

TEDD  
TÜRK EĞİTİM  
DEĞERLENDİRMELERİ DERGİSİ

# TEDD

TÜRK EĞİTİM DEĞERLENDİRMELERİ DERGİSİ



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TÜRK EĞİTİM DEĞERLENDİRMELERİ DERGİSİ  
THE JOURNAL OF TURKISH EDUCATIONAL REVIEW

e-ISSN: 2822-5740

Yaz/Haziran 2023 Sayı: 3 Cilt: 1

Summer /June 2023 Issue: 3 Volume: 1

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## *Editorial Commentary - ICPLTL 2022*

The spring 2023 issue of The Journal of Turkish Educational Review (TEDD) compilation of scholarship includes Special Issue articles presented as part of “The 1st International Conference on Psychology for Language Teachers and Learners” held in Istanbul Medipol University, Turkey on October 26-27, 2022. The conference aimed to focus on Language Teachers and Learners by bringing together international experts to investigate psychological aspects and dimensions of language learning and teaching while welcoming presentations that explore new paradigms in psychology. The objective of gathering these articles together is to help promote research related to the psychology of language learning and teaching. By targeting professionals who incorporate interdisciplinary focus in their research, we hope that this issue helps merge current theoretical understanding in the field of language teaching and learning as well as the practical experiences of language teachers and learners.

The psychology of language learning and teaching focuses on connecting the disciplines of psychology and second language learning. As an emerging field of inquiry, establishing a community of scholars in the field will help adopt a more visibly interdisciplinary approach and serve as a plea for recognition and support. With this editorial introduction, we hope to offer an overview of the development of the field and examine some of the issues while identifying key characteristics. The authors in this special issue discuss the attractions of such an interdisciplinary field of research and reflect on the challenges facing those working in this area. A note of appreciation is suitable here both for participants who attended the conference and the authors who contributed to this issue. Also, we are exceptionally grateful for the time and effort of those who extended their support with the peer review process as well as the conference board who spent many hours organizing the event.

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# Wellbeing Strategies for Women Educators: A Resilience-Centered Framework to Empower Teachers and Students

Efsevia Kyrikaki<sup>1</sup>

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Citation : Kyrikaki, E. (2023) Wellbeing strategies for women educators: a resilience-centered framework to empower teachers and students. *The Journal of Turkish Educational Review* 3, (3), 7-20.  
Received : 10.03.2023  
Accepted : 04.05.2023  
Published : 30.06.2023  
Publisher's Note : Istanbul Medipol University stays neutral with regard to any jurisdictional claims.  
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## Abstract

Even though female educators constitute a significant majority of the educator population worldwide, very little attention has been directed until now to their distinct socio-psychological needs when dealing with stress and burnout, the more so during the COVID-19 outbreak. This study examines the current state of research for gender specific support of women educators suffering from stress. Resilience-centred strategies, both personal and societal, are substantiated as positive correlates to wellbeing and empowerment outcomes. Using these findings, a multi-dimensional, gender-specific intervention is proposed with five overarching aims—emotional intelligence, growth mindset, mindfulness, professional learning communities, and mentoring. NeuroLearningPower, an evidence-based framework is suggested as a means to support female educators to thrive.

**Keywords:** Female educators, stress, burnout, COVID-19, gender-specific support, emotional intelligence, NeuroLearningPower.

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1 MetaMathesis Educational Organisation, Greece

# Kadın Eğitimciler İçin İyi Hali Stratejileri: Öğretmenleri ve Öğrencileri Güçlendirmek İçin Esneklik Merkezli Bir Çerçeve

## Özet

Kadın eğitimciler dünya çapında eğitimci nüfusunun önemli bir çoğunluğunu oluştursa da, COVID-19 salgını sırasında daha da belirgin olmak üzere, stres ve tükenmişlikle başa çıkarken farklı sosyo-psikolojik ihtiyaçlarına şimdiye kadar çok az ilgi gösterilmiştir. Bu çalışma, stresten etkilenen kadın eğitimcilerin cinsiyete özel olarak desteklenmesine yönelik araştırmaların mevcut durumunu incelemektedir. Hem kişisel hem de toplumsal dayanıklılık merkezli stratejilerin, refah ve güçlendirme sonuçlarıyla pozitif ilişkili olduğu kanıtlanmıştır. Bu bulgulardan hareketle, duygusal zeka, büyüme zihniyeti, farkındalık, profesyonel öğrenme toplulukları ve mentorluk olmak üzere beş kapsayıcı amacı olan çok boyutlu, cinsiyete özgü bir müdahale önerilmektedir. Kanıta dayalı bir çerçeve olan NeuroLearningPower, kadın eğitimcilerin gelişmesini desteklemek için bir araç olarak sunulmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kadın eğitimciler, stres, tükenmişlik, COVID-19, cinsiyete özgü destek, duygusal zeka, NeuroLearningPower.

## Introduction

Sophia loved her teacher and the English language learning process from the moment she set foot in the classroom. She decided then and there to become an English teacher herself. Her dream was to help young students love the culture she had also adored. Teachers are dreamers, often driven by their passion for learning and a desire to make a positive impact on their students' lives. TESOL teachers, in particular, are motivated by a deep and passionate urge to connect their students to the world. However, new teachers may face difficulties in realizing their aspirations due to increased workloads, challenging relationships, and lack of support, which can contribute to stress and burnout (Raiskaya & Tikhonova, 2019). This is a reality for which they are often unprepared, and bashes their dreams, as was the case with Sophia. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has added to the burden, leading to a worldwide phenomenon of quiet



quitting or outright turnover among educators, both novice and experienced (Sorensen and Ladd, 2020, Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014).

This article provides a review of teacher well-being based on current findings from positive psychology and cognitive neuroscience, highlighting its importance for student outcomes and educational success. Additionally, the unique support needs of women educators are addressed, and the role of peer communities and mentoring in empowering and supporting ESOL teachers is examined. Finally, the article introduces NeuroLearningPower®, an innovative framework, and a cognitive-behavioural intervention designed to empower women educators and support their students' thriving.

### **Women educators, a vulnerable majority**

Looking around in any TESOL Conference one can only confirm empirically what studies state clearly; women form the majority of the educator population. According to a recent longitudinal study, the trend of female predominance in ESL is rising with women covering 68.6% of teaching ESL positions in the USA alone and still earning less than their male counterparts (Zippia, 2022). This follows the general trend with women forming 60% of the educational population worldwide, 72% in EU countries, and 76% in the US (Le Nestour & Moscovitz, 2020; (European Commission, 2019; NCES, 2021). Such percentages speak for themselves when addressing the void in gender-specific interventions for this specific population, whose mental health and occupational stress have been found to be more challenging in comparison to their male counterparts (Antoniou et al., 2013; Dagar & Mathur, 2016).

Although stressors may be the same for both sexes, women experience more perceived stress (Battams et al., 2014). The educational context is not an exception, as women educators tend to experience more stress in their effort to manage their multiple roles both at home and in the workplace (Johnson et al., 2021). Antoniou et al. (2006), reporting on gender differences in teacher occupational stress, state that female educators “presented higher levels of emotional exhaustion compared to their male counterparts, which probably suggests that either they have not acquired or cannot utilize the suitable psychological-coping resources geared to the demands of the profession” (p. 688).

Female educators in all directions and levels of education consistently report higher stress than men (Antoniou et al., 2006; Donovan, 2018; Johnson et al., 2021; Kemeny et al., 2012; Raitskaya & Tikhonova, 2019). As a result, in the U.K. only, around 6,000 women teachers aged 30-39 (27% of all leavers in total) leave the profession yearly—the largest group of leavers other than retirees (Simons, 2016).

Extensive literature exists on reasons leading to women educators' distinct need for support due to their increased susceptibility to stress and burnout. These aggravating factors can be personal, societal, and organizational and may involve indicatively self-efficacy issues more common to women than men (Smetackova, 2017), schemata, i.e., psychological constructs of the self, deriving from social constructs with women still expected to emphasize the home-maker role (Eddleston et al., 2006).

Acquiring well-being strategies presents even more extended implications for women educators who aspire to leadership roles, as they need greater support than their male counterparts. Dickey et al. found in their comprehensive longitudinal study on TESOL organisations worldwide that women's presidentship - although improved recently - still needs to be representative of the women-educator membership ratio (Dickey, 2016). This poses the question of promoting equity and inclusion in educational leadership, as women educators report being more prone to stress than their male counterparts due to career development issues (Archibong et al., 2010). Fostering gender equity in education leadership means supporting women educators and their gender-specific needs by training them in active coping measures and psycho-prophylactic strategies, partly through peer support and mentoring.

### **Educator well-being as an essential factor of student outcomes**

The impact of positive emotions and well-being on educational environments has been gaining attention in recent years, as evidence for the effectiveness of positive psychology interventions in educational settings continues to grow. Despite a historical emphasis on academic achievement in educational frameworks worldwide, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of social-emotional skills and wellness in educational settings. This shift is supported by recent advances in educational neuroscience (Seligman, 2012).

The construct of well-being, which is a dynamic concept from positive psychology, encompasses both personal and professional life. According to Acton and Glasgow (2015), teacher well-being can be defined as "an individual sense of personal professional fulfilment, satisfaction, purposefulness, and happiness, constructed in a collaborative process with colleagues and students" (p. 101). In the field of educational psychology, including language learning, there has been a growing emphasis on learner well-being, but often at the expense of acknowledging the critical role that educator well-being plays in achieving positive outcomes (Sulis et al., 2021).

However, there is mounting evidence to support the notion that teacher well-being is a crucial variable for both teacher success and student outcomes. For instance, stressed educators are more likely to adopt suboptimal instructional practices, such as teaching to the test, rather than the general curriculum (Putwain & Symes, 2010), which in turn can negatively impact students' academic achievement (Klusmann et al., 2016). Thus, it is imperative to prioritize teacher well-being as a means of optimizing student outcomes.

### **Mental health issues, a dual-faced challenge**

A literature review can easily reveal a significant increase in mental health challenges among both educators and students, which requires urgent attention. Teaching is widely recognized as a highly stressful profession, with 73% of educators reporting frequent work-related stress even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has further exacerbated the issue (American Federation of Teachers, 2015; Gallup, 2019; Mercer, 2020). This percentage is notably higher than that reported by the general population, which stands at approximately 30%. Recent research conducted during the pandemic suggests that six out of ten teachers in the US experienced heightened anxiety and declining well-being compared to the previous year, with those who experienced the most significant decline calling for greater support for their well-being (Dempsey & Burke, 2021).

Prolonged stress often leads to compassion fatigue, a term used to describe exhaustion experienced by individuals who are continuously required to assist others (DuBois & Mistretta, 2019). Teachers are considered a high-risk group for this type of burnout resulting from long-term stress, as they are among the helping professionals (Raitskaya & Tikhonova, 2019). In the context of TESOL, novice teachers report feelings of loneliness and stress, with deficient language skills, lack of pedagogy, and low self-efficacy additionally contributing as risk factors for burnout, even for experienced educators (Li, 2021).

Simultaneously, the world is facing an unprecedented mental health crisis among young people, with mental health issues in children and teenagers on the rise globally (Twenge et al., 2019; Wilson & Dumornay, 2022). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in seven young people between the ages of 10 and 19 experiences some form of mental health disorder, which impacts their educational readiness but frequently goes unrecognized and unaddressed (WHO, 2021).

## **Connections as a mutual empowerment factor**

The traditional view that learning is a solitary activity has been challenged by recent advances in cognitive neuroscience. It has been found that teacher-student relationships are critical to the well-being of both teachers and students and play a key role in determining student outcomes, particularly in challenging circumstances such as those brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic (Frenzel et al., 2021). Social relationships and connections are also crucial components of multidimensional well-being models over time. Lhospital and Gregory (2009) conducted a study involving 33 teachers who were part of a prereferral intervention team, and found that student-teacher stress decreased steadily over time, with an effect size of  $d = 0.66$  between the first and third time points. Participation in a supportive team was identified as a contributing factor to this reduction in stress.

However, long-term stress and burnout have been shown to be associated with health problems, depersonalization, and attrition. Teacher exhaustion can have a negative impact on teacher-student relationships, which in turn can affect the relational aspect of student well-being. This is defined as a “sustainable state, characterized by predominantly positive feelings and attitudes, positive relationships at school, resilience, self-optimization, and a high level of satisfaction with learning experiences” (Noble et al., 2008, p.30). Additionally, teachers’ difficulty in engaging with students and forming relationships has been found to mediate the effect of peer acceptance on students (Hughes & Kwok, 2006). Finally, emotional contagion between teachers and students can lead to the transfer of stress and other negative emotions, inadvertently affecting students’ emotions and outcomes (Frenzel et al., 2021; Harding et al., 2019).

Considering these findings, it is essential to recognize the significance of teacher-student connections and to prioritize the well-being of educators parallelly and with similar care as that of learners. This is particularly important in the context after the COVID-19 pandemic, when educators and students are still facing numerous challenges and stressors. By fostering supportive relationships between teachers and students, and creating a positive and nurturing learning environment, it is possible to promote student well-being and academic success.

## **Peer support communities contribute to resilience**

In literature, resilience has been identified as a critical factor in promoting teacher well-being and success (Beltman, 2020; Mansfield et al., 2018). Resilience has been linked to various predictive factors, including having a sense of purpose and meaning in life, realistic optimism, and goal creation, among oth-

ers, which have been associated with teacher coping and success. However, it is important to note that teacher resilience extends beyond the ability to recover from adverse experiences. Instead, it involves the capacity to maintain a sense of commitment and agency in the face of daily work conditions (Gu & Day, 2013).

