 1. positive interdependence, 2. individual accountability, 3. face-to-face promotive interaction, 4. social skills, and 5. group processing. First of all, rather than negative interdependence where individual students work against each other and a competitive and individualistic environment is created, positive interdependence promotes a shared responsibility because each group member knows that they cannot succeed unless the other members do. Secondly, group members should be accountable both for their own achievement as well as the group’s achievements. Teachers can evaluate the performance of each member, and give it back to the individual and to the group. By doing so, each member can see how much s/he contributes to the success of the group, and feels accountable. Thirdly, group members promote each other’s success by “…helping, assisting, supporting, encouraging, and praising each other’s efforts to achieve” (p. 71). Fourthly, group members should be taught and maintain the social skills they need while working in groups such as leadership, decision-making skills, et cetera. And lastly, group members should discuss their performance within their groups; i.e., how well or how bad they are doing, what they should do in order to achieve their
mutual goals, et cetera. By making sure these elements are integrated, the aforementioned disadvantages concerning the possibility of a clash of ideas, conflicts, and discrepancies among group members, and the unequal distribution of roles within the groups can be eliminated. And, when these disadvantages could be transformed into advantages by L2 writing teachers, the effectiveness of using collaborative writing activities in L2 writing classrooms would be maximized.

From these results which have also been discussed in depth above, it can be concluded that the social constructivist view of learning should have a bigger place in L2 writing classes. On the contrary to individual writing, collaborative writing increases meaningful communication, helps L2 writers engage in cognitive processes, contributes to learner collaboration, and creates a positive classroom atmosphere. Collaborative writing, thus, can be a powerful pedagogical tool. In fact, good things happen when L2 learners write collaboratively.

Based on these results, several pedagogical implications can be suggested as follow: First of all, teachers in L2 writing classrooms can take advantage of collaborative writing -especially group writing activities- in order to create a positive learning atmosphere in which students feel more relaxed and confident. Secondly, in order to improve the accuracy, fluency, complexity, length, or overall quality of the writing products, L2 writing teachers can also design and implement different collaborative activities. Another implication of this study might be that using collaborative writing activities could also improve learners’ oral interaction and thus could be conducive to both positive feedback and modified input within a Vygotskian framework, which highlighted the role of social constructivism in the learning process. Finally, both teachers and students can design collaborative activities by selecting the topics or deciding on the outline together, thereby increasing the teacher-student interaction. All these activities could also develop learner autonomy, which might help them develop the ability to control their own learning process (Benson, 2011).

To sum up, it can be stated that on the contrary to the general assumption held by many people that writing is an “...intrinsically individual, antisocial” activity (Bruffee, 1983, p. 160, as cited in Hirvela, 1999, p. 8), writing “...does not need to be a solitary act” (Shehadeh, 2011, p. 297) because as one proverb suggests, one hand washes the other and both wash the face; that is, collaboration leads to accomplishment.

7. Limitations and further research

Given the nature of this study, the findings of this study should carefully be interpreted with its limitations. First of all, the study was a short-term study. Even though the participants practiced writing paragraphs individually, in pairs, and in groups for 11 weeks in a cyclical fashion until the data collection procedure for this study started, the comparison of the paragraphs was made out of three paragraphs- with one paragraph for each condition. Further studies which are long-term in their nature, therefore, might provide the results of longer-term effects. Moreover, delayed post-writing-tests can be administered to investigate whether the effectiveness of
these activities are retained or not. Thirdly, the number of participants employed in
this study presents another limitation for this study. We, therefore, believe large-scale
studies might be more explanatory if future researchers want to compare the
effectiveness of individual, pair, and group writing. Another limitation concerns the
proficiency level of the participants since only intermediate level learners participated
in this study. While investigating the difference between collaborative and individual
writing, future researchers should also take the proficiency level of the participants
into consideration. We think that future research can be conducted with participants
at different proficiency levels or mixed-ability (heterogeneous) students, and can
compare the effectiveness of collaborative and individual writing across different
proficiency levels (e.g., beginner or lower intermediate learners), if possible. Finally,
employing only one type of writing (i.e., descriptive writing) presents another
limitation for this study. Further research might, therefore, investigate the effects of
individual and group writing in different types including expository, persuasive, and
narrative writing. We think the results might vary according to the type of writing.
Further research should also focus on the basic elements of cooperation in
collaborative tasks. It is of great importance that all these five elements of cooperation
(i.e., positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive
interaction, social skills, and group processing) are included in further studies where
collaborative tasks are used.

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Appendix A. Prompts for descriptive paragraphs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing condition</th>
<th>Paragraph writing prompt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Describe and explain a popular slang term.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair</td>
<td>Describe and explain the steps of a process (e.g., How to get a driving license? How to shop online?).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Describe and explain a cultural tradition (e.g., Wedding traditions).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix B. Semi-structured interview questions

1. In which writing condition do you feel more comfortable? Why?
2. In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of
   a. individual writing?
   b. pair writing?
   c. group writing?
3. According to you, which kind of writing is more effective in terms of the
   a. accuracy of a paragraph?
   b. fluency of a paragraph?
   c. length of a paragraph?
   d. complexity of a paragraph?

Appendix C. Customized analytic rubric for paragraph writing tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Partially satisfactory</th>
<th>Needs improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always has exemplary and accurate grammar use, with almost no errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often has good and accurate grammar use, only with a few errors which do not hinder the meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has satisfactory grammar use, with satisfactory grammatical knowledge, with some errors that might sometimes affect comprehension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has limited control over grammar, with considerable errors that make comprehension difficult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has very limited control over grammar, with numerous errors that interfere with meaning and legibility.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always has exemplary and accurate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often has good and accurate vocabulary use,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has satisfactory vocabulary knowledge, with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has limited control over vocabulary use,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has very limited control over vocabulary use,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with almost no errors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Has an exemplary paragraph organization with proper introduction, body, and conclusion</th>
<th>Has a good paragraph organization with proper introduction, body, and conclusion</th>
<th>Has satisfactory paragraph organization, but some elements of a well organized paragraph are missing</th>
<th>Has organization below the expectations and most of the elements of a well-organized paragraph are missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Rich in content; has a clear representation and well-developed discussion of concepts/ideas that have clear connections</td>
<td>Good content; has a clear representation and a good discussion of concepts/ideas; most of the time, but there are certain points which can still be clarified and developed</td>
<td>Satisfactory content; has average representation and discussion of concepts/ideas that do not have clear connections, and some parts are unclear</td>
<td>Limited content; has somewhat unclear representation and partial discussion of concepts/ideas that are irrelevant some of the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Superficial and/or minimal content; the representation and discussion of concepts/ideas is very poor/ambiguous, which interferes with meaning and legibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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ICT Competence and Needs of Turkish EFL Instructors: The Role of Gender, Institution and Experience

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Abstract
This study aimed to scrutinize Information and Communication Technology (ICT) competence of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors in Turkey and their professional development (PD) needs in ICT in relation to the variables of gender, institution, teaching experience, and their past PD experience. This study also explored the types of training sources EFL instructors preferred to further their PD in ICT. The data were collected by administering a questionnaire of ICT competence and PD needs of teachers. The participants were 193 EFL instructors teaching at various universities in Turkey. The data were analyzed by using IBM SPSS Statistics (i.e. Mean, Standard Deviation, ANOVA, Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis test). The results indicated that EFL instructors perceived their current ICT competence as low in the seven major areas. However, gender and previous PD experience in ICT played a role in their perceived ICT competence. The study also revealed that regardless of gender, type of institution, previous PD experience in ICT, and teaching experience, EFL instructors reported a medium and higher amount of ICT training needs. The most preferred modes of PD in ICT were immersion or internship activities while the least preferred modes of PD were workshops/conferences/seminars. The implications of the study are also presented.

