



International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research (IJCER)

www.ijcer.net

Developing Language Assessment Literacy of EFL Pre-service Teachers through Classroom Assessment Course

Elçin ÖLMEZER ÖZTÜRK¹,

¹ Anadolu University, ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7743-6361

Article History

Received: 04.05.2021

Received in revised form: 26.05.2021

Accepted: 11.06.2021

Available online: 03.09.2021

To cite this article:

Ölmezer Öztürk, E. (2021). Developing language assessment literacy of EFL pre-service teachers through classroom assessment course. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 8(3), 13-22. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33200/ijcer.932721>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes.

Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

Authors alone are responsible for the contents of their articles. The journal owns the copyright of the articles.

The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of the research material.

Developing Language Assessment Literacy of EFL Pre-service Teachers through Classroom Assessment Course

Elçin ÖLMEZER ÖZTÜRK^{1*}

¹ Anadolu University

Abstract

The study reports on how Classroom Assessment Course changed the perspectives of EFL pre-service teachers related with language assessment and contributed to their language assessment literacy development. The participants included 48 junior students in an English language teacher education program of a state university in Turkey. All the participants enrolled in a course named Classroom Assessment and the data were collected through reflection reports and a focus group interview within the scope of this course that was conducted in a 14-week period. The coding phase of the data analysis was carried out through in-vivo coding and the codes were combined under more general themes to be presented. The findings revealed that the participants' perspectives in language assessment significantly changed at the end of Classroom Assessment Course. While their initial thoughts included some negative connotations regarding assessment itself, its purpose and the role of teachers in language assessment, they turned to be just the opposite towards the end of the semester. Moreover, the participants also expressed that they started to feel themselves more competent in language assessment as prospective teachers and got more enthusiastic to study on this topic in the future. Demonstrating the contribution of Classroom Assessment Course to language assessment literacy development of pre-service teachers, the study offers some policy and research suggestions to improve assessment literacy of EFL teachers in similar contexts.

Key words: Language assessment literacy, EFL Pre-service teachers, Classroom assessment

Introduction

Though neglected in the past, assessment has been gaining a growing interest in education, especially language education because assessment is a crucial part of teaching and learning process (Cheng & Wang, 2007; Russell & Airasian, 2012). Relying on the term assessment, classroom assessment has also flourished for the reason that teachers are required to assess their learners for many purposes throughout the school day (Russell & Airasian, 2012), and that assessment is a natural component of everyday instruction (Shermis & Di Vesta, 2011). Chappuis, et al. (2012, p. 3) listed five key qualities of classroom assessment as follows:

1. They are designed to serve the specific information needs of intended user(s).
2. They are based on clearly articulated and appropriate achievement targets.
3. They accurately measure student achievement.
4. They yield results that are effectively communicated to their intended users.
5. They involve students in self-assessment, goal setting, tracking, reflecting on, and sharing their learning.

To be able to carry out these mentioned qualities of classroom assessment successfully and effectively, there is a need for language assessment literacy (LAL) of language educators (Coombe, Vafadar, & Mohebbi, 2020) since for good classroom assessment practices to take place, teacher competency does matter and language assessment literacy is a must for teachers. There is an array of experts who gave their own definitions of LAL in the literature; thus, there is no exact and agreed definition of it among researchers. Rooted more generally in education assessment literacy, LAL was defined by Baker and Riches (2017) as the competencies required in language assessment. Focusing on competencies as well, Inbar Lourie (2008, p. 389) stated that "language assessment knowledge base comprises layers of assessment literacy skills combined with language specific

* Corresponding Author: *Elçin Ölmezer Öztürk, elcinolmezerozturk@anadolu.edu.tr*

competencies, forming a distinct entity that can be referred to as language assessment literacy". Furthermore, O'Loughlin (2013, p. 363) voiced that those competencies LAL covers should help one "understand, evaluate and create language tests and analyse test data". Last but not the least, Vogt and Tsagari (2014, p. 377) came up with their own definition of LAL as "the ability to design, develop and critically evaluate tests and other assessment procedures, as well as the ability to monitor, evaluate, grade and score assessments on the basis of theoretical knowledge". As is obvious in the aforementioned definitions, LAL is directly related to language assessment, and not only includes theory related to language assessment but also includes using this theory appropriately and efficiently in assessment practices.

