

# 16<sup>th</sup> METU International ELT Convention

**Voices Beyond Algorithms:  
Reclaiming**

*The Human Touch*  
**in Language Learning**

**May 8-9, 2026**

**Ankara, TÜRKİYE**

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**ELT Convention**

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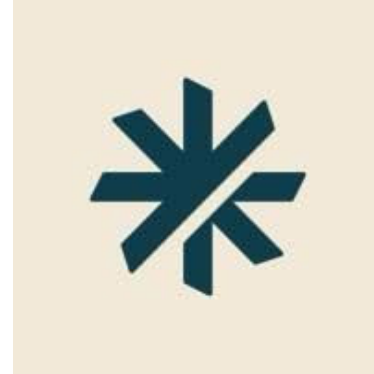
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# BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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Voices Beyond Algorithms:  
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*“What Algorithms Can’t Hear: Humanizing Language Education by Listening to Teachers”*

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At a time when algorithms increasingly shape teaching and learning, what can they *not* hear — and what do we risk losing when we don’t listen to teachers’ voices? In this plenary, I take up the conference call that "it is through human connection that meaning, understanding, and belonging are created" — and explore what that means for humanizing language education. Drawing on ten years of collaborative research with multilingual educators, I share how centering and listening to teacher voices transformed my practice-based research and led to more humanizing learning opportunities for multilingual students. I present six core practices born from dialogic, humanizing spaces where teachers became a genuine, supportive community of researchers and knowledge-makers— and I close by asking what role, if any, AI can play in creating that kind of community.

Megan Madigan Peercy, Ph.D. is a Professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership at the University of Maryland, USA, where she teaches in two specializations: Applied Linguistics and Language Education, and Teacher Education and Professional Development. Her research examines pedagogies of teacher education and the preparation and career-long development of teachers who work with multilingual learners (MLLs). As a former MLL and Spanish teacher, she is deeply invested in bringing practice and theory into dialogue to support teachers and students. Her research has been funded by the Spencer Foundation, the Institute of Education Sciences, and the Maryland State Department of Education. Examples of her recent work appear in *Linguistics and Education*, *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *TESOL Quarterly*, and *TESOL Journal*. Her co-authored book *Core Practices for Teaching Multilingual Students: Humanizing Pedagogies for Equity*, and accompanying YouTube channel, are important resources for P-12 teachers of MLLs. Dr. Peercy is recipient of the American Educational Research Association Leadership Through Research Award, and Mid-Career Award, from the Second Language Research group. She has also been named a University of Maryland Distinguished Scholar-Teacher.

*“The Indispensable Role of the “Disagreeable” Human Touch”*

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We often think the "human touch" in education means being kind, soft, or agreeable. But as AI begins to offer us a world of perfectly polite, pleasing, and politically correct answers, we risk losing something vital: the touch of honest disagreement. While an algorithm is an agreeable assistant, it lacks the professional courage to tell us when we are wrong or when something will not work. Although the human touch beyond algorithms may not be always soft or empathic, we still must embrace the "disagreeable giver", the colleague who is often challenging, but deeply committed to their profession and our students' success. This talk explores how disagreements and critical frictions may actually be an act of care. We see it in curriculum renewal processes, where disagreeable colleagues point out unrealistic expectations. We also see it in curriculum implementation, where they demand a level of rigor in materials, tests, and alignment. And, we see it in test development, where teachers, as human examiners, are still the backbone of the assessment procedures. Thus, this talk aims to embrace the "prickly" colleague, since in a world of agreeable algorithms, the most authentic service we can offer may be the courage to be difficult for the sake of our students' growth.

Dr. Deniz Şallı-Çopur is a teacher educator in the Department of Foreign Language Education at Middle East Technical University. Here, she has been teaching methodology and practicum courses to prospective teachers of English. Her areas of interest are pre-service teacher education, materials design, program evaluation, and assessment. She also takes part in program evaluation and curriculum studies as an external researcher.

*“From Natural Learners to Artificial Intelligence: Philosophical Concerns in Higher Education”*

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The continuous progress in Generative AI tools creates both significant threats and significant opportunities for teaching and learning in higher education. In this talk, we will consider some philosophical questions about academic achievement and well-being that arise from the prevalence of Generative AI, and we will discuss healthy and unhealthy ways of engaging with this technology, especially for undergraduate students.

Dr. Tufan Kıymaz received his PhD in Philosophy from Indiana University, Bloomington in 2017. The same year he joined the philosophy department in Bilkent University. His main areas of research are philosophy of mind, philosophy of religion and philosophy of well-being. He is also interested in Philosophy for Children (P4C) and philosophical pedagogy. He is involved in various public philosophy projects to promote critical thinking and philosophical examination outside of the academia. He is also a member of Bilkent Teaching and Learning Support Center, where he organizes pedagogy and well-being related seminars, trainings and workshops for students and for faculty members.

*“Iconic Gestures as Manual Cognates in Second Language Acquisition”*

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Gestures play a crucial role in human communication and support learning across development. They also facilitate second language acquisition (SLA), particularly through iconic gestures that provide embodied cues to meaning. Although the role of gestures in SLA is pronounced for adults, less is known about how and to what extent children benefit from gestures. The present study examines the role of iconic gestures as manual cognates in French vocabulary acquisition among Turkish learners. Participants included 43 children (8–9 years old) and 40 adults, who were exposed to novel French verbs coupled with gestures in three conditions: iconic gesture (IG), beat gesture (BG), and no gesture (NG). Learning was assessed through recall tasks administered at two time points (T1 and T2), across two learning sessions one week apart. Results from a generalized linear mixed-effects model showed a significant main effect of age group, with adults demonstrating higher recall accuracy than children ( $\beta = -2.91$ ,  $p < .001$ ). A significant main effect of time indicated improved performance at T2 compared to T1 ( $\beta = 0.82$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Although no significant main effect of gesture condition was observed, the interaction between age and IG condition was significant ( $\beta = 0.92$ ,  $p = .038$ ), suggesting that adults showed stronger benefits from IG compared to children. Taken together, these findings suggest that IG may function as manual cognates in SLA. However, their effectiveness appears to be developmentally modulated, with adults benefiting more strongly from the semantic support that gestures provide.

**Keywords:** Gesture, Second Language Acquisition, Language Development

Afaf El Qacemi is a TED University Psychology graduate (2022) and current master’s student in Developmental Psychology at Middle East Technical University. Her research focuses on gesture-supported second language acquisition, with particular emphasis on the role of iconic gestures in vocabulary learning across developmental groups.

Dilay Z. Karadöller is an assistant professor at METU and researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics. She received her PhD from Max Planck and Radboud University. Her research examines spatial and mathematical language across modalities and sign language exposure, supported by international grants.

*“Beyond the Screen: How "TalkCraft" Reclaims Narrative Agency in Language Learning”*

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In this session, we will share 'TalkCraft,' a capstone multimedia framework implemented in a university-level Effective Multimedia Presentation course. It is an elective course designed for undergraduate students and through 'TalkCraft' project, it challenges students to move from being passive 'users' of digital tools to 'crafters' of human meaning. The project requires a 5–7 minute digital performance synthesizing design, storytelling, and interactivity. It serves as a pedagogical intervention against 'algorithmic flattening,' ensuring technology remains a tool for—not a replacement of—the human voice.

TalkCraft embodies the 'human touch' by prioritizing empathy and ethical awareness over automated templates. For instance, a mandatory Week 12 instructor consultation serves as a 'human-to-human' checkpoint, ensuring that students' digital stories are grounded in respect for diversity and personal authenticity.

We hope to take the audience on a journey to explore a framework for balancing technical proficiency with emotional resonance. The key points include:

- Synthesis of Competencies: How to assess the intersection of design, interactivity, and 'human' delivery.
- Accessibility as Empathy: Framing universal design as an ethical choice for diverse audiences.
- Practical Takeaways & Engagement: Attendees will receive strategies to implement similar 'TalkCraft' elements in their own contexts, including a sample rubric that weights narrative empathy alongside technical execution.

We will discuss lessons learned regarding the balance of creative freedom and ethical constraints. The 5-minute Q&A will be structured as a 'Problem-Solution' exchange, where participants share challenges regarding 'automated' student output, and the presenter offers specific TalkCraft strategies to reclaim the human element.

**Keywords:** TalkCraft, storytelling, multimedia, active learners, interactivity, diversity

Dr. Ahmet Colak is an educational technologist at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University with 15+ years of experience. A Fulbright Scholar with a PhD from USF, he specializes in TPACK, AI, and digital quality assurance. He currently leads faculty development and certificate programs, focusing on innovative, technology-enhanced learning experiences.

Dr. Hatice Karaaslan is a Cognitive Scientist and educator at Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University, specializing in autonomy-supportive learning ecosystems. With twenty years of experience, she leads international training in reflective mentoring and social-emotional learning. Her award-winning research focuses on holistic growth and research-informed, tech-enhanced pedagogy in diverse educational communities.

*“Erasure Poetry as a Means of Creative Engagement in B2-Level EFL Classrooms”*

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This study explores the integration of erasure poetry into B2-level English classrooms as a creative approach to language learning. Erasure poetry, a form of found poetry created by selectively removing words from an existing text to reveal a new composition, offers a distinctive pedagogical opportunity: it transforms passive reading into active meaning-making. The study was conducted with a group of twenty B2-level EFL learners, who were given an excerpt from Jack London's *White Fang* and instructed to create their own erasure poems by selectively deleting words. The process was structured around three stages: an introductory session with visual examples, the erasure activity itself, in which students worked individually to craft their poems before sharing them on a collaborative digital platform, and a reflective discussion supported by pre- and post-activity questionnaires. Findings indicate that the activity prompted a notable shift in learner attitudes toward poetry and creative writing. Students who initially reported hesitation or anxiety demonstrated increased confidence and engagement following the task. Qualitative responses highlight enhanced lexical awareness, interpretive thinking, and a heightened sense of ownership over the target language. The peer-sharing component further extended these benefits by exposing learners to diverse interpretations of texts. The study concludes that erasure poetry effectively bridges the gap between reading and writing, fostering critical engagement with authentic literary texts. Its accessibility and adaptability make it a viable creative intervention for EFL contexts, with broader implications for arts-integrated language pedagogy.

**Keywords:** Arts-based pedagogy, Erasure poetry, Creative language use

Ahmet Gülsat holds a Bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature and a Master's degree in American Culture and Literature. With over fifteen years of experience in EFL instruction at university level, he currently works as an English Language Instructor at Hacettepe University, Ankara, Türkiye.

*“Simplify This Text for my Students”: How Well Do ChatGPT and Gemini Simplify Reading Texts?”*

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Language instructors adopt generative AI to create simple texts for classroom use. However, the evidence for the linguistic and pedagogical reliability of these outputs across proficiency levels remains limited. This research evaluates the capacity of Gemini and ChatGPT to deliver stable linguistic and instructional value across the CEFR spectrum. The study analyzes the transition of a C2-level text into A1, A2, B1, and B2 target levels. The methodology integrates automated readability metrics, lexical profiling, and a blind expert review of semantic, syntactic, lexical, cohesion, and pedagogical dimensions in text analysis. Data reveals a pattern of bimodal instability. Gemini performs with precision for foundational levels but produces original C2 complexity at the B2 stage. ChatGPT offers a stable B1 transition yet creates unnatural fragmentation for the A1 target. These variations identify a mid-tier complexity trap where AI fails to balance linguistic simplicity with the necessary conceptual depth. These findings show that AI-automated adaptation does not guarantee level-appropriate content. This research provides clear evidence of the necessity of expert oversight to ensure CEFR alignment, as AI text simplifications lack pedagogical intuition and are not yet ready for immediate use.

**Keywords:** AI, readability, CEFR, reading, adaptation

Ahmet Bařal is a professor at Yıldız Teknik University in Türkiye. He holds an MA in English Language Teaching, a PhD in Curriculum and Instruction. His research interests include technology-enhanced language learning, instructional design, and CALL. He has published widely in (inter)national journals and actively participated in professional events.

Erdem Akbaş is an Associate Professor of English Language Teaching at Erciyes University in Türkiye. He holds a PhD in English Language Teaching and specializes in corpus linguistics, discourse analysis, and pragmatics. His research focuses on academic discourse and data-driven approaches to language teaching, and he has published widely.

Assoc. Prof. Betül Bal Gezegin is an Associate Professor in English Language Teaching at Ondokuz Mayıs University. She leads multiple TÜBİTAK-supported projects, supervises graduate theses, and has published extensively on corpus linguistics, applied linguistics, and teacher education in peer-reviewed journals, books, and international conferences.

*“Bridging Language and Culture through Global Music Videos: Intercultural Competence among Local and International Learners”*

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First, the workshop will highlight how local foundation and international learners from five continents share global music videos in language and culture sessions grounded in a transformative philosophy: music is a universal language, and English is the global bridge. When foundation students converse with international learners about song lyrics, melodies, translanguaging, and emotional resonance, English serves as a medium for authentic human connection rather than a classroom exercise. Global cultures are humanized, abstract “others” become peers, and communication shifts to relationships as learners strengthen speaking skills and intercultural competence.

Secondly, the presenter will share an example local/international student session via videos and photos illustrating the basic agenda in which a student presents their country and a favorite music video, initially in the native language. Working in local/international clusters, learners reflect on the music video’s meaning, then receive a lyrics sheet in the original language and English. After watching again with English subtitles, partners collaborate to select meaningful lines to share as authentic conversations emerge.

