Alternative E-Assessment in Language Classes: Recent Experiences and Future Directions

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' perceptions regarding alternative e-assessments in the Turkish tertiary level context. The study utilized semi-structured interviews with a sample of EFL instructors from 17 higher education institutions in Türkiye. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify emerging themes. The results revealed varying perceptions about alternative e-assessments, with six primary themes emerging: impact on learning, workload, academic integrity, digital technology, grading and feedback, and assessment competence. Overall, this qualitative study provides valuable insights into the perceptions of EFL teachers regarding alternative e-assessments, highlighting key areas of concern. The study emphasizes the need to address these concerns in professional development programs that provide teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively implement alternative e-assessments. The results also have implications for the development of effective assessment policies and procedures, optimizing educational practices in the digital age.

Keywords: Alternative assessments, e-assessments, EFL, higher education, qualitative study

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Introduction

In contemporary language education, the transformative impact of globalization on societal and professional domains has prompted a fundamental reevaluation of pedagogical strategies. Traditional language teaching methodologies, which often prioritized grammatical accuracy and linguistic knowledge in isolation, are being replaced by more dynamic and communicatively oriented approaches. This paradigmatic shift reflects an acknowledgment of the critical need to provide learners with the practical skills necessary to engage with a variety of language contexts in an increasingly interconnected world. As educators attempt to develop learners' communicative competence, the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) have emerged as a guiding framework, emphasizing authentic language use and interaction as the cornerstone of instruction. Parallel to these pedagogical developments, assessment practices in language education are undergoing a transformation, which acknowledges the need to assess not only linguistic proficiency but also the ability to effectively engage in real-world communicative tasks.

To prepare students for practical language use in an increasingly globally interconnected world (Johnson, 2009), foreign language teaching has moved towards communicative outcomes, which may ultimately lead to a change in assessment methods. In the past two decades, there has been a shift from traditional high-stakes summative assessments to process and performance-based alternative assessments. As MacNamara (2001) clearly expressed, alternative assessment is a movement "away from the use of standardized multiple-choice tests in favor of more complex performance-based assessments" (p. 329). Briefly stated, Communicative Language Teaching principles are being increasingly incorporated into classroom teaching; therefore, it is clear that assessment should also take into account language use scenarios that students would experience when using the language for communication.

The term 'alternative assessment', which rose in popularity during the mid-1980s, is used interchangeably with 'performance-based assessment' and 'authentic assessment' (Yusop et al., 2022). Alternative assessment emphasizes the ability to use language in real-life situations, creativity, and personal expression, and offers a more comprehensive and realistic evaluation of language proficiency, although it may not provide an objective or standardized measure. Hancock (1994) defined alternative assessment as "an ongoing process involving the student and teacher in making judgements about the student's progress in language using non-conventional strategies." (p. 2). As Gaytan and McEwen (2007) stated, students should be provided with a variety of evaluation methods and assignments to promote multiple perspectives as evidence of learning. Alternative assessments involve objectives that require students to solve problems, apply their knowledge to real-world situations, and be closely linked to their regular class activities (Burkšaitienė & Teresevičienė, 2008). Among the most common types of such techniques in ELT are portfolio assessment, personal response assessments such as journals, reading logs, videos of role plays and presentations, asynchronous

online discussions, self-evaluation questionnaires, self and peer assessment questionnaires, and performance assessments, such as role plays, debates, oral presentations (McNamara, 2001).

Discussion Forums: Discussion forums serve as a valuable alternative for e-assessment in language teaching. These online platforms replicate traditional classroom discussions, enabling learners to engage in written conversations on language-related topics. Participants are able to express their thoughts, insights, and analyses, showcasing their language proficiency and critical thinking skills. The asynchronous nature of forums accommodates diverse learning schedules and thus encourages active participation (Vonderwell et al., 2007). Through these interactions, students can enhance their written communication skills, and receive valuable feedback from peers and instructors. Discussion forums are effective tools for assessing language comprehension, application, and collaborative abilities, providing teachers with insights into individual progress and areas for improvement. With the help of a predefined set of criteria or rubric, teachers can assess students' written language and communication skills. In order for discussion forums to perform this function, they must be well structured with clear guidelines on the content, frequency and length of posts.

Blogs: A blog is an online site that allows learners to improve their written communication skills as they can draft their work, edit, and conduct updates. Blogs provide a space for students to practice language created for a real audience (Pinkman, 2005) and encourage substantial language production and stimulate motivation for learning (Sun, 2009). Some LMSs include blogs as a tool and enable teachers to set up blogs for individual or collaborative group tasks. Like discussion forums, blogs can be used as an e-assessment tool and a rubric for assessment can be utilized for grading (Radia & Stapleton, 2008).

E-Portfolio: An e-portfolio contains digital artifacts such as evidence, reflections, and feedback, and can be used to store evidence of students' achievement and learning (Wang & He, 2021). The advantages of e-Portfolios include their space-efficient nature, ease of retrieval, and the potential for permanence when files are backed up. E-Portfolios have the potential to harmonize pedagogical methods and assessment strategies, likely producing a positive washback effect on language teaching and learning (Fox, 2017; Lam, 2023).

Videos: Beyond their use in teaching, digital video recordings have also been integrated into the assessment of speaking skills as an alternative e-assessment technique. These are usually video files of learners speaking in English on a given topic for a pre-determined period and uploaded to a designated online repository (Göktürk, 2016). By employing alternative e-assessments involving video recordings of speaking performance, students can track their skill development more comprehensively compared with traditional achievement exams (Safari & Koosha, 2016). Research shows

that assessment practices involving video recordings of oral performance increase students' confidence in speaking and risk-taking behaviors (Kim, 2014; Göktürk, 2016).