Interestingly, Gu (2014) argues that teacher resilience is not merely a personal resource, but rather a collective issue. This perspective is supported by the social brain hypothesis (Dunbar, 1998), which suggests that humans have a biological predisposition to form social connections. From a psychological viewpoint, the quality of relationships at school plays a critical role in promoting teacher well-being, effectiveness, and positive identity. The concept of relational resilience (Miller, 1986; Jordan, 2004) is based on the idea that all psychological growth occurs within relationships. Peer and social support networks have been found to be central to both the learning communities and the development of resilience, especially among novice teachers and women educators (Raitskaya & Tikhonova, 2019). Sharing daily challenges with peers can help relieve stress and maintain morale (Howard & Johnson, 2004), and such relationships are essential for both personal and collective resilience. In Gu's (2014) longitudinal study, 91% of teachers who remained resilient and committed reported the positive influence of collegial and collaborative support on their morale and teaching capacity.

Furthermore, the changing educational landscape, where teachers act as coaches and learning facilitators, requires a new outlook on pedagogy and learning processes. Professional learning communities (PLCs) provide a supportive environment for teachers to share new practices and develop their social schemata (Cottam et al., 2015). In case-study methodology research, teachers emphasized the importance of building trust in groups, collaborating, and establishing shared norms and identity with others in the team (Owen, 2016). Reflection on positive psychology outlooks enables teachers to take on leadership roles, inquire, risk, and explore, resulting in enhanced effectiveness, purpose, and well-being. Women educators are more likely to benefit from the power of these communities due to their stronger communal orientation (Jordan, 2004). Sharing ideas and practices in PLC networks positively affects both teacher problem-solving, social skills, independence, and creativity and student academic outcomes (Owen, 2016).

### **The case for mentoring**

Empowerment plays a crucial role in the resilience process, and mentoring is an essential factor in this regard. Positive mentoring relationships have a significant impact on the satisfaction, identity, and self-efficacy of teachers (Le

Cornu, 2013), providing them with supportive and challenging scaffolding for the process of learning to teach, as well as for supporting experienced teachers to persevere and develop (Nguyen, 2013). While educators may not consider vulnerability and trust to be signs of resilience (Gilmore et al., 2018), female educators, who are more prone to perceived stress (Antoniou et al., 2006), require this support. Like oxygen masks first put on by adults in flight emergencies, teachers need to learn to empower themselves systematically, so as to be in a position to support their students adequately.

Mentoring is also a crucial component of professional development and advancement, providing important social support. Research indicates that being mentored can help women attain higher positions in educational leadership, develop the necessary personal resources, and overcome contextual barriers (Ballenger, 2010; Cullen and Luna, 1993). In fact, having multiple mentors can be beneficial, as it caters to various needs (Hansman, 1998).

### **The NeuroLearningPower® framework**

The NeuroLearningPower® framework is an intervention tailored to the needs of women educators with the purpose of promoting psycho-social strategies aimed at reducing stress and burnout symptoms, while enhancing resilience and social-emotional well-being both for teachers and their students. By systematically and systemically integrating teacher communities focused on female teachers' well-being NeuroLearningPower® aims to enrich and deepen the knowledge of teacher flourishing at both personal and professional levels, with a specific emphasis on improving the quality of education through the quality of connections (García-Álvarez, 2020; VanderWeele, 2017).

Through the integration of the most current literature findings, the NeuroLearningPower® framework endeavours to foster the concept of flourishing while also promoting coping and resilience strategies for women educators via a multivariate process that longitudinally and dynamically contributes to well-being. Innovative features of this framework include the utilization of structured supportive communities as well as delivery via a mobile application.

### **Intervention design**

The current study presents an eight-week intervention aimed at enhancing the well-being of women educators through the development of a resilience mindset, daily habit consolidation, and strengthening of social connections. The intervention is designed to combine neuroeducation with cognitive-behavioural and mindfulness training, delivered through online meetings and a mobile application. The design includes:

*The cognitive training component* of the intervention involves the delivery of an hourly video in the mobile application every week, which addresses the scientific background of the framework and assists participants in developing emotional intelligence and a growth mindset.

*The daily contemplative practice section* assigns succinct activities through the mobile application, which aims to increase resilience and mindfulness. The mobile application is gamified to encourage adherence to the self-care program, enabling participants to monitor their progress over time.

*The social support teams* organized through the mobile application, enable participants to interact daily to provide mutual support in consolidating their new mindset and self-care practices.

*Structured mentoring* with an expert mentor provides emotional and practical facilitation weekly towards the sustenance of the participants' new mindset and an increase in skills and resilience.

*The use of a mobile application* enables the gamification of the process, allowing for extra points to be allocated for timely task execution, thereby supporting participants in achieving their goals in a more enjoyable manner. Indicative daily goals in the application include learning to unwind through breathing, stopping the inner critic, using empathy towards oneself, growing through failure, and finding the gift in every situation. This approach trains participants to take frequent breaks from their busy schedules and gradually develop the habit of self-care under any circumstances, increasing their sense of self-efficacy.

## **Conclusion**

There is a vast body of literature demonstrating the adverse effects of stress and burnout among teachers (Friedman, 2019; Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Therefore, it is justifiable to propose that mental health interventions in schools should prioritize the emotional and mental well-being of teachers to promote student well-being.

Women are more vulnerable to stress, and women educators are no exception. Seeding the seeds of resilience for women educators is not only dictated by a moral responsibility to two-thirds of the educator population. It will also lead to a thriving educational ecosystem with teachers and students contributing to global flourishing.

To truly support educators and the broader school community, it is imperative to focus on the factors that foster teacher well-being and address their unique

needs. By doing so, teachers will be empowered to remain committed, motivated, and enthusiastic while effectively managing the daily challenges of their roles. To achieve this, interventions for the majority of educators, women, should incorporate a combination of structured measures such as emotional support through peer communities and mentoring programs that can have a systemic impact on the educational environment.

One such framework is NeuroLearningPower®, which aims to promote flourishing and well-being at all levels of education, rather than success at all costs. By prioritizing the well-being of women educators, interventions such as NeuroLearningPower® can catalyse a paradigm shift in education, creating a more positive and sustainable educational ecosystem.

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# Second Language Writing as A Way to Build Up Confidence in Adult Learners

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Citation : Litvinova, O. (2023) Second language writing as a way to build up confidence in adult learners. *The Journal of Turkish Educational Review* 3, (3), 21-31.  
Received : 12.03.2023  
Accepted : 01.05.2023  
Published : 30.06.2023  
Publisher's Note : Istanbul Medipol University stays neutral with regard to any jurisdictional claims.  
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## Abstract

Adult students are known to experience a range of psychological barriers in foreign language learning. Writing seems to present the greatest number of challenges as apart from the linguistic issues related to the proper use of grammar and vocabulary. Even learners at more advanced levels are faced with finding their own voice and writing style for communicating ideas in an authentic way. In the present paper, the author argues that teachers working with adult learners can create a safe supportive environment for adult writers provided they are aware of psychological challenges facing adults due to prior negative learning experiences where the major focus was on mistake correction rather than growing a learner's confidence as a language user and a writer. Offered and introduced cautiously, writing activities are capable of boosting an adult's self-confidence and even serving as a vehicle for creative self-exploration, which might potentially increase a learner's general well-being. Rather than focusing on the target language alone, tasks have to be tailored to a student's personality and draw on their own experiences allowing their multiple identities to be discovered and negotiated in writing. For a student to build up their confidence while working with meaningful tasks, teachers have to be

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empathetic readers providing feedback aimed not only at improving his/her language skills but also at boosting their overall confidence to use their English writing to reach out to a wider world, which might also grow their resilience – particularly at times of global turbulence. The author suggests writing activities which are designed with the above considerations in mind and can be used as part of a writing course supplementing a language curriculum or as a stand-alone course for speakers of any languages.

**Keywords:** Writing, L2 writing, writing instruction, creative writing, identity, corrective feedback

# Yetişkin Öğrencilerde Güven Oluşturmanın Bir Yolu Olarak İkinci Dilde Yazma

## Özet

Yetişkin öğrencilerin yabancı dil öğreniminde bir dizi psikolojik engelle karşılaştıkları bilinmektedir. Yazma becerisi, dilbilgisi ve kelime dağarcığının doğru kullanımıyla ilgili dilbilimsel konuların yanı sıra en fazla sayıda zorluğu ortaya çıkarır gibi görünmektedir. Daha ileri seviyelerdeki öğrenciler bile fikirlerini özgün bir şekilde iletmek için kendi seslerini ve yazma stillerini bulmakla karşı karşıya kalmaktadır. Bu makalede yazar, yetişkin öğrencilerle çalışan öğretmenlerin, bir dil kullanıcısı ve yazarı olarak öğrencinin kendine olan güvenini artırmaktan ziyade hata düzeltmeye odaklanılan önceki olumsuz öğrenme deneyimleri nedeniyle yetişkinlerin karşılaştığı psikolojik zorlukların farkında olmaları koşuluyla, yetişkin yazarlar için güvenli ve destekleyici bir ortam yaratabileceklerini savunmaktadır. Dikkatli bir şekilde sunulan ve tanıtılan yazma etkinlikleri, bir yetişkinin özgüvenini artırabilir ve hatta bir öğrencinin genel refahını potansiyel olarak artırabilecek yaratıcı bir kendini keşfetme aracı olarak hizmet edebilir. Yalnızca hedef dile odaklanmak yerine, etkinlikler öğrencinin kişiliğine göre uyarlanmalı ve kendi deneyimlerinden yararlanarak çoklu kimliklerinin yazılı olarak keşfedilmesine ve müzakere edilmesine olanak sağlamalıdır. Bir öğrencinin anlamlı etkinliklerle uğraşırken özgüvenini artırabilmesi için, öğretmenlerin empati kurabilen okuyucular olması ve geribildirim vererek yalnızca dil becerilerini geliştirmeyi değil, aynı zamanda İngilizce yazılarını daha geniş bir dünyaya ulaştırmak için kullanmalarına yönelik genel özgüvenlerini de artırması gerekir. Yazar, yukarıdaki hususlar göz önünde bulundurularak tasarlanan ve bir dil müfredatını tamamlayan bir yazma dersinin parçası olarak veya herhangi bir dili konuşanlar için tek başına bir ders olarak kullanılabilir yazma etkinlikleri önermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Yazma, L2 yazma, yazma eğitimi, yaratıcı yazma, kimlik, düzeltici geribildirim

## Introduction

Writing tends to cause a lot of people to experience a great deal of anxiety. For some of them those insecurities date back to the school time when teachers were so scrupulous in identifying mistakes in their writing. To make it worse, instructors did not always have the courtesy and professionalism to deliver feedback in a way that would not hurt a young student's self-esteem. Others must have been discouraged to partake in this activity in other school classes such as Literature as they were made to believe putting words on paper takes a genius.

This is definitely the case for my home country, Russia, where school instruction is rather conservative and rigorous allowing teachers to spare no criticism. This country's literary heritage is incredibly and overwhelmingly rich that unless you think you might be a new Pushkin, Dostoevsky, etc., there might be no way for you to ever dare put pen to paper.

As a result of not quite motivating and inspiring school experiences, all adults around the world might be having similar issues stopping them from writing unless their jobs demand that, which is most often, e.g., business correspondence. This type of writing is definitely not about creativity, self-expression and experimentation, which are capable of enriching a person's life and improving their emotional well-being without them having to write absolutely mistake-free or leaving an immortal literary legacy behind.

With all these anxieties associated with writing, no wonder expressing one's self in another language is fraught with even more fears. Language learning itself could be nerve-racking and damaging to one's self-confidence. The so-called foreign language anxiety (FLA) has been studied by SLA researchers and is defined as "the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language" (Macintyre, 1999). I am afraid language teachers might be to blame for that as well. Remembering their school-time failures and insecurities, adult students commonly experience difficulties with starting or continuing mastering a new language years and years after having had their writing graded and criticized. Others — especially those who began their language learning career later in life — use the well-known critical age hypothesis (Chomsky, 1957) according to which a language is easier to master till around the age of 12 as an 'excuse' for their failures. Some scientists questioned the validity of this excuse and stated that this mostly applies to first language acquisition rather than second language learning (Moskovsky, 2012).

So is there anything teachers can do to inspire their adult students to write



in a target language? Given this new type of a relationship where the whole student-teacher dynamics has luckily shifted, empowering students is now a lot easier than it used to be. Impersonal classrooms that used to intimidate and scare individuals away from even daring to think of a new language as an avenue for self-expression have now turned into tailored safe spaces where there are no grades and learners' personalities, and individual styles are respected. Nevertheless, some beliefs and ideas still dominate both teachers' and students' minds. The so-called *native speakerism*, i.e., an ideology that upholds the idea that so-called native speakers are the best models and teachers of English because they represent a Western culture from which spring the ideals both of English and of the methodology for teaching it (Holliday, 2013). This ideology can be a major factor preventing even advanced students (even their teachers as well) from pursuing writing.

Even if teachers themselves manage to break away from this 'tunnel vision' affecting their own professional self-efficacy and manage to get their students on the same page, there are still some issues we have yet to grapple with. The major one entails identity which has been researched a lot in sociolinguistics over the last few decades (e.g., Block, 2007; Norton, 2000). There is a lot of identity work and struggles associated with (re)negotiating it as an adult. Our students might be accomplished professionals and have a sufficient self-confidence in their first language to keep them advancing in their own fields. However, while being put even in the safest and friendliest language classroom, they still have to reconcile their multiple identities outside it and the one of a learner.

Adding the *identity of a writer* in a foreign language into the equation could be daunting. As teachers working with adults just like ourselves, we have to develop a gut for being able to detect those individuals who might potentially be open to the idea of writing creatively in their target language and possible emotional struggles associated with it that can sometimes be described, e.g., as feeling like a lost child in the process (Yang, Peng, 2021). It is absolutely acceptable to make an attempt in order to find out a student is only willing to do writing if it fits their current learning goals.