Next, workshop attendees experience the same process, hands on. After voting which country they would like to ‘visit’: Germany, Turkey, Belgium, Kenya, East Turkestan, Italy, Uzbekistan, Moldova, Kashmir, South Korea, or Azerbaijan, attendees will watch a related music video and collaborate to share meaningful lines and language lessons.

The workshop will conclude by highlighting how the local/international student sessions are a replicable, human-centered safe space for embracing the human spirit and a sense of belonging through language.

Attendee insights and inquiries will be invited.

**Keywords:** Intercultural Competence, Empathy, Humanize, Authentic Language, Music

Originally from Boston with a background in linguistic anthropology, Alison specializes in creative language education. TESOL’s Arts and Creativity PLN leader, Alison inspires the Language and Culture Club at Kadir Has University, engaging learners through global music videos with a focus on intercultural competence and global citizenship.

*“Exploring Researcher Identity Construction through Undergraduate Research Experiences”*

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Undergraduate research experiences (UREs) involve intricate processes where emerging researchers encounter diverse social, emotional, research-based, and identity-related challenges. Engaging in UREs can foster essential teacher-as-researcher competencies needed for inquiry-informed pedagogy for language teachers. However, there is a dearth of research exploring how pre-service teachers (PSTs) perceive these experiences as they construct their researcher identities. The research presents a multiple-case study tracking three PSTs in Türkiye as they navigated their first URE, conducted research for the first time, and prepared an oral presentation for an undergraduate conference. This study draws on a large dataset to trace the entire process through pre- and post-URE semi-structured interviews, guided video journals, multimodal artefacts, peer/co-presenter interviews, and researchers’ field notes and observations during conference presentations. Data were analyzed thematically, focusing on how the participants enacted researcher identity across the research and presentation phases and all data sources. The analysis reveals that researcher identity is actively realized through agentive dimensions, comprising (a) the participants’ shifting perceptions of themselves as the “doers” of research, transforming from self-described novices to legitimate researchers; (b) the strategic designing and rehearsing of research for an imagined audience to embody credibility and merited presence; and (c) perceived affordances of research as a gateway for future academic and professional aspirations. Across cases, identity development is characterized by oscillations, with conference preparation functioning as a key site for consolidating a sense of

researcherhood. Thus, the present study offers implications for teacher education programs to cultivate teacher-researcher competencies through UREs during pre-service teacher education.

**Keywords:** Undergraduate research, researcher identity; language teacher education

Ali Anaç is a research assistant at the Department of Foreign Languages Education at Amasya University and a PhD candidate at METU. He studies language teacher education and related institutional settings using multimodal conversation- and discourse-analytic methodologies.

*“Building Connections and Empathy Through Shared Understanding of Teachers-as-Learners”*

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Nearly all teachers of English as a foreign language are language learners themselves. We have gone through our struggles and triumphs in the processes of learning, yet when we are in the classroom as teachers, there is often a disconnect between students’ perception of our language abilities and their own ability to achieve, or even in our ability to relate to them. In addition, students frequently have a complicated relationship with language learning and the psychology of this can, at times, hinder their progression. With the added layer of teacher vs student status, students and teachers sometimes do not emphasize their commonalities as learners, missing the powerful potential of utilizing this shared experience to harness empathy and activate hearts and minds towards the good of students’ learning and the enjoyment of teachers’ work. This topic intertwines the conference theme of "reclaiming the human touch in language learning" beyond algorithms. It is appropriate for both pre-service and in-service teachers.

The reflective workshop will begin with observations by the co-presenters about how this concept has played out in their classrooms. They will then lead participants through a reflective session in their own classrooms, followed by small group discussions on steps that each teacher might take to develop mentoring and equality-based dynamics in their classes.

**Keywords:** empathy, connection, mentoring, human-centered management

Anita Tjan from TOBB University has a Master's in TESOL from School of International Training in Vermont. Born in Indonesia, raised in the States, she has also worked at TED Malatya and Atatürk University (English Language Fellow 2022-2024).

Alissa Nashold has a Master’s in TESOL from the School for International Training and has taught in the USA, Costa Rica, Korea, on a Japanese boat and in Çanakkale, Türkiye at Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi (English Language Fellow 2024-2025).

*“Exploring Human-Centered EFL Teaching in AI-Enhanced Contexts: The Contribution of Professional Learning”*

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The expanding use of artificial intelligence (AI) in language instruction has generated further discussion about the role of educators in technology-enhanced classrooms. Although AI tools provide efficiency, feedback support, and opportunities for content creation, questions remain regarding how human-centered pedagogy can be sustained in EFL contexts. Rather than perceiving AI as a replacement for professional expertise, it is essential to examine how instructors position themselves in AI-enhanced teaching contexts. Research indicates that AI can support writing instruction through feedback and assessment without replacing the teacher’s professional role (Dong, 2023). Studies in teacher education contexts highlight both the benefits of AI for instructional design and concerns regarding overreliance, ethical issues, and misleading content (Wulandari & Purnamaningwulan, 2024). Overreliance on AI may undermine creativity and authentic learning, underscoring the need for balanced integration and ethical consideration (Rafida et al., 2024). This exploratory study investigates how EFL instructors at a public university in Turkey integrate AI into their teaching practices and sustain a human-centered approach in AI-enhanced contexts. It also examines the contribution of professional learning experiences—both institutional and external—in shaping instructors’ pedagogical use of AI. Data were collected from 14 instructors through open-ended survey questions and analyzed using thematic analysis. Preliminary findings suggest that instructors view AI primarily as a pedagogical resource rather than a substitute for the teacher’s role. Professional learning appears to enhance pedagogical awareness and encourage more deliberate and responsible classroom use of AI. This study highlights the role of professional learning in supporting pedagogically grounded AI integration.

**Keywords:** AI in EFL, human-centered pedagogy, professional learning

Dr. Arzu Koçak serves as the coordinator of the professional development unit at the School of Foreign Languages, Hacettepe University. She earned her BA in English Language Teaching (ELT) from Hacettepe University. She holds an MA in TEFL from Bilkent University and a PhD in ELT from Hacettepe University.

*“Thinking Skills Applied with AI prompting”*

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Creative thinking is the gateway to critical thinking, allowing students to explore ideas freely before refining them through analysis and reasoning. As educators, we strive to foster both skills, encouraging students to think “outside the box” while engaging in deeper inquiry. Just as language skills require practice, so do thinking skills, and artificial intelligence can serve as a powerful tool in this process. Consequently, the enhancement of thinking skills leads to a greater ability to use language in a more descriptive and detailed manner. This interactive workshop will explore how creative thinking is connected to critical thinking and how the use of AI tools through prompt engineering can enhance these skills. Through the application of several artificial intelligence platforms, participants will engage in hands-on activities that demonstrate how to refine students’ analytical and reasoning abilities, such as observation and evaluation. This workshop shows how, by leveraging AI tools effectively, educators can support self-regulation, encourage diverse perspectives, and create more dynamic learning environments. Participants are encouraged to bring a laptop and a smartphone to ensure full access to the applications and to experience them from both the learner’s perspective and that of the educator designing the activity.

**Keywords:** AI, Critical Thinking, AI Prompting, Interactive Classrooms

Ashanti Lee is a U.S. English Language Fellow in Ankara with a Master’s in Curriculum Development and TEFL certification. He designs interactive, learner-centered instruction that develops creative and critical thinking, effective language use, and innovative classroom practices, including the integration of artificial intelligence to enhance inquiry, self-regulation, and analytical skills.

*“FLOWrishing: Flow Experiences and Well-being of Pre-Service English Teachers”*

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Being able to experience flow and a high sense of well-being are two of countless components of a successful educator. Being both psychological concepts, investigating the interplay between them offers valuable insights into second language teaching research. This study examined the relationship between flow experiences and well-being states of pre-service English teachers. It bases its discussion on the PERMA Model, which positions well-being as an individual trait socially embedded and ecologically situated, and Flow Theory, where flow is a state in which an individual is completely immersed and experiences a deep sense of satisfaction during activities. Using a mixed methodology, it was revealed that well-being and flow are loosely connected. The study emphasizes the significance of flow and well-being in the context of pre-service teachers, highlighting the importance of these factors for improved practicum outcomes and underscoring the need for more extensive and comprehensive research.

**Keywords:** PERMA, teacher education, well-being, flow theory

Ata Can Sezgin is a Research Assistant at the Department of ELT, Education Faculty at Anadolu University, Turkey. He is current a PhD student at Anadolu University. His research interests include sociolinguistics in ELT, conversation analysis, and teacher autonomy.

Hülya İpek is an Assistant Professor at the Department of ELT, Education Faculty at Anadolu University. She's taught EFL to young adults at various proficiency levels and is teaching BA, MA, and PhD courses. Her research interests include teaching/testing language skills, affective factors, and well-being in language learning and teaching.

*“Making Care Visible: Students’ Conceptions of Teacher Care in EAP settings”*

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In today’s higher education landscape, there is extensive emphasis on marketization and academic performance. Metrics used in performance evaluations mainly rely on quantifiable measures, which lead to a disregard for more invisible elements in teaching, such as care (Lynch et al., 2020). Yet, research has revealed that fostering caring relationships in higher education is essential for student learning (Walker & Gleaves, 2016). Within the current context, practicing and sustaining care as educators has become increasingly challenging.

While care is not entirely absent from higher education, “it is on the periphery – pushed to the margins by a more central concern with efficiency, competition, and survival” (Baker & Burke, 2023, p.116). In contexts where care risks being overshadowed by performance imperatives, understanding how students themselves conceptualize care becomes particularly significant. Care is not secondary to academic excellence but an integral part of preparing socially responsible individuals (Wilde, 2012).

This study explores undergraduate students’ conception of care in English for Academic Purposes courses at a state university. Data collected from 80 students through structured reflective tasks was analyzed thematically using Braun and Clarke’s (2021) framework. Preliminary findings align with Tronto’s (2015) dimensions of care, highlighting attentiveness, responsibility, competence, and responsiveness as central to students’ perceptions of caring teaching. By foregrounding students’ voices, this presentation invites educators to re-examine their practices through the lens of care and provides insight into how care can be enacted within an increasingly technologized educational context.

**Keywords:** teacher care, ethics of care, higher education

Aylin S. Dewan Türüdü works at the Department of Modern Languages at METU. She holds a Ph.D. in ELT from the same university and has over 25 years of experience in the field.

Hale Kızılcık works at the Department of Modern Languages at METU, where she teaches EAP courses and coordinates the ENG 311 Professional Communication and Career Skills course. She holds an M.A. and Ph.D. from the same university.

*“L2 Learners’ Drives for Using AI Tools in Their Writing: Learning- vs. Performance-Oriented Goals”*

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Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are increasingly integrated into foreign/second language (L2) learning environments for instructional support. Therefore, understanding learners’ goals is essential for clarifying their AI use orientations. For this reason, the current study examines whether L2 learners’ goals for using AI tools in L2 writing are learning- or performance-oriented. Following a qualitative phenomenological design, we tried to explore L2 learners’ experiences with AI-assisted writing in a university context in Türkiye. Ten undergraduate students majoring in English were interviewed via semi-structured questions. Data were collected over six weeks in L2 writing classes through a range of academic paragraph-writing tasks, during which students were allowed to benefit from AI tools as assistants. The data were analyzed through content analysis to identify participants’ AI use orientations and the purposes for which they used AI tools during their writing processes. The findings indicated that the participants found AI tools useful in L2 writing activities, yet their long-term aims were not merely to improve task-fulfillment performances but to develop their L2 writing skills. Overall, the results suggest that using AI tools as supportive assistants in L2 writing classes may enhance L2 learners’ learning performance and promote their sustained skill development positively.

**Keywords:** AI tools; L2 writing skills; orientation

Dr. Aysel Eyerci is an Assistant Professor at Erzurum Technical University and a lifelong learner passionate about language education. Her work focuses on applied linguistics, EFL teaching and learning, and innovative higher education practices. She explores how inclusive approaches and emerging technologies can enhance learner engagement and support academic success.

*“Metaphorical Constructions of the Human–AI Boundary in English Language Teaching”*

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The integration of AI into ELT has increased debates about efficiency and pedagogical change, raising questions about the boundaries between human agency and algorithmic influence (Konstantinidis, 2025). Drawing on recent research (Yan et al., 2024), this study explores how pre-service English teachers metaphorically conceptualize AI and its role in language teaching, especially the human–machine relationship. Based on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), the study analyzes metaphors of 80 pre-service teachers who completed the prompt: “AI in language teaching is like ... because ...” Data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis to identify recurring source domains and underlying pedagogical assumptions.

The initial findings indicate that participants view themselves as ethical gatekeepers, emphasizing the importance of relational judgment and contextual sensitivity in language-learning environments. The analysis identified three main metaphors: AI AS A TOOL/INSTRUMENT (such as key, compass, assistant), AI AS A RESOURCE/SPACE (like library, ocean, new world), and AI AS A DOUBLE-EDGED WEAPON (including sword, scissors, two-sided sword). Notably, the most common pattern was dual-structured metaphors highlighting conditionality (e.g., “you can either... or...”). This suggests that participants do not see AI as purely deterministic but as morally and pedagogically dependent on human judgment.

Overall, pre-service teachers view themselves as responsible gatekeepers who exercise relational judgment and carefully consider context. While acknowledging AI’s transformative potential, they describe it as a powerful yet ethically complex tool for teaching. The study emphasizes the need to develop critical AI literacy that preserves human-centered decision-making in an increasingly automated education environment.