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Keywords: Professional Development (PD) Needs; Information and Communication Technology (ICT); EFL Teachers; Technology Integration.

1. Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) refers to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunication. These include the Internet, wireless networks, cell phones, and other communication mediums. In alignment with the increased digitalization in education, ICT has evidently become the main
ingredient of the integration where effective and efficient teaching/learning processes are guaranteed as it enables significant functions for both educators and learners. The use of ICT in education has even become a must for today’s teachers in order to provide students with technology-supported learning opportunities and schools have been integrating ICTs into their curriculums for the last twenty years (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen, 2009). More specifically, the integration of ICT into second language learning is particularly important as it is a genuine need for students who grow up with such technologies in the 21st century while learning (Chapelle, 2010). In second language learning, the use of ICT provides many benefits, such as immediate feedback, instant interaction, boosted motivation, and access to authentic resources in and outside the classroom. ICT use also facilitates the opportunities for engaging in intercultural communication and similar encounters (Ibrahim, 2010).

ICT use in language learning and teaching obviously necessitates effective planning and design even more than other fields. One major element in this is undoubtedly the teacher herself/himself. As articulated by Smith and Hanson (2000), technology in education begins and ends with teacher. ICT and computers will remain as only electronic devices unless teachers use them efficiently in classroom practice. Teachers are the ones who transform these electronic devices into useful educational materials. Thus, the power to change or adapt new conditions relies on teachers’ development (Ovens, 1999).

There is no doubt that ICT affects the roles and practices of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in the sense that traditional approaches to language teaching are replaced with the new student-centered approaches; new roles for both teachers and students are set. This requires teachers to be equipped with ICT resources and skills, and be able to teach the content in subject matter while incorporating technology concepts and skills. However, because of tangible and intangible barriers, teachers are not able to extensively exploit ICT. For tangible factors, it is generally about having limited or no access to ICT tools and facilities or shortly physical conditions. But there are numerous intangible factors that are in relation with attitudes, motivations, and beliefs of teachers and learners. This study aims to explore both sides by focusing on the use of ICT by the EFL teachers, professional development (PD) needs of EFL teachers in ICT and their preferred modes of PD in ICT. Besides, it also aims to highlight future prospects and bring some recommendations for public policy making in education.

1.1. ICT in education

Applying the modern technology in-class and out-of-class activities has gained momentum and become trendy since millennium. Computers, digital technology, and Internet as a combined force of forming effective learning environment refine the processes of learning and teaching, where students have been engaged in getting knowledge and applying it in an active, self-directed, and constructive environment (Hismanoğlu, 2015; Volman & Van Eck, 2001). After computers have been introduced,
related items such as scanners, printers, floppy disks and drivers have also been exposed to the market. Then, the concept of Information Technology (IT) has become so widely used in economy and public institutions that the sub-units of those have started to include IT departments in their organization structures. Following this, the Internet and smart technologies boomed and have been brought together with the World Wide Web (WWW), networks, search engines, and e-mails. Thus, along with emphasis on communication through such technologies, the term 'IT' has turned into ‘ICT’ to better express the connection between technology and its affordances for communication. One of the most important features of ICT is that learning and teaching can be time-independent and place-independent. Thanks to technology, everybody can access information any time they want without boundaries of time and place. This makes learning lifelong.

Shawcross (2004) remarked the things that technology is able to bring along in language teaching as these factors: “greater availability, accessibility, and flexibility, integration of media and linguistic skills, constant access to authentic material, reaching larger and remote populations, speech samples and accents, appropriate content matter, feedback and monitoring, enhanced learner involvement and motivation, new classroom dynamics” (p. 2). It is possible to ascertain that while there are these benefits of technology in language teaching, it is worth saying that the future of education is lying on the roads of technological development.

It has been stated by Davis (2006) that computers cannot change things positively without having trainers and educators. Schrum (2000) has also argued that technological knowledge and expertise do not take place in a quick way or by having access to it. Rather, it should be learnt and applied. UNESCO (2011) has reported that having gained basic ICT skills is never enough. A teacher today has to be able to make use of technology in the process of teaching so that the learning process can be as interactive as possible and responding to the learner’s needs. Therefore, teachers are the ones who will enable collaborative environment to be creative learners through applying necessary ICT tools.

1.2. Implementation of ICT in Turkey

There has been a significant step to prompt up education with technology in Turkey. Since the beginning of 21st century, Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has invested in ICT to facilitate and enrich teaching. Some schools were provided with ICT classrooms, education software, computers, overhead projectors, printers and Internet connection (Gülbahar & Güven, 2008). The latest attempt of MoNE to increase ICT support in schools was projected as Movement of Enhancing Opportunities and Improving Technology (presented as FATIH project). It started in 2010 with an overall aim to promote equality in education and efficient use of technology and communication tools. By setting an ICT infrastructure in schools, 570,000 classrooms were equipped with interactive white boards, multi-functional
printers and broadband Internet connection. Besides, all the students and teachers were provided with a tablet PC.

MoNE has been working on a website to use as an Education and Information Network called EBA (http://www.eba.gov.tr/). It aims to broadcast free electronic resources for effective use of ICT tools in classrooms. What is more, besides electronic resources EBA offers videos, images, audios, e-books, discussion groups and educational software to all communities of education. Furthermore, MoNE has launched a school system as a portal. This portal is used by both foundation and public schools for any kind of administrative purpose. Parents are now able to follow their children’s progress at this online platform. Following this, MoNE has come up with the educational software DynEd, which is the abbreviation for Dynamic Education and has been used in language teaching in primary and secondary schools since 2007-2008 academic year. Respectively its use has been compulsory for all levels of schools and students as a supplement to their English lessons since then.

However, Uzun (2015) proposed that teacher training programs (TTP) in Turkey have been largely technologically investigated and modified starting from their establishment, but in parallel to this there has been a mislead or incapacity to apply theory. That is why, the Turkish education system in its technology captivation has faced crucial problems in applying the theory. For instance, integrating ICT into education was a global trend in which technology-backed education was implemented by traditional means and materials. More controversially, the space has been equipped with modern technologies but the mentality of the teachers and learners has not changed enough to activate the change. What is more, TTPs and curriculums have not been updated in an innovative way to alter the educational viewpoints of the teachers and learners. That is to say, there has been a little or limited effort to realize the ideological change from traditional base to digital or innovative base. The current English Language Teacher Training Programs (ELTTP) seem not to be close to having a technologically collaborative, updated, and innovative content. These programs in general comprise traditional approaches, methods, materials, and procedures combined with outdated knowledge.