Self/Peer assessment: Self and peer assessment refers to the use of digital tools and platforms to facilitate students' active involvement in evaluating their own and their peers' language skills. These assessment techniques leverage technology to enhance assessment, and promote a more interactive and learner-centered approach to evaluation. Alderson (2005) regarded self-assessment as a vital element in language acquisition, emphasizing that self-awareness plays a key role in this process. . Self-awareness is essential for recognizing one's current proficiency level, and identifying personal strengths and areas for improvement (Ünaldı, 2016). Likewise, peer assessment has a potential impact on language learning, and creates opportunities for learner interaction; however, its effectiveness appears contingent on multiple student factors, such as attitudes, language proficiency levels, familiarity with assessment criteria, and the potential influence of biases, e.g., interpersonal relationships (Azamoosh, 2013).

The expanding availability of digital resources has opened a range of opportunities for alternative language assessments. These assessments could be used for both formative and summative purposes and have become increasingly important in the educational system. However, rigorous attention to particular design principles is required in order to ensure their effectiveness.

Research shows that both language learners and teachers hold positive perceptions towards alternative e-assessments (e.g., Baturay, 2015; Cirit, 2015, Assulaimani, 2021; Alavi et al., 2022; Issa, 2020). Nevertheless, carrying out alternative e-assessments brings some difficulties such as an increased workload for teachers. In addition, research studies have explored specific factors affecting students' performance on e-assessments, such as insufficient technology experience and the reliability of assessments (Gardner et al. 2009; Tarhini et al., 2013; Park, 2009; Phongsirikul, 2018; Alenezi, 2022).

Building on the foundation of the literature review, the current study was conducted with the aim of understanding the perceptions of tertiary level Turkish EFL instructors regarding alternative e-assessments. Recent research showed that teachers' e-assessment and feedback practices appear to have been affected by contextual and experiential factors (Zhang et al., 2021; Zou et al., 2021). Therefore, in order to develop frameworks across contexts, it would be valuable to seek insights into the perceptions of individuals from particular contexts, as well as their experiences with alternative e-assessments, and the challenges they face. The study particularly aims to seek answers to the following research question: What are the EFL teachers' perceptions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the alternative e-assessments in the Turkish tertiary level EFL context?

Method

Context

Türkiye's current tertiary education policy encourages English language learning and English-medium instruction, and to support this aim, higher education institutions offer a one-year preparatory/foundation intensive English program. The Testing and Assessment Unit within English Language Preparatory Programs is a fundamental component, responsible for designing, administering, and evaluating language assessments. Teachers can become members of these units either voluntarily or as assigned by their directors. Testing and Assessment Unit members are tasked with formulating test specifications for all assessments in alignment with curriculum objectives. Their roles involve establishing an item repository for these assessments, coordinating editing, administration, standardization, grading, and feedback sessions. Additionally, their work involves analyzing assessment results, adapting items and tasks as needed based on the results. However, such responsibilities can vary depending on the institution, because Turkish institutions have no standardized program or regulations for testing unit members. As a result, it is common to encounter diverse practices among institutions.

As for technology integration, in Türkiye, as elsewhere, the global pandemic's emergency remote teaching has further expedited the integration of technology into language assessment. A variety of web-based learning management systems currently facilitate technology-enhanced teaching and learning, and these systems offer a suite of tools designed to enrich course content and streamline the assessment process. Notable features include glossaries, assignments, tests, and self/peer assessments, blogs and discussion boards, all contributing to a comprehensive educational experience.

In light of these contextual factors, this research aims to investigate teachers' perceptions of alternative e-assessments within the English Language Preparatory Programs in Türkiye, shedding light on the landscape of language assessment in higher education.

Research Design

The study focused on exploring instructors' perceptions and experiences regarding alternative e-assessments. To achieve this, a qualitative research design was employed, guided by the philosophical framework of phenomenology. According to Creswell (2009), in qualitative inquiry, the intent is not to generalize to a population, but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon. In this study, the central phenomenon under investigation is the intricate interplay between instructors' perceptions, experiences, and interpretations of alternative e-assessments within English Language Preparatory Programs. Phenomenology, as a qualitative approach, prioritizes the subjective nature of experiences and individual interpretations (Patton, 2015; Creswell, 2009).

Participants

Phenomenological research draws its data from individuals who possess direct experience and the capacity to articulate the central phenomenon being studied. The crucial aspect of participation in qualitative research emphasizes the "depth" rather than the frequency of data, and in this regard, the participants were deemed representative of the research topic, as highlighted by O'Reilly and Parker (2012). The sample of this qualitative research was selected through purposeful sampling and the criteria for inclusion were (a) being a member of the testing and assessment unit in the preparatory/foundation program of an English-medium university in Türkiye and (b) having a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience. The participants consisted of 17 EFL instructors and each was affiliated with a different university, providing insights into a range of assessment practices within varying contexts.