**Keywords:** metaphors, artificial intelligence, language teachers, teacher agency

Banu Cicek BASARAN-UYSAL works as an Assistant Professor at Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Faculty of Education, Department of Foreign Language Education. She pursued her Ph.D. in ELT at Middle East Technical University. Her major research interests include teacher education, technology integration, language teacher educator identity, and corpus linguistics.

*“Teaching for Creativity in Turkish Higher Education: Perceptions of University-Level EFL Instructors”*

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The concept of teaching for creativity, which plays a central role in promoting creative thinking, learner autonomy, and adaptability, has gained increasing attention across diverse educational contexts over the years. However, limited research has examined how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors in the Turkish Higher Education context conceptualize and foster creativity among language learners. Addressing this gap, this quantitative study investigates Turkish university-level EFL instructors' perceptions regarding teaching for creativity (TfC). TfC and its subcomponents are measured using the Second Language Teaching for Creativity Scale (L2TCS), developed by Wu and Zeng (2025). The participants of the study are EFL instructors of state and private universities across Türkiye, and they are recruited through convenience and snowball sampling methods. Descriptive statistics are used to examine TfC levels and subcomponents, while potential differences across demographic variables are explored through inferential statistics. The study contributes to the expanding body of literature on L2 teaching for creativity by presenting a depiction of the beliefs of instructors working in the Turkish higher education EFL setting, a basis for cross-cultural comparisons and for future research. The non-probability sampling methods and the self-reported nature of the scale used constitute the possible limitations of the study.

**Keywords:** L2 Teaching for Creativity, Second Language Teaching

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*“Exploring the Lived Experience of Wellbeing Among English Language Instructors: A Phenomenological Inquiry”*

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Being part of an emotionally and physically demanding and challenging profession, teachers at all levels tend to cope with various stressors both in and outside the classroom, affecting their wellbeing. Although the literature has largely examined wellbeing through measurable constructs such as burnout and job satisfaction, limited attention has been given to how English language instructors experience wellbeing in their lived professional realities. This ongoing doctoral study aims to explore the phenomenon of wellbeing, and gain insight regarding the lived experiences of non-native English teaching instructors by adopting a phenomenological approach to grasp the essence of wellbeing as perceived by English language instructors.

Data are being collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, and insights drawn from instructors’ professional and personal contexts, which enable an exploration of wellbeing as a lived, dynamic phenomenon shaped by relationships, institutional conditions, and identity negotiations.

Interpretation of emerging meanings is informed by insights from positive psychology, particularly the PERMA framework (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment). Preliminary analysis suggests that instructors’ wellbeing is not merely an individual psychological state but is constructed through the interplay of emotional experiences, professional purpose, relational belonging, and perceived achievement.

By shedding light on how English language instructors interpret and construct their wellbeing, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper, experience-based understanding of wellbeing in language teaching and highlights the value of integrating lived experience with strengths-based perspectives.

**Keywords:** Well-being, phenomenology, PERMA, English Teaching Instructors

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Betil Eröz is an Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Language Education at METU and a founding partner at FabuLAB Education and Information Technologies, Inc. at METU Technopolis. She specializes in teacher education and sociolinguistics.

*“The Preconditions of Learning: Bias and Pedagogical Priming in ELT”*

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Meaningful learning does not begin with input, tasks, or technology; it begins with the learner’s cognitive and affective readiness to receive them. In English Language Teaching, deeply ingrained biases—concerning language, intelligence, error, identity, and authority—often operate as invisible barriers that inhibit engagement and learning, regardless of methodological sophistication. This workshop argues that for learning to occur, teachers must first attend to these preconditions by consciously disrupting limiting beliefs and intentionally priming learners for openness, curiosity, and cognitive flexibility.

Grounded in insights from cognitive psychology, applied linguistics, and humanistic pedagogy, the session introduces pedagogical priming as a deliberate and ethically grounded instructional stance. Participants will explore how classroom discourse, framing choices, task sequencing, and teacher language can either reinforce resistance or prepare the mind for learning. Through guided reflection, short experiential activities, and collaborative discussion, participants will identify common classroom biases, examine their own instructional habits, and experiment with low-risk priming strategies applicable across diverse ELT contexts.

By the end of the workshop, participants will gain a clearer understanding of how learning is shaped before it visibly begins and will leave with practical, principled tools to foster readiness, agency, and sustained engagement in their classrooms—reclaiming the human dimension of learning beyond methods, tools, and algorithms.

**Keywords:** priming, bias, learning, cognition, emotion, engagement, ELT

Başak Atasoy is an English language instructor at METU, Türkiye. She has over twenty-eight years of teaching experience and specializes in humanistic ELT, learner engagement, and fostering cognitive and affective readiness through classroom discourse. Her professional interests include cognitive readiness, affective factors in learning, and teacher agency in language education.

*“Preparatory Program English Teachers’ Evaluations of Global Citizenship Education in English Language Teaching”*

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In an era marked by rapid globalization and technological transformation, global citizenship education (GCE) has gained prominence as a vital educational framework that equips learners with intercultural awareness, global competence, and a sense of responsibility toward worldwide challenges. The English language, widely recognized as a lingua franca, holds a pivotal role in advancing these competencies, particularly in higher education contexts. This study explores the evaluations of preparatory program English teachers regarding the integration of GCE into English language teaching. Adopting a qualitative research design, written semi-structured interview forms were administered to ten instructors teaching at a state university preparatory program. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns in teachers’ perceptions and practices. The results highlight the tension between the pedagogical potential of GCE and the practical limitations of current preparatory curricula. The study underscores the need for systematic inclusion of GCE principles into ELT materials, teacher education programs, and institutional policies. By doing so, language teaching can extend beyond linguistic competence to nurture globally responsible citizens prepared to engage with the complex realities of the 21st century.

**Keywords:** Global Citizenship Education (GCE), Preparatory Program

Master’s student in Foreign Language Education with a focused interest in the intersection of artificial intelligence, language learning, and global citizenship. Particularly interested in how technology-enhanced, globally oriented environments support effective language teaching and meaningful intercultural communication.

*“Negotiating Identity across Borders: A Narrative Case Study of Transnational Mobility in an Expanding-Circle Context”*

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Identity and language learning are fundamentally interconnected and mutually influential processes. Recent studies in applied linguistics highlight that acquiring a language involves not only cognitive processes but also social interaction and identity formation (Dooly, 2017; Li, 2025). From a post-structural perspective, the sense of self in learners develops through continuous negotiation within changing cultural, linguistic, and power-laden contexts. Although identity has been extensively examined in language education, relatively less attention has been paid to how identity negotiation unfolds within expanding-circle contexts under conditions of transnational mobility. Drawing on transnationalism as a theoretical lens (Vertovec, 2009; Menard-Warwick, 2008) and Darwin and Norton’s (2021) theory of investment, this study conceptualizes transnational mobility as an ongoing process of identity negotiation shaped by movement across linguistic, cultural, and academic spaces. In such settings, learners deploy English as a global resource while positioning themselves in relation to local cultural norms, institutional expectations, and broader sociopolitical power structures. Utilizing a longitudinal qualitative case study design informed by narrative inquiry, this research centers on a Turkish graduate student pursuing an MA degree in Poland. Collecting data through in-depth interviews, reflective journals, and field notes, the study explores how the participant engages with new linguistic practices, academic discourses, and sociocultural norms within the host institution and the wider social field. By centering the participant’s voice and lived experience, the findings are expected to illuminate how learners in expanding-circle contexts negotiate identity through transnational experiences, thereby contributing to post-structural perspectives in identity research and language education.

**Keywords:** identity negotiation, transnational mobility, expanding-circle, narrative inquiry

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Dr. Müge Gündüz is a faculty member in the Department of Foreign Language Education and the ELT Program Coordinator at Middle East Technical University, Türkiye. She received her doctorate from University of Leicester, UK. Her current research interests include Intercultural Pragmatics, Cross-Cultural Communication, Integrating Literature into ELT and Teacher Education.

*“Beyond Algorithms: Compassionate Teaching for Resilient and Human-Centered Language Learning”*

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As classrooms become increasingly shaped by algorithms and intelligent tools, the question is no longer what technology can do, but how we can preserve the human heart of language learning. This session places empathy, connection, and learner well-being at the heart of pedagogy.

Drawing on research in growth mindset, social-emotional learning, and compassionate teaching, the workshop explores how emotionally supportive classrooms enhance not only well-being but also language acquisition, motivation, and long-term resilience. Participants will examine how compassionate practices—such as validating learner voice, responding constructively to mistakes, and building psychologically safe environments—can counterbalance the depersonalising effects of technology-driven instruction.

Through interactive tasks and reflective discussion participants will experience practical strategies for developing resilient, confident learners who are willing to take risks in communication. The session will also address how teachers can maintain their own sense of agency and authenticity while navigating AI-enhanced educational environments.

By the end of the workshop, participants will leave with concrete, adaptable techniques to integrate compassion into everyday teaching, strengthen classroom relationships, and create inclusive spaces where every learner feels seen, heard, and valued. Eventually, the session argues that the future of language education depends not only on smarter tools, but on wiser, more compassionate educators who ensure that the human voice remains central to learning.

**Keywords:** Compassionate teaching, resilience, human-centered education, SEL, AI

Beril Ayman Yücel has dedicated 35 years to ELT, serving as an instructor, teacher trainer, textbook writer, and administrator. She has contributed to many national and international teacher training and trainer training projects. Currently, she works as a freelance ELT consultant and Learning & Teaching expert, supporting educators and institutions.

*“Developing Pre-service English Teachers’ Resilience Skills Through Coaching During Practicum”*

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Although pre-service English teachers often enter practicum contexts with substantial theoretical preparation and emerging pedagogical competence (Darling-Hammond, 2006), sustaining psychological well-being, professional confidence, and teacher identity remains a persistent challenge (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Conducted as part of ongoing doctoral research, this qualitative study is positioned within Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) three-dimensional narrative inquiry space (interaction, continuity, and situation), focusing on participants’ lived experiences across personal, social, and contextual dimensions of the practicum. It explores how an integrated coaching model informed by positive psychology coaching (Grant, 2017), narrative coaching (Drake, 2024), and resilience coaching (Neenan, 2018) supports resilience development among twelve fourth-year pre-service English teachers during the practicum.

The coaching model was strengthened by the BRiTE Framework (Building Resilience in Teacher Education; Mansfield et al., 2016) and individualized reflective coaching practices designed to enhance resilience skills, teacher identity development, and adaptive coping during the practicum. Data were generated through classroom observations, semi-structured individual and group coaching sessions, and reflective papers, and were analyzed thematically through participants’ evolving professional narratives.

Findings indicate that participants already possessed pedagogical knowledge, prior teaching experience, and personal coping strategies. However, the coaching process contributed uniquely by fostering resilience awareness, strengthening self-confidence, encouraging collaborative reflection, and supporting participants in navigating practicum-related challenges. Coaching sessions functioned as reflective narrative spaces in which participants reconstructed teacher identities, reframed practicum challenges, and mobilized psychological resources within demanding school contexts. These findings highlight the value of incorporating a “human touch” into traditional practicum models through resilience coaching.

**Keywords:** pre-service English teachers, resilience, coaching, narrative inquiry

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Irem Çomođlu is a professor of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Türkiye. Her research focuses on pre-service teacher learning and development, research-based learning, and multilingualism in English language teacher education, primarily adopting a qualitative approach.

*“Student Perspectives on Translanguaging for Self-Regulation in EMI Preparation: A Sequential Explanatory Mixed-Methods Study”*

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English-medium instruction preparatory programs sit at a high-stakes transition point where students must learn academic English while preparing to study disciplinary content. This study will examine how EMI preparatory students view translanguaging and how these views relate to self-regulated learning. The study will use a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. In phase one, approximately 242 students in a Turkish university EMI preparatory program will complete an online survey. The survey will measure translanguaging orientations and reported translanguaging practices across common prep tasks such as reading, vocabulary learning, note-taking, problem solving, and exam preparation, alongside self-regulated learning strategies such as goal setting, planning, monitoring, and help seeking. Quantitative analyses will include reliability checks, confirmatory factor analysis, and correlation and regression models to test whether self-regulation predicts translanguaging orientations and task-specific practices after controlling for proficiency level and prior EMI experience. In phase two, 15 to 25 students will be selected based on survey profiles for semi-structured interviews. Interviews will explore when students switch or blend languages, what triggers these choices, and how institutional English-only norms shape strategy use. Qualitative data will be coded thematically, then integrated with the survey results to explain statistical patterns and identify classroom and assessment conditions that support strategic language use. Findings will inform EMI prep pedagogy by clarifying how translanguaging functions as a self-regulatory resource and where it conflicts with policy and expectations.

**Keywords:** translanguaging, student perspectives, efl, self regulations

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*“Teacher Feedback Literacy in Middle School EFL Writing: Exploring Teachers’  
Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions”*

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This abstract is part of Prof. Dr. Çiler Hatipoğlu's Cultures Beyond Algorithms: Moving from Surface-Level Data to Deep Cultural Understanding panel.

This study examines how middle school EFL teachers’ written feedback practices in Türkiye are shaped by the interplay between teacher feedback literacy and culturally situated norms. While feedback in EFL writing is often treated as a pedagogical technique to improve learner performance, it is also a socially embedded practice influenced by cultural expectations, relational dynamics, and institutional contexts.