Stoynoff and Coombe (2012) voiced that there exist many factors why language teachers should have LAL. First one is the change in the content of the course books which has opened a gate for the combination of theory and practice. The next one is that though teachers did not take a language assessment course in the past, the situation is getting better now suggesting that more and more pre-service teachers have been exposed to language assessment courses. The last one is the changing perception of language assessment that adopts a more cognitive and social-constructivist stance. This changing perspective was highlighted by Stiggins (2007) as well who stated that language teachers were not expected to have LAL in the past, but now there is greater emphasis on and expectation of them in relation to their LAL levels.

As is seen, LAL is highly emphasized in the literature as it is the core of the professional development (DeLuca, et al., 2018), and "sine qua non for today's competent educator" (Popham, 2009, p. 4). However, despite the growing importance and attention given to LAL, Stiggins (1991, p. 535) stated that "we are a nation of assessment illiterates". Popham (2004) also came up with similar comments saying that the training in LAL is not adequate for language teachers; so it is a professional suicide" (p. 82). This insufficient training was touched upon by Inbar-Lourie (2017) as well, and Lam (2015) uttered that language teachers are not prepared to carry out their assessment-related responsibilities. In addition to those, Lee (2017) drew attention to the potential hazard assessment illiterate teachers may cause by verbalizing that language teachers have many assessment-related responsibilities, and added that if they are assessment illiterate, then they may "jeopardize learning and teaching with direct consequences for students' future learning" (p. 147).

Upon the importance of LAL of language teachers, many researchers began to study LAL from different aspects. Some focused on the needs of pre-service and in-service teachers in relation to LAL (Baker, Tsushima, & Wang, 2014; Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Malone, 2013; Mede & Atay, 2017; O' Loughlin, 2013; Scarino, 2013), some gave trainings to teachers in order to increase their LAL (Baker & Riches, 2017; Malone, 2013; Mertler, 2009), some investigated their perspectives on LAL (Berry, Sheehan, & Munro, 2019; Öz & Atay, 2017; Sellan, 2017; Tsagari & Vogt, 2017; Volante & Fazio, 2007), and some focused more on language assessment knowledge and investigated whether language teachers are language assessment literate or not (Davidheiser, 2013; Mertler, 2003; Ölmezer-Öztürk & Aydın, 2019; Tao, 2014; Xu & Brown, 2017).

Apart from aforementioned studies, there were also some researchers who investigated LAL of language teachers in relation to the language assessment courses in pre-service education, and tried to increase their LAL levels with the help of these courses. To start with, Lam (2015) looked into two language assessment courses in five Hong-Kong institutions and how these courses contributed to LAL of pre-service teachers, but the findings revealed insufficient training and support for LAL. Next, Hatipoğlu (2015) investigated 124 Turkish EFL pre-service teachers' knowledge and expectations in relation to English Language Testing and Evaluation Course. The results demonstrated that the learners had insufficient assessment knowledge after all four years in pre-service education, and they expected to learn exam-related issues and how to help their learners get prepared for exams. Şahin (2019) also examined English Language Testing and Evaluation Course with respect to LAL of EFL pre-service teachers by gathering both qualitative and quantitative data from the participants. The findings indicated that one language assessment course was not enough to develop LAL of pre-service teachers in terms of theory and practice.

Though the importance of LAL for EFL teachers is stressed in the studies above, it is still the case that EFL teachers do not have sufficient LAL which is a big weakness for a teacher whose main responsibilities also include assessment-related practices. As LAL covers both theory and practice (Malone, 2013; O'Loughlin, 2013; Scarino, 2013) and as the studies have showed that the amount of training in pre-service education may not be enough for pre-service teachers to be language assessment literate (Ölmezer-Öztürk & Aydın, 2019), the theory part is missing in the learners who graduate from teacher education programs. As many researchers touched upon the theory component of the term by stating "LAL is a repertoire of knowledge of using assessment methods" (Taylor, 2009, p. 24), "familiarity with testing definitions" (Malone, 2013, p. 329), and "one of the three skills needed for LAL is the principles, that is, the concepts underlying testing" (Davies, 2008,

p. 338), the importance of helping pre-service teachers gain this knowledge during their initial training becomes more crucial. At this point, it can be seen that there is a need for increasing the exposure of pre-service teachers to language assessment before they start their professions. Based on this, this study aims to investigate whether and in what aspects taking a language assessment course called Classroom Assessment contributes to their LAL development. The following research question was addressed throughout the study:

1. How does Classroom Assessment Course contribute to language assessment literacy of EFL pre-service teachers?

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design which aims to explore views and opinions of the participants to present an in-depth perspective regarding the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2002). In a qualitative research design, “a researcher collects and interprets data, making the researcher as much a part of the research process as participants and the data they provide” (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 3). In the current study, the researcher, as the lecturer of the course, acts as a part of the research process including the data collection, teaching of the course and data analysis phases. Based on these explanations, this study aims to provide a picture of LAL development among EFL pre-service teachers through Classroom Assessment Course.

Setting

The current study took place at an English Language Teacher Education Program of a state university in Turkey. In this program, pre-service teachers have to take a range of courses from linguistics, to methodology courses, from skills to literature throughout four years, and when they pass all the courses, they could graduate from the university and have the right to work as an English language teacher. One of these courses pre-service teachers have to take during four-year education is Language Testing and Evaluation Course, a 4th year course, in which they learn how to assess reading, writing, listening and speaking skills of learners. A new program offered by Higher Education Council (HEC) in 2018 added one more language assessment course called Classroom Assessment which is a 3rd year course. Addition of this new course is promising in the sense that presence of just one course in the last year of the program was not sufficient to increase LAL of pre-service teachers, and it was limited to one term which was not enough to cover the topics related to language assessment.

Thus, with the help of Classroom Assessment Course, pre-service teachers are exposed to language assessment more and get more aware of the importance of language assessment before they become seniors. Throughout the term that lasted 14 weeks, the participants were exposed to language assessment focusing on a different point each week, and they were supposed to learn the importance of assessment, how planning is important in this process, the role of feedback in language assessment, assessment types, improvement of student learning through assessment, analysing ready-made exams and the question types, the betterment of the items in the exams having flaws, etc. Thus, this course included both theory and practice though practice was embraced less than theory due to time constraints.

Participants

The participants were junior pre-service teachers who were in the fifth semester of their program. They got skills courses in their first year to improve their foreign language skills, and general field courses in the second year such as linguistics, English literature and language acquisition to have a general understanding of the field. At the time of the study, their third year started and they were taking some more teaching-related courses such as language teaching methodology and teaching English to young learners to improve their skills as teacher candidates. One of these courses was Classroom Assessment Course and 48 students who enrolled in this course formed the participants of the current study. 26 of the participants were female and 22 of them were male, and their ages ranged from 19 to 22. As for all of the participants, it was the first time they encountered a language assessment course in their educational life.

Data collection tools and process

The data collection process of the study included two reflection reports and a focus group interview. First of all, some guiding questions for the reflection reports and questions for the focus group interview were prepared.

After that, these questions were controlled by two experts in the fields of English language teaching and educational assessment in terms of their appropriacy with the research focus, wording and orthography. After getting feedback from the experts and making the necessary revisions, the final format of the questions was prepared, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Guiding questions of the reflection reports

Data Collection Tool	Questions
Reflection Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What comes to your mind when you hear the word assessment? What do you feel about it? • What do you think about the role and purpose of assessment in language classrooms? • What do you think about the role of teachers in language assessment? • What kind of techniques do you think should be used in language classrooms for assessment purposes?
Focus Group Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were your expectations of this course? • How has this course contributed to you as a prospective teacher?

All 48 participants were required to write two reflection reports as the course requirements. They wrote their first reflection report in the first week of the course. Throughout the semester, they actively took part in Classroom Assessment Course, the content of which consisted of certain topics including assessment literacy, the purpose of assessment, assessment methods, alternative assessment and assessment of language skills. In the final week of the semester, the participants wrote their second reflection reports. What is more, a focus group interview was held with the willing participants after the second reflection reports. Eight participants (4 female and 4 male) participated in a focus group interview since they were willing and voluntary to reveal and share their ideas with the researcher and their friends. In this focus group interview, they dwelled more on the reflection reports, and gave some more information about their perspectives and the contribution of this course. In a motivating and stress-free environment, all the discussions took place, and the researcher had the chance to gather in-depth and detailed data about the participants' perspectives regarding the contribution of this course to the LAL development of the participants.