1.3. Integration of technology in English language teacher education in Turkey

Providing insights into the integration of technology in education in Turkey, Akçaoğlu (2008) investigated the technology integration approaches and practices of 120 in-service and 62 pre-service English language teachers working at foundation universities in Ankara. First, he defined the level of their involvement with the computers in their activities, their computer expertise, perceived barriers behind applying ICT and their attitudes towards computers. He also examined the educational value they attained to ICT exploitation in their language teaching practice and their personal ideas of effective integration. He pointed out that teachers make use of computers at their schools at limited times; the findings also indicated that they had higher levels of instructional computer usage outside the school.
Although these teachers thought that technology would help make their lessons more student centered, they believed applying ICT as a teacher tool rather than a student tool would help them foster higher thinking skills and better learner autonomy.

More recently, Selvi (2015) indicated that participants regarded ICT as a valuable tool and maintained interest in developing their ICT capabilities. In his study, the researcher developed a questionnaire to be applied to 103 participating EFL teachers working in Artvin and its towns. Following the questionnaire, he conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 participants to examine EFL teachers’ use of ICT in their classroom practice. The study indicated that EFL teachers were mostly found to use ICT mostly in classroom and home activities for drill and practice, and also in explaining new information and doing presentation of student works.

The abovementioned studies presented several drawbacks with regard to ICT use and integration to EFL instruction. First, none of the courses promoted the ICT knowledge and/or skills of teachers and trainees at a sufficient level. Second, the pedagogical knowledge given to the participants did not corroborate with the technical knowledge, which actually should have eased the application of pedagogical skills with the technological developments. Finally, these studies proved that the inadequate technical expertise and weaker technical skills would cause avoidance of technology use and development higher education.

1.4. Need for PD of EFL teachers with the use of ICT

With the use of technology, teachers’ roles turn into monitors and facilitators by having less control over transmitting knowledge and this makes learners to be interactive in receiving information (Lamtara, 2014). Hence, the use of technology in the classroom necessitates EFL teachers to use technology effectively to improve their students’ language proficiency in English and requires them to be knowledgeable in ICT in order to integrate them into the curriculum in a way that aims to raise their academic development. Previous research on teachers’ use of ICT in educational institutions has also indicated that the reason why they fail in the practice of ICT in classes is closely linked to little effort or very few resources available for professional development of teachers (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen, 2009). The majority of EFL teachers express that the most important professional development need is teaching English with ICT and to use new technologies in the workplace (Marin, 2015).

According to the study of Akbaba-Altun (2006), one of these problems is the insufficient in-service training courses for teachers, especially in content areas. Training courses are provided by unqualified trainers and are not appropriate for teachers’ needs and levels; besides these in-service training courses also have a lack of hands-on activities and are not offered for school principals and teachers.

Chen (2008) had also made an observatory study on 311 EFL teachers in higher education entities in Taiwan and tested their Internet use in their teaching, and the possible factors that fall behind in the use of the Internet. The results showed that the majority of the teachers (80%) employed the Internet use in their teaching.
Furthermore, it was proven that seven different factors as expertise, external support, perceived capability, beliefs, attitudes, the constructive thinking, and classroom pedagogy had correlated to the use of Internet. However, the teacher’s expertise was the most directly affecting factor on the Internet use.

In a research study administered by Karakaya (2010), the attitudes of English language teachers towards computer and their use of technology in language teaching were explored. The results of the study indicated that almost all of the teachers had positive opinions for integrating technology in language teaching. Nonetheless, they had hard times in integrating technology into their instruction effectively since they did not have professional training on integrating technology into education. Thus, he proposed that in order to make prospective teachers competent in ICT skills in language instruction, pre-service English language teacher education programs should provide technology related courses for their students. It is also recommended that teachers should be provided with in-service training on technology integration in order to realize effective use of technology in education.

Özdemir (2013) took the central premise of his doctoral project to improve the pre-service English Language Teachers’ ICT skills and to help them develop positive attitudes towards the use of ICT in classroom teaching. With regard to this, an online course was attained. The researcher made use of three tools to collect data from 27 participants as fourth grade pre-service students of English Language Faculty of a university in Turkey. The tools named as ‘Computer Technologies Survey’ and ‘ICT Can Do List’ were prepared as pre-test and post-test to depict the change in their attitudes towards ICT, computer self-efficacy and computer technology literacy. The last tool was a semi-structured interview that was employed to get some useful information about the perceptions of the participants on the use of ICT in teaching English. The outright results showed that the treatment of giving an online educational technology course to them did not really have an important impact on the attitudes and self-efficacy of the pre-service teachers about applying ICT in the classroom.

In spite of an increased interest in the use of technology in English Language Teaching (ELT), little empirical research has been conducted in this line of scope, especially from the perspectives of in-service English language teachers’ needs in ICT. The studies done so far generally focus on teachers’ perceptions on using ICT in their teaching or attitudes toward ICT integration into language instruction and very few studies have been conducted on alternative solutions to empower EFL teachers with the necessary knowledge about ICT through hands-on practice. In the light of the unquestionable importance of ICT in EFL education, the present study focuses on Turkish in-service EFL instructors’ PD needs in ICT. First, their technology competence is examined and then their PD needs pertaining to the use of technology in the classroom are investigated. Lastly, the modes of PD preferred by the instructors are identified. The study also aims to provide implications for addressing such PD needs of in-service language teachers in Turkey as well as recommendations.
for further research. Thus, the present study seeks to reach the aforementioned purposes by addressing the following questions:

1. What is the level of ICT competence of EFL instructors in Turkey?
2. What are the desired ICT training/professional development needs of EFL instructors?
3. What are the preferred modes of professional development of EFL instructors?

2. Method

2.1. Research design

The current study was conducted through quantitative research methods based on the questionnaire of ICT competence and professional development needs of teachers. This non-experimental research provides numeric description of opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (Creswell, 2014). In this context, EFL instructors’ general ICT competence levels and their PD needs were analyzed on the basis of the variables of gender, place of work (state or foundation university), teaching experience and their past PD experience in ICT and their preferred modes of professional development were determined by interpreting the mean scores.

2.2. Setting and participants

The population of the present study consists of Turkish in-service EFL instructors who worked at English preparatory schools of 6 state and 5 foundation universities in Turkey in 2017-2018 academic year. The number of people in the sample population was 193 EFL instructors working at different foundation and state universities in İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Kocaeli and Yalova in Turkey. They taught EFL to different levels of learners and their teaching experience ranged from 1 to more than 12 years at the time of data collection. Sampling design of the target population was decided as convenience sampling because participants were chosen regarding their willingness to be part of this study and their availability (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). The demographic information of the participants is presented in Table 1 in number and frequencies.
Table 1. Demographic features of the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>State University</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation University</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>7-9 years</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-12 years</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 12 years</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors having PD in ICT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors having no PD in ICT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3. Instrument

The modified questionnaire in this study was originally developed by Aduwa-Ogiegbaen (2009) to investigate Nigerian in-service teachers’ self-assessment in core technology competence and their professional development needs in ICT. To test the adequacy of the questionnaire, it was revised and a Likert-type scale from 1–4 with ratings aligning with evaluations was adapted as a 5-point Likert-type scale for the current study. All of the items in the questionnaire were adopted. After adaption of the Likert-type scale in the questionnaire for present study, a quantitative analysis of the investigation was implemented to statistically test the reliability of the research instrument. Therefore, each section of the questionnaire was tested with Cronbach alpha coefficient, and for Section B .95, for Section C .98, and for Section D .85 were obtained as reliability coefficients, which showed a strong reliability of the data collection tool. Also, the researcher who designed the questionnaire was informed about using the questionnaire in the research study via e-mail.