Drawing on Lee’s (2021) L2 writing teacher feedback literacy framework and using Hofstede’s cultural dimensions as an interpretive lens, the study adopts an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Quantitative data were collected through a feedback literacy scale, followed by qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and document analysis of teachers’ written feedback on students’ compositions.

Findings indicate that teachers’ feedback practices are shaped not only by pedagogical knowledge and beliefs about writing development, but also by culturally mediated understandings of authority, face, and emotional sensitivity in teacher–student relationships. Patterns in tone, wording, clarity, and focus suggest efforts to balance instructional guidance with relational care in a context characterized by hierarchical dynamics. Interpreted through Hofstede’s dimensions, these patterns align with higher power distance and relationship-oriented norms, where harmony and face-saving shape instructional interaction.

By foregrounding written feedback as a cultural and social practice rather than a purely technical instructional procedure, this study contributes to ongoing discussions of feedback literacy, intercultural dimensions of assessment, and context-sensitive EFL writing pedagogy.

**Keywords:** Teacher feedback literacy; written feedback; cultural norms

I hold a B.A. in English Language Teaching from Middle East Technical University (METU) and am currently pursuing an M.A. in ELT there. I have been working as a middle school English language teacher at METU College since graduating and I am particularly interested in written feedback practices.

*“Learner Motivation and Engagement in ELT: Effects of Perceived Human versus AI-Generated Texts”*

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The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into English Language Teaching (ELT) has transformed the ways instructional materials are generated and adapted for classroom use (Crompton et al., 2024). While AI-generated texts increasingly resemble authentic real-world discourse, little attention has been paid to how learners perceive such materials when their origin is made explicit. Traditionally, authenticity in ELT has been associated with texts produced for genuine communicative purposes by human authors. However, the rise of synthetic text challenges the assumption that authenticity is an inherent textual property rather than a learner-perceived construct.

This classroom-based study explores whether perceived authorship influences learner motivation and engagement. Using a quasi-experimental design, two same-level groups of English learners (n=30) at a private university have been presented with identical reading texts, labeled as either “human-authored” or “AI-generated.” Participants have completed the same comprehension and discussion tasks, followed by a brief Likert-scale questionnaire measuring perceived authenticity, trust, and motivational engagement. Quantitative data obtained from the post-task questionnaire are currently being analyzed using descriptive statistical procedures.

Preliminary observations suggest that learners’ perceptions of the origin of texts may influence their willingness to engage with language-learning tasks. The study aims to offer insights into how source perception and attribution shape learners’ interaction with instructional materials and to discuss implications for curriculum and material development in today’s AI-supported learning environments.

**Keywords:** Learner perception, AI-Generated ELT materials, text authenticity

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*“Human Voice and Algorithmic Assistance in ELT Digital Storytelling”*

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As generative artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly mediates creative and academic production, critical questions emerge regarding authorship, agency, and pedagogical intentionality in teacher education. While AI tools are often framed as efficiency-enhancing supports, limited research has explored how future language teachers interpret and negotiate their own voice when algorithmic assistance becomes part of the design process. This qualitative study examines how pre-service English language teachers make sense of AI-supported digital storytelling compared to AI-free narrative production. Within a five-week digital storytelling workshop, participants completed two parallel storytelling tasks: one developed independently and one created with structured AI support. Following task completion, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted using artefact-elicited prompts. Participants reflected on narrative decisions, linguistic choices, and pedagogical alignment while reviewing both versions of their stories and, where applicable, their AI prompt chains. Thematic analysis revealed four recurring tensions: (1) negotiation of authorship and ownership, (2) efficiency versus cognitive engagement, (3) creativity enhancement versus stylistic homogenization, and (4) pedagogical control and ethical awareness. While AI frequently functioned as a cognitive scaffold facilitating linguistic refinement and structural organization, participants expressed ambivalence regarding authenticity and voice dilution. Findings suggest that AI operates as a co-designing presence that redistributes cognitive labor and reshapes how future teachers conceptualize creativity, responsibility, and instructional agency. Implications are discussed for sustaining human voice within increasingly algorithm-mediated language education contexts.

**Keywords:** Artificial intelligence; Digital storytelling; Teacher agency

Dr. Bilal Karaca is an Assistant Professor in the Department of FLE at Trabzon University. His research focuses on language teacher education, digital pedagogy, AI integration in ELT, and teacher professional development. He has been involved in national and international research projects exploring technology-enhanced language learning and innovative pedagogical practices.

*“A Diachronic Analysis of Academy Award Speeches and Their Pedagogical Implications for High-Stakes Speaking”*

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Many EFL students struggle with high-stakes oral tasks, particularly academic presentations. These contexts require them to manage audience expectations, credibility, and evaluative stance. In order to assist students facing challenging speaking situations, it is essential to develop research-based models that illustrate how proficient speakers effectively construct high-stakes public discourse in English under pressure. Academy Award acceptance speeches are a useful case in this regard because they are brief, highly ritualized, and delivered under intense emotional and social scrutiny, making interpersonal and pragmatic choices especially visible.

This study traces the diachronic evolution of these speeches, a ritualized genre facing intense emotional pressure and global scrutiny. While scholarship establishes baselines for pronoun usage and "Up-scale Graduation," a gap remains regarding the genre's decades-long evolution. This longitudinal perspective determines if linguistic intensification is a stable feature or an artifact of socio-historical shifts in celebrity culture.

The corpus-based design analyzes 100 transcriptions spanning five decades. Swalesian Move Analysis examines structural evolution, while Searle's Speech Act Theory tracks shifts between "Expressives" and "Commissives." Appraisal Theory measures rhetorical inflation and emotional vulnerability. Preliminary analysis suggests increasing interpersonal features, revealing "rhetorical inflation." Findings highlight the genre's plasticity; winners negotiate a tension between expected modesty and professional self-assertion.

This study offers ELT practitioners practical techniques to teach genre-based speaking, guiding learners to plan spoken texts through moves, select appropriate speech acts, and control evaluative intensity. These skills strengthen pragmatic competence and audience-aware performance in high-stakes tasks, fostering genre awareness and learner empowerment in ESP curricula.

**Keywords:** academy award speeches, appraisal theory, move analysis

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Elvan Eda Işık is an associate professor at the Department of Foreign Language Education at Middle East Technical University. Specializing in applied linguistics for TESOL, she has published in leading journals and recently co-edited the book *English for Specific Purposes in the 21st Century* (2026, Palgrave Macmillan).

*“Navigating AI Dilemmas: The Intersection of Professional Agency and Ethical Reasoning Among Pre-Service ELT Teachers”*

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The growing presence of AI tools in teacher education raises an urgent question aligned with human-centered ELT: how do preservice teachers negotiate ethical judgment as they develop a sense of agency? While prior research has examined ethical decision-making in AI use, limited attention has been given to how such reasoning intersects with the formation of emerging professional agency during teacher preparation. This study explores how preservice English language teachers’ ethical reasoning about AI use is reflected in how they position themselves as future professionals. Grounded in Rest’s Four-Component Model of ethical decision-making and Jones’ Issue-Contingent Model, the study adopts a qualitative scenario-based design to elicit situated moral reasoning rather than abstract attitudes.

Fourth-year preservice ELT teachers in Gaziantep, Türkiye, respond to five AI-related vignettes that represent common dilemmas in teacher education: AI-supported lesson planning in practicum, AI-mediated feedback to learners, and institutional restrictions and surveillance. Participants provide written justifications focusing on perceived ethicality, anticipated consequences, and future teacher positioning. Data are analyzed using a hybrid template analysis that combines deductive coding (ethical decision-making processes and moral intensity) and agency positioning.

Preliminary thematic patterns are expected to illuminate a tension between consequence-driven reasoning (grades, time pressure, evaluation) and value-based professional commitments (learning, fairness, responsibility) with conditional or externally regulated constructions of professional agency. The study offers implications for preparing preservice teachers to engage with AI tools through ethical literacy and agency-supportive pedagogies, preserving the human touch in an increasingly algorithm-mediated educational landscape.

**Keywords:** ai, ethical decision-making, preservice teachers, professional agency

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*“The Human Cost of Uncertainty: Mapping Work Precarity and Teacher Identity in EFL”*

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In the contemporary era of higher education, precarious labor conditions have become a global concern, significantly impacting the professional lives of educators. This phenomenon, often characterized by job insecurity, unpredictable schedules, and financial instability, creates a complex environment for English Language Teaching (EFL) professionals. While structural precarity is frequently discussed in economic terms, its deeper influence on how teachers construct and negotiate their professional identities remains a critical yet under-explored area. This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the interplay between multi-dimensional work precarity and teacher identity among EFL instructors at state and foundation universities in Türkiye. The research seeks to uncover the "lived experiences" of instructors through semi-structured interviews. It intends to explore how educators navigate the psychological burden of reemployment insecurity and the sense of meaninglessness that can emerge from unstable career paths. By focusing on the narratives of instructors under various contract types, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how institutional uncertainty shapes professional agency and wellbeing. Ultimately, this inquiry seeks to highlight the social and ethical dimensions of the language teaching profession, advocating for a more sustainable approach to teacher employment in a changing world.

**Keywords:** work precarity, language teacher identity, higher education

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Lecturer Ertuğrul Enis Can currently works at Ankara Medipol University and is enrolled at MA ELT programme at Gazi University. He is currently writing a thesis on the relationship between work precarity and language teacher identity in the context of preparatory schools in Türkiye.

*“Promoting Peacebuilding in Young EFL Learners through Picturebooks”*

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Peace education has become a major area in English Language Teaching (ELT) since it has the potential to develop empathy, communication, and intercultural understanding. According to Oxford et al. (2020) and Johnson & Johnson (2011), language classes offer language as well as promote collaboration and intercultural understanding. In this context, the choice of pedagogical content is critical. Picturebooks have been identified as useful tools for building perspective and emotional strength for potentially sensitive issues for children (Birch, 2022; Martinez-Alba & Herrera, 2023). However, few studies report empirically driven findings on peace education interventions in early-grade EFL classrooms.

The present study explores the possible impact of peace-themed English picturebooks on fifth-grade students' peaceful behaviors, conceptions, and perspectives in a Turkish primary school. The eight-week intervention follows a pattern: from inner peace to peace in the world. Multimodal data collection includes students' drawings, reflective journals, creative texts, and posters. Qualitative thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) identifies common patterns in pupils' conceptualization of peace, inclusion, identity, and empathy. Preliminary findings suggest that picturebooks with peace-themed content facilitate pupils' multi-tiered conceptualization of peace as inner, societal, and global peace. This intervention study offers students the opportunity to express their emotions and moral judgments in the classroom environment, while also promoting their ability to conceptualize peace not merely as the absence of conflict, but as active participation and empathy. The presentation will explain how instructional practices in peacebuilding can improve students' voices and preserve the human touch in today's more technology-focused learning settings.

**Keywords:** EFL, Peacebuilding, Picturebooks, Young Learners, Peace Education

Cansu Pelin Altıntaş is a TEFL instructor who works with young language learners in Turkey. Currently, she is working on her MA studies on peace education for young learners in English Language Teaching, with research interests in peace education, picturebooks in ELT, and humanistic approaches to language learning.

Assoc. Prof. Melike Ünal Gezer has been a faculty member in an English Language Teaching Department in Turkey. Her research interests are bilingual and biliteracy development, metalinguistic processes involved in language development, early English education, and pre-service English language teacher training.

*“Teacher-Led, AI-Supported Guided Discovery in Grammar Teaching”*

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This sharing session presents a practical way of implementing guided discovery technique in grammar teaching by using AI (ChatGPT) to generate contextualized examples that enable learners to notice, analyze, and formulate rules and patterns. It aims to demonstrate how AI can be used responsibly to support guided discovery in grammar teaching, share examples of materials and task design, and reflect on challenges such as over-reliance on AI output, prompt refinement, and maintaining pedagogical coherence. Rather than using AI as a substitute for teaching expertise; the main aim is to demonstrate how it can function as a facilitative tool. While AI offers efficiency and variety in generating texts and examples, pedagogical decisions, such as selecting structures, providing guiding questions, sequencing tasks and anticipating learner difficulties remain firmly teacher-driven. Thus, it moves beyond technological fascination and recenters grammar instruction around meaning-making, learner engagement, and reflective teaching practice.

It has been implemented in an English preparatory program for (pre)intermediate level learners, where grammar teaching often remains unengaging and ineffective. Guided discovery was therefore adopted to promote a learner-centered and meaning-focused approach while remaining compatible with the existing syllabus and institutional materials.

The participants will gain practical strategies for adapting this approach to their own teaching contexts and consider the use of AI without compromising teacher-autonomy. during the 5-minute Q&A session, they will be invited to evaluate the approach, discuss their own experiences with AI, raise concerns, and explore how human judgment, emotions, and values can remain central in AI-supported grammar instruction.