Table 1. *Demographic Characteristics of the Participants*

Participant	Gender	Age	Teaching Experience	Degree	Status of University Employed
P1	Female	28	5	MA in ELT	Private
P2	Female	42	17	MA in non-ELT	Public
P3	Male	31	8	MA in ELT	Public
P4	Male	34	11	MA in ELT	Private
P5	Female	41	19	MA in non-ELT	Public
P6	Female	34	13	PhD in ELT	Public
P7	Female	40	17	MA in ELT	Private
P8	Female	44	11	MA in non-ELT	Private
P9	Female	36	12	MA in non-ELT	Private
P10	Female	44	23	MA in ELT	Private
P11	Female	40	17	PhD in ELT	Public
P12	Male	37	15	MA in ELT	Private
P13	Female	40	18	MA in non-ELT	Public
P14	Female	42	21	MA in ELT	Private
P15	Female	38	15	MA in ELT	Private
P16	Male	34	11	PhD in ELT	Public
P17	Male	35	10	MA in ELT	Public

As shown in Table 1, the great majority, 71%, of the participants were female. Half of the participants have an MA degree in ELT and 3 out of 17 have a PhD degree. Of the participants, 53% work at private foundation universities and 47% are employed at public universities.

Research Instruments and Data Collection Procedures

In this qualitative study, data were collected through semi-structured interviews in which the participants were engaged in reflective conversations, delving into their unique

viewpoints, challenges, and insights concerning the integration of alternative e-assessments. A two-part interview protocol was used to guide the interviews. The first part included questions about demographic information and the second inquired about opinions and experiences on the use of alternative e-assessments. Before the main study, the interview schedule underwent a pilot test with two English language teachers employed at the researchers' university. During this pilot stage, participants were invited to provide feedback on the clarity, comprehensibility, and basic wording of the questions. In response to their comments, one question was excluded due to its redundancy with another question in the initial interview schedule. The semi-structured interview centered around the following questions:

- What has been your experience with alternative e-assessments in the English foundation program?

- What forms of alternative e-assessments, if any, are used in the English foundation program?

- Can you describe a specific instance where alternative e-assessments have influenced your understanding of your students' progress?

- How would you describe your own attitudes towards using alternative forms of assessment in your school?

- What do you perceive as the most significant challenges in integrating alternative e-assessments into the English foundation program?

Each interview was conducted online through a web-conferencing tool and lasted around 20-30 minutes. All interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants and transcribed verbatim. To ensure rigor, the researcher consistently restated and mirrored participants' significant ideas to validate accurate interpretation throughout the interviews. The methodological rigor was also maintained by adhering to "bracketing" to minimize potential biases. Bracketing refers to the process of setting aside one's preconceived beliefs, biases, and assumptions about a topic or phenomenon being studied (Tufford & Newman, 2012). This methodological approach aimed to ensure that interpretations remained true to teachers' lived experiences. In short, this research approach allowed the exploration of teachers' views, challenges, and insights regarding alternative e-assessments, leading to a better grasp of this central phenomenon in English preparatory programs.

Data Analysis

Due to the research's exploratory nature, thematic analysis was applied to the interview transcripts, a technique outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This technique is well suited for investigating participants' perspectives and generating insights in unexplored domains.

Figure 1. *Six-Phase Thematic Analytic process (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006)*

| Familiarization with data | Generating initial codes | Searching for themes | Reviewing potential themes | Defining and naming themes | Producing the report |

Throughout the data analysis process, the six-step procedure was applied as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This involved the researcher's immersion in the transcripts, the generation of initial codes, the identification of thematic patterns within and across transcripts, the review and adjustment of data patterns, the definition of themes so as to capture their essence, consideration of inter-relationships among themes, and finally, the presentation of results. In order to assign suitable codes to each message, the data was carefully reviewed multiple times and analyzed iteratively. To enhance the credibility of the analysis, peer debriefing was conducted. The researcher shared the data with an experienced and impartial researcher, who independently verified its accuracy. The technique of double coding, suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), was employed to mitigate any personal biases arising during data coding, thus enhancing the overall reliability of the research. Thematic analysis allows the identification of recurring patterns and emerging themes within the teachers' narratives, to capture the essence of their experiences.

Findings

The current study provided valuable insights into the instructors' perspectives on the research topic. As a result of an attentive and rigorous analysis of the data, the following main themes emerged: academic integrity, impact on learning, grading and feedback, workload, digital technology, and assessment competence. Table 2 shows the frequency of the themes identified and the respective codes.

Table 2. *Emerging themes, coding, and frequencies*

Themes	Content coding	No. of participants	%
Impact on learning	Individualized feedback, Engagement, Motivation, Awareness	8	47%
Grading and feedback	Rubric, Criteria, Ease of giving and organizing feedback, Effective feedback	15	88%
Academic integrity	Cheating, Plagiarism, Reliability	14	82%
Workload	Time management, Class size, Extra time, Flexibility	12	70%
Digital technology	Internet connectivity, Digital literacy, Digital platform, Resistance, Learner training	7	41%
Assessment competence	Teacher training, Professional development, Pre-Service education	10	59%

Impact on learning

The interviews revealed some insights regarding the impact of alternative e-assessments on students' language skills. The findings show that alternative e-assessments are not as widespread as the traditional assessments in the English preparatory programs. However, one teacher highlighted the positive influence of incorporating discussion forums and blogs as an alternative assessment method:

[P14] "In our school, we've been using discussion forums and blogs as part of our teaching and assessment methods. It's been really good for getting students involved and active. Like, in our B1 and B2 level writing classes, students share their essays as blog entries on the LMS and give each other feedback. It's nice because it feels like a small community; they learn from each other."

Portfolio assessment and student videos are more frequently used than other types, such as forums, blogs, self or peer assessments. According to the participants, e-portfolios offer many benefits.

[P4] "Well, portfolio assessment, we've taken it a step further by going digital. Students compile their work, like essays, presentations, and recordings of speaking tasks in an online portfolio. It's so convenient. They can see how they've improved over time. So, I believe e-portfolio assessment has made our assessment more dynamic and effective."