Data analysis

In the data analysis phase, first of all, the focus group interview was transcribed verbatim and all the collected data were prepared for analysis. Then, the researcher went through the files to have a general understanding of the material. After that, the coding process started and the familiar chunks were code-labelled through in-vivo coding which "uses words or short phrases from the participant's own language in the data record as codes.....that prioritize and honor the participant's voice" (Miles, et al., 2020, p. 65). All the coding process was assisted by an academician who was teaching in the faculty of education and had five years of research experience in coding and qualitative data. The agreement ratio on the codes labelled by these inter-raters was 84% and the remaining in-vivo codes were agreed on through negotiations at the end. After this coding process, the codes driven from the data were grouped under more general themes to be presented with their frequencies under the pre-determined research foci of the study.

Trustworthiness

Since the current study employed a basic qualitative research design, several procedures were followed to ensure its trustworthiness, stated by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as the concept referring to the validity and reliability of qualitative research studies. First of all, the data were triangulated with the help of different types of data collection tools as reflection reports and a focus group interview. Besides, the coding process during the analysis phase was assisted by a colleague to ensure interrater reliability. The last procedure that was employed to contribute to trustworthiness of the data collection and analysis process was member-checking in which the participants were asked to check the transcriptions of the focus group interview in terms of the accuracy of their own account.

Findings

The data obtained from all the participants via reflection reports revealed that the participants' perspectives related to language assessment have significantly and noticeably changed when compared to the beginning of the term (before they took Classroom Assessment Course). The findings derived from the data related to the participants' perspectives are as follows:

Table 2. Findings of the reflection reports

Research foci	Before the course	After the course
Opinions and feelings about assessment in language classrooms	*Increasing stress *Anxiety-provoking *Not contributing to learning	*Facilitating learning *A must for effective learning *Not as anxiety-provoking as thought before
Purpose of assessment in language classrooms	*To measure performance *To determine the level of success *To decide students should pass or fail	*To provide feedback *To improve student learning *To diagnose weaknesses and strengths
The role of the teacher in assessment in language classrooms	*Preparing exams *Scoring *Judging in a harsh manner	*Evaluating the process *Guiding *Giving feedback in a kind and positive manner *Interpreting the grades
Assessment techniques in language classrooms	*Traditional exams *Quizzes *Multiple choice tests	*Portfolios *Performance-based exams *Less traditional exams

The first focus of the questions in the reports was to uncover the opinions and feelings of the participants regarding assessment in language classrooms. The findings showed that while the participants had quite negative connotations with language assessment such as increasing stress, provoking anxiety and providing no contribution to learning, this negative perspective disappeared at the end of the semester. With the help of the course, the participants started to think that language assessment was a must for effective learning and it had a more facilitating role than the anxiety provoking one. The following excerpts from a participant's reflection reports provide an example how their perspective changed at the end of the semester.

"I never liked being assessed, I always felt nervous in all my exams. When I was a student, I always thought why we needed those exams because we just memorized something and teachers were asking about this memorized knowledge.....They were the routines of our school life but they never contributed to me." (Participant 22 – report1)

".....I was quite negative about this issue of assessment at the beginning, but now it is crystal clear to me that assessment is something that should be done to facilitate students' learning." (Participant 22 – report2)

Another point that significantly changed in the participants' perspectives was the purpose of assessment in language classrooms. At the beginning of the course, the participants commonly thought that assessment was used in language classrooms for giving grades and deciding on whether students should pass or fail. However, at the end of the semester, the participants embraced different ideas on the purpose of assessment in language classrooms and thought that it was used to give feedback to students, to improve their learning, and diagnose their strengths and weaknesses during the learning process. The following sentences from the reflection reports of the same participant emphasize how her perspective changed regarding the purpose of assessment.