**Keywords:** AI-assisted material development, AI-supported guided discovery

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*“Embracing the ‘Other’: ELT Teachers’ Praxis of Including Refugee Students”*

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ELT teachers’ preparedness to include refugee students is central to understanding the human dimensions of teaching, particularly empathy and compassion in the classroom. Drawing on semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion with 20 ELT teachers working with refugee learners in Türkiye, this qualitative study examines how teachers conceptualize inclusion and the challenges they encounter while fostering refugee students’ sense of belonging in English classrooms. Data were analyzed through critical thematic analysis using MAXQDA. The findings indicate that teachers often frame inclusion in terms of recognizing diversity in coursebooks and classroom materials, while also highlighting the significance of emotionally responsive pedagogy. Their empathetic orientations strongly inform their classroom practices, including efforts to build trust, sustain motivation, and create meaningful spaces for refugee students to share their experiences in English. Inclusion, therefore, is not merely a pedagogical strategy but a relational process grounded in human connection. Despite these efforts, teachers report persistent structural barriers, including limited institutional support, rigid curricula, and insufficient professional training for working with linguistically and culturally diverse learners. Such constraints restrict the scope of inclusive practice and place considerable responsibility on individual teachers. Participants emphasize the need for classroom environments that cultivate belonging through mutual respect rather than relying solely on standardized resources. The study calls for teacher education programs that position educators as active agents of inclusion and equip them with holistic, context-sensitive approaches to inclusive ELT.

**Keywords:** ELT, Emphaty, Inclusion, Refugee students, Teacher education

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*“Claude.AI as a self-study speaking partner: Insights from pre-service EFL teachers”*

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The present qualitative study investigates pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' perception of Claude.ai GenAI as a self-study speaking partner. Six pre-service EFL teachers enrolled in a Foreign Language Education (FLE) Department at a state university in Türkiye participated in interaction tasks with Claude.ai and subsequently responded to open-ended interview questions to elicit participants' perceptions of Claude.ai as a self-study speaking partner. The qualitative data were analyzed under four predetermined themes: i. speech quality, ii. interaction management quality, iii. perceptions of Claude.ai as a speaking partner, and iv. encountered challenges during interaction. The study's findings revealed that participants predominantly found Claude.ai's speech clear and intelligible; however, certain limitations hindered overall comprehensibility, including issues with prosodic elements, a rapid speech rate, robotic intonation, limited emotional expression, and lengthy responses. Furthermore, although several participants appreciated Claude's follow-up questions as relevant and beneficial, many reported challenges due to a lack of turn-taking signals and predominantly one-sided interaction. Moreover, participants stated that they favored a balanced integration of AI. Overall, the study suggests that AI conversational agents can function as scaffolding tools for autonomous speaking practice, particularly in contexts with limited exposure. Participants acknowledged its usefulness, but they also underlined the indispensable role of human partners. Given the scarcity of studies in the literature regarding the use of GenAI as a self-study speaking partner, particularly concerning Claude.ai, the current study's findings can illuminate the affordances and constraints of employing AI-based chatbots as supplementary tools for self-directed speaking practice partners in EFL contexts.

**Keywords:** Claude.ai, AI-mediated interaction, artificial intelligence, speaking practice

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*“Formative Assessment in Turkish Higher Education: EFL Teachers’ Lived Experiences and Challenges”*

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There has been a growing scholarly focus on the interest in language testing and assessment (LTA). Despite the growing interest in formative assessment, teachers’ actual lived experiences and practical implementation of formative assessment remain underexplored in the Turkish context. This study explores the lived experiences and challenges of Turkish EFL teachers in higher education regarding formative assessment. For this purpose, a phenomenological qualitative research approach was adopted, involving 10 Turkish EFL teachers at tertiary level. Data were collected through a series of semi-structured interviews and analysed using the phenomenological data analysis procedure suggested by Colaizzi (1978). The findings reveal that the participant teachers had a low level of conceptual understanding of formative assessment and were found to confuse it with summative assessment. Nevertheless, they adopted a variety of strategies in their feedback practices. Additionally, the findings indicate that they faced challenges, resulting from their own beliefs and interactions with their colleagues and students, such as time constraints and student motivation. The study contributes to the expanding literature in LTA by demonstrating how practical teaching experience, rather than formal training, primarily drives Turkish EFL teachers’ formative assessment strategies. The findings also provide insights for school administrators and language educators to facilitate targeted assessment training and foster collaboration.

**Keywords:** formative assessment, higher education, language assessment literacy, phenomenology, Turkish EFL teachers

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*“Beyond Support: Designing Language Learning Communities for Student Retention”*

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Student retention in language preparatory programs is often addressed through academic interventions such as tutoring or additional instruction. However, persistence in language learning is shaped not only by academic difficulty but also by students’ sense of belonging, confidence, and participation in a learning community (Tinto, 1993; Thomas, 2012).

This sharing session presents the development of a Student Success Center embedded within a university English preparatory program, designed to strengthen retention through community-based learning opportunities. The initiative integrates language-focused engagement activities, peer interaction, mentoring practices, and short, skill-oriented learning experiences that connect academic progress with student identity and motivation.

Examples from implementation will illustrate how informal learning spaces and structured student engagement activities can complement classroom instruction and contribute to persistence in intensive language programs. The session will invite participants to reflect on how retention can be supported not only through curriculum design but also through learning environments that make students feel visible, capable, and connected.

**Keywords:** Student Retention, Student Success

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*“Moving beyond “avoiding difference” toward “honoring difference” in initial language teacher education”*

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Multilingual language education benefits from acknowledging learners’ linguistic and cultural resources through the lenses of Funds of Knowledge (FoK) and Funds of Identity (FoI) (Garcia, 2008; Helot, 2012). FoK encompasses the accumulation of skills and knowledge inherent to students’ cultural background (Moll et al., 1992), while FoI captures how students internalize and mobilize these resources in constructing identity (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014). We designed a 12-week undergraduate course to prepare pre-service teachers (PSTs) to teach English in multilingual classrooms. 43 PSTs formed 13 groups to develop capstone projects, including lesson plans and instructional materials for teaching English in multilingual classrooms, and wrote post-project reflections. We purposefully selected three groups that explicitly utilized FoK/ FoI as a theoretical framework and analyzed their project artifacts and reflections using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We captured three themes: (1) centering students’ lived experiences, interests, and talents, (2) shifting from avoiding difference to honoring difference, and (3) linking the project to realistic classroom contexts in Türkiye and articulating strategies for guiding multilingual classrooms. We also discuss implications for initial language teacher education programs in Türkiye and comparable contexts where PSTs are underprepared for teaching in multilingual classrooms.

This research is part of the first author’s PhD study, conducted under the supervision of the second author and funded by the Dokuz Eylül University Department of Scientific Research Projects (Project No. SDK-2024-3488).

**Keywords:** multilingual classrooms; pre-service teachers; language teacher education

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*“A Systematic Review of English-Medium Instruction in Turkish Higher Education”*

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English-Medium Instruction (EMI) has become increasingly widespread in higher education worldwide as universities aim to increase their international visibility and attract global students. Although there has been a remarkable increase in EMI programs at Turkish universities, research on this subject is scattered across disciplines and methods, making it difficult to gain a comprehensive understanding of its impact. This study aims to present a systematic review of EMI research in Turkish higher education published in English between 2009 and 2025. In line with Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, the review addresses four main questions: (1) What are the publication trends regarding EMI in Turkey in terms of years, contexts, and disciplines? (2) What research methodologies have been employed? (3) What topics and themes have been investigated? (4) What affordances and challenges of EMI have been reported by students, lecturers, and institutions? Searches will be conducted in Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and TR Dizin. The data extraction process will include bibliographic details, research contexts, methods, participants, and key findings. Quality assessment will be carried out based on the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP), the Assessment Tool for Cross-Sectional Studies (AXIS), and the Mixed Methods Assessment Tool (MMAT). It is expected that the findings will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how EMI is implemented in Turkey, shed light on institutional practices, and guide policymakers in developing strategies that support both internationalization and equality.

**Keywords:** EMI, English-Medium Instruction, Higher Education in Türkiye

Dr. Eda Tayşı is an independent researcher with 13 years of tertiary-level teaching English experience. She holds a BA in English Literature and an MA and PhD in ELT. Her research interests include technology integration into language instruction, English-Medium Instruction, and the teaching of literature in EFL contexts.

*“AI-Generated and Teacher-Provided Feedback in EFL Writing: Implications for Digital Assessment and Feedback Literacy”*

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The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies has introduced new possibilities for writing practices and providing relevant feedback in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Providing potential to provide immediate, personalized, and scalable feedback, AI tools gained attention in the field of language education (Tafazoli, 2024). While previous studies have highlighted the efficiency of AI feedback systems in addressing linguistic features, questions still remain regarding their pedagogical effectiveness, learner perceptions, and their role in comparison with teacher feedback in higher education contexts. This study investigates the comparative effectiveness of AI feedback and teacher feedback on essay writing performance. The participants are preparatory level EFL students in Türkiye. Using a mixed-methods design, the study integrated quantitative analysis of writing scores with qualitative data obtained through structured student interviews. Over a six-week period, 15 students produced six essays each. Overall, 90 essays were evaluated in total. Those essays were evaluated both by a teacher using standardized rubric and by the AI. In addition, students' perceptions were collected to further examine motivational, affective, and practical dimensions. The findings indicate that AI feedback is effective in supporting grammatical accuracy, organization, and immediate revision. However, teacher feedback remains superior in fostering motivation, confidence, and content development. The study concludes that AI feedback can work as a complementary tool and meaningfully improve EFL writing.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence, EFL writing, personalized feedback

Eda Eğilmez is a master's student in the English Language Teaching (ELT) program at Gaziosmanpaşa University. Her research interests include writing skills, and assessment in foreign language education.

*“Evaluating Communicative Competence and Task-based Learning in the 5th-6th Grade English Curriculum and Coursebooks”*

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This study aims to examine the alignment between the Century of Türkiye Education Model (CTEM) and 5th- and 6th-grade English Language curriculum within the frameworks of Communicative Competence (CC) and Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). According to the Türkiye Ministry of Education Main Text, this new education model aims to maximize communicativeness in second-language use. The coursebooks that accompany this curriculum are said to include real-life exercises intended to support daily language use, which aligns with the main idea of TBLT. Within the boundaries of this study, the main text of the program and the 5th and 6th-grade coursebooks will be analyzed. This study is designed as a quantitative document analysis of the outcomes of the CTEM 5th and 6th Grade English Curriculum, and an analysis of tasks and exercises included in the student books and workbooks that accompany this curriculum. The analysis method of this study includes the binary coding of the principles derived from the TBLT (Ellis, R., 2003) and CC (Canale & Swain, 1984) frameworks. The analysis focuses on identifying supporting activities for the outcomes of CC development and the exercises in the accompanying coursebooks within the principles of TBLT.

The presentation will provide selected coded examples from the curriculum and coursebooks to demonstrate areas of alignment and potential mismatches. The practical implementation of TBLT will be presented in terms of classroom feasibility and teacher preparedness. Lastly, communicative language teaching and curriculum reform in the Turkish EFL context will be discussed.

**Keywords:** Communicative competence, Task-based Teaching, Educational Model

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*“From Knowing to Building: Designing Project-Based Online Language Courses in ELT”*

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This sharing session presents an experience-based model for helping pre-service English language teachers design and develop niche, ready-to-teach asynchronous online lessons. The model was implemented in an undergraduate elective course titled Online Language Teaching offered to senior ELT students. It brings together basic principles of instructional design and online pedagogy with a project-based design cycle in which students create complete online language courses for specific learner profiles and instructional contexts.

Future teachers often have limited practice in building full online courses that follow instructional design principles. This session therefore focuses on a practical pathway that

connects theory with course production. It aims to show a workable course structure that moves from analysis to design, to discuss key implementation decisions, constraints, and solutions observed during the course, and to share usable takeaways such as design logic, scaffolding practices, and evaluation criteria that participants can adjust to their own settings.

A key feature of the session is its shared presentation format. After an introduction to the course framework by the course instructor, student designer will present an example niche online lesson developed for teaching English to social media influencers. They will explain how they analyzed learners, planned instruction and assessment, designed interaction, and they will briefly reflect on difficulties and learning points from the process. The instructor will then connect these examples into a clear design-to-delivery model, highlighting important stages and points that require attention. Audience engagement will be supported through a brief “adopt and adapt” activity and a focused question-and-answer segment.

**Keywords:** Online Language Teaching, Instructional Design, Project-Based Learning

Dr. Ela Akgün-Özbek is a faculty member in ELT at Anadolu University, with degrees in English Language and Literature, English Literature, and Distance Education. Since 2003, she has taught language skills, literature, and online teaching, supervised practicum, led instructional design projects, and researches online and distance education and teacher development.

Dilara ARIK is a senior ELT student at Anadolu University. She has experience teaching English through private tutoring and is currently completing her teaching practicum as part of her undergraduate program. She has taken part in a course design project and worked on developing online lesson content within teacher education.

Aleyna SAMSA is a fourth-year student at Anadolu University. She completed a one-year teaching internship at YDS Academy and also worked as a volunteer teacher at LÖSEV. She currently teaches private students. Besides online language teaching, she is also interested in linguistics.

Meralay BAYSIN is an ELT student at Anadolu University. She has experience in both classroom teaching and private lessons. She is also completing her teaching practice this semester. She has worked on developing an online asynchronous course during her time in the university.

Rüya DEMİR is a senior ELT student at Anadolu University with a background in one-to-one language coaching and teaching practicum. She has specialized in digital material design and online curriculum development. Focused on cross-cultural communication, Rüya effectively integrates modern educational tools into her teaching practice.