Regarding the level appropriate for attempting to incorporate creative writing into language learning, it is hard to pinpoint the exact one at which writing in a foreign language would be most effective. So, those who would feel inclined to go for it at early stages are more likely to eventually succeed, but there are understandably few people like that since as it was previously stated, there are lots of misconceptions and resulting anxieties associated with L2 writing. However, at higher levels writing is definitely likely to cause fewer negative

emotions and psychological benefits might be more probable as well.

As much as we appreciate the linguistic as well as some emotional benefits of writing detailed in a few engaging studies (e.g., Pennebaker, 2004), there is no denying a new and probably slightly awkward nature of L2 writing, especially for beginning second language writers. E.g., learners will surely take a while searching for their new voice (Riyanti, 2015). As they do so, we will first be their only readers. So, we have to be there gently guiding them through the process. As we might have also been the one inspiring a student to let writing into their life, the last thing we want is for them to find it off-putting. All we want is for it to be a colorful part of their learning journey. Eventually, they might even find creative writing in L2 to be a self-empowering tool (Zhao, 2015).

The beauty of any creative activity - which writing is by all means - is that it cannot be forced on anyone as it is literally something you do following your own heart and instincts. We have to strongly encourage students to read and listen a lot as doing that is by far one of the best passive ways of stepping up one's language game. So, if that is the goal for a student, provided we have enough time on our hands and no immediate aims to be reached, we have to at least suggest adding writing to their learning diet highlighting the benefits of working on each of the four language skills in getting our adult student to their end goal.

As I am myself passionate about writing, I love bringing up to my students the benefits of it I enjoy in my own living. A student-teacher relationship is in a way like a romantic one as it all comes down to the level of connection and general compatibility. It was actually found that the teacher's emotional state and the factor of the so-called foreign language teaching enjoyment has a major effect on the learning outcomes (Proietti & Dewaele, 2021). So, I expect those of my students who stick around for a significant amount of time would be likely to at least give writing a go. Some jump at the chance right away, others seem reluctant first and then end up asking for it themselves. There are also those who never try writing, but at least they read and listen a lot.

In the language classroom writing can be used as a supplementary language activity to avoid students feeling under pressure to excel. We cannot simply manipulate adults (probably even younger learners for that matter) into doing what we think might be good for them. All we can do is respectively offer this option. With those choosing to get into it, we can further discuss how it can potentially be a new hobby or even a way to discover their own international/cosmopolitan identity, a way to communicate their national or local one to a

wider world and become global souls (Li, 2007). Ultimately, given the current global turbulence learners are impacted by in their own ways, this process might definitely yield some psychological gains as well for sure.

In assigning writing tasks to spark our adult students' creativity, the main consideration has to be keeping writing stimuli as engaging as possible so that ultimately, writers would be focusing on their ideas rather than the vocabulary and grammar. Of course, it is still a good idea to practice and recycle certain structures, but that shouldn't be a focal point of writing.

Another thing teachers have to bear in mind is not to push a student's personal boundaries by asking them to write about something they would not be comfortable sharing. While we are working together on hopefully building our writers' confidence as language users and exploring their old and new identities, as teachers we are only our students' readers. So, before they feel confident enough with their language, we have to do what those perfect readers every writer wants are expected to, i.e., provide moral support and delicate feedback.

Below are the examples of writing tasks that adult students might find engaging:

1) **a journaling task:** A student describes their day/week/monthly results at work, etc. (at any a convenient level of detail). This would be a nice way for them to practice some work-related vocabulary we might be working on as well as to explore their own professional identity and find out that their routine might actually sound a lot more exciting in a new language.

2) **a walk down the memory lane:** This could be a narrative telling about a memory of something of significance to a student. This task might also involve some emotional reflections on an event so we have to make sure a student is comfortable sharing it. They could also be instructed to elaborate on a cultural tradition shaping their memories of growing/living in a country, which would serve as a vehicle of discovering their national and/or local identity.

3) **a response/review of a reading/listening material.** This one might sound obvious, but a lot of effort is required of a teacher to select materials that would literally strike a chord with our adult students. So whatever we assign for listening and reading has to be relevant to what they do for a living or as a hobby. In order to keep the writing point more personalized and appeal to a student's identity, we can start a writing prompt as follows 'What do you as a ... think about the issue of ... discussed in ...?'

4) **a travel piece:** No matter what is happening in the world, we can succeed

in at least armchair traveling or domestic adventures. Travel accounts serve as an excellent speaking and as well as a writing point. If a student has been on a trip to similar places, we can ask them to compare these experiences. If they went to the same place at different points in time (e.g., before and after the pandemic), contrasting the sensations of a location would be interesting. Alternatively, we can assign them to write about their expectations of an upcoming trip and describe how it actually went. Finally, we can ask them to keep a travel diary trying to get them to focus on specific details we know are interesting to this specific adult student (e.g., architecture, clothes, etc.).

5) **a free-writing session:** We can ask a student to write about whatever first springs into their mind continuously for some amount of time. They might also benefit from changing their traditional location (another room, outdoor setting, etc.), which might add some novelty to their experience. This is also where we can capitalize on the glamour and romance of writing generated by the mass culture and get a student pretend that they are forging a new identity (e.g., that of an established writer, or a movie character).

6) **a letter to ...:** This individual could be imaginary/a student's idol/ an editor of a magazine where an article you got them to read for a class was published, etc. If you have another student attempting second language writing as well, this might be a way to connect two student writers. If you happen to have an English-speaking friend publishing their posts, you can get a student to write to them and pass on the response to this other writer and potentially keep this international correspondence going.

7) **a response to the teacher's own writing:** A lot of teachers assigning such a sort of writing tasks are likely to be writers as well. This is a kind of a (selfish) way to get an extra reader for us, but we have to remember not to set our own work as an example to follow. Think of this as a chance for a student to ask us directly about things we write about. If we can take something from a student's response on board and improve our own work, this would definitely boost both writers' confidence.

8) **a text/photo prompt:** Sometimes we can keep a writing task as short as possible and leave it to our students to find a way to frame their answer. This might be something random — provided they love surprises or related to whatever issue you have been discussing in class.

9) **a social media post:** Ultimately, we might aim to get our students to start publishing their writing. Modern professionals have to resort to writing in English as a way of promoting their business/personal brand, etc. If they try

to create a real-life post, they would have to outline their own unique identity and get clear about their target audience. Finally, they would realize all/some of the above tasks might have been building up to this one.

10) **reflections on the overall writing/learning:** In order to get a student's feedback, we might want to ask them (with any level of frequency) to elaborate on their experience in our class (what they enjoy/would love to see you two do more/less of, etc.) or focus on the challenges/positives of writing all/any of the above tasks.

These tasks can be used in any combination/sequence/order as long as our writer students feel inspired and happy to carry on writing. Of course, for writing to really boost their language level, it has to be consistent. It is a teacher's (and a student's) job to keep it that way without disrupting the artistic creativity of this intellectually and emotionally stimulating activity. We are not psychotherapists, but we can also hope that practicing writing in a foreign language connecting with their multiple identities as well as various individuals and communities, our students would also reap lots of psychological benefits out of the process going beyond their purely linguistic and professional goals.

When it comes to using writing in language classrooms as a means of boosting adults' confidence, teachers have to think carefully about how to provide their feedback. As much as we would like for our students to enjoy writing, this type of productive language activity is there to improve their proficiency as well. Hence, these two considerations, i.e., balancing creativity and language practice, are central to our feedback choices.

First of all, technically it is quite handy to use Google Docs for written exercises for on the student's and teacher's end. However creative a writing exercise might be, students will still likely expect to get traditional corrective feedback, which is crucial in improving students' writing performance (Fan & Ma, 2018). That is why whenever there is an issue with grammar or vocabulary, we cannot let it go unnoticed. It seems a good idea to use different colors for different mistake types. In the margin we might want to include references to grammar materials for a student to revise a corresponding rule or practice more. For vocabulary inaccuracies we can offer links to dictionaries explaining the differences between synonyms or defining words which are new to a student but could have been a better choice in this particular context. There might also be some issues that are a bit harder to pinpoint so we can ask a student what exactly they meant offering two or more options for possible correction depending on their answer.

As cohesion and coherence are also the essential elements of ‘good’ writing (Yang et al., 2018), we have to provide feedback on the bigger picture of the text — i.e., use of topic sentences, linkers, paragraphing, etc. In providing comments of such a nature, we have to be as respectful to a student’s original ideas without ending up asking them to make revisions getting them to basically rewrite the whole piece. If there are some particularly impressive ways of structuring the text, a teacher has to make sure to provide a comment showing how much they appreciate a seamless flow of ideas.

Putting writing as a language activity aside, apart from playing the customary role of a teacher, as was stated above, we also have to be our students’ readers and respond to the ideas and messages they are getting across in a foreign language. We must try to provide personalized comments showing how appreciative and attentive a reader you are by saying, e.g., *Congratulations on ..., I’m sorry you had to go through this, I’m afraid I have to disagree with you on this, etc.*

I would also suggest giving a final overall comment summarizing the previous ones (classifying the types of mistakes, making comments on the general progress, etc.) as well as acknowledging the time and effort a student must have put into a piece (Thanks for taking the time to write this. I guess it hasn’t been easy to discuss ... in English, but you’ve done so well!). When it comes to mistake correction, a student might want to rewrite some parts of a piece or they can also take your corrections on board for future tasks (esp., for repetitive mistakes).

We might even want to ask them to write a follow-up piece based on our comments or ask another student/teacher/international friend of ours to provide their feedback on a student’s writing. The idea is to encourage our adult students to keep writing, improving their language skills and building up confidence as language users. In order to facilitate this, we have to be sensitive language teachers and readers.

In the digital era language instructors have turned into teacherpreneurs, i.e., professionals who provide virtual private tutoring services to students, develop and sell their instructional material to other teachers on the internet (Lasekan et al., 2020). This has allowed us to be more flexible and deliver learning materials tailored to our students’ specific needs. That is why all of the above writing tasks can be made part of a writing course to be used as a supplementary material or on its own.

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# Effectiveness of Digital Education in English Language Learning from Undergraduate Students' Perspective

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Citation : Assaf, F., Solhi, M. (2023). Effectiveness of digital education in english language learning from undergraduate students' perspective. *The Journal of Turkish Educational Review* 3, (3), 32-49.  
Received : 14.03.2023  
Accepted : 08.05.2023  
Published : 30.06.2023  
Publisher's Note : Istanbul Medipol University stays neutral with regard to any jurisdictional claims.  
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The teaching-learning process is quickly changing worldwide, moving away from traditional classroom settings and toward a hybrid of traditional and on-line learning. Digital tools have admittedly become crucial to language education both within and outside the classroom context. Technological tools are becoming increasingly important to assist teachers in facilitating language acquisition. In response to the digitization of the academic settings and the recent global coronavirus pandemic, online platforms Zoom such as Microsoft Teams, Blackboard, Skype, Webinar, and Discord have become highly prevalent in L2 teaching. Specifically, Microsoft Teams has been the most frequently utilized digital platform for learning and teaching during the pandemic outbreak in Saudi Arabia. With the purpose of identifying the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in online education of universities, this study investigated 60 (20 female and 40 male) Saudi Arabian university students' perceptions regarding the efficacy of the platform for (1) teacher-student interactions and (2) learning, and (3) assessment. The findings will be discussed in light of the effectiveness of digital education in L2 learning from the university students' perspective.

**Keywords:** Digital education, microsoft teams, digital tools, university students

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# Lisans Öğrencilerinin Perspektifinden İngilizce Öğreniminde Dijital Eğitimin Etkililiği

Öğretme-öğrenme süreci dünya çapında hızla değişmekte, geleneksel sınıf ortamlarından uzaklaşarak geleneksel ve çevrimiçi öğrenmenin bir karışımına doğru ilerlemektedir. Dijital araçlar, hem sınıf bağlamı içinde hem de dışında dil eğitimi için kuşkusuz çok önemli hale gelmiştir. Teknolojik araçlar, dil edinimini kolaylaştırmada öğretmenlere yardımcı olmak için giderek daha önemli hale gelmektedir. Akademik ortamların dijitalleşmesine ve son küresel koronavirüs pandemisine karşılık olarak, Microsoft Teams, Blackboard, Skype, Webinar ve Discord gibi çevrimiçi platformlar L2 öğretiminde oldukça yaygın hale geldi. Özellikle Microsoft Teams, Suudi Arabistan'daki pandemi salgını sırasında öğrenme ve öğretme için en sık kullanılan dijital platform olmuştur. Microsoft Teams'in üniversitelerin çevrimiçi eğitimindeki etkinliğini belirlemek amacıyla, bu çalışmada 60 (20 kadın ve 40 erkek) Suudi Arabistanlı üniversite öğrencisinin (1) öğretmen-öğrenci etkileşimleri ve (2) öğrenme ve (3) değerlendirme için platformun etkinliğine ilişkin alguları araştırılmıştır. Bulgular, üniversite öğrencilerinin bakış açısından L2 öğreniminde dijital eğitimin etkinliği ışığında tartışılacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Dijital eğitim, microsoft teams, dijital araçlar, üniversite öğrencileri

## Introduction

The teaching-learning process is quickly changing worldwide, moving away from the traditional classroom setting toward a hybrid of traditional and online learning and instruction. Digital tools have become crucial to English language teaching (ELT) and learning both in different classroom settings. In many countries, technology is used to aid and enhance learning in educational settings. Technological tools are hence becoming increasingly prominence to assist teachers in facilitating language acquisition for their learners' language skills. Various terminologies are frequently used to refer to the utilization of technology in education. Some include technology-enhanced learning, digital learning, electronic learning, and online learning. They all refer to a group of

technology-integrated mediums of instruction so as to enhance and facilitate acquisition. In fact, they are used not only for the purpose of educating the learners but also evaluating their performances (Wheeler, 2012). Digital education (DE) points to the utilization of technology as well as instructional strategies with the intention of paving the way for learning and instruction (Fry, 2001). DE encompasses the use of a broad spectrum of approaches, including blended and virtual learning.