"The aim of assessment is to measure student performance by applying them some tests and giving a grade at the end." (Participant 34 – report1)

“In language classrooms, assessment should be used for a number of ways which include identifying the problematic sides of their learning process and giving feedback about to what extent they achieved.....In a way, the main role of assessment is to improve students’ learning.” (Participant 34-report2)

When the findings from the reflection reports were considered, it was also seen that the participants’ perspectives related with the role of teachers in language assessment also changed. Whereas, at the beginning of the course, they perceived the role of teachers in the assessment process as preparing exams, scoring or judging due to the exam results, their opinions on teachers’ role completely changed at the end of the course and they started to perceive teachers as encouraging, helping figures who interpret the grades and give feedback for students’ improvement. This change can also be seen in the sentences below taken from a participant’s reflection reports.

“To my own experience, teachers generally prepare exams and score them.....They sometimes give some feedback based on the mistakes students make, but in general, their role is mostly the same.” (Participant 5 – report1)

“.....Teachers interpret the grades for students and give feedback for their improvement.....Their major role is not to prepare exam but to know how to use the scores they get from various types of assessment in a process for students’ improvement.” (Participant 5 – report2)

The last point that changed in the participants’ perspective was about the assessment techniques used in language classrooms. At the beginning of the course, the participants expressed that traditional exams that included true/false, matching or fill-in-the-blanks questions, vocabulary or grammar quizzes and large scale multiple choice tests were the assessment techniques used in language classrooms. However, at the end of the semester, they started to believe that the amount of these traditional exams should be decreased and portfolios or performance-based exams should be integrated into the assessment process in language classrooms. The sentences below summarize how the participants’ perspectives changed on these assessment techniques:

“To assess students’ performance, the best way is to prepare a combination of different question types such as matching, or long answer.....No single type of questions should be used if we want to measure our students’ performances better.....Finally, we should have those exams frequently.” (Participant 21 – report1)

“Measuring students’ performances in language classrooms should be based on a process.....Portfolios in which students can have the opportunity to compile their products and demonstrate a long term performance should be used in language classrooms as assessment tools.” (Participant 21 – report2)

In addition to the reflection reports that aimed to reveal the participants’ changing perspectives throughout the semester, a focus group interview was also conducted to find out the contribution of classroom assessment course in the eyes of the participants. The findings derived from the interview are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Findings of the focus group interview

Research focus	Themes
Contribution of classroom assessment course	*understanding assessment better *feeling more knowledgeable as a prospective teacher in assessment *enthusiasm to study on assessment

The findings demonstrated that Classroom Assessment Course the participants took during the semester also helped them understand the notion of assessment better, feel more knowledgeable in this field and increase their enthusiasm to study more on language assessment, all of which contribute to language assessment literacy development of the participants.

The first point that the participants thought as a major contribution of this course was that they understood assessment better. According to their expressions, the notion of assessment was directly associated with exams and scores which made them perceive it as a stressful process for students and heavy workload for teachers. However, after the course, their opinions completely changed and the following utterances by an interviewee highlighted how his perspective changed:

“Now I know what assessment means, in its real sense. I mean, what I used to know was a very little part of it, this is what I understood. Now, I know assessment is for learning, I mean it has an important supportive role in learning

process. With all its types and techniques, we need to use it as a tool for improving learning.” (Interviewee 4 – focus group interview)

The participants in the interview also expressed that they started to feel more knowledgeable as prospective teachers in language assessment after taking this course. They thought that knowing about language assessment, its role in language learning, assessment types, assessing language skills etc. made them feel competent as teacher candidates, increasing their self-efficacies as prospective teachers. The expressions of a participant in the interview summarize this contribution.

“Honestly, I am really happy to have taken this course this semester.....It was very informative and I learnt a lot of things about assessment, from its real role and to some specific techniques to assess skills, feeling like an expert (smiling) in language assessment..... I feel myself lucky because I know there are not even many teachers knowing about this stuff but I know all about them as a pre-service teacher, that makes me very happy.” (Interviewee 2 – focus group interview)

The last point that the participants considered as a contribution of Classroom Assessment Course was the enthusiasm to study on assessment. During the interview, it was observed that the participants were feeling quite positive for having taken the course and in addition to feeling more knowledgeable in language assessment, some of them expressed a certain enthusiasm to learn more and improve themselves in this field of study. At this point, Interviewee 7 expressed her ideas quite willingly during the interview.