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*“Learning and Belonging in EMI: Erasmus Students’ Linguistic, Intercultural and Identity Development in Germany”*

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As student mobility expands, Erasmus students increasingly study through English-medium instruction (EMI) while living and socialising in local-language environments. This longitudinal qualitative study explores nine Erasmus exchange students’ experiences in an EMI university context in Germany, while focusing on three interrelated domains: German language learning, intercultural adaptation, and multilingual identity development. All participants shared English and had beginner German ( $\leq A2$ ), positioning German as at least an L3, contrary to the majority of previous research with an English focus. Data comprise three sets of face-to-face semi-structured interviews with each participant during the 2024–2025 spring semester (27 interviews in total), complemented by the researcher’s reflexive journal. Interviews were conducted in English, transcribed, and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis in MAXQDA. Preliminary findings indicate divergent pathways of participation and belonging in EMI environments. Some students invested in German through local encounters and self-initiated practices, describing growing confidence and stronger host-context belonging, whereas others relied mainly on English-mediated international or home-country networks, ending up reporting fewer opportunities for host-language socialisation and a more fragile sense of belonging. A recurring finding for ELT concerns EMI implementation gaps. It was reported that some courses advertised as English-medium were sometimes delivered partly in German, and peer interaction reverted to German when classmates could not sustain English. By tracing “learning and belonging” over time, the study contributes to EMI and study abroad research by underlining how EMI realities, social networks, and identity change can influence German language learning, intercultural adaptation, and identity development during the study period.

**Keywords:** study abroad, Erasmus, EMI, language, adaptation, identity

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*“Fostering Social Justice Language Education Through Collaborative Digital Annotation”*

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Social justice language education (SJLE) acknowledges the inherently political nature of language and language teaching. It aims to challenge prevailing social, cultural, and economic ideologies and power structures within educational and social contexts (Author, 2023). Scholars have conducted studies exploring ways to cultivate practitioners who can address and incorporate SJLE into their teaching ecologies (e.g., Coulter & Richardson, 2024; Ohja et al., 2024; Peercy et al., 2024). However, the majority of these studies have focused on classroom settings of master’s programs, leaving digital spaces and their potential contributions to SJLE underrepresented.

Therefore, this longitudinal case study investigated SJLE-oriented collaborative digital annotation practices among language teachers enrolled in M.A.-TESOL and M.A.-TEFL programs across three consecutive years. Specifically, it explored how three cohorts of language teachers engaged in collaborative reading and annotation of the scholarly articles of the authors (e.g., Paulo Freire, James Baldwin) that lay the foundations of SJLE. The data included participants’ digital annotations, course evaluations, and individual semi-structured interviews, and were analyzed with discourse analysis techniques (Wood & Kroger, 2000).

Preliminary findings suggest that engagement with SJLE-related texts in a digital environment facilitated deeper reflection, collaborative meaning-making, and increased sensitivity to the socio-political dimensions of language teaching. Participants demonstrated an enhanced ability to critically analyze and challenge dominant ideologies, bridging theory and practice in SJLE. This study highlights the potential of digital annotation tools in cultivating critically aware educators and researchers, urging a broader exploration of digital spaces within SJLE research.

**Keywords:** social justice language education, digital annotation

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*“I realized how to manage my emotions”: Pre-service teachers’ beliefs and emotions in  
ELT practicum”*

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The teaching practicum phase, a crucial bridge between theoretical knowledge and real classroom practice, leaves a powerful impression on pre-service teachers (PSTs) of English and requires them to adapt their teaching to the needs of a real classroom. Due to the nature of this process, PSTs are likely to experience conflicts or changes in their teaching beliefs, as their existing beliefs may need to be adjusted to fit the practicum context (Thin, 2025). As they question and renegotiate these beliefs, they may encounter various emotions and need to employ strategies to regulate them. Although changes in teaching beliefs during the practicum have been acknowledged in the literature, less is known about how these changes interact with PSTs’ emotions and emotion regulation strategies. Therefore, the present study aimed to explore the interplay among teaching beliefs, emotions, and emotion regulation strategies during the teaching practicum. To achieve this aim, a qualitative case study was conducted with fourth-year students enrolled in an English Language Teaching program at a state university in Türkiye. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and reflective journals. Preliminary findings indicate that PSTs experienced change and development in their teaching beliefs throughout the practicum and reported diverse emotions that required regulation in response to these belief-related changes. Overall, the findings suggest that their emotions and emotion regulation strategies are strongly influenced by changes in teaching beliefs, prompting a deeper understanding of the emotional and cognitive dimensions of the teaching practicum in English language teacher education.

**Keywords:** language teacher cognition, emotions, emotion regulation strategies

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*“ChatGPT Voice-Mode in EFL Speaking Practice: Evidence from Speaking Logs”*

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Voice-enabled chatbots are increasingly used as speaking partners in EFL contexts, yet classroom decisions often rely on broad enthusiasm or skepticism rather than evidence about what actually happens in the interaction. This qualitative observational study examined how voice-mode dialogue with the ChatGPT mobile app creates or disrupts opportunities for L2 development of language learners in a CEFR-aligned university preparatory program. Eleven B1-level learners completed six voice-mode speaking sessions using their own smartphones. Exported conversation logs were analyzed turn-by-turn by identifying bounded interactional episodes where topic talk shifted into repair, feedback, clarification, or visible technical disruption. Episodes were categorized into meaning-oriented repair, form-oriented repair, and technical-friction sequences, and end-of-session learner reflections were analyzed to capture perceived enablers, constraints, and recovery strategies. Across six sessions, 636 episodes were identified. Meaning-oriented episodes were typically driven by follow-up prompts that pushed learners to extend, justify, or specify their ideas, supporting sustained output. In contrast, form-oriented feedback was usually brief and, in the exported transcript record, immediate reformulation was visible in only about one third of cases, with many feedback moments followed by topic continuation rather than repair. Learner reflections highlighted the motivational value of stepwise questioning and “try again” invitations, but also emphasized transcription loss and recognition-related disruptions that interrupted continuity and sometimes reduced willingness to persist. The findings suggest that voice-mode practice is most productive when interactional design maintains pushed output, feedback is made actionable, and learners are equipped with simple breakdown-recovery moves.

**Keywords:** generative AI; L2 speaking; learning opportunity episodes

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*“EFL Instructors' Attitudes Towards AI and AI Readiness: A Mixed Methods Study”*

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This explanatory sequential mixed-methods study examined EFL instructors' attitudes toward artificial intelligence (AI) using the AI Attitude Scale-4 (AIAS-4) and their readiness for AI applications using the Readiness for Artificial Intelligence Applications Scale (RAIS) during the 2025–2026 academic year in a university English preparatory program in Kayseri, Türkiye. In Phase 1, survey data were collected from 30 EFL instructors and analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression. In Phase 2, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six instructors and analyzed using thematic analysis to explain quantitative patterns. Survey results showed highly positive AI attitudes ( $M = 8.00$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ ) and moderate-to-high AI readiness ( $M = 3.53$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ). Among readiness dimensions, instructors reported the highest readiness for interaction with students ( $M = 3.72$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ) and comparatively lower technology self-efficacy ( $M = 3.33$ ,  $SD = 0.78$ ). Readiness was positively associated with AI attitudes ( $r = .453$ ,  $p = .012$ ) and significantly predicted attitudes ( $\beta = .453$ ,  $R^2 = .205$ ,  $p = .012$ ). Interview findings converged with the survey results and emphasized pragmatic classroom benefits, concerns about privacy and academic integrity, and the need for institutional guidance and training to strengthen confidence. Overall, the findings suggest that professional development targeting technology self-efficacy and clear AI-use policies may strengthen instructors' readiness and support sustainable AI integration in EFL preparatory contexts.

**Keywords:** AI readiness, AI attitude, EFL instructors

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*“Reflective Teaching and Teacher Professional Identity Among EFL Instructors: A Mixed-Methods Study”*

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This study adopts an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design to examine the relationship between reflective teaching practices and teacher professional identity among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors in a university English preparatory program in Kayseri, Türkiye during the 2025–2026 academic year. In the quantitative phase, data were collected from 25 instructors using the English Language Teaching Reflection Inventory (ELTRI) and the English Teacher Identity Measure (ETIM), and analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent samples t-tests, Pearson correlation, and simple linear regression. In the subsequent qualitative phase, semi-structured interviews will be conducted to further explore instructors’ reflections and identity construction in relation to the quantitative findings. Quantitative results indicated high levels of reflective teaching and strong professional identity. Reflective teaching practices were positively and strongly associated with professional identity and significantly predicted professional identity scores. No significant differences in reflective teaching were observed across gender, age, teaching experience, or educational degree. However, female instructors reported significantly higher professional identity scores, particularly in the self-efficacy and career perception dimensions. The planned qualitative findings are expected to provide deeper insights into how reflective practices contribute to professional identity development and how institutional contexts shape these processes.

**Keywords:** reflective teaching, teacher professional identity; EFL instructors

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*“Keeping the Human Touch in Artificial Intelligence: A Local and Hybrid Essay Scoring System”*

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Automated Essay Scoring (AES) systems have been used for decades in scoring student essays, saving time and resources in educational contexts (e.g., Ke & Ng, 2019), despite their limitations (Perelman, 2014). While the traditional way of building an AI system is using linguistic analysis tools such as TAALES (Kyle & Crossley, 2015), the recent developments of Generative AI models have raised the question of whether such systems can be a faster and more accurate alternative, given that building traditional AI systems require technical and statistical expertise. Although Generative AI models like ChatGPT and Gemini have reached a remarkable level in sustaining a good intra-rater reliability score across the same essays, their inter-rater reliability with human raters is still below the desired threshold, especially when figurative language is involved (Oğuz, 2025). The biggest limitation of Generative AI models is their tendency to hallucinate, reducing the reliability of their outcomes (e.g., Adel & Alani, 2025). As an alternative, Large Language Models (LLMs) such as BERT can be trained on student essays and human-given scores associated with them, creating an AI-system based on human scoring patterns. Employing this idea, a hybrid scoring system was created using a fine-tuned DeBERTa model and human raters. The preliminary results suggest that the hybrid system offers greater reliability and efficiency in scoring student essays in their L2 (English).

**Keywords:** ai; essay scoring; LLM; hybrid essay scoring

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*“AI in EFL Assessment in Higher Education: A Systematic Review of Recent Empirical Studies”*

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Artificial intelligence (AI) has become increasingly widespread in multiple dimensions of education, transforming how teaching, learning, and assessments are conducted. Assessment is one area where AI has had a significant impact, with AI-supported tools revolutionizing conventional methods of assessing student learning. In higher education, notably within the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, AI-driven assessment tools are gaining prominence due to their potential to improve efficiency, deliver timely feedback, and support individualized learning. Despite several benefits, the rapid adoption of AI-based assessment also raises critical concerns related to validity, reliability, fairness, and pedagogical appropriateness. Given these challenges, the present study adopts a systematic review methodology to document and synthesize research published over the past five years. A systematic identification and analysis of 31 studies conducted worldwide between 2021 and 2025 were carried out. The review maps prominent methodological trends and key themes, as well as the pedagogical potentials and constraints of AI-supported assessment in EFL higher education. Drawing on a critical analysis of prior research, this study sheds light on prevailing practices and offers directions for future research and pedagogical implementation. The findings are designed to support researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in engaging with the evolving field of AI-driven assessment in EFL higher education.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence; AI; higher education; EFL; assessment

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***“DEVELOPING AN IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAM FOR ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE INSTRUCTORS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS”***

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Through language education, learners not only improve their reading, writing, and spoken language skills, but also explore global issues and contribute to a more sustainable world (Cates, 2002; Oxfam, 2015). It is crucial for teachers to gain a thorough understanding of sustainable development to teach from a holistic perspective, encompassing ecological, economic, and social dimensions (Östman et al., 2019). This study aimed to assess English instructors' awareness and training needs on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their integration into ELT. A needs assessment questionnaire developed by the researchers was administered to 74 English instructors, and two focus group interviews with 11 instructors were conducted. While the quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS Version 31, qualitative data were analyzed via MAXQDA software. The results showed that most participants were unfamiliar with the SDGs; the most requested training areas included how to integrate SDGs into lessons, using digital tools, localization of SDG-related themes; and the most in-demand SDGs for the training were SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 16. Based on the results, a four-module in-service professional development training for English instructors working at preparatory schools of universities across Turkey was developed using the ADDIE model. The training aimed to raise English instructors' awareness of SDGs and to promote critical reflection on how to implement SDGs into English classrooms. While up-to-date and localized content, and instructional activities were found effective by the trainees, the allocated time for activities and the mode of training were suggested to be reconsidered.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development Goals, Sustainability, English Language Teaching

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*“An experimental examination of how a mindset intervention affects L2 mindsets, emotions and speaking performance”*

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Language mindsets concern learners’ beliefs about the malleability of their L2 learning abilities. Individuals with a fixed language mindset believe that they either have the L2 learning ability or not, whereas individuals with a growth language mindset believe that they can improve their L2 learning abilities. Research has shown that language mindsets are associated with L2 emotions (e.g., Ozdemir & Papi, 2021), learning behavior (e.g., Papi et al., 2019), and learning outcomes (e.g., Khajavy et al., 2020). Mindset interventions have shown to improve motivation and resilience (e.g., Lou & Noels, 2016). To examine if interventions can lead to L2 learning outcomes, this study implemented a language mindset intervention. One-hundred-and-eight English language learners from a North American university completed a questionnaire measuring language mindsets, L2 anxiety and L2 enjoyment. Sixty of these participants who had relatively higher scores in the fixed mindset were recruited for the intervention. The participants were randomly assigned to a growth or a fixed language mindset condition. They completed a pre-test picture description, read a mock article, wrote a letter, completed a post-test picture description, and responded to the questionnaire for the second time. The results showed that the mindset intervention decreased L2 speaking anxiety and significantly increased the learners’ growth mindset, the accuracy and fluency of their speaking performance whereas the fixed language mindset condition increased lexical diversity. The results support the utility of mindset interventions in enhancing learners’ language mindsets, L2 speaking performance and decreasing L2 speaking anxiety. Theoretical and educational implications will be discussed.