Using online digital tools are used to give instructional content and training in DE, which can either be synchronous (where instruction takes place online simultaneously when both teacher and students are present) as well asynchronous (where students have access to the material and instruction at any time through lesson recordings or autonomous online activities). Smartphones, computers, and other devices that are widely accessible, together with a variety of social media and communication applications like WhatsApp and YouTube, are transforming how people live, interact with one another, and even learn. Even though the premise of DE is not new, particularly in light of the widespread success and popularity of a number of mass educational platforms which offer free online courses such as EdX and Coursera, the learning process of foreign languages has fundamentally changed over the last decades (Hidalgo, 2019).

After the outburst of the pandemic, many educational institutions and settings were partially or fully locked down. In fact, the pandemic dramatically affected all types of academic institutions in the world, ranging from with kindergartens, schools, and universities. Before the pandemic, different virtual educational materials as well as platforms were primarily supplemental to the language instruction provided in different educational settings. However, the pandemic brought about a new situation in which education in most institutions was radically adjusted to become entirely online. Due to the complete lack of strategic planning or preparation concerning its global deployment, this digital reform in education settings was unexpected despite being somewhat unavoidable.

Over 1.2 billion pupils worldwide were out of school, ranging from primary schools to universities. While countries' rates of coronavirus infection were different, it is estimated that the educational institutions were locked down in more than 186 countries in the world (Rahman, 2019). Undoubtedly, this emergency reform from the in-person to online education has impacted students to a great extent, and they have affectively been influenced by this educational system.

In Saudi Arabia, similar to other countries, the pandemic impacted how people engage socially, as well as the way the way instructors taught students in educational settings. Indeed, Saudi Arabia's educational institutions would not have used online education in such an impromptu manner if the pandemic had not occurred. The Saudi authorities hence ensured that all educational settings collaborate to effectively implement the new educational delivery during the pandemic when the schools were fully or partially closed. Consequently, the recent circumstances prompted ELT researchers to consider the usefulness of virtual platforms for learning English outside of the classes.

With today's rapid technological advancements, EFL researchers have recently begun to investigate how EFL learners acquire English language outside of the class context with the help of digital devices as well as online resources (Sundqvist & Sylvén, 2016). Results indicate that the major purpose of virtual education is to enhance the quality of learning when at the same time lowering the cost of delivering education to the public (Hamidi & Chavoshi, 2018). Overall, students may benefit from online education since it allows them to learn whenever they want, anywhere, and at their speed. The effectiveness of adopting technology in English language acquisition in Saudi Arabia colleges has been the subject of numerous prior research as well. In addition to in-person training, Alsowayegh et al. (2019), for example, identified that being engaged in online speaking activities as well as watching course-related films improved university EFL learners' speaking and listening abilities. In order to possess an efficient as well as productive virtual education, teachers and authorities need to thoroughly understand the advantages and disadvantages of the platforms so as to be able to identify the appropriate paths of learning. In higher education settings, virtual education needs to be seen as the culmination of all digital facilities that can pave the way for effective implementation of virtual learning.

Over the last years, as aforementioned, with the outburst of pandemic, educational institutions have embraced the facilitative improvements in technology as well as well-enhanced educational platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams to revolutionize teaching and learning drastically. However, since these platforms have recently been taken into close account and thereby there are debates about the efficacy of virtual education during the pandemic, educators focus on the platforms' flexibility and effectiveness so as to deliver resources and content, pave the way for creating student-centered environments, and prove suitability as a supplement to traditional education (Allo, 2020). Online education platforms that facilitate language acquisition are required when migrating to remote learning (Heggart & Yoo, 2018). Microsoft Teams has been

one of the most popular platforms during the pandemic, which promotes synchronous and asynchronous collaboration, both of which are important for distant and remote learning (Poston et al., 2020). Indeed, this platform is considered suitable platforms for usage in official, non-formal, and informal education and supporting distance learning (Hai-Jew, 2020). Microsoft Teams is a digital educational system which enables the instructors as well as the learners with a large number of facilities in the platform. This cloud-based digital platform makes it possible to unify files, meetings, and discussions, to name a few. According to Microsoft website, the application offers a virtual learning environment and is designed to make it simple to transition from chats to content creation. In Microsoft Teams, channels allow instructors and students to collaborate on projects or access learning materials. The platform also enables the users to upload files such as PowerPoint presentations or have access to YouTube videos after creating a new tab which directly connects to the desired file. A built-in store of application is also accessible to the tutor, who can use one of them to build a tab using Quizlet or Survey. Microsoft Teams include audio, video, and desktop sharing feasibilities that can enable the users to interact with the peers as well the teachers in the channels. For users of different skill levels, Microsoft Teams has made various online training videos and instructions available.

As aforementioned, with the emergence of the pandemic there was a necessity to use online educational tools in different educational settings. With the urgent need to implement innovative approaches to educate learners, the moment has come for the digitalization of education. Over the last decades, the utilization of digital storing of materials, collaborative tasks, online courses, digital portfolios, and social platforms in the process of language learning has led to a broader application of Internet technology. With the outbreak if the pandemic, the utilization of such technological tools has come more prevalent. Admittedly, choosing an educational platform that meets the needs of instructors and learners can be advantageous if their benefits, drawbacks, and possibilities are closely considered. In the present investigation, the benefits and the challenges that EFL teachers or learners may perceive when using Teams Microsoft will be taken into scrutiny in higher education settings in the EFL context.

EFL teachers may integrate a range of instructional means in teaching a second language at university contexts. In response to the digitization of the academic environments and the global coronavirus pandemic, digital tools such as Microsoft Teams, Blackboard, Zoom, Skype, Webinar, and Discord have become

highly popular in the field of ELT. More specifically, Microsoft Teams has been the most frequently utilized digital platform for learning and teaching English during the pandemic outbreak in Saudi Arabia. This digital platform can be used on the smartphones as well as the PCs. From my personal experience, it provides them numerous advantages to communicate in real-time.

However, the interactive aspects of online interaction can be quite difficult because of the absence of in-person communication. Because the participants talk at a distance, maintaining a connection between the instructors and students in a digital environment seems to be a pressing issue. Due to the communicator's limited display and video latency, communication may seem to be unauthentic. Furthermore, critical challenges may be involved in online education including the learners' lack of autonomy, unfamiliarity with digital tools, and connectivity problems. As the distance between participants grows, it might result in inappropriate contact and interaction so as to solve a potential setback. It is hence critical for the instructor to maintain control over the learners' participation in class, and to ensure that learning goes smoothly.

The pandemic has forced the EFL practitioners as well as the learners to rely on virtual learning platforms. As an enforcing substitute for in-person lectures, online seminars and webinar meetings, video lectures, and videoconferences have gained popularity over the last years (Rabinovich, 2020), and the popularity of virtual platforms such as Teams Microsoft has significantly increased. Several studies have been conducted on online learning and Teams Microsoft in particular, and they indicate the advantages and disadvantages of this educational platform.

Investigating the students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of this online delivery platforms particularly from the perspective of the students would be enlightening in terms of identifying the way they find this platform effective or malfunctioning. In doing so, this study sought to investigate Saudi university learners' opinions on the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in virtual English language courses.

### **Research Questions**

The three quantitative research questions are as follows:

- RQ1. Is there any difference between male and female university students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in (a) learning, (b) teacher-student interaction, and (c) assessment?
- RQ2. Does age play a determining role in university students' perceptions

regarding the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in (a) learning, (b) teacher-student interaction, and (c) assessment?

- RQ3. Does university students' academic level play a significant role in their perception of the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in (a) learning, (b) teacher-student interaction, and (c) assessment?

## **Method**

In the present quantitative cross-sectional study, we utilized a questionnaire to investigate the effectiveness of using Microsoft Teams in online classes from the perspective of Saudi Arabian university students. The participants in the present study were EFL English preparatory school students from a university in Saudi Arabia, majoring in college of science, engineering, general studies, environmental design, petroleum engineering and geosciences, computer sciences and engineering, and business school. Considering English is the language of instruction in most of this university's departments, enrollment in the English Preparatory School is necessary until students pass a proficiency test or present a validated competency certification. English Preparatory classes are essential because departmental courses are also taught in English. The Preparatory English Program is in charge of helping students gain the English skills, they will need to succeed at a university where English is the primary language of teaching. This intense five-course (half-semester) program, to which all new students are admitted at the start, is meant to consolidate and strengthen the basic English skills learned in school. Four hours of English instruction are offered each day. The goal of the course is to assist students in developing the language skills of speaking, writing, listening, and reading that are essential for academic success. In total, sixty students, ranging in age from 19 to 22 participated. They were all native Arabic speakers and non-native speakers of English language.

## **Instruments**

The effectiveness of online education during the Covid-19 pandemic was assessed in this study using AlAdwani and Anam AlFadley's (2022) 30-item Online Learning using Microsoft Teams Scale. The developers adapted and adjusted the scale based on Rojabi's (2020) conceptual model and Cakrawati's model (2017) to gather data. The scale has three dimensions, namely Interaction, Assessing, and Learning. Each of the dimensions has 10 items. AlAdwani and Anam AlFadley's (2022) study indicated a high correction of 0.901 for Interaction, 0.768 for Assessing, and 0.880 for Learning dimensions, revealing a high internal consistency. The scale also indicated a reliability with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.79, 0.77, and 0.87 for Interaction, Assessing, and Learning dimen-

sion, respectively. In the present study, the result similarly indicated a high reliability of the three subscales with Cronbach's alpha .91 for Learning subscale, .87 for Teacher-student Interaction subscale, and .77 for Assessment subscale. Cronbach's alpha for the full 30-items scale computed as .95, indicative of excellent reliability of the scale. The quantitative data was collected and analyzed using SPSS program. An independent-samples t-test was used to explore the difference for gender, and a one-way ANOVA was run to investigate the potential difference for age and educational level variables.

## Results

The study's results are illustrated in this section. The main goal of this study, as stated in the preceding chapters, was to learn how preparatory students perceived the value of digital education for learning the English language. It seeks to understand how students feel about utilizing the Microsoft Teams platform. Sixty students were given a 5-point Likert scale with 30 questions in addition to an interview to collect the data, and the replies were then analyzed.

At the outset, the result indicated a high reliability of the three subscales with Cronbach's alpha .91 for Learning subscale, .87 for Teacher-student Interaction subscale, and .77 for Assessment subscale. Cronbach's alpha for the full 30-items scale computed as .95, indicative of excellent reliability of the scale.

An independent-samples t-test was then run to investigate whether there is a difference for gender in their perception of the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams for remote learning at higher education. As evident in Table 1, descriptive statistics for the two groups revealed that male participants had a non-significantly higher mean score in learning dimension ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 0.98$ ), while that of females was non-significantly higher in teacher-student interaction dimension ( $M = 3.77$ ,  $SD = 0.36$ ). However, different from learning and teacher-student interaction dimensions, the female participants' mean score was found to be significantly higher than that of male participants in assessment ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 0.34$ ).

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics for gender

	Gender	N	Mean	SD
Learning	Male	40	3,75	,98
	Female	20	3,55	,61
Interaction	Male	40	3,71	,68
	Female	20	3,77	,36
Assessment	Male	40	3,77	,45
	Female	20	4,05	,34

The results obtained from the independent-samples t-test (Table 2) indicated a non-significant difference between the scores of male and female university students in learning  $t(58) = 0.83, p < 0.41$  as well as in teacher-student interactions  $t(58) = -0.34, p < 0.72$ . However, the results identified a statistically significant difference between the mean score of the males and female in assessment  $t(58) = -2.43, p < .01$ .

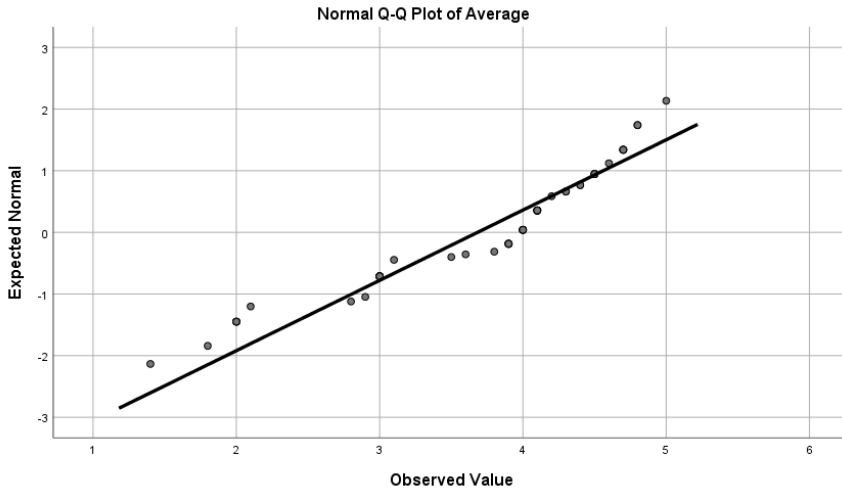
**Table 2.** T-test results between the males and the females' perception of effectiveness of Microsoft Teams.