“Probably the biggest gain for me is that I enjoyed reading and learning about language assessment. It is quite different than the teaching of a language, and quite dynamic, I mean I feel that I will always keep myself fresh and updated if I study on it.....I want to get a Master’s degree when I graduate and for now, I clearly want to study on something related with language assessment.” (Interviewee 7 – focus group interview)

When the findings of both the reflection reports and the focus group interview are examined, it can be seen that Classroom Assessment Course the participants enrolled in not only changed their perspectives positively on the role and purpose of language assessment and teachers’ role in this process but also helped them understand the nature of assessment, made them more knowledgeable and aware in the field of language assessment. Taking all these into consideration, it can be said that the Classroom Assessment Course contributed to language assessment literacy development of the participating EFL pre-service teachers.

Discussion

Studies focusing on assessment-related competencies of language teachers and defining language assessment literacy (LAL) to put forward a framework mutually highlight the importance of EFL teachers’ assessment knowledge and familiarity with assessment-related concepts (Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Malone, 2013). In that sense, making pre-service teachers familiar with those concepts and any contribution to increase their knowledge and familiarity with language assessment in their initial training during the pre-service program are highly suggested by the same literature. The findings of the current study, at this point, present an insight on how a Classroom Assessment Course can potentially change the perspectives of pre-service teachers on assessment-related issues and contribute to their LAL development.

One of the major findings of the study was related to the purpose of language assessment in the lenses of the participants. While it was directly in relation to only measuring performance or pass-fail decisions at the beginning of the semester, their perspective shifted towards assessment for improvement and learning, which is ideally the current tendency in the last decade regarding how teachers should see and practice assessment in their classrooms (Chappuis & Stiggins, 2016; William, 2011). Moreover, the participants also reported their changing perspectives on the role of teachers in language assessment, from a scorer to a guide and interpreter of exam results for the betterment of the learning-teaching process. It is undeniable that assessment process includes various duties and tasks such as developing tests, scoring and interpreting, and teachers are responsible for them as part of their profession (Mertler, 2003). However, with the emerging concept of assessment for learning, teachers are expected to become more aware of and conscious about what, how, and why they are making use of assessment practices to make better instructional decisions (Stanford & Reeves, 2005). For this reason, helping pre-service teachers gain such a perspective during their initial teacher training years is not only noteworthy for their learning to teach process but also contributes to their LAL development. Finally, changing the perspectives of pre-service teachers on assessment techniques that should be used in language classrooms was another major finding. At first, the participants were aware of just the traditional methods of testing and assessment; however, at the end of the semester, most of them expressed that they were in favour of using

process and performance based on assessment techniques in language classrooms that are regarded as a prerequisite for the quality of the instruction and learning (Stiggins, 1999).

The other set of findings derived from the focus group revealed that, with the help of Classroom Assessment Course, the participants understood the concept of assessment better and they started to feel more competent and knowledgeable in language assessment. The studies recently focusing on the assessment knowledge and level of EFL teachers (Ölmezer-Öztürk & Aydın, 2019; Öz & Atay, 2017; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014) demonstrated a low level of LAL and certain problems related with assessment competencies of EFL teachers. As a solution for this, they suggested an increase in the number of courses and training opportunities for EFL teachers in both pre-service and in-service levels. For instance, studying with 288 pre-service EFL teachers, DeLuca and Klinger (2010) reported that the testing and assessment course contributed positively to their knowledge and confidence. In the same way, Hatipoğlu (2015) also mentioned the positive attitudes of the participating pre-service teachers towards English Language Testing and Evaluation Course. Being parallel with the results of these studies, the current study provided important findings on how the integration and implementation of a potential course on assessment would serve in training more assessment literate teachers in language teacher education programs.

Conclusion

In the last decade, language assessment literacy (LAL) has been one of the primary concerns of both researchers and practitioners in the field. In addition to the studies identifying the needs, levels and competencies of teachers related with language assessment, there have been several attempts that call for the exploration of courses, trainings or methods that would potentially contribute to LAL development of both pre-service and in-service teachers (Hatipoğlu, 2015; Tsagari & Vogt, 2017). Addressing this need for research, this study outlined the changing perspectives of EFL pre-service teachers through Classroom Assessment Course. The results of the reflection reports of the participants put forward a significant change in the perspectives of EFL pre-service teachers regarding their feelings about assessment, the purpose of assessment in learning process, the role of teachers in assessment and the assessment techniques used in language classrooms. Besides, the findings derived from the focus group interview revealed that the participants understood the concept of assessment better, felt more knowledgeable in assessment as pre-service teachers and had more enthusiasms to study on assessment at the end of Classroom Assessment Course.