**Keywords:** Language mindset intervention, L2 emotions, L2speaking performance

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Mostafa Papi is an Associate Professor of Second Language Education at Florida State University. He is interested in the role of learners' psychology in second language acquisition. He has published extensively in journals such as the Journal of Second Language Writing, Language Learning, Language Teaching, and the Modern Language Journal.

*“Preparing Future-Ready Learners: Integrating 21st Century Skills Using Bloom’s Taxonomy and deBono’s Six Thinking Hats”*

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Recent advancements in artificial intelligence have sparked important questions about their potential impact on learners’ cognitive development. As educational environments evolve, English Language Teaching (ELT) practitioners face increasing pressure to design learning experiences that cultivate future-ready skills while maintaining meaningful human interaction and amplifying learner voice.

This interactive workshop draws on the 21st Century Skills Framework, Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy, and Edward de Bono’s “Six Thinking Hats” model to provide practical strategies for systematically integrating future-ready skills into everyday classroom practice, both with or without the use of artificial intelligence tools. Grounded in the view that future-ready competencies and higher-order thinking develop most effectively through structured cognitive processes and purposeful dialogue, the session begins with a brief conceptual overview linking the 21st Century Skills Framework with Bloom’s cognitive levels.

Through guided analysis and task adaptation, participants will practice transforming traditional ELT reading exercises into engaging 21st century skills-integrated tasks using Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy and Edward de Bono’s Six Thinking Hats to scaffold discussion and reflection. With hands-on application, participants will explore how these frameworks promote balanced thinking, visible reasoning, and collaborative talk from a learner’s perspective. By the end of the session, participants will leave with adaptable activity templates, facilitation strategies, and ready-to-use tools to support language development alongside critical thinking, collaboration, and other essential future-ready skills, ensuring immediate classroom application.

**Keywords:** 21st century skills, Bloom’s Taxonomy, visible thinking

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*“Teaching Across Borders: Ethical Substance and Self-Practices in a Multilingual Teacher’s Identity Work”*

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This proposal investigates the professional identity negotiation of a transnational, multilingual teacher who identifies as a non-native English-speaking teacher (NNEST) as a process of ethical self-formation in a time when digitalization and algorithmic logic strongly influence and even shape language education. In line with the conference theme, this narrative study conceptualizes identity as a moral and relational endeavour that goes beyond performance and data-based effectiveness. Drawing on Clarke’s (2009) Foucauldian framework, we explore identity work across four axes: substance, authority sources, self-practices, and telos. This paper specifically focuses on the dynamic interaction between substance and self-practices to analyze how a transnational, multilingual NNEST enacts her identity in a private school context. The participant, Maria (pseudonym), is a multilingual teacher from North Africa with a linguistic repertoire that includes Arabic, Italian, French, English, and Flemish, and is currently teaching in Türkiye. Data include four series of semi-structured interviews, analyzed through temporal narrative analysis and deductive coding. Findings illustrate that Maria’s multilingual upbringing, experiences with multiple languages as a medium of instruction, and transnational mobility constitute the ethical foundations of her teacher identity. Informed by lived experiences across various countries, she has developed pedagogical practices such as translanguaging, flexible assessment, and normalizing mistakes. In doing so, she undermines native-speakerist and monolingual assumptions often reinforced by standardized and data-driven approaches. The study contributes to teacher identity research by interpreting transnational multilingualism as an affective-ethical resource that empowers teachers and by highlighting the importance of teachers’ moral commitments, lived histories, and relational practices.

**Keywords:** Multilingual teacher identity, transnational teacher, ethical self-formation

Fatma Gümüřok, PhD is working as an assistant professor at Bartın University, Faculty of Education, Department of Foreign Language Education. Her research interests focus on pre-service foreign language teacher education, professional identity, teacher educator identity, and teacher professional development. She mainly teaches language teaching methodology, assessment, curriculum, and practicum courses.

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Bedrettin Yazan is a scholar of identity and critical autoethnography focusing on educator preparation at the nexus of ideologies, emotions, and agency. He is professor in the department of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies at the University of Texas at San Antonio. His research focuses on language teacher learning and identity construction.

*“Exploring Challenges in Alternative Teacher Certification Programs: A Qualitative Case Study from Türkiye”*

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Despite the numerous policy changes in relation to teacher education programs in Türkiye, alternative teacher certification programs have continued to become a part of teacher education programs in Türkiye since the 1990s. This qualitative case study aims to investigate both practical and psychological challenges student teachers face during their alternative teacher certification program at a state university in Türkiye. The data were mainly collected from six student teachers and three teacher educators through semi-structured interviews with student teachers and focus group interviews with teacher educators. The data was also triangulated with observation notes and document analysis, such as reflection papers of student teachers. The data analysis was conducted through MAXQDA, a qualitative data analysis software. The findings of the study revealed that student teachers faced some classroom challenges, such as classroom management problems, unplanned teaching responsibilities, and affective challenges like identity tension and student motivation during the Alternative Teacher Certification program. Thus, the study presents some implications for universities administering Alternative Teacher Certification programs.

**Keywords:** alternative teacher certification, teacher education, teacher identity

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*“From Thinking with to Thinking for: GenAI Dependency and Epistemic Agency in Education”*

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The rapid normalization of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) in higher education has shifted pedagogical debates from questions of adoption to questions of epistemic positioning in learning. While a growing number of empirical research documents patterns of GenAI dependency among students, these findings are predominantly interpreted through psychological or technological lenses, leaving their pedagogical and curricular implications underexplored. This presentation offers a theory-informed reinterpretation of recent empirical studies on GenAI dependency through John Dewey’s concept of docility and Paulo Freire’s banking model of education.

Adopting a critical educational theory framework both conceptually and interpretively, the research critically synthesizes selected global research evidence to carefully assess how uncritical, single-source use of GenAI reflects a repetitive mode of epistemic passivity in learning. It indicates the normalization of algorithmic power over learning within the academic sector. Further findings indicate that dependence on GenAI does not arise intrinsically from technology use, but rather is a consequence of pedagogical frameworks that privilege efficiency, certainty, and product-focused assessment over inquiry, dialogue, and reflective judgment in that context.

The argument presented will not promote limiting use or disconnecting from technology; rather, it will make a case for a new way of thinking about GenAI as a resource to promote dialogue and provide support for inquiry. The study concludes with recommendations for curriculum and instructional practices designed to restore learners' epistemic autonomy, increase the ability to learn reflectively, democratically, and socially, and improve the quality of education in AI-mediated learning environments.

**Keywords:** GenAI; GenAI dependency; epistemic agency; education pedagogy

I am a PhD graduate in Curriculum and Instruction from Hacettepe University and an instructor in the Department of Foreign Languages at a foundation university in Türkiye. My research focuses on foreign language self, anxiety, teacher identity, curriculum theory, and AI-supported language learning in higher education.

*“Building an English-Medium Community: METU Northern Cyprus Campus”*

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Established in 2005 as an international extension of Middle East Technical University, METU Northern Cyprus Campus (NCC) represents a distinctive example of a transnational higher education environment. Located in the Güzelyurt district of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the campus brings together students from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds while maintaining English as the medium of instruction across all academic programs. Over the past two decades, the campus has developed into a dynamic academic community that combines METU's established educational traditions with the opportunities of its local context. This presentation introduces METU NCC to the ELT community by highlighting its campus environment, faculty and student profile, and English-medium academic culture. Representing the School of Foreign Languages, the session will briefly outline the role of the SFL in supporting students in their transition into departmental studies and throughout their academic journey, while highlighting its contribution to the wider academic and social life of the campus as well as its engagement with the broader community. The presentation will also reflect on insights gained through twenty years of experience and ongoing collaboration with METU's School of Foreign Languages.

*“Exploring EFL Instructors’ Experiences with AI Tools in Material and Assessment Design”*

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Material development in the context of ELT has recently experienced a transformation with the growing use of artificial intelligence tools (Karaduman, 2025). The literature review demonstrates that these tools have assisted instructors in taking some workload off, getting inspired for creative activities, adapting materials into cultural contexts, and tailoring to them to individual students’ needs (Estaiteyeh & McQuirter, 2024; Moorhouse et al., 2024). However, they have been also reported to have several drawbacks including output quality issues, lack of AI literacy, teachers’ overdependence on AI, and lack of AI policies drawing ethical boundaries. This study aimed to investigate the problems EFL instructors experience while developing materials and assessment with the help of AI tools, their AI literacy, and their suggestions for the professional development regarding these issues. To this end, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five instructors working in the curriculum and testing units at the school of foreign language of a private university. The findings demonstrated four major themes: (1) concerns about the unnatural AI language and lack of authenticity of AI output, (2) teachers’ critical role in refining AI output and training these tools, (3) AI’s unfavorable effect on instructors’ creativity in the long run, (4) the need for AI training and a policy. The study highlights the importance of AI literacy and professional development and concludes with recommendations for research and practice to use AI more responsibly and efficiently. Limitations and recommendations for future research are also indicated.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence, assessment, material development, professional development,

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*“Evaluation of Sustainability Discourse in Environmental Studies: A Conceptual Analysis  
from ESP and CLL Perspectives”*

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Sustainability is one of the most important research themes in the multidisciplinary research fields in 21st century. To highlight this fact, this study aims to examine the historical and conceptual evaluation and transformation of the "sustainability". Keleş (1998) defines sustainability as a “green worldview” that promotes economic development without compromising the principle of using environmental values and natural resources, in a way that does not lead to waste of environmental and natural resources and considers the rights and benefits of both present and future generations. Similarly, another important definition of sustainability can be noted in “Bozdoğan (2005)’s article as Allaby (1993)'s definition, “continious economic growth based on the consumption of renewable resources and causing only limited environmental degradation that saves and protects Earth’s carrying capacity”. The importance of conceptual analysis in linguistics leads us an important approach in English Language Teaching, English for Specific Purposes (ESP). ESP an approach which focuses on specific learning purposes in specific fields like law, mathematics, social and life sciences, engineering, business, tourism, etc.(Rahman, 2015). Since it centers more on language in context, it sees language not a subject separated from learners' real world or context and an integration of a subject field ( such as tourism, business, social and life sciences, law, mathematics, etc.) based on learner needs, it empowers the conceptual use of language, which leads us to conceptual language learning (CLL) Approach. The research investigates conceptual discourse analysis of sustainability discourse in environmental studies as a reflection of conceptual language learning and English for Specific Purposes Approach.

**Keywords:** sustainability, discourse analysis, english for specific purposes

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*“Liberating Beyond the Classroom: Exploring Research Engagement among ELT Practitioners Five Years into Practice”*

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Teacher research is part of continuous professional development, involving questioning and ongoing reflection on practice. This inquisitive mindset starts in initial teacher education, where candidates learn to engage in educational research. We believe that investigating teachers' research orientations and engagements from their initial years of education through early career is important for predicting their future research practices and improving teacher education. Therefore, we conducted a longitudinal study tracing student teachers' research perceptions, orientations, and engagements from their initial years of teacher education through their early career stages. In this presentation, we present the second phase of the study, in which we followed up a group of graduates (eight teachers and two research assistants) five years after their graduation. We interviewed ten novice ELT practitioners to investigate their current research engagements. This qualitative case study shows that participants were still heavily influenced by the research culture in their ITE; seven out of ten were pursuing master's degrees and presenting papers at conferences. Participants' research engagements range from publishing fully-fledged research papers to reading research to find solutions to classroom problems. They all believed that research is part of teaching; however, they did not report conducting action or classroom research to improve their teaching. They conducted educational research to pursue their academic degrees. Therefore, their experience seems to have contributed to their understanding of the inherent link between research and teaching, although it is not yet reflected in their practice - another question to be explored at later stages of their careers

**Keywords:** teacher research, research engagement, professional development

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Gülden Taner Yavuz is an assistant professor at İzmir University of Economics. She earned her PhD in ELT from METU in 2017 and completed her post-doctoral research at the University of Warwick in 2020. Her research interests include EFL teachers' competencies, professional development and identity, translator/interpreter training, and translation studies.

*“From Prompts to Plans: Pre-Service English Teachers’ Use of AI in Lesson Preparation”*

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The growing presence of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools in language education influences how pre-service teachers design and prepare lesson plans. This qualitative exploratory study investigates the integration of AI into micro-teaching preparation among pre-service English teachers and examines both their prompting behaviours and reflections on AI-supported lesson planning. The study was conducted with third-year students enrolled in an English Language Teaching program at a foundation university in Türkiye. Data were collected from two primary sources: 130 screenshots documenting participants’ interactions with AI tools during lesson planning and reflection papers written by 10 pre-service English teachers. A qualitative document analysis was applied to the screenshots to explore the purposes behind AI use and the linguistic and structural characteristics of prompt formulation. Findings revealed that AI was primarily used for material creation and selection, lesson plan structuring, pedagogical guidance, lexical and linguistic support, proofreading, and visual design. Analysis of prompt formulation showed variation in language choice, mechanical accuracy, and tone, with participants alternating between imperative commands, direct questions, and polite requests. In addition, reflection papers were analyzed thematically to gain deeper insight into participants’ perceptions, experiences, and decision-making processes while using AI tools. Reflection data indicated that participants viewed AI as a supportive planning assistant but still emphasized the importance of human judgment and personalization. All in all, the findings highlight a growing partnership between AI tools and teacher candidates, where technology supports the process but human insight continues to guide it.