The questionnaire in the current study has four sections with 61 items in total. Section A consisted of demographic information of the participants including gender, place of work, teaching experience and whether they have received any training in the use of computers in the past three years. In Section B, respondents were asked to indicate their level of professional skills they have in ICT areas through 25 items. Section C required participants to identify the quantity of training they need in 27 ICT skill areas. In Section D of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to indicate their preferred modes of professional development and rate their preferred professional development modes according to whether they are very high, high, medium, low, or none in their scale of preference.

2.4. Data collection

Prior to the data collection, certain steps were followed for ethical concerns. First, heads/directors of Foreign Languages departments/schools were contacted via e-mail
and permissions for the application of the questionnaire were obtained. The data collection involved delivery of questionnaires both as hard copies and online. In both formats, the participants were informed about steps for administering the questionnaire through the informed consent letter as the initial page of the questionnaire. Before starting to fill in the questionnaire, they were asked to accept that they willingly consent to participate in this research. The return rate for the completion of the questionnaire was 80% of the intended participants (n=193).

2.5. Data analysis

The data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS 22. Prior to the analysis, the missing data pattern was checked and it was found that the data were missing at random and thus incomplete observations were replaced with new data using an expectation-maximization (EM) algorithm. In the entire dataset, 193 participants’ rates for Section B, 182 participants’ rates for Section C, and 146 participants’ rates for Section D were evaluated because of the missing data. Before examining group differences, the skewness and kurtosis statistics were checked for normality and Levene’s test was examined for equality of the variances. It was concluded that the data met the normality assumption for some groups as the standard error was between -1.96 and +1.96 in skewness and kurtosis values. In Levene statistics, as significant p value shows heterogeneity of variances, it was regarded to be more than 0.05 to meet the homogeneity of variances. When the assumptions were satisfied, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used for comparing more than two groups. For the groups in which there is violation of normality and equal variance assumption, the non-parametric tests (Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis test) were performed to compare group differences. The .05 level of significance is adopted for the whole data analysis. For Section D, the mean scores of the eight items were calculated and shown by column chart.

2.6. Limitations

There are certain limitations in the present study. As the target population of the study is the in-service EFL instructors working at foundation and state universities in Turkey and the sample size of the study are limited to 193 EFL instructors, the findings may not be generalizable to the other EFL settings since the instructors’ knowledge, past experience and working places might affect their professional and personal development needs in ICT. Hence, even though the situation might have similarities, the findings should be evaluated with caution while making comparisons as ICT needs in a certain social context might be quite different as well. Also, the scope of this study is English language preparatory programs at universities in Turkey. Future research should expand to K-12 educational settings, adult EFL/ESP programs at language institutions or similar settings in different cities in Turkey and other ELT contexts.
2.7. Delimitations

This study also has a few delimitations. First, EFL instructors working at English preparatory schools at foundation and state universities were purposefully chosen since there are not many studies in the literature administered to English preparatory school instructors. The investigators also selected these participants since they were accessible and their characteristics seemed to be appropriate for the aim of the study. The universities in different cities were chosen regarding their availabilities. In addition to this, as the major data collection instrument, a self-administered questionnaire was preferred in that it provides specific advantages, such as the economy of the design and the fast returns in data collection. Also it has the advantage of diagnosing dimensions of a large population from a small group of individuals (Babbie, 1990; Fowler, 1988 as cited in Creswell, 2014).

3. Results

3.1. Research question 1: What is the level of ICT competence of EFL instructors in Turkey?

The second section of the instrument in this study was used to answer the first research question. In order to measure EFL instructors’ ICT competence, 25 items were posed. These 25 items were collapsed into seven major areas to get a clear indication as follows:

i) Word processing skills
ii) Spreadsheet skills
iii) Database skills
iv) Electronic presentation skills
v) Web/Internet navigation skills
vi) Graphic tools skills
vii) Integration skills

The mean scores and standard deviation values for ICT competence areas were calculated to analyze Research Question 1 and are given in Table 2.

Table 2. The mean and standard deviation values for ICT competence areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.5538</td>
<td>1.7974</td>
<td>1.8275</td>
<td>1.7513</td>
<td>1.4273</td>
<td>1.9462</td>
<td>1.8290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>.72122</td>
<td>.80012</td>
<td>.73748</td>
<td>.81172</td>
<td>.58424</td>
<td>.92784</td>
<td>.89953</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As can be seen in Table 2, the mean values for seven major skills range from 1.43 to 1.95 out of 5. The table shows that EFL instructors assess themselves as having low skills in the seven major skills areas above.

Skewness and kurtosis values and Levene statistics showed that the data violated normality and equal variance assumption. To investigate group differences in terms of general ICT competence levels, Mann-Whitney U test for comparing two independent samples was used and Kruskal-Wallis test was performed.

Table 3. Mann-Whitney U test findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
<th>U Statistic</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>90.11</td>
<td>10993.50</td>
<td>3490.50</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>108.84</td>
<td>7727.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State University</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>102.30</td>
<td>12583.00</td>
<td>3653.00</td>
<td>.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation University</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>87.69</td>
<td>6138.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having Professional Development</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>80.73</td>
<td>5570.50</td>
<td>3155.50</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having No Professional Development</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>106.05</td>
<td>13150.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the female EFL instructors having a mean rank of 90.11 and the male EFL instructors having a mean rank of 108.84, the Mann-Whitney U test of difference shows that there is a significant difference between the male and female EFL instructors in their general ICT proficiencies (p=.02 < 0.05). The male EFL instructors assess themselves more competent than female counterparts.

With the instructors in state universities having a mean rank of 102.30 and the instructors in foundation universities having a mean rank of 87.69, the Mann-Whitney U test of difference shows that there is not any significant difference between instructors in state and foundation universities in terms of their general ICT proficiencies (p=.08 > 0.05). In other words, EFL instructors in both state and foundation universities do not differ in terms of ICT competence levels.

As for the EFL instructors with previous professional development experience (a mean rank of 80.73) and EFL instructors without previous professional development experience (a mean rank of 106.05), the Mann-Whitney U test shows that there is a significant difference between the EFL instructors with and without professional development in their general ICT proficiencies (p=.003 < 0.05). The EFL instructors with previous professional development experience assess themselves more competent in ICT than English language instructors without any previous professional development experience.

To investigate if there is any significant difference between EFL instructors with regard to their teaching experience in terms of general ICT competence levels, a non-
parametric test called Kruskal-Wallis test was performed. Table 4 shows Kruskal-Wallis test findings.