Being conducted within a specific course content and with a limited number of participants are the limitations of the current study. However, with the methodology it follows and the findings derived from the data collection tools present an understanding on how EFL pre-service teachers can be made more aware of assessment during their pre-service education and how a course content can contribute to their LAL development. In this regard, the findings of the current study also serve as suggestions to be implied in pre-service language teacher education programs with similar contextual characteristics to the one in this study. In other words, it can be seen that language teacher education programs should be enriched with more optional or compulsory courses to train teacher candidates on language assessment and educate more assessment literate language teachers. As for research suggestions, it is believed that the research focus should urgently shift from identifying language teachers' needs and levels related with assessment literacy to exploring the effectiveness and contribution of courses, trainings or workshops on EFL teachers' LAL development. Besides, how teachers reflect on such opportunities and how these opportunities are reflected in teachers' short term and long term practices should also be investigated. In that way, the unique and most effective ways of developing EFL teachers' assessment literacy can be explored and important steps to have more assessment literate teachers can be taken.

References

- Baker, B. A., Tsushima, R., & Wang, S. (2014). Investigating language assessment literacy: Collaboration between assessment specialists and Canadian university admissions officers. *Language Learning in Higher Education*, 4 (1), 137-157. <https://doi.org/10.1515/cercles-2014-0009>.
- Baker, B. A., & Riches, C. (2017). The development of EFL examinations in Haiti: Collaboration and language assessment literacy development. *Language Testing*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532217716732>
- Berry, V., Sheehan, S., & Munro, S. (2019). What does language assessment literacy mean to teachers? *ELT Journal*, 73 (2), 113-123. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccy055>
- Chappuis, J., Stiggins, R., Chappuis, S., & Arter, J. (2012). *Classroom assessment for student learning: Doing it right-Using it well* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Chappuis, J., & Stiggins, R. (2016). *An Introduction to Student-Involved Assessment for Learning* (7th Ed.). Pearson Education.
- Cheng, L., & Wang, X. (2007). Grading, feedback, and reporting in ESL / EFL classrooms. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 4 (1), 85-107. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434300701348409>
- Coombe, C., Vafadar, H., & Mohebbi, H. (2020). Language assessment literacy: What do we need to learn, unlearn, and relearn? *Language Testing in Asia*, 10(3), 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-020-00101-6>
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Davies, A. (2008). Textbook trends in teaching language testing. *Language Testing*, 25, 327-348. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532208090156>
- Davidheiser, S. A. (2013). *Identifying areas for high school teacher development: A study of assessment literacy in the Central Bucks School District* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation). Drexel University, United States.
- DeLuca, C., & Klinger, A. D. (2010). Assessment literacy development: identifying gaps in teacher candidates' learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 17(4), 419-438, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2010.516643>
- DeLuca, C., Valiquette, A., Coombs, A., LaPointe-McEwan, D., & Luhanga, U. (2018). Teachers' approaches to classroom assessment: A large-scale survey. *Assessment in education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 25 (4), 355-375. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594X.2016.1244514>.
- Fulcher, G. (2012). Assessment literacy for the language classroom. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 9 (2), 113-132. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2011.642041>.
- Hatipoğlu, Ç. (2015). English language testing and evaluation (ELTE) training in Turkey: Expectations and needs of pre-service English language teachers. *ELT Research Journal*, 4 (2), 111-128.
- Inbar-Lourie, O. (2008). Constructing a language assessment knowledge base: A focus on language assessment courses. *Language Testing*, 25 (3), 385-402. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532208090158>
- Inbar-Lourie, O. (2017). Language assessment literacy. In E. Shohamy, I. G. Or, S. May (Eds), *Language Testing and Assessment* (pp. 1-14). Springer International Publishing.
- Lam, R. (2015). Language assessment training in Hong Kong: Implications for language assessment literacy. *Language Testing*, 32 (2), 169-197. DOI: 10.1177/0265532214554321
- Lee, I. (2017). *Classroom writing assessment and feedback in L2 school contexts*. Singapore: Springer.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Malone, M. E. (2013). The essentials of assessment literacy: Contrasts between testers and users. *Language Testing*, 30 (3), 329-344. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480129>.
- Mede, E., & Atay, D. (2017). English Language Teachers' assessment literacy: The Turkish context. *Dil Dergisi*, 168 (1), 1-5.
- Mertler, C. A. (2003). Secondary teachers' assessment literacy: Does classroom experience make a difference?. *American Secondary Education*, 33 (1), 49-64.
- Mertler, C. A. (2009). Teachers' assessment knowledge and the perceptions of the impact of classroom assessment professional development. *Improving Schools*, 12 (2), 101-113 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480209105575>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis: A method sourcebook* (4th Ed.). Sage Publications.
- O'Loughlin, K. (2013). Developing the assessment literacy of university proficiency test users. *Language Testing*, 30 (3), 363-380. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480336>.
- Ölmezer-Öztürk, E., & Aydın, B. (2019). Investigating language assessment knowledge of EFL teachers. *Hacettepe University Journal of Education*, 34 (3), 602-620. <https://doi.org/10.16986/HUJE.2018043465>.
- Öz, S., & Atay, D. (2017). Turkish EFL instructors' in-class language assessment literacy: Perceptions and practices. *ELT Research Journal*, 6 (1), 25-44.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