	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Learning	2.28	0.13	0.83	58	0.41
Interaction	5.74	0.02	-0.34	58	0.72
Assessment	0.85	0.36	-2.43	58	0.01

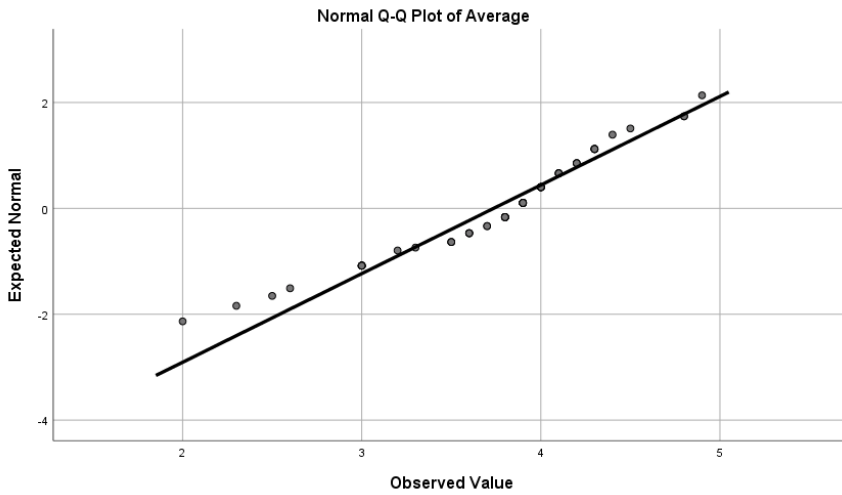
The normality test was also conducted so as to check whether the data is normally distributed. According to Tabachnick et al. (2013), a kurtosis value between +1.5 and -1.5 is considered acceptable for most psychometric purposes, while skewness values falling outside the range of -1 to +1 indicate a substantially skewed distribution (Hair, et al., 2013). A Shapiro-Wilk's test ( $p > .05$ ), normal Q-Q plots, and a visual inspection of the histograms indicated that the scores of the learning dimension (Figure 1) were normally distributed, with a skewness of  $-.82$  ( $SE = .30$ ) and a kurtosis of  $-1.29$  ( $SE = .60$ ).

The normality tests for the other dimensions of the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams scale were also found to be drawn from a normally distributed population with a skewness of  $-.72$  ( $SE = .30$ ) and a kurtosis of  $.60$  ( $SE = .60$ ) for teacher-student interaction dimension (Figure 2), and with a skewness of  $.19$  ( $SE = .30$ ) and a kurtosis of  $.01$  ( $SE = .60$ ) for assessment dimension (Figure 3).





**Figure 1.** Normal Q-Q plots for learning dimension



**Figure 2.** Normal Q-Q plots for teacher-student interaction dimension



**Figure 3.** Normal Q-Q plots for assessment dimension

In the second phase of the study, a one-way ANOVA was run to investigate the potential difference between university students' perceptions on the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in learning at higher education. Descriptive statistics for age are indicated below in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Descriptive statistics for age

	Age	N	M	SD
Learning	19	29	3.61	.17
	20	10	4.08	.19
	21	11	3.54	.24
	22	10	3.64	.28
	Total	60	3.68	.11
Interaction	19	29	3.77	.09
	20	10	3.80	.16
	21	11	3.68	.18
	22	10	3.61	.26
	Total	60	3.73	.07
Assessment	19	29	3.93	.07
	20	10	4.01	.11
	21	11	3.67	.17
	22	10	3.76	.13
	Total	60	3.86	.05

The results obtained from one-way ANOVA for the learning dimension showed no significant difference among the scores of the participants who were nineteen ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 0.17$ ), those who were twenty ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 0.19$ ), those who were twenty-one ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 0.24$ ), and those who were twenty-two years old ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 0.28$ ),  $F(3,56) = 0.83$ ,  $p < 0.48$ . Nor was there a significant difference in relation with teacher-student interaction among the scores of the participants who were nineteen ( $M = 3.77$ ,  $SD = 0.09$ ), those who were twenty ( $M = 3.80$ ,  $SD = 0.16$ ), those who were twenty-one ( $M = 3.68$ ,  $SD = 0.18$ ), and those who were twenty-two years old ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 0.26$ ),  $F(3,56) = 0.25$ ,  $p < 0.85$ . Similar to the learning and interaction dimensions, no statistically significant difference was found for assessment among the scores of the participants who were nineteen ( $M = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 0.07$ ), those who were twenty ( $M = 4.01$ ,  $SD = 0.11$ ), those who were twenty-one ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = 0.17$ ), and those who were twenty-two years old ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 0.1$ ),  $F(3,56) = 1.52$   $p < 0.21$  (Table 4). Following One-way ANOVA, Games-Howell Post Hoc test was used to compare the learning, interaction, and assessment scores across age. However, no significant difference was identified for any age groups.

**Table 4.** One-Way ANOVA for age in respect with Microsoft Teams effectiveness

		SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Learning	Between Groups	1,942	3	,647	,834	,481
	Within Groups	43,442	56	,776		
	Total	45,383	59			
Interaction	Between Groups	,286	3	,095	,257	,856
	Within Groups	20,773	56	,371		
	Total	21,059	59			
Assessment	Between Groups	,853	3	,284	1,523	,219
	Within Groups	10,457	56	,187		
	Total	11,310	59			

Finally, another one-way ANOVA analysis was conducted so as to explore whether the participants' academic level plays a significant role in their perception of the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in learning in higher education. Descriptive statistics for the academic level are indicated below in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Descriptive statistics for academic level

	Age	N	M	SD
Learning	Freshman	28	3.58	0.96
	Sophomore	11	3.90	0.84
	Junior	10	3.69	0.69
	Senior	11	3.71	0.88
	Total	60	3.68	0.87
Interaction	Freshman	28	3.12	0.50
	Sophomore	11	3.69	0.62
	Junior	10	4.79	0.74
	Senior	11	4.67	0.82
	Total	60	4.06	0.67
Assessment	Freshman	28	3.93	0.39
	Sophomore	11	3.94	0.41
	Junior	10	3.71	0.58
	Senior	11	3.75	0.41
	Total	60	3.86	0.43

The results obtained from one-way ANOVA for the learning dimension showed no significant difference among the scores of the freshmen ( $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ), sophomores ( $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = 0.84$ ), juniors ( $M = 3.69$ ,  $SD = 0.69$ ), and seniors ( $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ),  $F(3,56) = 0.34$ ,  $p < 0.79$ . Nor was there a significant difference in relation with assessment scores of the freshmen ( $M = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 0.39$ ), sophomores ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.41$ ), juniors ( $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = 0.58$ ), and seniors ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 0.41$ ),  $F(3,56) = 1.04$ ,  $p < 0.38$ . However, different from learning and interaction dimensions, the academic level of the participants indicated a significant difference for the interaction dimension. More specifically, there was a significant difference among the scores of the freshmen ( $M = 3.12$ ,  $SD = 0.50$ ), sophomores ( $M = 3.69$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ), juniors ( $M = 4.69$ ,  $SD = 0.74$ ), and seniors ( $M = 4.67$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ),  $F(3,56) = 4.83$ ,  $p > 0.001$  (Table 6).

**Table 6.** One-Way ANOVA for academic level in respect with Microsoft Teams effectiveness

		SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Learning	Between Groups	,817	3	0272	0.342	,795
	Within Groups	44,566	56	0.796		
	Total	45,383	59			
Interaction	Between Groups	,113	3	0.92	4.83	,001
	Within Groups	20,947	56	0.15		
	Total	21,059	59			
Assessment	Between Groups	,600	3	0.200	1.045	,380
	Within Groups	10,710	56	0.191		
	Total	11,310	59			

## Discussion

This study probed English preparatory university students' perceptions of the efficiency of the Microsoft Teams platform in online education. In the first research question, the difference between male and female university students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of Microsoft Teams in learning, teacher-student interaction, and assessment was investigated. The findings revealed that the mean scores for the two groups were non-significantly higher for male participants in the learning dimension and non-significantly higher for female participants in the teacher-student interaction dimension. However, different from learning and teacher-student interaction dimensions, the female participants' mean score was found to be significantly higher than that of male participants in assessment.

Bao (2020) investigated the pressure created by virtual education on many Saudi university students during the epidemic, surveying more than two thousand male and female Saudi university students. Results indicated that, more than five hundred of the students were severely anxious because of the abrupt transition from in-person to virtual classrooms. Hence, different from the results of the present study, nearly 30% of both male and female university students indicated to be anxious about the process of learning. It might be attributed to the fact that the study was conducted at the beginning of the pandemic and the university students had a higher level of anxiety.

Echoing the results of the present study, Peterson et al. (2018) and Martin and Tapp (2019) found that synchronous education has promoted students' engagement and collaborative learning, and their access to the educational sources. However, approximately half of the students disagreed that attending classes online improves their ability to collaborate and connect. The implica-

tion drawn from the findings can be that EFL teachers need to address this synchronous learning deficit by giving students engaging activities and simple assignments, so they can participate, interact, and cooperate in online learning to their full potential.

Additionally, according to Poston et al. (2020), this educational platform seems to be more effective in not big classes. The students can use PowerPoint to do collaborative assignments for their group papers, and the instructors need to persuade and familiarize the students with Teams Microsoft, so they understand how it is used in virtual education. The result is consistent with the present research indicating that this educational platform results in more satisfactory outcomes while being implemented with a small group of students. It was also found that the students actively participated in learning English through online learning because it was a new platform, challenging though, for them. They felt comfortable responding to questions and working together to discuss papers because they were given fascinating materials.

The second research question examined whether students' perceptions of Microsoft Teams' usefulness for learning, teacher-student interaction and assessment depended on their ages. According to the results, the learning dimension showed no significant difference among the participants' nineteen, twenty to twenty-two years old scores. Additionally, there was no noticeable variation in participants' scores for teacher-student interaction. There was no substantial distinction in the participant scores for assessment, just like the learning and interaction dimensions. Teachers should be trained in practical adaptive formative assessment (including self- and peer-assessment, use of rubrics), as well as methods for providing real-time and ongoing feedback to online learners, given that the findings of this study show that the role of assessment is essential for maintaining students' motivation in the online environment.

Third research question investigated whether university students' academic level play a significant role in how they find Microsoft Teams effective in learning, teacher-student interaction, and assessment. The results for the learning dimension showed no significant difference among the scores of the freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Nor was there a significant difference in relation with assessment scores of the freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. However, different from learning and interaction dimensions, the academic level of the participants indicated a significant difference for the interaction dimension. More specifically, there was a significant difference among the scores of the freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors.

A study by Almahasees et al. (2021) showed that the students from different academic levels reported challenges with online platforms. The findings show that these issues are connected to students' struggles with time management, difficulty transitioning to online courses, and lack of direct contact with professors. Aligned with this study, Radovan and Makovec (2015) affirms that improving students' enthusiasm for learning largely depends on the learning environment. Because of this, the learning environment should inspire students to pursue higher education and create an impressive atmosphere. Students' engagement with the educational environment while enrolled in online courses is beneficial for helping students. Accordingly, Lin and Lin (2015) underline that both teacher-student and student-student interactions should be designed to enhance communication and discussion of each activity in the teaching and learning process.

Similar to the results of the present study, there are various benefits to using an online education platform reported in a wealth of studies. For instance, online education can help students sharpen their language abilities, learn new vocabulary, and comprehend the lesson's subject (Cakrawati, 2017). Unlike a strand of studies that found online learning less effective, less pleasant, and more stressful (Dixon et al., 2017; Garris & Fleck, 2022), in the present study, the English preparatory university students mostly reported the benefits of the online learning, interaction, and evaluation. In a different study conducted by Fuaddah and Maharani (2021), Microsoft Teams was indicated to serve as a channel for students' interactions and communications with their teachers, serving as their remote learning solution tool. However, as Rojabi (2020) indicate, some students might still have trouble interacting with their teachers. This is because there is less interaction between students and professors in person or because they are uncomfortable using technology to communicate. The present study also indicated that a sizeable percentage of the students were struggling with the logistics and accessibility of virtual education while working under relatively unfavorable circumstances from home. Aligned with the findings, Ituma's (2011) study revealed that e-learning makes it easier for students to complete their coursework and assessments online, regardless of their location.

Meanwhile, the results suggest that EFL students enhance their language abilities when learning online with Microsoft Teams. The finding could be attributed to a variety of factors. One of them might concern the accessibility of online English-language learning materials to people worldwide. Practicing language skills, learning new terms, and better comprehending the lesson's content are other reasons for using online learning platforms (Alabay, 2018). Another factor is that on-

line learning improves language skills and reduces anxiety in a virtual classroom.

Additionally, preparing for online instruction takes much longer than planning in-person instruction (Guri-Rosenblit, 2018). It hence saves time while learning. The results of the current study, when compared to those of earlier studies, imply that studying using Microsoft Teams is more appropriate for female EFL university students in determining their language competency. This research study also reveals that learning with Microsoft Teams has additional benefits, such as encouraging student engagement. The results are consistent with Sukman and Mhunkongdee's (2021) findings in demonstrating that students preferred in-person instruction to online learning.

## Conclusion

The current study clarifies how the Microsoft Teams platform works for teaching English from undergraduate students' perspectives during the Covid-19 Pandemic and. The present study suffers from a couple of limitations. First, a non-random convenience sample was implemented when choosing the participants in the present study. Future research should employ a more structured and representative methodology of sampling the participants. There were sixty college students included in this study. Future studies need to be conducted with a bigger sample size to strengthen the generalizability of the findings. Second, Investigations into the assessment procedures used in online language learning environments are thus necessary. Third, the study only focuses on social interactions between students, teachers, and peers. Their interactions on a broader scale are crucial for future research. Finally, the present study investigated the effectiveness of only Microsoft Teams in online education during the pandemic. Scrutinizing K-12 and university students' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of different educational platforms seems to be a fruitful avenue for future studies.