Table 4. Kruskal-Wallis test findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Experience</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>95.82</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.322</td>
<td>.677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6 years</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>92.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9 years</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>92.15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12 years</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>98.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 12 years</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>110.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the instructors’ groups (1-3 years, 4-6 years, 7-9 years, 10-12 years and more than 12 years experience) having a mean rank of 95.82, 92.56, 92.15, 98.52 and 110.16 respectively, the Kruskal-Wallis test of difference shows that there is not any significant difference between instructor groups having different teaching experience years in terms of their general ICT proficiencies ($x^2 = 2.322$, $p = .677 > 0.05$). In other words, EFL instructors having different experience do not differ in terms of their ICT competence levels.

3.2. Research question 2: What are the desired ICT training/professional development needs of EFL instructors?

To determine EFL instructors’ training/development needs, third section of the questionnaire consisting of 27 items was used. Mean scores and standard deviation values were used in order to answer the second research question. The means and the standard deviations for the items in the questionnaire are given in the Table 5.

As can be seen in Table 5, the items in the questionnaire have a mean score of 3.0 out of 5 and above, showing that EFL instructors need a medium and high amount of training/professional development in these areas. To be more precise, Table 5 shows that EFL instructors need a medium training/professional development in 5 out of the 27 ICT areas and need high amount of training/professional development 22 out of the 27 ICT areas.
Before examining group differences, to see if the data is dispersed in a normal distribution way, the skewness and kurtosis statistics were checked and Levene’s test was examined again. It was found that the data did not turn up normally distributed in terms of gender, types of institution, and having PD or not. Therefore, the data was analyzed with Mann-Whitney U test.

Table 5. The mean and standard deviation for the items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Create a document on a word processor</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.5714</td>
<td>2.67724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Operate computers and use basic software for word processing</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.4547</td>
<td>1.50403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Create effective computer-based presentations</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.3077</td>
<td>1.45422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Access information on CD-ROM</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.5934</td>
<td>1.54832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Search the Internet for resources</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.4451</td>
<td>1.68344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Integrate ICT tools into student learning activities in my teaching subject</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.1152</td>
<td>1.31009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Evaluate educational software</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>2.9945</td>
<td>1.20082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Advanced input/output devices-scanner, digital camera</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.1154</td>
<td>1.35959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. ICT for school management grading, attendance, student records</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.1203</td>
<td>1.46450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Electronic research using Internet and other online resources to enhance my research</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.2527</td>
<td>1.50941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Create multimedia documents to support instruction</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.1429</td>
<td>1.38717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Accessing and sending e-mail</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.5604</td>
<td>1.70283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. PowerPoint presentation</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.3681</td>
<td>1.61884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Using computers for grading and producing assignments for my students</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.2527</td>
<td>1.44584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Evaluate and use computers and related ICT tools for instruction</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.1067</td>
<td>1.30326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Desktop publishing</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.1461</td>
<td>1.25967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Drill/practice programs/tutorials</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.1209</td>
<td>1.31574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Use of spreadsheet for several instructional applications</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.1462</td>
<td>1.30274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Use of word processor for my written professional works</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.2637</td>
<td>1.44769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Use of graphics in my word processing or presentations</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.2161</td>
<td>1.30437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Set up my computer and peripheral devices, load software, print and use operating system tools</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.1489</td>
<td>1.36446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. To organize my files, locate files quickly, and back up my files to floppy disk or other storage devices</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.2802</td>
<td>1.48046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. To manipulate/analyze/interpret data and perform calculations</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.1498</td>
<td>1.26357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. To create models or simulations</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>2.9176</td>
<td>1.22984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. To use metasearch tools and subject directories (Google, Internet, public library, Yahoo) to locate materials in my subject area</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.2659</td>
<td>1.51171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Use presentation devices (video data projector, scan converter/monitor, document camera) for classroom presentation</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.1868</td>
<td>1.47099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. To demonstrate ethical usage of ICT materials (e.g., software)</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>3.1012</td>
<td>1.26684</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. Mann-Whitney U test findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
<th>U Statistic</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>91.41</td>
<td>10329.00</td>
<td>3888.00</td>
<td>.976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>91.65</td>
<td>6324.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State University</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>93.56</td>
<td>11227.50</td>
<td>3472.50</td>
<td>.462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation University</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>87.51</td>
<td>5425.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Professional Development</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>99.08</td>
<td>6440.50</td>
<td>3309.50</td>
<td>.148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Without Professional Development</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>87.29</td>
<td>10212.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the female EFL instructors having a mean rank of 91.41 and the male EFL instructors having a mean rank of 91.65, the Mann-Whitney U test shows that there is no significant difference between the male and female EFL instructors in their professional development needs (p=.976 > 0.05). In other words, the female and male EFL instructors are identical in terms of professional development.

With the instructors in state universities having a mean rank of 93.56 and the instructors in foundation universities having a mean rank of 87.51, the Mann-Whitney U test shows that there is no significant difference between instructors in state and foundation universities in terms of their professional development needs (p=.462 > 0.05). In other words, EFL instructors in both state and foundation universities do not differ in terms of professional development needs.

As for the EFL instructors with ICT professional development having a mean rank of 99.08 and EFL instructors without ICT professional development having a mean rank of 87.29, the Mann-Whitney U test shows that there is not significant difference between them in their professional development needs (p=.148 > 0.05). The EFL instructors with professional development and without professional development are identical in terms of their professional development needs.

Regarding skewness and kurtosis values and homogeneity variances, the data distribution was found normal regarding teaching experience of the EFL instructors in this study. Therefore, one-way ANOVA test was performed to see if there is any significant difference between EFL instructors with regard to teaching experience in terms of professional development needs.
According to the values shown in Table 7, no statistically significant difference was found between instructor groups having different experience years in terms of their professional development needs ($F=.213, p=.931 > 0.05$). In other words, English language instructor groups having different experience do not differ in terms of professional development needs.

3.3. Research Question 3: What Are the Preferred Modes of Professional Development of EFL Instructors?

To determine preferred professional development mode, Section D of the questionnaire consisting of 8 items was used. The mean scores were used in order to answer this research question. The means of the rates to the eight items in Section D range from 2.26 to 2.68 and were shown by column chart in Figure 1.

As Figure 1 demonstrates, the most preferred mode of professional development by Turkish EFL instructors is *immersion or internship activities* in which a teacher spends a concentrated period of time working in a lab or industrial setting with
professionals in his/her subject area. These are followed by receiving mentoring, coaching, lead teaching, or observation in the classroom and teacher study groups that meet regularly in face-to-face meetings to further their knowledge in their discipline and ICT respectively. The least preferred mode is workshops/conferences/seminars provided by professional organizations within the country.

4. Discussion

This study aimed to address three research questions on ICT competence of Turkish EFL instructors. The first research question examined the level of ICT competence of these instructors with regard to the variables of gender, type of institution (foundation or state), teaching experience, and previous professional development experience. The findings showed that EFL instructors assessed themselves as having low skills in the seven major skills areas, such as the word processing facilities, spreadsheet facilities, database facilities, web/Internet facilities, electronic presentation skills, graphic tools, and integration skills. One reason for this might possibly be the bias of teachers who are used to teaching English by using traditional methods and this might lead such a perception of having low ICT competence. In Efaw’s (2005) study, for instance, it was claimed that little has been done to prepare reluctant teachers for the computers found in the classrooms in a three-phase program aiming to help novice instructors in incorporating technology into the classroom. The similar finding was echoed in the study conducted by Aduwa-Ogiegbaen (2009) investigated Nigerian in-service teachers’ self-assessment in core technology competence and found that the majority of the in-service teachers have a less than satisfactory level of ICT competence and only few of the in-service teachers have high and medium skills in integrating ICT into the curriculum.