- Popham, W. J. (2004). All about accountability / Why assessment illiteracy is professional suicide. *Educational Leadership*, 62 (1), 82-83.
- Popham, W. J. (2009). Assessment literacy for teachers: Faddish or fundamental? *Theory Into Practice*, 48, 4-11.
- Russell, M. K., & Airasian, P. W. (2012). *Classroom assessment: Concepts and applications*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill.
- Scarino, A. (2013). Language assessment literacy as self-awareness: Understanding the role of interpretation in assessment and in teacher learning. *Language Testing*, 30 (3), 309-327. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532213480128>.
- Sellan, R. (2017). Developing assessment literacy in Singapore: How teachers broaden English language learning by expanding assessment constructs. *Papers in Language Testing and Assessment*, 6 (1), 64-87.
- Shermis, M. D., & Di Vesta, F. J. (2011). *Classroom assessment in action*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Stiggins, R. J. (1991). Assessment literacy. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 72, 534-539.
- Stiggins, R. J. (1999). Evaluating classroom assessment training in teacher education programs. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 18 (1), 23-27.
- Stiggins, R. J. (2007). Conquering the formative assessment frontier. In J. H. McMillan (Ed.). *Formative classroom assessment: Theory into Practice* (pp. 8-28). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Stoynoff, S., & Coombe, C. (2012). Professional development in language assessment. In C. Coombe, P. Davidson, B. O'Sullivan, & S. Stoynoff. (Eds.). *The Cambridge guide to second language assessment*. (pp. 122-130). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Şahin, S. (2019). *An analysis of English Language Testing and Evaluation Course in English Language Teacher Education Programs in Turkey: Developing language assessment literacy of pre-service EFL teachers*. (Unpublished PhD Dissertation). Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.
- Tao, N. (2014). *Development and validation of classroom assessment literacy scales: English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in a Cambodian Higher Education Setting*. (Unpublished PhD Dissertation). Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia.
- Taylor, L. (2009). Developing assessment literacy. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 29, 21-36. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190509090035>
- Tsagari, D., & Vogt, K. (2017). Assessment literacy of foreign language teachers around Europe: Research, challenges and future prospects. *Papers in Language Testing and Assessment*, 6 (1), 41-64.
- Vogt, K., & Tsagari, D. (2014). Assessment literacy of foreign language teachers: Findings of a European study. *Language Assessment Quarterly*, 11 (4), 374- 402. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15434303.2014.960046>.
- Volante, L., & Fazio, X. (2007). Exploring teacher candidates' assessment literacy: Implications for teacher education reform and professional development. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 30 (3), 749-770. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20466661>.
- William, D. (2011). What is assessment for learning? *Studies in Educational Evaluation*, 37 (1), 3-14. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.stueduc.2011.03.001>
- Xu, Y., & Brown, G. T. L. (2017). University English teacher assessment literacy: A survey-test report from China. *Papers in Language Testing and Assessment*, 6 (1), 133-158.