[P12] "Everyone learns a language differently. With the e-portfolio, we help students become more aware of their progress as we give feedback regularly, especially on their writing skills. Also, students share and reflect on their own interests while working on e-portfolio tasks."

[P9] "We ask students to record their own videos and add them to their digital portfolios. I can identify general problems in pronunciation for example and give more practice in class. Also, grammar mistakes… Although I give individual feedback, I also highlight the most common mistakes in class. I check whether they see my feedback and it makes me happy when they correct their mistakes."

On the other hand, helping students adapt to these alternative e-assessments seems to bring challenges, as described by the following participant:

[P5] "Some students were hesitant to share their comments on the forum openly, and it was due to cultural and personality differences. It took some time to get them used to it, but later, they got more comfortable. But not all teachers are that much encouraging and patient."

Grading and Feedback

Alternative e-assessments such as blogs, discussion forums and video products necessitate personalized feedback. Some of the participating instructors in this study highlighted that conducting assessments online facilitates the feedback process:

[P2] "Ion online platforms I can watch the students' video recordings again and again, so this allows me to give more effective and healthier feedback".

On the other hand, instructors' perceptions regarding the practicality of feedback online depend on the way they are accustomed to going about this.

[P9] "Feedback sessions take a lot of time because I have to spend hours watching videos, preparing feedback and spending time with each student after class. When we do speaking assessments in the traditional way, I give overall feedback to the class."

For the reliability of alternative e-assessments, as in any constructed response or performance-based assessment, it is essential to create clearly defined grading rubrics to help learners understand the desired outcomes and reflect on their products. Some participants particularly highlighted the problem of developing rubrics:

[P6] "Creating rubrics for alternative e-assessment tasks is a challenge. The criteria and descriptors should be clear for both the teachers and students. While assessing students, you need to be fair. Especially in collaborative tasks, I would like to know which student contributed more so that I can assess their performance in a fair and objective way."

Academic Integrity

Issues involving breaches of academic integrity, i.e., academic misconduct, have always been a focus of attention; however, the shift to online learning and e-assessments has created greater challenges in this area. The increase in academic misconduct, such as cheating, submitting plagiarized work, and collaborating inappropriately on assignments is a prevalent concern in the participants' perceptions regarding e-assessments. As one participant stated:

[P2] "We can't be sure whether the essays students produced are original and it is an extra burden to check the originality. I have seen many cases of plagiarism."

Another participant also expressed their concern regarding assessing speaking skills online.

[P13] "I may say they memorized, or they just put a card in front of the camera and were reading, it was detectable. Their eyes were moving. So, I don't think we can get away from the traditional assessments unless such cheating problems are solved."

Workload

As alternative e-assessments require personalized feedback and close progress monitoring, this translates into an increased workload. This issue becomes even more critical in large enrollment classes. The participants in the current study agreed that large class sizes hinder the feedback process, preventing effective personalized feedback. The following quote from a participant highlights this factor:

[P4] "In some classes we have 30 students and our teachers have more than one class. This doesn't allow enough time to focus on feedback because it takes a lot of time. Students need to be given feedback and because of time issues and not enough teachers; we are not able to apply alternative e-assessments."

However, according to one of the participants, grading performance and giving feedback on learners' progress is an essential element of the teaching process and doing that online does not, in fact, increase the workload.

[P15] "Some of my colleagues complain that their workload increases with e-assessments. But I must disagree with that idea because I think being a teacher means bringing work home. I mean, it's indispensable, so you can't escape from that. But what makes it easy online, or with these alternative e-assessments, is that you can decide when to deal with them. So, it's a big advantage, I mean I disagree with the idea that it's an extra burden on teachers."

Digital Technology

Another prevailing theme that emerged during the interviews was the use of digital tools and platforms for alternative e-assessments. The decision to conduct e-assessments is considered to be significantly influenced by the availability of digital tools and a robust LMS. The challenges regarding alternative e-assessments are not simply limited to hardware, software, or internet connectivity issues; but rather, competency and literacy in digital platform use seem to be important and motivating factors. The participating instructors in this study also mentioned technological barriers to the implementation of alternative e-assessments, highlighting the challenges that students encounter in utilizing digital platforms for academic purposes.

[P3] "One of the challenges we have is that not every student is tech savvy. You design a task and notice that some students have difficulty accessing it or completing it. You have to handle those problems."

The participants also acknowledged that, implementation of alternative e-assessments also requires teachers to be competent in using digital platforms.

[P13] "I have some colleagues who are like 60 plus years old and I know their complaints. They wanted to print out writing submissions to be able to assess and give feedback using a pen."

[P12] "Some teachers are not confident enough to use these digital platforms and what is more, they resist improving their digital skills. I personally trust my own digital skills and find it hard to understand why some are not willing to develop themselves. Also, I think our students need to develop their digital skills too. Although they were born into the age of technology, they have difficulty managing the online platforms or uploading their assignments online. We should consider learner training programs for that purpose."

With the advent of digital technologies and the adoption of technology-enhanced teaching and learning approaches, digital skills have become even more important.

Assessment Competence

Teacher training and development are critical components of any quality instruction and school improvement initiative. Some of the participants in the current study also reported that they were not fully aware of the nature of alternative e-assessment methods and that they needed training in this area. The following three excerpts highlight the participants' opinions on this theme:

[P7] "I graduated from the ELT department, but we only had one course on language assessment. We did not have any practice designing assessments. It was just the theory, you know, what validity means, reliability, washback and so on. And I have colleagues who graduated from non-ELT departments, like Translation. So, we definitely need intensive training on assessment. But I know, not every teacher is interested in assessment. They find it difficult."