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# Evaluating the ELT Coursebooks for Young Learners: The Issue of Affective Engagement

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Citation : Benlioğlu, B., Şahin, B., Sönmez, E., Solhi, M. (2023). Evaluating the elt coursebooks for young learners: the issue of affective engagement. *The Journal of Turkish Educational Review* 3, (3), 50-63.  
Received : 11.03.2023  
Accepted : 11.05.2023  
Published : 30.06.2023  
Publisher's Note : Istanbul Medipol University stays neutral with regard to any jurisdictional claims.  
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## Abstract

Coursebooks are known to be the most well-acknowledged language learning and teaching materials. The effectiveness of the coursebooks for fruitful language learning can be augmented with considerations of the second language acquisition theories. Among these, affective engagement is one of the significant contributors to language acquisition characterized by the active involvement of the learners' emotions, such as enthusiasm, excitement, curiosity, enjoyment, and purposefulness. This study investigates the affective engagement elements of a series of coursebooks used in private elementary schools in Turkey. To this end, six commonly used coursebooks were evaluated based on one criterion set by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) to determine to what extent they are likely to be affectively engaging. A group of four researchers made a consensus on the selection and evaluation process of a coursebook from the series, as well as two chapters from each coursebook. The affective engagement was evaluated according to the content delivery, activity types, visual elements, and possible involvement of the audience of the coursebook, and each coursebook

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was scored 1 to 3. Results indicated that coursebooks have the potential to be effective in terms of emotional engagement; however, this potential has been minimally utilized. The results are discussed in alignment with the literature, along with recommendations to the coursebooks designers and practitioners.

**Keywords:** Affective engagement, coursebooks evaluation, material evaluation, EFL learning

# Çocuklar için Hazırlanmış ELT Ders Kitaplarını Değerlendirmek: Duyuşsal Bağlılık Sorunu

## ÖZ

Ders kitaplarının en çok kabul gören dil öğrenme ve öğretme materyalleri olduğu bilinmektedir. Verimli bir dil öğrenimi için ders kitaplarının etkinliği, ikinci dil edinimi kuramlarının dikkate alınmasıyla artırılabilir. Bunlar arasında, duyuşsal katılım, öğrenenlerin şevk, heyecan, merak, zevk ve amaçlılık gibi duygularının aktif katılımı ile karakterize edilen dil edinimine önemli katkı sağlayanlardan biridir. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki özel ilkokullarda kullanılan bir dizi ders kitabının duyuşsal katılım unsurlarını incelemektedir. Bu amaçla, yaygın olarak kullanılan altı ders kitabının, ne ölçüde duyuşsal olarak ilgi çekici olduklarını belirlemek için Tomlinson ve Masuhara (2013) tarafından belirlenen bir kritere dayalı olarak değerlendirmesi gerçekleştirilmiştir. Dört araştırmacıdan oluşan bir grup, seriden bir ders kitabının ve her ders kitabından iki bölümün seçilmesi ve değerlendirilmesi konusunda fikir birliğine varmıştır. Duyuşsal katılım, ders kitabının içerik sunumuna, etkinlik türlerine, görsel öğelere ve olası dinleyici katılımına göre değerlendirilmiş ve her ders kitabı 1'den 3'e kadar puanlanmıştır. Sonuç olarak ders kitaplarının duyuşsal açıdan etkili olma potansiyeline sahip olduğu, ancak bu potansiyelden asgari düzeyde yararlandığı ortaya konmuştur. Sonuçlar, ders kitabı tasarımcılarına ve uygulayıcılarına önerilerle birlikte literatürle uyumlu olarak tartışılmıştır.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Duyuşsal katılım, ders kitabı değerlendirmesi, materyal değerlendirmesi, EFL öğrenimi

## 1. ELT Coursebooks

In learning a second or a foreign language, anything that facilitates the process of learning can be categorized as materials (Tomlinson, 2001), and coursebooks are known to be the most mostly used learning and teaching materials, acknowledged by second or foreign language (L2) teachers and learners. The coursebooks have gained this crucial role in being designed for the purpose of learning and teaching and thus providing a structural path to L2 acquisition. In this systematicity, contemporary English language teaching (ELT) materials provide complete learning and teaching solutions, indicating that they more

effectively contribute to L2 learning (Littlejohn, 1998). Hence, coursebooks are deemed reliable and valid resources that shape the learning route and uptake rate of the students by structuring the language lessons. This effect manifests in the function of language coursebooks as an important contributor.

The literature includes studies that confirm the role of the coursebooks are confirmatory in language learning and teaching process. From this perspective, the positive traits of the ELT coursebooks may include helping the students to develop their intercultural competencies (McKay, 2003), exhibiting an important role in structuring a language lesson (Gray, 2006), presenting important values and culture (Bahman & Rahimi, 2010), and functioning both as a general framework and a syllabus for the language process (Tsiplakides, 2011). Moreover, these materials also support the teachers with help by offering a facilitative tool for the evaluation procedures (Abdelwahab, 2013) and being economical in terms of time spent on the lesson preparations (Dodgson, 2019; Tsiplakides, 2011).

## **2. Affective Engagement**

Engagement, one of the hot topics among researchers, is an umbrella term for understanding individuals' dispositions for specific tasks or general devotions. Affective engagement is directly related to the emotions such as enthusiasm, excitement, curiosity, enjoyment, and purposefulness. These affective factors may engage the learners in the language learning process (Oga-Baldwin, 2019). Indeed, the language learning process "crucially involves a range of social and affective phenomena" (Svalberg 2009, p. 243). Hence, learning processes seem highly susceptible to affective factors along with other engagement domains. According to Izard (2009), the role of emotions, in general, play a crucial role in young learners' development by functioning as an inducement necessary for the activation of cognitive resources. Emotions such as interest, joy, and excitement are reported to have increased selective attention and thus provide long-term benefits in learning processes (Frederickson, 1998, 2001; Frederickson & Branigan, 2005).

Positive affect (e.g., interest, attitude, emotions) is not only an essential requirement for effective learning of languages but also a necessity for the fruitful development of materials (Tomlinson, 2013d). According to the text-driven approach, in preparing the reading materials, materials developers need to give priority to texts with a potential for cognitive and affective engagement and then produce relevant activities (Tomlinson, 2013b). Hence, affective engagement maintains its importance when it comes to coursebooks as it can effectively reinforce learners' task performance.

### **3. Affective Engagement in ELT Coursebooks**

The background knowledge of the students and how they exhibit emotional responses to the contents in ELT coursebooks need to be taken into account in materials development. Texts in ELT coursebooks, for example, need to pave the way for students to talk about their emotional reactions and affectively make connections with the content. However, despite being cognizant of the fact that affective engagement is a vital necessity for long-term acquisition, both material developers and teachers continue to provide trivial, neutral, and bland texts for learners to read (Tomlinson, 2013d).

Indeed, the reading materials that are void of affective stimuli (Tomlinson, 2011, 2013a) and thereby failing to arouse curiosity is less likely to facilitate affective engagement.

As mentioned above, EFL coursebooks have a prominent role in language education (Bahman & Rahimi, 2010). Coursebook analysis and evaluation studies are significant because they guide the choice of quality materials. According to Dörnyei et al. (2014, 2015), a directed motivational current (DMC) is a phenomenon of motivation defined by the density of engagement and sustainability of effort in which people exhibit highly motivated target attitudes and achieve outcomes that surpass initial expectations. For this reason, affective engagement has a vital place for language learners in general and particularly young learners, on whom the foundations of language acquisition are established. As a significant contributor to the learning-teaching process, coursebooks and their affective potential are worthwhile to examine. In light of the literature, the research question of the present study was formulated as follows:

RQ. How likely are the coursebooks to emotionally engage the learners?

### **4. Methodology**

Affective engagement is one of the fifteen coursebook evaluation criteria put forward by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013), in which the long-term effectiveness of coursebooks is taken into account. In their comprehensive frame, they underline extensive exposure to the target language, cognitive and affective engagement, personalization, learner-led discoveries about the subject matter, providing an achievable challenge to make the input comprehensible, developing communication skills and cultural awareness among learners, and making learners motivated to use English outside of the classroom, as the criteria for a long-term effective coursebook. The criteria have been acknowledged as a universal, aiming baseline for coursebook evaluation studies.

In the present pre-evaluation study, we investigated the affective engagement of six different young learner coursebooks, taking into account affective and emotional factors such as amusement, excitement, and stimulation of the coursebooks contents. In doing so, four different researchers evaluated the coursebooks that are mainly used in private elementary schools. The evaluation process was run separately, and after the process, all researchers gathered to reach a consensus on the evaluation report. In order to establish reliability, third and sixth-level coursebooks were chosen in each coursebook series, and third and sixth chapters were chosen, and it was acknowledged as they represent the whole units in question. The evaluated coursebooks in this study were selected for being the most preferable ones by teachers and school administration in private elementary schools.

## 5. Findings of Evaluation

Whilst evaluating each unit, we made comments on the likely effectiveness of the unit in relation to our criteria and scored each criterion on a scale of 1 to 3 (with 1 indicating ‘Unlikely to be effective in facilitating the long-term acquisition,’ 2 indicating ‘Likely to be partially effective in facilitating long-term acquisition’, and 3 indicating ‘Likely to be effective in facilitating long-term acquisition’). The coursebooks and the result of the evaluation are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Evaluated Coursebooks and Results

<b>Name of the Coursebook</b>	<b>Authors</b>	<b>Publishers</b>	<b>Score</b>
Discover 3	Kathleen Kampa & Charles Vilina	Oxford	3
Kids’ Box 3	Caroline Nixon & Michael Tomlinson	Cambridge	2
Let’s Go 3	Karen Fraizer, Ritsuko Nakata, Barbara Hoskins & Steve Wilkinson	Oxford	1
Fairyland 3	Jenny Dooley & Virginia Evans	Express Publishing	2
Family and Friends 3	Tamzin Thomson & Naomi Simmons	Oxford	2
Primary Skills Reading & Writing 3	Helen Casey	Oxford	1

### **5.1. Discover**

Unit 3 is mostly about moving to a new place, and it starts with a picture of a girl who's carrying a box. Next to the picture, there is a question, 'How do they feel?' In terms of affective engagement, this type of question is beneficial as it helps to develop a learner's sense of empathy. It cannot be overlooked that the coursebook gives a great part of emotional elements. On page 30, a girl, Sati, who has just moved to a new place, writes a letter to her friend Nisha about her experience. We can also witness how Sati's feelings towards her new place change as time passes and she meets new friends. Additionally, learners can observe more different emotions than getting accustomed to a new place, such as getting bullied. In one of the letters, Sati wrote about a boy who bullied her because of the smell of her Indian lunch. The picture accompanying the paragraph describes the events vividly so that the script makes sense for the construction of the meaning.

In addition to this, the coursebook includes many affectively engaging activities and elements. Poetry is treated in a manner of personalization from, say, the general attitudes of the learners to the poems to their imagination for specific verses. For instance, learners are expected to read a poem and write three things that cross their minds. This activity is far from ordinary and practice-oriented grammar activities since learners' imagination, attention, and emotions get involved. Besides, there are various poems that the learner is asked to imagine while reading the poem, such as 'What pictures do you see in your mind when you read the poem?' It seems that in this coursebook, the learner's feelings and emotions are prominent elements and are treated as a valuable source that creates involvement.

### **5.2. Kids' Box**

In terms of general evaluation, the activities are void of affectively engaging activities despite being potentially interesting. In the accompanying picture, there is an activity in which learners are expected to listen and match the lyrics with the pictures. The pictures could have been used for more engaging activities, and the questions related to the song are more mechanical-focused, which seem to fail to involve the learners affectively. These questions could be potentially turned into more emotionally engaging and personalized questions. The second activity is where students put their hands on their hearts and feel the heartbeat can be a beneficial one because, in this activity, they stop whatever they are doing for a minute and feel what is going on in their bodies. This activity is capable of engaging learners in personalization and having them focus on their own feelings. Besides, at the end of every unit, there are cartoon-strip stories with pictures that include different facial expressions.



### **5.3. *Let's Go!***

In these book series, visuals are generally used to describe the events in the activities. Besides, the use of colorful visuals can arouse a sense of curiosity and amusement in the student. However, there is not much space for emotional description. There are no activities where students can connect and feel about the visuals except the “What about you?” activity on page 21. Students can express their feelings, such as amusement or tiredness, while answering these questions. In the “Let’s Sing” activity on page 26, the song consists of repetitive words. Students might find such activities boring, but if acting out is included in the singing, it could have been more emotionally engaging. On page 48, images describe what the characters are doing. Still, there is no evidence of their facial expressions or body movements, so there are no visuals that students can connect with or evoke emotion. Although on page 50, there are pictures pertaining to facial expressions and body language, the sentences under the images seem to express the event without emotion. In addition, the colorful visuals are used mainly for decorative purposes with little function. All in all, the activities related to these images do not involve emotionally engaging elements.

### **5.4. *Fairyland***

The book contains extraterrestrial characters and visuals, such as a fairy and a genie, which can create a sense of curiosity and interest for the learner. The dialogues contain exclamatory sentences to support students in terms of affective engagement by including them more in the activity, such as “Be careful, oh no!” However, it seems this is the only activity that attempts to engage learners emotionally. The questions in other activities do not seem to pave the way for personalizing.