This study has also indicated that gender plays a role in the reported ICT competence of Turkish EFL instructors as the male EFL instructors assessed themselves more competent than female counterparts. Besides, this study demonstrated that there was a significant difference in favor of the EFL instructors having personal development in ICT before. In the light of this finding, it was concluded that having PD in the use of computers in the past was proved to have positive influence on their professional skills in ICT areas. This was also in line with the research administered by Chen (2008) who found out that the teacher’s expertise and experience in ICT training was a positive factor affecting ICT usage directly. The reason for the significant difference was related to the importance of the development of appropriate pedagogical practices in ICT.

The second research question in this study aimed to examine the desired ICT training/professional development needs of Turkish EFL instructors. The findings revealed that Turkish EFL instructors express a need for a considerable amount of professional development in key ICT areas. Previously, certain reasons were associated with ICT professional development needs of teachers, such as unavailable or insufficient ICT, poor or nonexistent Internet connectivity, lack of technical
support, and little effort or too few resources available for professional development of teachers (Aduwa-Ogiegbaen, 2009). In spite of the heavy investment in ICT facilities and professional development for teachers, the majority of teachers has not yet grasped new pedagogical practices and do not have confidence yet in exploiting ICT to support new approaches in teaching (Silva, 2007). In this study, the reported need for ICT professional development in key technological skills by EFL instructors is important and the findings should be considered a call for a systematic and well-designed ICT in-service teacher education program. This study also corroborates with previous research in the sense that in-service teachers are willing to acquire more skills and experience through pedagogical and technical training in ICT (Mulholland, 2006; Sang, Valcke, van Braak, Tondeur, & Zhu, 2010) to be able to integrate ICT effectively into their classroom practices.

It is obvious that in-service EFL instructors in this study are willing and ready to acquire ICT skills. It can be understood that in-service instructors who are open to change through on-going education are willing to try new ideas in the classroom. When eager instructors are given the opportunity to learn new technology skills and techniques, they most probably will show increase in their competence.

The second research question in this study also investigated the desired ICT training/professional development needs of Turkish EFL instructors in terms of gender, type of institution, teaching experience, and their having PD in ICT or not. Overall, these variables did not make any difference in the desired ICT training/professional development needs of Turkish EFL instructors. Thus, this study contributes to the line of ICT research indicating that the length of teaching experience, whether being a novice or an experienced teacher, does not play a role in EFL instructors’ need to improve themselves on the personal and professional level (Solmaz, 2011). Although a few studies argue that teaching experience is a significant factor affecting technology integration (Akçaoğlu, 2008; Saklavci, 2010), this study provides evidence for the necessity of ongoing in-service ICT teacher training programs regardless of the amount of experience in the profession.

The third research question in this study examined EFL instructors’ preferred modes of ICT professional development. The findings demonstrated that EFL instructors mostly prefer to gain practical skills through pedagogical practices focusing on subject mastery, management skills, and use of various teaching tools, including ICTs rather than theoretical knowledge. This suggests that the development of appropriate pedagogical practice is more important than technical mastery of ICTs for them. The literature related to this research question also provides relevant support by putting forward the idea that the factors to be considered by community leaders and public policy makers have changed as teachers’ roles change. As a result of that, EFL instructors are increasingly in need of in-service training support programs for the pedagogical use of ICT in language teaching (Kalogiannakis, 2010). There is no doubt that such training provides a strong base for teachers’ continuing learning and growth in ICT use in their instruction. Regular attendance at immersion and internship activities, doing mentoring, coaching,
teaching in the classroom and meeting teacher study groups may provide more ongoing professional development activities than one-time-only workshops (Lorenzo, 2002; Wang, 2006; Zhou, 2007). These activities enhance improved teacher skills in the classroom by facilitating improved student performance.

5. Implications and recommendations

The questionnaire responses revealed some implications for in-service EFL instructors’ training and program designers in the field. Firstly, EFL instructors assessed themselves as being deficient in seven key ICT competence areas consisting of word processing skills, spreadsheet skills, database skills, electronic presentation skills, web/Internet navigation skills, graphic tools skills and integration skills. The statistical data showed that the male EFL instructors assessed themselves more competent than female counterparts. Also, the analysis of the first research question illustrated that EFL instructors having professional development assessed themselves more competent in ICT competence than English language lectures having no PD. It can be understood from these findings that the difference in ICT competence levels arose between the instructors having PD and other instructors having no PD in ICT because of their CALL knowledge. In that sense, those who feel more self-confident with ICT use and abilities should take a leading role among their colleagues and motivate them. One way to establish such a support system for ICT development for in-service teachers should be collaborative action research studies as a part of the training program. The school/university administrations and program designers should definitely consider the facilitation of such teacher research in ICT.

Secondly, the analysis of the second research question showed that EFL instructors needed a medium training/professional development in 5 out of the 27 ICT areas and needed high amount of training/professional development in 22 out of the 27 ICT areas. We can understand from that result most of the EFL instructors are in need of training in order to use ICT more effectively although they generally know how to use the computer and can benefit from it in various ways. Hence, ICT training courses can be organized for the ELT teachers/instructors and pedagogical training on how to use ICT for communicative purposes should be offered through good examples of effective integration of technology to language learning and teaching. Thus, they should be informed about the efficient use of ICT in the class. Even if a school is equipped with technological devices such as overhead projectors, computers, labs, and smart boards, teachers should be trained for the integration of ICT to use them effectively during the lessons.

Third concrete implication of the study is the top professional development modes preferred by EFL instructors. The data gathered from the research demonstrated that immersion or internship activities in which a teacher spends a concentrated period of time working in a lab or industrial setting with professionals in his/her subject area is the most preferred mode among EFL instructors in Turkey. That is to say, EFL instructors should be equipped with ICT skills and appropriate training on when and
how to use ICT tools appropriately in classroom situations. To realize this, ICT professional development should be an ongoing effort and the focus of professional training in ICT should emphasize the practical aspects such as how to apply and integrate appropriate technologies into the curriculum.

In conclusion, this study indicates that in-service EFL instructors in Turkey are not competent in many skill areas in ICT. That is why they indicated a medium and high level of need for professional development in the ICT skill areas. The major implication of this study is that making technology relevant for teachers is required in designing professional development program for teachers, and the main areas include skills for using the Internet, ability to locate relevant Web sites and level-appropriate materials, and knowledge to incorporate ICT materials into teaching and learning. Based on the findings, following recommendations are made:

- All in-service EFL instructors should have minimum proficiency in the using software, basic word processing, database, and spreadsheet functions.
- They should learn how to use the Internet to search for relevant materials for their lessons.
- These in-service instructors need pedagogical skills, such as classroom management skills needed for mentoring and coaching, to create student-centred learning environments by developing innovative ways of technology use for efficient teaching and learning.
- Authorities should provide educational institutions with equal access of computer technology by distributing government-funded materials.
- Instructors should be provided with scholarships and some motivation to acquire knowledge and skills in ICT. It may include sponsorship of them for immersion and internship activities in higher degree programs coordinated with university professionals.