[P13] "I can say that I received no formal training on alternative e-assessments but during the pandemic we had to integrate some into our assessment procedures. In our professional development sessions, I learned about blogs and discussion forums as means of assessment."

[P16] "When teachers are asked to do something which they are not comfortable with or familiar with, it adds to the workload that they already have. So probably there should be some training scheme in place for teachers and then for the students. This may make such initiatives successful."

Discussion and Recommendations

This study aimed to explore tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' perceptions regarding alternative e-assessments through a phenomenological perspective. The findings provide valuable insights into EFL instructors' perceptions of alternative e-assessments and their implications for teaching and learning in higher education contexts. The results of the study revealed that tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers held varying perceptions about alternative e-assessments, with six primary themes emerging: impact on student **learning**, **grading and feedback practices**, academic **integrity** concerns, **workload** implications, the **role** of digital technology, and the **need for assessment competence** among instructors.

The impact of alternative e-assessments on student learning emerged as a key theme in this study. Alternative e-assessments were found to have a positive impact on student learning, with methods such as discussion forums, blogs, and e-portfolios being highlighted for their ability to enhance engagement and motivation. Similarly, Chugai et al. (2021) found that Ukrainian English teachers were positive about the impact of portfolios as alternative assessments on motivation. Alternative e-assessment has the capacity to cater to the varying needs of each student, and their highly differentiated abilities, making it an essential component in transforming assessment practices from their current position within the confines of the curriculum, to accommodating a much wider spectrum of student learning. In addition, utilizing alternative e-assessments can stimulate critical thinking and creativity among students as they engage in collaborative efforts, both within and beyond the classroom. The assessment process evaluates students not solely based on task completion, but also considers their collaboration and performance throughout the process.

An important factor in the effectiveness of alternative e-assessments is the feedback element. Effective feedback has emerged as a crucial component of alternative e-assessments, with online platforms offering opportunities for personalized feedback. Alternative assessment serves as a crucial link between instruction and assessment, forming a feedback loop that aids teachers in adjusting instruction based on student assessment outcomes (Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). For an assessment to be considered valid, it must be prompt, continuous, formatively beneficial, and simple to grasp (Gaytan & McEwen, 2007). Creating assessments with the sole intention of serving formative

purposes does not increase their validity; rather, assessment must aim specifically to promote the desired learning. Hargreaves (2007) stated, "The validity of an assessment for learning depends on how far the interpretation and use of the assessment actually lead to further learning" (p. 186). The availability of features on online platforms can improve the speed and precision of feedback, thus encouraging learner engagement and contentment. Several research studies have explored how online feedback affects the writing skills of non-native English speakers, and they generally show that online feedback helps improve their writing abilities (e.g., Link et al., 2020; Noroozi & Hatami, 2019)

However, instructors highlighted challenges such as time constraints and the need for clear grading rubrics to ensure reliability and fairness. Instructors face challenges in providing timely and personalized feedback, particularly in large classes. Clear guidelines and grading rubrics were emphasized as essential for enhancing the authenticity and reliability of assessments, aligning with previous studies.

Following the transparency principle in assessment design, teachers should discuss the grading rubrics with learners along with the assessment guidelines for mutual understanding of the expected performance or product. This will promote learner responsibility, the negotiation of meaning in the feedback process, and teachers' self-reflection on their classroom practices.

Academic integrity emerges as a significant concern in the shift to e-assessment. Instructors reported challenges in detecting and preventing cheating and plagiarism, highlighting the need for strategies to ensure the authenticity and reliability of assessments. This finding is parallel to Yulianto and Mujtahin's (2021) study, which highlighted ELT teachers' negative perceptions of e-assessments, especially regarding their validity and reliability due to possible misconduct. Due to the problems in detecting cheating, e-assessments were less favored than the traditional proctored assessments (King et al., 2009; Watson & Sottile, 2010; Yilmaz, 2017). However, this is perhaps due to the general (mis)understanding that e-assessment is limited to summative assessments; indeed, one way of eliminating possible academic misconduct is by designing alternative e-assessments with personalized elements, ensuring that students' own products or performances are evaluated.

The authenticity of performance tasks has the potential to reduce academic dishonesty because scoring rubrics and sample outputs accompanying the assessments provide clearer guidance for learners' work (Oosterhof et al., 2008). In addition, it is important to create and use clearly defined grading rubrics to increase the reliability of alternative e-assessments, which help students become aware of what is expected of their work, and of the target outcomes. Clear guidelines, transparent assessment design, and ongoing monitoring are essential for upholding academic integrity standards in e-assessment practices.

The transition to e-assessment has implications for instructors' workload, with many reporting increased time and effort required for designing, administering, and grading online assessments. Large class sizes exacerbate these challenges, limiting instructors' ability to provide personalized feedback and support to students. Institutional support and strategies to manage workload effectively are crucial for supporting instructors in implementing e-assessments successfully. Research showed that the shift from traditional pen-and-paper to e-assessment increased instructors' workload (e.g., Meccawy et al., 2021; Abduh, 2021). Apparently, conducting e-assessments, whether summative or formative, requires more time and effort as these have to be designed, developed and implemented online, along with sufficient guidance and support. In a study conducted with Moroccan EFL teachers, it was found that the major cause of time constraints was class size (Ghaicha and Omarkaly, 2018). Hung (2012) also found that, due to the class size, the teachers were unable to provide the students with regular feedback on e- portfolios. Several researchers also presented time and class size as main factors increasing workload in incorporating alternative e-assessments (e.g., DeLuca et al., 2012; Abbas, 2012; Demir et al. 2018; Moqbel, 2020).