### **5.5. *Family And Friends***

Each chapter starts with a cartoon-strip story depicting friends and family relationships. We witness a conflict among the group, and each character wants a different thing. At the end of the story, they find a way to smooth the battle over. The story successfully presents something we experience daily in colorful visuals and authentic depictions of characters with realistic facial expressions. The pages are mainly occupied with colorful drawings primarily utilized to demonstrate the objects in vocabulary enrichment. The passage seems relatively dull in the reading section, in which three different students mention their collections. The only salient thing about the text is the fonts, which allude to students’ handwriting. This small change may grab learners’ attention since reading a note from a peer might induce curiosity. In general, this unit neither provides affectively engaging content nor presents it this way.

## **5.6. Primary Skills Reading & Writing**

The chapter includes a reading passage with small photographs that refer to the text. The text also refers to the pictures, for example, “Look! Can you see... They are...” which creates a meaningful context. Nevertheless, comprehension check questions take place after reading the passage, which cannot exceed knowledge-level assessment. The writing activity targets creative writing skills guided by some questions. Indeed, this activity may enhance students’ imaginary skills. Unfortunately, the creative writing activity has little face validity and seems little convenient. Students’ creativity could have been boosted with the help of visual elements, or the page could have been designed for this activity with writing space. As such, the activity creates an impression of being prepared for the sake of filling the space.

## **6. Results**

### **6.1. Discover**

This coursebook provides an emotional investment with its different types of contents and activities. Emotional elements can be easily observed throughout the coursebook. For instance, in the letters that Sati wrote to her friend, there are so many emotions, ranging from happiness and yearning to being bullied and sadness. In unit 6, different forms of emotional engagement are included with poetry.

### **6.2. Kids’ Box**

We can see some potentially engaging activities as well as a lot of pictures and cartoon-strip stories, but they are not used to engage students affectively. For example, in unit 3, there is a song about a daily routine and adverbs of frequency accompanying a couple of questions. These questions could be more creative in terms of engaging them emotionally or personalizing learning.

### **6.3. Let’s Go**

There is no description of emotions, and the language elements in the book are too basic. The activities could have been designed in a more engaging way. There are so many cartoon-strip stories and songs in this coursebook, but they are rather mechanical and not engaging, especially for young learners. To exemplify, on page 48, there are pictures and sentences about the things people are doing, but they don’t state how they are feeling. Nor are they used to engage the learners emotionally.

#### **6.4. Fairyland**

The activities in the coursebook include some expressions that can engage learners affectively. Besides, they can arouse feelings of hilarity and curiosity in the learners. On the other hand, some of the questions in the activities fail to help students to personalize and create a bond. Visuals in the coursebook are great resources to arouse emotions, but the remaining parts of the unit are about grammar or vocabulary.

#### **6.5. Family and Friends**

The coursebook has colorful visuals, and the stories look amusing, but overall, it can be described as insufficient in terms of affective engagement. For example, on page 44, although there are many facial expressions in the cartoon-strip story, they are not used effectively for the purpose of learner engagement. There are stories in nearly every unit; however, they are void of emotional elements. On page 50, there are pictures and sentences about ‘good at, bad at, terrible at’ and the facial expressions that demonstrate them. Despite being informative and engaging, they do not seem to be affectively engaging.

#### **6.6. Primary Skills Reading & Writing**

Despite the potential of the activities in the unit, and a wide range of pictures, dialogues, and passages, it seems to be inadequate for provoking emotion. On page 15, for example, there is a passage about a child going to a zoo in Kenya. The excitement of the event could be easily influenced by the story, but they lack emotional elements. Additionally, the coursebook has so many writing activities about different topics. Before writing, it asks some questions or requires some details, but none of them include emotions.

All in all, the pre-evaluation of the coursebooks regarding the affective dispositions in this study showed little evidence of affective engagement. Despite the fact that the evaluated coursebooks have great potential for young learners to stimulate emotionally, the majority of the activities are only for the purpose of language practice, and they seem to be inadequate in terms of affective engagement.

### **7. Discussion**

Coursebooks have been accompanying L2 learning and teaching processes for many years, yet coursebook evaluation studies have gained interest recently. Since the coursebooks are indispensable contributors to the process, and they seem will be so far, selecting the most convenient and effective coursebook will remain an area of interest both for practitioners and researchers.

Studies conducted to this end so far indicate similar results to the current findings. For example, Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) conducted a pre-evaluation study for six global coursebook series. In the same study, they set fifteen universal criteria to be a guideline for further pre-evaluation research. The evaluation showed that coursebooks were limited in terms of offering affectively engaging elements. While the researchers indicated that there was potential in the contents and presentation of the topics, the coursebook designers failed to turn this potential into engaging content. Limited use of affective engagement was also reported from the teachers' point of view. The teachers stated that there is a void in relatable and provoking elements in the texts in language coursebooks (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2008). Following the same criteria set by Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013), Solhi et al. (2021) evaluated the coursebooks used in Turkish public high schools. The results of the evaluation showed that coursebooks were void of including affectively engaging elements, while this deficiency manifest itself in a lack of creativity, personification, and development of cultural awareness. In another study in which public elementary school English coursebooks were evaluated, the results indicated that the dull and disinterested content in the materials was excessive, thus hindering students from engaging with the language that is necessary for long-term acquisition (Solhi et al., 2020).

Assessing the compatibility of the core SLA principles to the English coursebooks, Renandya et al. (2015) investigated nine extensive reading coursebooks used in China. More than half of the materials yielded low scores on the basis of predetermined criteria, which were set as a reflection of the basic premises in the language acquisition procedure. Strikingly, the researchers emphasized the lack of engaging components both cognitively and affectively and proposed a revision for coursebook designers to include target learners' dispositions to active engagement.

Similarly, Melliti (2013) investigated the users' perspectives on a global English coursebook and found that more than half of the participants were dissatisfied with the dull and irrelevant content presented in the material. One of the possible reasons that limited engaging opportunities have not been exploited is attributed to steering clear of potentially taboo concepts that can be varied across cultures, hence creating a restriction for global coursebook designers (Gray, 2001; Mishan, 2021). However, affectively engaging content and presentation of the materials can still be relatable, stimulating, and bright in terms of addressing the potential readers' interest without including taboo content. All in all, the literature in the material evaluation indicates coherent

findings that coursebooks are needed to be revised so that the potential for long-term effectiveness in language acquisition can be exploited by affectively engaging elements.

## **8. Conclusion**

The utilization of coursebooks in the process of language teaching and learning is a pivotal aspect, given their widespread acceptance as materials for the purpose. However, the efficacy of these materials can be further augmented through the integration of theoretical advancements within the domain of language learning research. From a theoretical perspective, it is widely acknowledged that exposure to language, the ability to recognize and analyze linguistic differences, and the motivation to employ the language both inside and outside the classroom are critical factors in the process of language acquisition.

In order to truly leverage the advantages of the factors previously discussed, it is essential to understand the significance of engagement. It is important to note, however, that engagement is a unique and integral aspect of the language acquisition process. To enhance the affective elements in coursebooks, it is necessary to create a personalized and localized experience that resonates with the target audience. This involves accurately reflecting a diverse range of emotions and exploring the full spectrum of human experiences beyond just binary feelings of good and bad. By humanizing everyday situations and incorporating a variety of perspectives, we can foster greater engagement and more effective language learning outcomes.

In the present study, all coursebooks were appealing in appearance, with vivid, colorful pictures and illustrations indicating high face validity. However, the pre-evaluation showed that the activities and the presentation of the content failed in terms of utilizing the potential of affective engagement. Out of the six coursebooks, only the Discover series had a significant affective element contributing to the learners' engagement. The five remaining coursebooks did not make as much effort to engage the reader emotionally. Instead, repetitive exercises and dull activities were present. Along with the activities, the presentation of the content failed to include thought-provoking and stimulative delivery.

Designers of coursebooks should take advantage of the fact that stimulating emotions in learners has a significant impact on the long-term effectiveness of the learning process. This can create a valuable opportunity to engage learners in a more meaningful way.

Addressing the learners' inner worlds, presenting the content with more per-

sonalization and localization, including stimulative reading texts, and designing thought-provoking questions might lead to affective engagement. Therefore, learners assimilate the material in a way that connects it to their personal experiences and individual learning journey.

As with all research studies, this one has limitations in several aspects. Before deciding whether to use a material, it is essential to conduct a pre-evaluation to determine its value. This involves assessing the material beforehand. This study is a pre-evaluation study; even though it bears insightful information, it would be more comprehensive to implement a while- and post-evaluation phases. Secondly, including the users of the material and their opinions might enable us to comment more precisely on the coursebooks' value. Further studies would be more informative in light of these precautions.

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# Strategic Competence in Virtual Classrooms: An Exploration of Compensation Strategies of Non-native Adult Speakers of English

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Citation : Karacan C. G., Kılıç, T., İnce M. (2023). Strategic competence in virtual classrooms: an exploration of compensation strategies of non-native adult speakers of english. *The Journal of Turkish Educational Review* 3, (3), 64-77.

Received : 11.03.2023

Accepted : 25.05.2023

Published : 30.06.2023

Publisher's Note : Istanbul Medipol University stays neutral with regard to any jurisdictional claims.

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## Abstract

Compensation strategies, a crucial aspect of strategic competence, are playing a decisive role in effective communication and, used in communication by interlocutors to compensate for their deficiency in the target language. The use of compensation strategies is anticipated to vary depending on the context, due to their context-specific nature. Thus, this descriptive study aims to explore the types and frequencies of compensation strategy use by an international group of graduate students. The data were collected through observation of video-recorded class sessions from nine graduate students studying at a foundation university in Turkey. The results showed that the strategies of “keeping the floor,” “self-rephrasing,” and “appeal to authority” were most frequently utilized. Conversely, strategies like word coinage and non-verbal signs were not employed at all. This research offers insight into the compensation strategies used in online settings, where communication dynamics are notably distinct.

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**Keywords:** Language learning strategies, compensation strategies, compensatory strategy use

# Sanal Sınıflarda Stratejik Yeterlilik: Ana Dili İngilizce Olmayan Yetişkin Konuşmacıların Telafi Stratejilerinin Araştırılması

## Özet

Stratejik yeterliliğin önemli bir yönü olan telafi stratejileri, etkili iletişimde belirleyici bir rol oynar ve iletişimde muhataplar tarafından hedef dildeki eksikliklerini telafi etmek için kullanılır. Telafi stratejilerinin kullanımının, bağlama özgü doğası nedeniyle bağlama bağlı olarak değişiklik göstermesi beklenmektedir. Bu nedenle, bu betimsel çalışma, uluslararası bir grup yüksek lisans öğrencisi tarafından telafi stratejisi kullanım türlerini ve sıklıklarını keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Veriler, Türkiye’deki bir vakıf üniversitesinde öğrenim gören dokuz yüksek lisans öğrencisinin video kaydı yapılan sınıf oturumlarının gözlemlenmesi yoluyla toplanmıştır. Sonuçlar, “sözü tutma”, “kendini yeniden ifade etme” ve “otoriteye başvurma” stratejilerinin en sık kullanılan stratejiler olduğunu göstermiştir. Buna karşılık, kelime uydurma ve sözel olmayan işaretler gibi stratejiler hiç kullanılmamıştır. Bu araştırma, iletişim dinamiklerinin oldukça farklı olduğu çevrimiçi ortamlarda kullanılan telafi stratejileri hakkında fikir vermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Dil öğrenme stratejileri, telafi stratejileri, telafi edici strateji kullanımı

## Introduction

Communication dynamics in online environments are different from those in face-to-face interactions. This variety leads to increased communication problems for language speakers, stemming either from a lack of linguistic resources or from the nature of the online environment. These communication problems, or communication breakdowns, are compensated for by means of various compensatory strategies to reach a shared understanding (Rababah, 2004). Compensation strategies employed by non-native speakers were generally investigated in face-to-face contexts. However, to our knowledge, no prior studies have investigated compensatory strategy use in an online learning environment in Turkish context. Hence, the current study aims to identify the

types and frequencies of compensatory strategies used by non-native speakers of English in a synchronous online learning environment.

## **Literature review**

### **Language Learning Strategies**

Learning strategy is defined as “an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language -- to incorporate these into one’s interlanguage competence” (Tarone, 1983, p. 67). These strategies include “any sets of operations, steps, plan, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval and use of information” (Wenden & Rubin, 1987).

Learning strategies are generally categorized into two groups: direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies are solely associated with mental processing of the target language (i.e., memory, cognitive and compensation strategies), and indirect strategies (i.e., metacognitive, affective, and social strategies) “support and manage language learning without directly involving the target language” (Oxford, 1990, p. 135).

### **Compensation Strategies**

Compensation strategies, or communication strategies as Hymes (1972) suggests, are the strategies “needed to overcome any gaps in knowledge of the language” (Oxford, 1990, p. 71). Language learners attempt to compensate for their limited linguistic and non-linguistic abilities in the target language by employing compensation strategies, which might be crucial in enhancing their communicative competence.

With the concept of “language for communication” gaining more attention after the 1970s, when Hymes (1972) introduced the concept of communicative competence, greater interest was directed towards “communication strategies,” a term first introduced by Selinker (1972) in his discussion of the five central processes of the interlanguage system. Studies on communication strategies led Canale and Swain (1980) to explore strategic competence as an important element in their model of communicative competence. Strategic competence is defined as the “verbal and non-verbal strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or insufficient competence” (p. 30). Canale and Swain (1980) refined Hymes’ definition and identified four components of communicative competence (See Table 1).

**Table 1.** Definition of Communicative Competence by Canale and Swain (1980).

Communicative Competence			
Grammatical Competence	Discourse Competence	Sociolinguistic Competence	Strategic Competence

Building on the work of Canale and Swain (1980), Dörnyei and Scott (1997) also categorized strategic competence as a subset of communication strategies. They noted that these strategies are employed to achieve communicative goals between speakers and to address their oral communication deficiencies.