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BOOK REVIEWS
Review of *Tests, Measurements and Research Methods in Behavioural Sciences*

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Abstract


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**Keywords:** measurement; behavioural science; historical research; hypothesis; research methods

The pursuit of systematic and scientific research by experts and researchers in various disciplines has always been a rigorous activity; the most vital part of this systematic process lies in the research methodology which takes up finding answers to the research questions. The present review analyses one of the most comprehensive books on research methodology. The book entitled “Tests, Measurements and Research Methods in Behavioural Sciences” brings together the requisite qualities and adequate information and resources on a conceptually complicated topic of research methodology. Rajasekar et al. (2006) asserted that “research is a logical and systematic search for new and useful information on a particular topic” (p. 2). Research is an integral part of all disciplines and it demands a significant conceptual understanding, a prudent planning and knowledge of various techniques and methods to be applied and implemented in solving research problems. According to Leedy and Armord (2008), “research is a process through which we attempt to achieve systematically and with the support of data to answer a question, the resolution of a problem, or a greater understanding of a phenomenon” (p. 24).

Tests, Measurements and Research Methods in Behavioural Sciences written by Arun Kumar Singh (2017), is a useful and sound resource for undergraduate and
postgraduate students and research scholars in various scientific majors; it provides a substantial broad-based introduction to research methods in various fields including sociology, psychology, and education. This book consists of three major aspects a) construction and standardisation of tests, b) principles of measurements, and c) principals of research methods; it comprises 23 chapters, categorised into three main parts including: principles of test construction (eight chapters); principles of measurements (five chapters); and principles of research methodology (ten chapters). It mostly focuses on developing the skills required to work on research problems, and the problem-solving nature of the research. It also can be a particularly useful guide for the civil services examination and UGC NET/JRF examination; UGC NET stands for University Grant Commission National Eligibility Test, which is a national eligibility test that evaluates and determines the eligibility of Indian national candidates for university / college level lectureship and for the award of Junior Research Fellowship (JRF).

The first part, which starts from chapter 1 to chapter 8 and focuses on the principles of test construction, consists of an introduction to measurement and evaluation, measurement scales, meaning of test, classification, and characteristics of tests. The majority of the discussions in this part are useful for psychology and sociology students; as most of the illustrations and examples in this part are within these majors only.

The second part, which starts from chapter 9 to chapter 13 and focuses on the principles of measurements, covers the general principles of measurements of intelligent, aptitude and achievement. It is a reader friendly section but again in most of the cases, it presents examples of psychology and medical studies that make the understanding more difficult for students and researchers from other majors. With a kind of balancing in presenting examples from various fields of studies, such as fields of social and cultural anthropology, linguistics and language education, behavioural facets of economics and political science and etc., this part can be considerably useful for all students.

The third part, which is the major part of the book and composed of 10 chapters, goes through the research methodology and problem-solving in research process, gives information about sampling methods, social scientific research, single subject experimental research, historical research, problem and hypothesis, reviewing the literature, variables, research design, statistical analysis, and finally writing a research report and as well as a research proposal. In contrast to the first two parts of the book, which present an introduction to various concepts of tests and measurements and provide the definition of key terms and lexical items in a general manner, part three consists of the major discussions involved in research methodology, which is the main concern of the book and essential to the researchers in various fields with distinct educational backgrounds. Part three, as the major part of the book, is highly
informative and well explained; researchers and students in all majors can enjoy reading and learning from this part; part three can be used as a useful guide within the topics it covers. As mentioned, in contrast to the first two parts which provide only an introduction and general information with regards to tests and measurements, part three specifically focuses of principles of research methodology in an interdisciplinary approach; therefore, the review continues in detail about ten chapters in this part, starting from chapter 14 and ending in chapter 23.

Chapter 14 and 15 cover some of the important topics in research, including probability sampling and non-probability sampling methods, distinguishing features of each strategy, data collection, representation of data, steps for conducting quantitative research and etc. In these two chapters, the author mainly talks about the social scientific research and a broad account of different types of studies. The main purpose of these chapters is to provide the potential researchers with important steps for conducting a scientific research.

Chapter 16 explains about single-subject experiment research. Single-subject research, also sometimes referred to as single-case, is a kind of experimental research in which usually one individual subject participates in investigation and the effect of interventions is vigorously studied on an individual over a period of time (Best & Kahn, 2006). Referring to Schweigert (2006), the author of the book asserts that “single subject designs focus on individual (or, at most a few) but bring with them the rigors and objectivity of the scientific method, in an effort to determine the effect of an independent variable on some dependent variable” (p. 189). This chapter is useful for medical research and particularly in the area of behaviour modification and drug evaluation.

Chapter 17 focuses on historical research. Historical research is different from research conducted by most behavioural scientists. Referring to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002) definition of historical research as “an act of reconstruction undertaken in a spirit of critical enquiry designed to achieve a faithful representation of a previous age” (158); the author further explains that historical research refers to the application of scientific methods to the description and analysis of past events. This chapter gives a general description of historical research.

Chapter 18 provides information about problem and the hypothesis. It gives an explanation on the meaning of problem and subdivides it into two types: a) solvable problem b) unsolvable problem. It also gives explanations on meaning, significance, and characteristics of a good hypothesis. Mangal and Mangal (2013, p. 28) defined hypotheses as “tentative propositions, hunches, or intelligent guesses open to testing as true or false for answering the research questions of the study”. Two suggested points about the hypothesis are discussed. First, the author explains that a hypothesis is a testable statement, which means it displays the relationship between those variables
which are measurable. Second, he asserts that a hypothesis exhibits either a general or specific relationship between variables. On the basis of the degree of generality, research hypothesis can be divided into two types: a) universal hypothesis b) existential hypothesis. In this chapter, some of the given examples are specifically related to psychology research which makes its understanding more difficult for those who do not have enough background in psychology. The sample hypotheses discussed in this chapter are mainly useful for behavioural research; however, it lacks an interdisciplinary approach in explaining the sample hypotheses or rendering the examples.

Chapter 19 gives a detailed explanation on the review of literature with a simple and understandable language; it renders the possible research resources for finding the related literature review and as well as useful procedures for practical search and review. Chapters 20, 21 and 22 provide detailed information of statistical analysis that most of the time students and researchers find these complicated statistical analyses formidable to understand completely. Chapter 21 is about research design. It introduces the criteria of research design in three categories; i.e. capacity to answer research questions adequately, control of variables and finally general legibility. Chapter 22 represents the statistical analysis in detail. It introduces some statistical analyses which can be used in psychology and sociology, but also in other fields of research.

Finally, in chapter 23, Singh (2017) demonstrates the effective and precise ways and steps that students and researchers in various scientific fields need to follow in order to write a successful research report or a research proposal. This chapter provides sound and informative information and a detailed description about the structure or the format of a research report. The language of this chapter is easy to understand and to follow up the discussion and in addition the topics discussed in this chapter are very well organised and systematic. Personally, I think, this chapter is one of the best chapters of the book which students and research scholars can learn a lot about the important steps in conducting a research and authoring a good research report.