The use of digital tools and platforms for e-assessment presents both opportunities and challenges, with technological barriers and a lack of digital literacy hindering effective implementation. Ongoing training and support for instructors and students are essential to maximize the benefits of digital assessment methods such as e-portfolios. Baturay (2015) suggested that the use of e-portfolio assessment was better received by those students who were comfortable using the Internet and had at least a modest level of self-regulated learning skills.

Many instructors expressed a need for training in alternative e-assessment methods, indicating gaps in assessment literacy and digital skills. In some earlier research, teacher educators cited their supervised teachers' limitations regarding the use of technology in their classrooms and regarding their technological competencies (Karagiorgi & Nicolaidou, 2013; Teo, 2011). Apparently, for alternative e-assessments to be conducted effectively, not only detailed guidelines but also continuous teacher and learner support are required as suggested by the participants.

Assessment competence emerges as a key factor influencing instructors' perceptions and practices regarding e-assessments. Many instructors expressed a need for training in alternative assessment methods and digital platforms, highlighting gaps in assessment literacy and digital skills. This finding aligns with Yang and Cornelious' (2005) emphasis on the significance of teachers' engaging in professional development activities related to online teaching and assessment. Similar findings were evident in a study conducted by Brumen and Cagran (2011) across the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Croatia. Their research revealed that a substantial majority of teachers lacked additional training in assessment techniques; however, they expressed a strong inclination towards further opportunities to enhance their competence in effectively assessing learners. Similarly,

Chugai et al., (2021) concluded that both Indian and Ukrainian teachers acknowledged the importance of receiving training in assessment and facilitation of learning.

The majority of EFL teachers appear to have an insufficient understanding of language assessment principles and methods, according to a substantial body of research (Berry et al., 2019; Deygers & Malone, 2019; Koh et al., 2018; Kremmel & Harding, 2020). According to Mertler (2009), this is because assessment classes are not essential or required for pre-service teachers, and teacher education programs are partially responsible for teachers' incapacity to understand practical classroom assessment procedures. This is also true in the Turkish context, where pre-service teacher education programs only cover theoretical components of assessment, rather than comprehensive practical instruction. The research conducted by Mede and Atay (2017) revealed that English language instructors in Turkish universities have inadequate language assessment expertise, and there is a substantial insufficiency of knowledge concerning assessment concepts. Similarly, a significant finding in a recent study by Ölmezer-Öztürk (2021) is that the present undergraduate teacher training may not adequately provide teacher candidates with the essential competencies. It is evident that teachers require more structured assistance to utilize alternative e-assessment methods with greater frequency and efficiency. Teacher education programs should prioritize assessment literacy and provide practical training to equip instructors with the necessary competencies for effective assessment practices.

To meet the needs of new generations, teachers should regularly revisit their teaching approaches and methods. Moreover, as current studies contend, several factors emphasize the importance of language assessment, as well as the crucial role played by assessment literacy (Malone, 2013; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). Language assessment literacy is crucial because it equips teachers to understand, evaluate, and analyze students' performance data and thus, to enhance and improve instruction. Hence, even if not all EFL teachers engage in assessment design activities, as practitioners, all need to be knowledgeable about assessment to support their students and improve the learning environment.

Traditional and alternative assessments are often regarded as opposing approaches. However, combining both traditional and alternative assessment techniques would be the most effective approach for schools looking to balance teaching and assessment practices and create a conducive learning environment that facilitates students' learning. This requires a paradigm shift in ELT assessment practices and teacher training, in terms of approaches to assessment, as well as digital literacy and skills. Teachers encounter various challenges and should be provided with training in the use of digital tools for assessment purposes, and on the effective incorporation of technology in assessment task design. The recent review of the Turkish education system based on the 2019 OECD report emphasized the necessity for multiple means of assessment, and diversifying techniques beyond traditional methods (Kitchen et al., 2019). This highlights the importance for sufficient knowledge and competence in implementing a range of

assessment techniques, which can be achieved through hands-on teacher training and continuous professional development.

Overall, the findings suggest that institutions should provide support and resources to help teachers navigate the challenges associated with alternative e-assessments. This includes providing training programs, easy access to digital tools and platforms, and ongoing support for the enhancement of digital literacy and assessment competence. Administrators and policy-makers should prioritize professional development, while also addressing workload and class size to support the seamless adoption of alternative e-assessments. The study also emphasizes the importance of promoting academic integrity among students. Institutions should implement strategies to discourage cheating and plagiarism, such as establishing a culture of integrity and providing clear guidelines for academic honesty.

As a limitation, this study involved a small sample size; therefore, using larger sample sizes may also provide more insights into the perceptions and experiences of EFL teachers regarding alternative e-assessments. Secondly, the participants included in this study were limited to the Turkish language instructors in the preparatory programs in higher education institutions in Türkiye. Similar studies in other contexts will expand the literature on alternative e-assessment practices. In addition, quantitative data can be collected to triangulate the findings of this study.

The current study aimed to potentially contribute to the field of language assessment in the tertiary level EFL context by providing insight into EFL teachers' perceptions. In such contexts, these findings highlight areas and aspects of alternative assessments that require further research, thus stimulating discussions focusing on the rising trend towards more widespread use of learner-centered assessment. Although alternative e-assessments offer numerous advantages, their effectiveness relies on careful planning and implementation, and it is essential to remember that successful utilization is contingent on thoughtful mediation throughout the process.