Compensatory strategies, considered as either communication strategies (Canale & Swain, 1980) or language learning strategies (Oxford, 1990), garnered increased attention in the 1990s. This focus aimed to assist speakers in achieving successful communication when they encounter difficulties due to a mismatch between their communicative intentions and their current linguistic capabilities. Despite the increased scholarly attention since the 1990s, the definition of compensatory strategies has remained somewhat vague. The literature defines compensatory strategies through two distinct approaches: the interactional approach and the psycholinguistic approach (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997). Tarone's (1980) study, which influenced the interactional approach, emphasized the negotiation of meaning between speakers. Consequently, compensatory strategies are recognized as "tools used in a joint negotiation of meaning where both interlocutors are attempting to agree as to a communicative goal" (Tarone, 1980, p. 420).

Most of the research conducted on compensation strategies has focused on the concerns of definitions and classifications of compensation strategies (Faerch & Kasper, 1983; Tarone, 1977). Various definitions for compensation strategies have been offered in the literature over the course of years, but several of these definitions are concerned with the "problematicity" concept (Kasper & Kellerman, 1997). For instance, Tarone (1977) defined compensatory strategies as "conscious communication strategies that are used by an individual to overcome the crisis which occurs when language structures are inadequate to convey the individual's thought" (p. 195). Furthermore, Poullisse et al. (1984) indicate that "compensatory strategies are strategies which a language user employs in order to achieve his intended meaning on becoming aware of problems arising during the planning phase of an utterance due to his own linguistic shortcomings" (p. 72). As Rababah (2004) also explains:

Language learners attempt to solve their communication problems when they lack adequate resources in the target language by resorting to compensatory strategies. Most researchers agree that compensation strategies are used to

bridge the gap that exists between the non-native speakers' linguistic competence in the target language and their communicative needs. (p. 148)

The concept of compensation strategies has been considered as one of the five domains of Oxford's Strategy Inventory Language Learning (SILL) (1990). The concept of compensation strategies refers to the use of avoidance, circumlocution, approximation, word coinage, non-verbal signals, prefabricated patterns, code-switching, appeal to authority, and keeping the floor (Brown & Lee, 2015). The use of compensation strategies is not limited to either native or non-native speakers, however, due to the lack of sufficient competence in the target language, non-native speakers employ these strategies more frequently than native speakers.

### **Studies on Compensation Strategies in EFL Contexts**

A study by Yılmaz (2010) and Demirel (2012) revealed that compensation strategies are the most frequently used learning strategies. Green and Oxford (1995), on the other hand, observed a critical parallel between proficiency and compensatory strategy use. In addition to the proficiency aspect, Margolis (2001) found that language learners have used a variety of techniques, particularly requesting more input or clarification, to mitigate shortcomings in the listening and communication abilities of their target language. Liskin-Gasparro (1996) analyzed the use of compensation strategies in terms of its relation to proficiency levels and found that advanced speakers rely more on a range of compensation strategies compared to upper-intermediate speakers of the same target language.

Compensation strategies have not received sufficient attention in the relevant field, and much of the research has primarily focused on defining, pinpointing, and categorizing compensation strategies. The remainder of the research has mostly examined the impact of various factors on the use of compensation strategies and concerns related to teachability (Bialystok, 1983; Faerch & Kasper 1983; Taheri & Davoudi, 2016; Tarone, 1977). Even though compensation strategies in virtual environments were investigated (Feng & Shirvani, 2021), this has not been a point of focus in Turkish context. Thus, this study aims to identify the types and frequencies of compensation strategy use by non-native speakers of English in a synchronous online learning environment in Turkish context. The research questions guiding the study are as follows:

- 1) What is the prevalence of various compensation strategy types employed by non-native English speakers?
- 2) Which strategies are utilized with the highest and lowest frequencies?

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The current study employs an observational descriptive design to capture the real-time use of compensation strategies by non-native speakers, as it allows for a naturalistic and detailed examination of their communication behaviors (Rezigalla, 2020). This design utilizes quantification of observations through “a simple tally sheet” with the aim of recording the frequency of compensatory strategy use (Mertler, 2016, p. 112). Unlike experimental designs, the observational approach allowed for a more authentic capture of communicative strategies, free from the artificial constraints of a controlled experimental setting.

### **Setting and Participants**

This study involved 9 graduate, non-native English-speaking students, aged between 22 and 30, to explore a diverse range of linguistic backgrounds and experiences. The research was conducted during the spring term of the 2017-2018 academic year at a foundation university in Istanbul. The sample was intentionally international, with participants hailing from Turkey, Canada, South Korea, the USA, and Palestine, reflecting the global nature of online learning environments and the varied linguistic challenges faced by non-native speakers. Moreover, all non-Turkish participants were multilingual, proficient in at least three languages, including Italian, Turkish, and French.

All participants were enrolled in the ‘Intercultural Pragmatics and Language Teaching’ course, which was delivered remotely via video-conferencing software. As part of the course requirements, they gave weekly presentations on topics such as cross-cultural interaction, intercultural communicative competence, and sociopragmatics.

All the participants took the Intercultural Pragmatics and Language Teaching course remotely via video-conferencing software, and they were required to give presentations on cross-cultural interaction, intercultural communicative competence, and sociopragmatics every week.

### **Data Collection**

Data were meticulously collected over a 12-week period from synchronous online sessions to ensure a comprehensive analysis of communication strategies employed by the participants in a naturalistic virtual learning environment. These recordings were securely stored in accordance with the university’s data protection policies, ensuring confidentiality and ethical compliance. After obtaining the permission letter from the Educational Sciences Faculty and the con-

sent form from the participants, researchers began transcribing the online video sessions. Each online presentation video lasted between 30 and 50 minutes.

### **Data Analysis**

The transcription of online presentations was undertaken with utmost diligence. Each researcher independently reviewed the video sessions to minimize transcription discrepancies, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the data for subsequent analysis. Subsequently, the researchers collectively examined the transcripts, paying close attention to the parts related to the use of compensation strategies. For data analysis, Brown and Lee's Compensation Strategy categorization (2015) was used as the primary classification source. As the process unfolded, researchers noticed that Brown and Lee's taxonomy missed a few aspects of compensatory strategy use, prompting them to include "self-repetition, self-rephrasing, and self-repair" strategies from the Inventory of Strategic Language Devices developed by Dörnyei and Scott (1997). The researchers agreed on 186 instances of compensation strategy use in these online presentations.

In the first review of the transcripts, potential parts were identified. In the second review, types of compensation strategies were highlighted and noted down. In the last phase of reviewing the transcripts, researchers ensured consistency among the detected strategy types. The compensation strategy types were then counted and classified for data analysis. Due to the small number of participants, researchers did not feel the need to include variables such as gender, age, and proficiency. In the final step, frequencies were calculated by counting the occurrences of each compensation strategy, and percentages were derived by dividing these counts by the total number of communicative acts observed, providing a clearer picture of their relative usage.

### **Findings**

Frequency counts and percentages were calculated to determine which compensation strategies were used most frequently by the participants. Researchers focused on and investigated 12 compensation strategies during this process. The most widely used strategies were "Keeping the floor" (87 instances) and "Appeal to authority" (16 instances). The least frequently used strategies in the participants' online presentations were non-verbal signs, word coinage, and self-repetition (see Table 2).

**Table 2.** Compensation Strategies

Compensation Strategy Type	Frequency	Percent
Keeping the Floor	92	49.5
Self-Rephrasing	17	9.1
Appeal to Authority	16	8.6
Self-Repair	13	7.0
Avoidance	10	5.4
Code-Switching	10	5.4
Approximation	9	4.8
Prefabricated Patterns	9	4.8
Circumlocution	6	3.1
Self-Repetition	2	1.1
Word Coinage	1	.5
Nonverbal Signs	1	.5

The most frequently used strategies identified in this study are discussed individually, and evidence from the data is extensively provided for a deeper understanding.

### ***Keeping the Floor***

The “Keeping the floor” strategy refers to the use of fillers or hesitation tools to compensate for long pauses and to buy some time to think (e.g., well, so, uh, like, as a matter of fact). This strategy was the most frequently used compensatory strategy, with 92 instances. Since “Keeping the floor” involves using fillers or hesitation tools to compensate for pauses and is a way to gain time to think, it is evident that the need for using it primarily arises from deficiencies in the target language. The researchers of this study observed that some students were reading from ready-made materials in front of them, which makes it easier to avoid resorting to compensation strategies. The following excerpts taken from the data illustrate the use of the “Keeping the floor” strategy in an online context:

- (1) “Self-reflection **or, uh, uh**, (long pause) or, calling for their, **uh**, previous information, or their previous thoughts, **uh**” (P4)
- (2) “What we do in the classroom...**like** what we do... **Like ... Like ...**materials **or...?** (long pause)” (P6)



(3) “**So, uh**, the beliefs of the people... and society, **uh.**” (P1)

Students appeared to be quite anxious at times when they were not speaking, and they attempted to fill these gaps by adding sounds such as “uhhm, mmm, errr,” which are examples of the “Keeping the floor” strategy. It was also evident that students encountered difficulties when conveying their knowledge or thoughts in their second language. During such moments, they unconsciously tended to employ compensation strategies.

### ***Self-Rephrasing***

The second most commonly used strategy in the present study was “Self-Rephrasing,” with a total of 17 instances. “Self-Rephrasing” refers to a type of repetition that falls between self-repetition and self-repair; the speaker repeats the word, adding something or using paraphrasing with the aim of clarifying it for the audience. The following excerpts demonstrate the use of “Self-Rephrasing” in action:

(1) “**This does not mean; this does not necessarily mean** that ....” (P3)

(2) “**For the conclusion, to conclude** despite the findings of ELF research, English language policies around the world still premised on the need for all to use native academic English” (P2)

(3) “**In your minds, in your opinions**, any ideas about what situation in low PDR used?” (P5)

### ***Appeal to Authority***

“Appeal to Authority,” which refers to directly asking for help (e.g., “What do you call...?”) or indirectly seeking assistance (e.g., rising intonation, pause, eye contact, puzzled expression), is the third most frequently preferred compensation strategy, with a total of 16 instances. The following examples demonstrate the use of “Appeal to Authority” in action.

(1) “The first one is called “savoir”, I don’t know how it is pronounced.???” (pausing and waiting for confirmation from the professor) (P9)

(2) “As a matter of fact . . . I couldn’t understand that, I mean a requirement rule...**so, if you could give me a** you know...” (waiting for help from the professor) (P7)

(3) “**Should I go on?** Okay...**so ?**” (waiting for the professor’s confirmation to move forward) (P1)

(4) “**Is that gonna be alright?**” (asking for confirmation) (P3)

A total of 186 instances of compensation strategies were identified in the online presentations. Non-verbal signs are the least used compensation strategy in online presentations, a finding that is supported by this study. The reason for the low frequency is that non-verbal signs are not visible in online sessions. Word coinage, defined as “making up new words to communicate the desired idea,” is also among the least used compensation strategies, as corroborated by the findings of this study (Oxford, 1990, p. 50).

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

This study aims to address the gap in the literature concerning the use of compensatory strategies in virtual classrooms. While there are numerous studies on strategy use, research specifically focused on compensatory strategy use in an online environment is quite limited. The findings revealed that the most frequently used compensation strategies by the participants were “keeping the floor,” “self-rephrasing,” and “appeal to authority.” This aligns with the findings of (Broadbent & Poon, 2015), which demonstrated positive relationships between the use of self-regulated learning strategies and academic outcomes in online higher education environments (Broadbent & Poon, 2015). Furthermore, the significance of compensation strategies in ESL online classes resonates with our findings. Ragab et al. (2021) emphasized the positive effect of these strategies in enhancing media translational skills, a crucial aspect in online learning environments. The use of non-verbal communication, such as gestures, to convey meaning when the specific words are not accessible, is particularly relevant. This aligns with our observation of participants’ inclination to validate information with peers, suggesting a reliance on alternative forms of communication to supplement verbal interactions.

Costley (2020) highlighted the relationship between cognitive strategies and cognitive load in online learning environments, providing further insight into the cognitive aspects of compensatory strategies. This is complemented by the work of Pasumbu and Macora (2020), who noted that ESL learners often adopt gestures and similar words or phrases when they lack the right vocabulary. This behavior underscores the importance of compensation strategies in maintaining the flow of conversation and understanding in an online learning context.

A comparative analysis with previous research, such as the study by Rababah and Bulut (2007), reveals a commonality in the infrequent use of the “word coinage” strategy. This aligns with the findings of Syafryadin et al. (2020), which noted a higher preference for word coinage among less proficient En-

glish speakers. Given that the participants in the current study are established EFL educators, the limited use of word coinage aligns with expectations.

Another noteworthy observation from this study was participants' inclination to validate information with their peers before escalating queries to professors. Due to the scarcity of studies on the types and frequencies of compensation strategies in online environments, our findings are not strongly supported by existing literature. The findings shed light on the nuanced choices of compensatory strategies by non-native English speakers in online learning environments, emphasizing the need for further research to validate and expand upon these observations.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

The study faced certain constraints, including a restricted sample size and time limitations, which led to the exclusion of factors such as gender, age, language proficiency, and native vs. non-native speaker distinctions. Future research could benefit from a more expansive participant pool to provide a more comprehensive understanding of compensatory strategies. Additionally, the study observed a discrepancy in strategy usage between participants who prepared their responses and those who spoke spontaneously. To ensure consistency in future studies, educators facilitating online sessions may require students to enable their webcams. While the researchers chose not to disclose the analytical nature of the study to prevent participant anxiety, some apprehension was still evident due to the recording of presentations. Subsequent studies could explore learners across various proficiency levels and draw comparisons between native and non-native speakers. An examination of compensatory strategies in both formal and informal settings could further contribute to the existing body of knowledge.

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