Tests, Measurements and Research Methods in Behavioural Sciences is a useful reference book and an indispensable resource for students and researchers who engage and deal with research writing. It provides a significant discussion about the research methodology and renders a detailed description of the essentials of principles of measurements and research methods, which finally results in a successful and outstanding research report.

The book with a comprehensible language precisely explains about the important research concepts, principles and methods in detail. It provides a detailed introduction to various approaches and methodologies in social sciences, sociology, educational sciences, statistical studies, and psychological studies. It covers a significant portion of
theoretical and statistical analysis and has been written in a very precise, efficient, and systematic way. As mentioned, this book proves to be an inestimable and seminal research guide for graduate and postgraduate students and as well as researcher scholars in various research fields in order to conduct and present a scientific and systematic research report or research proposal and to further develop their research competence. It should be mentioned that although this book renders different stages and aspects of research in detail, more examples should be presented from other subject matter fields such as education, economics, linguistics, etc, so that it can widely be used in all other majors and researches.

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Review of *Thinking English Translation: Analysing and Translating English Source Texts*

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Abstract

This book is a welcome contribution to the existing body of research into translation studies. It is a helpful source for instructors of translation courses as well as advanced undergraduate and postgraduate students. The nearest resource it could be compared to is James’s (2012) *Interpretation: Techniques and Exercises* which provides more detailed information on translation techniques for different discourses. Inside a continuum of research, evaluation, and theorizing in translation studies, this book offers implementation samples through authentic translation examples.

The book is organised into four chapters with a brief preface provided by the authors. One useful feature of the book is that the chapters follow a line from theoretical knowledge of translation to practical implementations. This allows readers to get background knowledge on translation methodologies before translation practices, though there is still room for pre-translation preparations. A glossary and an index are provided at the end of the book. The first chapter includes criteria before initiating translation; the second chapter informs readers on some grammar points, and draws readers’ attention to various factors that may affect the quality of translation. The third and fourth chapters include practical activities through ready-made translation examples from different languages. In brief, the chapters fall largely into two categories: theoretical and applied; the first two chapters explore

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ideas and theories whilst the last two chapters intend to put theoretical knowledge into practice.

Chapter One, the longest chapter, aims to establish a general framework for pre-translation analysis; i.e., it informs readers on what to know before starting a translation process, which includes three phases: pre-translation reading, in-translation reading, and post-translation reading. Having indicated the importance of understanding the source text, the authors define the criteria of pre-translation analysis through explanations of specific terms and example tasks for readers. The criteria that the authors mentioned are subject matter, purpose of the translation, genre, format, language related matters like grammar, vocabulary choice, discursive features, organization of the translation, meaning, viewpoint, and culture and context. The explanations of these criteria for pre-translation analysis may help readers to create their own path in the process of prospective translations. At the end of the chapter the authors provide a useful summary of the chapter. Also, key terms are presented to familiarize the readers. The chapter is good for readers to develop an analytical preview of translation.

Chapter Two mentions the importance of unique attributes that every language holds in its structure as every language has its own distinctive features to be taken into consideration throughout translation process like grammatical, lexical and pragmatic (appropriate use of language in context) differences. It is underscored that there is not an eclectic method that could be applied to all translation work; therefore, each translation work is to be regarded as a unique work that necessitates customized translation implementations. Being aware of the importance that register and genre of a source text may have on the target text, the authors provides translation samples from different registers such as recent and older texts, information and advice, specialist and technical, fiction and non-fiction, and newspaper and magazine articles; accordingly talks about the challenge that a translator may encounter if s/he is not qualified in the register that the translation is carried out. In other words, any registers that fall outside the translator’s specialization may affect the quality of the translation, which is why familiarization with genres and registers is of utmost importance for the translation quality. At the end of the chapter, some practical tips on how to overcome the challenges that the context and registers have posed are suggested.

Chapter Three provides authentic samples to illustrate the problems that a translator may encounter in the process of translation. It is aimed at developing a practical approach to source text analysis so that more informed, coherent and appropriate target text may be created. To this purpose, the authors introduce a technique that they have developed; fast-track analysis. The issues that are related to establishing the theoretical foundation of pre-translation analysis in the first chapter are put into practice through the implementation of the technique. The validity and efficiency of the technique is tested through authentic translation samples so that its merits could be witnessed by the readers. This technique is based on two questions: what and how. What questions allow the translator to categorize the source text, thus
understand the small details that should not be overlooked (e.g., what type of text is it?) whilst how questions offer possible ways that the translator may follow in the process of translation (e.g., How is the discourse organised?). In the chapter, you may find many samples; first the full sample texts are given, and then the analyses are conducted in line with the pre-translation criteria mentioned in the first chapter.

The final chapter is fully devoted to practical applications. It expands its scope through some examples of texts from languages, namely, Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish. The text types include fiction, business, administration, tourism, cookery, science and technology. The chapter can be thought as an application area for ideas and theories covered in the previous chapters. Different from the criteria used for the analyses in Chapter Three (pre-translation criteria), the translation analyses in this chapter are conducted according to two strategies which are macro (concise) and micro (detailed). After presenting the source text in English, the translated text in the target language is provided. Then the translated text are analysed based on macro and micro strategies. The activity is good to be able to show weak and strong sides of the translation. This chapter can be thought as an annotated activity chapter as it entirely includes assessment and evaluations of the sample source texts.

Taken together, the book has many merits. The strong point of this book is that it provides numerous authentic translation samples as well as critiques regarding some translation problems. The book also deserves praise with its originality of developing a technique which eases and accelerates the translation process thanks to the successful pre-translation analysis. As known, one of the problems that students in the Departments of Interpretation and Translation encounter is to create a convenient framework before initializing a translation work (Gutt, 2014). Therefore, this book may help them to establish a pre-translation framework for a better understanding of how to approach source texts and where to start. On the whole, the book widens our knowledge of analysis skill for translation process. However, there is still room for minor critical remarks. One demerit of the book is the lack of theoretical information on translation studies. Theoretical information is important in constructing practical knowledge on it. Furthermore, the last chapter is absolutely beneficial, though it would be better if there were not samples from so many different languages since the authors miss providing enough explanation for each sample due to number of languages. The struggle for providing examples as varied as possible is absolutely praiseworthy; however, the number of the samples from each language is not sufficient in understanding the basics of techniques mentioned in the Chapter Three because only a few examples from different languages do not appear to be enough to get the technique. Accordingly, a welcome addition for this book would simply be the suggestion that the authors focus on two languages with most translated text (namely English and French) rather than five languages so that more detailed evaluations and samples could be presented for the readers. The last addition is that more examples regarding the use of the developed technique on each language may help readers be more practical in applying the technique in their own studies.
These minor shortcomings should not detract from the positive contribution that this book makes to the translation studies. Thinking English Translation: Analysing and Translating English Source Texts is valuable for anyone; particularly for instructors who need a practical course book for their undergraduate students. I also recommend this book for freelance translators, who make translation on different genres, in order to critique their own work.

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