In conclusion, successful utilization of alternative e-assessments requires collaborative efforts to ensure meaningful and equitable assessment practices that support student learning and engagement. Recommendations include providing institutional support, ongoing professional development, and strategies to promote academic integrity. Future research should explore these themes in larger sample sizes and diverse contexts, while also considering quantitative data to triangulate findings and enhance the understanding of e-assessment practices in tertiary level EFL education.

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Genişletilmiş Türkçe Özet

Ölçme-değerlendirme, öğretim süreçlerinin ayrılmaz bir parçasıdır ve öğrenme deneyimlerini şekillendirmede kilit bir rol oynar. Öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarını, güçlü ve zayıf yönlerini belirlemeye, müfredat ve materyaller hakkında karar vermeye, gelişimi izlemeye, performans kanıtı toplamaya ve öğretim yöntem ve stratejilerini değerlendirmeye yardımcı olur. İletişimsel Dil Öğretimi metodolojisine (Communicative Language Teaching) ve dijital çağa geçişle birlikte, süreç ve performansa dayalı alternatif değerlendirmeler yaygınlaşmaya başlamıştır.

Dijital teknolojiler, eğitimin yürütülme biçimine önemli ölçüde katkıda bulunmuş ve değiştirmiş, e-öğrenme ve teknoloji destekli öğrenmeye kapı açmış, bu da e-değerlendirmelerin önünü açmıştır. Çeşitli web tabanlı öğrenme yönetim sistemleri yükseköğretime dâhil edilmiştir. Bu öğrenme yönetim sistemleri, yalnızca standart testlerin çevrimiçi olarak yapılmasına değil, aynı zamanda daha işbirlikli ve/veya etkileşimli görevlerin tamamlanmasına da olanak tanıyan çeşitli işlevler barındırmaktadır. Kullanıcılar arasında işbirliğini ve etkileşimi artırma amacına hizmet eden bu araçlar arasında tartışma forumları, bloglar ve wikiler bulunmaktadır. Öz ve akran değerlendirmeleri ve e-portfolyolar, öğrencilerin dil performanslarını çevrimiçi olarak değerlendirmede yaygın olarak kullanılan diğer iki alternatif tekniktir. Yabancı dil eğitimi bağlamında, alternatif değerlendirme yöntemlerinin uygulanması, öğrenme çıktılarını geliştirme kapasitesi açısından kabul görmüştür.

Araştırmalar hem dil öğrenenlerin hem de öğretmenlerin alternatif e-değerlendirmelere yönelik olumlu algılara sahip olduğunu göstermektedir (Baturay, 2015; Cirit, 2015, Assulaimani, 2021; Alavi et al., 2022; Issa, 2020). Ancak, alternatif e-değerlendirmelerin uygulanması, öğretmenler üzerinde artan iş yükü gibi zorlukları beraberinde getirebilir. Yetersiz dijital beceriler ve değerlendirmelerin güvenilirliği gibi faktörler öğrencilerin e-değerlendirmelerdeki performansını etkileyebilmektedir.

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de üniversitelerin hazırlık programlarında görevli İngilizce öğretmenlerinin alternatif e-değerlendirmelere ilişkin algılarını araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma nitel araştırma kapsamında fenomenoloji desene uygun olarak tasarlanmıştır. Fenomenoloji, bireylerin bir kavram veya fenomene yönelik deneyimlerini ortaya çıkarır (Cresswell, 2007). Bireylerin fenomeni nasıl algıladıkları, nasıl betimledikleri, fenomen hakkında ne hissettikleri, fenomeni nasıl yargıladıkları, nasıl anımsadıkları, nasıl anlamlandırdıkları fenomenolojinin temel odak noktasını oluşturmaktadır (Patton, 2018). Türkiye'de farklı üniversitelerin İngilizce hazırlık programlarında görevli 17 İngilizce öğretmeniyle çevrimiçi görüşmeler yapılmış ve alternatif e-değerlendirmelerle ilgili görüş ve deneyimlerine odaklanılmıştır. Katılımcıların seçiminde amaçlı örnekleme süreçleri izlenmiştir. Seçim kriteri olarak, a) Üniversitelerin hazırlık programlarında en az beş yıl çalışmış olmak b) bu programlarda ölçme-değerlendirme ekip üyesi olmak belirlenmiştir. Görüşmeler çevrimiçi bir ortamda gerçekleştirilmiş ve görüşme için hazırlanmış olan protokol takip edilmiştir. Katılımcıların rıza beyanına istinaden görüşmeler kaydedilmiş ve akabinde yazıya dökülmüştür.

Öğretmenlerin anlatılarındaki örüntüleri ve temaları ortaya çıkarmak için tematik analiz kullanılmıştır ve veri analizinde Braun and Clarke (2006) tarafından önerilmiş olan süreçler takip edilmiştir.

Bulgular, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin alternatif e-değerlendirmeler hakkında farklı algılara sahip olduğunu ve altı ana temanın ortaya çıktığını ortaya koymuştur: öğrenci öğrenimine etkisi, iş yükü, akademik dürüstlük, dijital teknoloji, not verme ve geri bildirim ve ölçme-değerlendirme becerileri.

Alternatif e-değerlendirmeler kişiselleştirilmiş ve dinamik öğrenme deneyimleri sunar. Tartışma forumları, bloglar ve e-portfolyolar gibi araçlar öğrencilerin aktif katılımını ve özdeğerlendirmelerini kolaylaştırmaktadır. Ancak katılımcılara göre öğrencileri yeni değerlendirme formatlarına alıştırma sürecinin yönetimi ve kültürel farklılıklar zorluklar olarak belirtilmiştir.

Dijital araçların ve öğrenme yönetim sistemlerinin mevcudiyeti, alternatif e-değerlendirmelerin benimsenmesini kolaylaştırmaktadır. Ancak öğrencilerin farklı dijital okuryazarlık seviyeleri ve öğretmenlerin dijital platformları kullanma yetkinlikleri nedeniyle zorluklar ortaya çıkmaktadır. Hem öğretmenlerin hem de öğrencilerin dijital araçları etkin bir şekilde kullanabilmeleri için sürekli destek ve eğitim çok önemlidir.

Geri bildirim, alternatif e-değerlendirmelerde çok önemli bir rol oynar. Ancak bu süreç, özellikle kalabalık sınıflarda eğitmenler için zaman alıcı olabilir. Tanımlanmış dereceli puanlama anahtarları güvenilirliği ve özgünlüğü artırarak hem öğrenciler hem de öğretmenler arasında şeffaflığı ve özdüşünümü teşvik eder. Katılımcılar, özellikle sınırlı kaynaklara ve çok sayıda öğrenciye sahip bağlamlarda alternatif e-değerlendirmelerle ilişkili artan iş yükünü ortaya koymaktadır. Bu zorluklara rağmen, bazı katılımcılar alternatif e-değerlendirmeleri esneklikleri ve kişiselleştirilmiş geri bildirim potansiyelleri nedeniyle bir avantaj olarak görmektedir. Alternatif e-değerlendirmelerin uygulanması, özellikle kalabalık sınıflarda öğretmenlerin iş yükünü artırmaktadır. Katılımcılar, daha fazla zaman ve çaba gerektiren çevrimiçi e-değerlendirmelerin tasarlanması, geliştirilmesi ve uygulanması nedeniyle artan iş yükünü vurgulamışlardır. Kişiselleştirilmiş geri bildirim sağlamak ve öğrenci ilerlemesini çevrimiçi olarak yakından izlemek önemli ölçüde zaman ve çaba gerektirir. Bazı eğitmenler bunu öğretmenin doğal bir yönü olarak görürken, diğerleri zaman yönetiminin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Sınıfların kalabalık olması geri bildirim sürecini aksatabilmekte ve etkili kişiselleştirilmiş geri bildirimin önünde bir engel haline gelebilmektedir.

Katılımcılar e-değerlendirmelerin çevrimiçi doğası gereği, akademik suistimalle ilgili endişelerini vurgulamışlardır. İntihal ve kopya, öğrenci çalışmalarının orijinalliğini sağlamak için yöntemler gerektiren zorluklardır. Alternatif performans değerlendirmeleri, kopya çekme vakalarını azaltabilir ve değerlendirme ölçütleri geliştirilip değerlendirmede sağlıklı bir şekilde kullanımıyla ölçme-değerlendirmenin güvenirliği artırılabilir.

Ölçme-değerlendirme yetkinliği, kaliteli öğretim için çok önemlidir. Araştırmalar, pek çok öğretmenin dil ölçme-değerlendirme ilkeleri ve yöntemleri konusunda yeterli bilgi

ve deneyime sahip olmadığını göstermektedir. Türkiye bağlamında bu eksiklik kısmen öğretmen eğitimi programlarının ölçme-değerlendirmenin yalnızca teorik yönlerini kapsamasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Öğretmenler, çevrimiçi öğretim ve değerlendirme ile ilgili mesleki gelişim faaliyetlerine katılmalı ve değerlendirme teknikleri konusunda eğitim almalıdır. Araştırmada katılımcılar bu konunun önemini vurgulamışlardır. Öğretmenlerin alternatif e-değerlendirme yöntemlerini etkili bir şekilde kullanabilmeleri için daha fazla mesleki gelişim programlarına ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Değerlendirme okuryazarlığını ele alan mesleki gelişim programları, öğretmenlerin yeterliliğini artırmak için gereklidir.

Sonuç olarak, alternatif e-değerlendirmeler kişiselleştirilmiş öğrenme deneyimleri sunmakta ve eleştirel düşünmeyi teşvik ederek geleneksel standart değerlendirmeler ile öğrenci merkezli yaklaşımlar arasında bir denge sağlamaktadır. Bulgular, alternatif e-değerlendirmelerle ilgili zorlukları ele almak için öğretmen eğitimine, sürekli desteğe ve kaynaklara duyulan ihtiyacı vurgulamaktadır. Öğretmenlerin iş yükünün dengelenmesi, sınıf mevcutlarının azaltılması ve akademik dürüstlüğün geliştirilmesi, bu değerlendirmelerin başarılı bir şekilde benimsenmesinde kilit faktörlerdir.

Çalışmanın sınırlılıkları, örneklemin küçük olması ve Türkiye'deki yükseköğretim kurumlarının hazırlık programlarında görevli öğretmenlerle kısıtlı olmasıdır. Gelecekteki araştırmalar daha büyük ve daha çeşitli örneklemle gerçekleştirilebilir, ayrıca nicel verilerin dâhil edilmesi bulguları daha da geçerli kılabilir.

Çalışma, öğretmenlerin algılarına ışık tutarak alternatif e-değerlendirme uygulamalarının faydalarını ve zorluklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Ölçme-değerlendirmeye dengeli bir yaklaşımı vurgulayarak kurumlar, öğrenci öğrenme çıktılarını geliştirmek ve etkili dil eğitimi uygulamalarını teşvik etmek için alternatif e-değerlendirmelerin potansiyelinden yararlanabilir. Eğitim geliştikçe ölçme-değerlendirme uygulamalarının da anlamlı ve etkili öğrenme sonuçlarını sağlamak için geliştirilmesi gerekmektedir.

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