**Keywords:** AI-Assisted Lesson Planning, Pre-Service English Teachers

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Mehmet Efe Aşılar is a fourth-year student in the ELT Department at Başkent University.

*“EFL Learners’ Error-Correction Experiences with AI and Teacher Feedback in Writing”*

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AI-generated feedback has emerged in recent years in language education research as a tool with its potential to transform error correction processes in writing instruction. However, the existing literature falls short of providing comprehensive findings on the learner experience when AI feedback is used alongside teacher feedback, particularly in process-oriented EFL writing contexts. This study aims to examine students' experiences with AI- and teacher-provided error correction in the writing process in an EFL context, focusing specifically on how learners perceive, interpret, and utilize each feedback source during revision. The research was conducted using a qualitative case study design. The study involved 22 B1-level students attending the same preparatory class at a state university receiving both AI and teacher feedback on the essays they wrote over an eight-week period. Data collection tools consisted of student reflection journals, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis of revision drafts, which were analysed thematically. The findings indicate that AI feedback is perceived as motivating in terms of speed, accessibility, and linguistic accuracy, while teacher feedback is perceived as more valuable in terms of clarity, reliability, and pedagogical guidance. In addition, most students stated that the combined use of both types of feedback increased error awareness and improved revision quality. The results indicate that AI needs to be positioned as a complementary tool rather than a replacement for teacher feedback. This study offers pedagogical implications for designing hybrid feedback models in writing instruction and contributes empirical evidence to ongoing discussions on human–AI collaboration in language learning.

**Keywords:** AI, writing, feedback, error correction, EFL learners

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*“A multiple case study on pre-service EFL teachers' cognitions about teaching speaking”*

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Teacher cognition refers to what teachers know, believe, and think (Borg, 2006). In language education contexts, teacher cognition plays a key role in shaping instructional decisions and classroom practices. This presentation reports the findings of a qualitative multiple case study examining pre-service EFL teachers' cognitions regarding teaching speaking, and how these cognitions are shaped through teacher education and practicum experiences. The study draws on data from semi-structured interviews, stimulated-recall interviews, and reflection papers. Twenty-five pre-service teachers in an English language teacher education program in Türkiye were interviewed in their junior year to identify their prior schooling, language learning experiences, and beliefs about teaching speaking. Following these, in their senior year, five participants took part in a five-week “Speaking Club” project, where they taught speaking to intermediate-level learners, observed one another's lessons, and engaged in peer reflection. Stimulated-recall interviews with the participants examined their instructional decisions and underlying reasoning, and the reflection papers they wrote revealed their experiences during practicum. Interviews at the end of their senior year provided the researchers with a comprehensive understanding of their practice teaching experiences and teacher-learning processes. Data were analyzed using Borg's (2006) framework alongside a sociocultural perspective, allowing for an examination of how teacher cognitions are formed and reshaped through social interaction, reflection, and engagement in practice. The findings suggest that teacher learning and the development of teacher cognition are enhanced through socially mediated and practice-oriented teacher education experiences.

**Keywords:** Teacher cognition; teaching speaking; pre-service teachers

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*“Understanding the Interplay Between Teacher Attitudes and Self-Efficacy in English Language Education”*

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This study examines the attitudes of pre-service and in-service English teachers toward the teaching profession and their levels of self-efficacy. It further investigates the relationship between these two factors and the influence of variables such as gender, education level, and years of teaching experience. The research sample included 57 pre-service English teachers from various universities across Türkiye and 120 in-service English teachers. Quantitative results revealed a strong positive correlation between attitudes toward teaching and self-efficacy. Both groups demonstrated generally high levels of self-efficacy and positive attitudes; however, challenges such as managing difficult students and dissatisfaction with socioeconomic conditions were noted. Teaching experience had a significant effect on self-efficacy, with teachers having 1–5 years of experience scoring the highest. Qualitative insights from structured interviews indicated that participants view teaching as a meaningful profession that shapes future generations and expressed strong interest in professional development and innovative instructional methods. No significant correlation was found between gender and either self-efficacy or attitudes, though male teachers showed slightly higher mean scores. Limitations of the study include a small sample size and reliance on self-reported data, highlighting the need for further research. By addressing gaps in the literature, this study underscores the importance of teacher attitudes and self-efficacy in English language education and contributes to the development of effective teacher education programs.

**Keywords:** Teacher attitudes, self-efficacy, English language education

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*“Equity Through Creativity: Activities for an Inclusive ELL Classroom for Visually-Impaired Learners”*

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As English language educators, we sometimes find ourselves navigating mixed-ability classrooms that include visually impaired, blind, and neurodiverse learners. Research suggests that these students’ needs are often not met, or classes are not adequately adapted to ensure equitable access. This workshop presents practical, adaptable strategies for fostering an inclusive and engaging language learning environment. Participants will be invited to experience hands-on activities designed to support visually impaired learners while benefiting all students. The session also provides space for collaborative reflection and discussion of participants’ experiences working with diverse learner populations.

**Keywords:** inclusivity, visually impaired, creative pedagogy, practical activities

Heidi Demello is an English Language Fellow at Marmara University. She teaches academic writing at universities in the U.S. and has taught EFL/ESL in several countries through authenticity and community building, including visually impaired learners in Kyrgyzstan. She is a teacher trainer and holds an MA in Applied Linguistic (TESOL).

*“Iconicity Facilitates Lexical Recognition Selectively in Younger Late Signers”*

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Most deaf children (95%) are born to hearing parents and acquire sign language late, typically after entering deaf school. Conversely, deaf children with deaf parents (i.e., native signers) learn sign language from birth. Previous studies show detrimental effects of late sign exposure compared with native signers on linguistic capabilities, including grammatical judgment, utterance length, and spatial descriptions. Little is known about how timing of exposure affects lexical acquisition and how sign structure modulates this process. Here, we investigated lexical development in late-signing ( $n=10$ ;  $M=92,40$ months) and native-signing ( $n=10$ ;  $M=92,30$ months) children acquiring Turkish Sign Language. Using a web-based two-choice sign recognition task, children saw a video of a sign and two images from the same category, and then, they were expected to choose the correct answer. Data was analyzed using glmer model to assess the impact of language exposure type (native,late), iconicity, phonological complexity, and age at testing on the binary values of accuracy (1=accurate; 0=inaccurate). Accuracy was significantly predicted by exposure type ( $\beta=17.126$ ,  $p=.007$ ), such that native signers outperformed late signers ( $p > .05$ ). Age positively predicted accuracy in late signers ( $\beta = 0.07$ ,  $p < .001$ ) but not in native signers ( $\beta=0.01$ ,  $p=.70$ ). Importantly, a three-way interaction among exposure type, iconicity, and age, suggesting that iconicity facilitated performance selectively in younger late signers ( $\beta=0.66$ ,  $p=.02$ ). No other effects/interactions were significant ( $p > .05$ ). These findings suggest that early exposure provides lexical advantage, whereas iconicity serves as a compensatory scaffold for younger late signers, but its effect diminishes with age.

**Keywords:** Language exposure type, Iconicity, Turkish Sign Language

Hilal Özdemir is a METU Psychology graduate (2023) and current master's student in Developmental Psychology at METU. My research focuses on sign language acquisition in Deaf children. I have worked on parenting and child development projects, including as a TÜBİTAK STAR Scholar, and currently serve as Project Coordinator of the My Sign App Project.

Maharrem Ayar is a graduate student in the Department of Linguistics at the University of California, Davis. He is also an affiliated researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen. His main interests include psycholinguistic, neurolinguistic, and language acquisition issues in sign languages.

Dilay Z. Karadöller is an assistant professor at METU and researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics. She received her PhD from Max Planck and Radboud University. Her research examines spatial and mathematical language across modalities and sign language exposure, supported by international grants.

*“An Intervention Program: Helping Deaf Children with Hearing Parents in Acquiring Turkish Sign Language”*

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Many deaf children first encounter a language in deaf schools, often experiencing adverse effects of late exposure on several aspects of language. Little is known about how late-signing children acquire lexical signs and the impact of the structural organization of signs on this process. This study investigates the lexical development of late-signers through an 11-week intervention using mobile-compatible web app developed to teach lexical signs in Turkish Sign Language. The goals are to determine whether children acquire basic signs during intervention and how phonological complexity and iconicity influences acquisition process. Thirteen children (Mage=82,4months; Range=54-115) completed a baseline test (Pre-test), which was repeated after the intervention (Post-test). In between Pre-and Post-Test, children were trained in 14 semantic categories via exposure module for 8 weeks and test module of these categories were administered on the first day of training (i.e., Immediate Test) and a week after (i.e., Retest). Results from Pre-Post test data showed that children significantly developed lexical knowledge after intervention ( $p=.011$ ), particularly for highly iconic signs ( $p=.025$ ). Iconicity showed a strong main effect ( $p < .001$ ) and interacted with Test Phase ( $p=.013$ ), showing greater facilitation at Retest. Phonological complexity affected accuracy only at Immediate test for medium and high iconicity (three-way interaction,  $p=.052$ ), with no effects at Retest. Overall, the intervention supports vocabulary development. Although phonological complexity hindered performance at early learning stages, this effect decreased with brief repeated exposure. These findings strengthen iconicities' role in language acquisition and highlight the need for alternative exposure platforms for late-signing children.

**Keywords:** Intervention , Late Signers, Turkish Sign Language

METU Psychology graduate (2023) and current master's student in Developmental Psychology at METU. My research focuses on sign language acquisition in Deaf children. I have worked on parenting and child development projects, including as a TÜBİTAK STAR Scholar, and currently serve as Project Coordinator of the My Sign App Project.

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**“THE IMPACT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON EDUCATION AND  
STUDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARD AI”**

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This study is designed as a qualitative case study aiming to examine high school students' attitudes toward artificial intelligence in depth. The study examines students' perceptions, expectations, and experiences regarding AI within the framework of Amara's Law, an approach that argues perceptions of technological developments are shaped unevenly over time, in the context of the tension between short-term expectations and long-term educational impacts.

The qualitative dimension of the research is based on semi-structured interviews conducted with a total of 18 students selected from three different school types (Science, Anatolian, and Vocational) in Ankara. Through these interviews, how students define artificial intelligence, the areas in which they use it, and the factors shaping their attitudes toward these technologies were examined. Triangulation was applied in this study by using quantitative data as a supporting tool to support, validate, and enrich the qualitative findings. To this end, the General Attitude Scale toward Artificial Intelligence (GAAIS) was administered to 600 students randomly selected from 10 schools.

Quantitative findings revealed gender-based differences in the positive attitude dimension, while no significant difference was found in overall attitude based on school type. Qualitative findings revealed that students evaluated AI positively in terms of speed, access to information, and convenience; on the other hand, they expressed concerns regarding ethics and assessment fairness. While students found artificial intelligence useful, they emphasized the importance of security and pedagogical boundaries. Students' attitudes toward AI are shaped not only by individual factors but also by temporal expectations, school context, and sociocultural factors.

**Keywords:** education, artificial intelligence, attitude, gender, school type

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*“Academic Writing Skills Development at the Master’s Degree Level: A Cross-Institutional Comparative Study of Universities”*

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This study explores academic writing skills development at the master’s degree level through a comparative multi-case analysis of graduate writing instruction across differing higher education contexts. Positioned within academic literacies and sociocultural perspectives on writing, the study examines how institutional conditions, pedagogical practices, and language environments shape the development of academic writing among graduate students writing in English. The topic addresses the convention theme by engaging with issues of academic excellence, multilingualism, and the global transformation of graduate education.

A mixed-methods design was employed to integrate institutional and participant perspectives. Data were collected from a survey of 78 graduate students and semi-structured interviews with eight faculty members involved in academic writing instruction, complemented by curriculum analysis of graduate writing courses. This triangulated approach enabled examination of perceived writing challenges alongside structural factors influencing academic writing development. Comparative analysis identified patterns shared across contexts as well as locally specific practices.

Findings indicate that academic writing development is influenced by alignment between curricular design, pedagogical support, and institutional expectations. Students reported persistent challenges related to argumentation, genre conventions, and academic voice, while instructors emphasized process-oriented pedagogy, feedback practices, and explicit instruction in disciplinary discourse. The study further reveals that multilingual academic environments require adaptable instructional strategies rather than one-size-fits-all models.

The study contributes to ongoing discussions on graduate academic literacy by highlighting context-sensitive pedagogy. Implications include curriculum refinement, enhanced professional development in writing instruction, and evidence-based approaches supporting graduate students’ academic writing success in internationalized higher education settings.

**Keywords:** academic writing, graduate level, context-sensitive pedagogy

Dr. Indira Dyussekeneva is a researcher and educator specializing in academic writing, higher education pedagogy, and multilingual learning environments. Their work focuses on graduate academic literacy, curriculum development, and evidence-based approaches to writing instruction. Current research explores comparative perspectives on academic writing development and professional development practices in internationalized higher education contexts.

Dr. Sanim Zhanbyrbayeva is a researcher and educator whose interests include management in education, academic writing, and higher education pedagogy. Their work focuses on leadership, institutional practices, and teaching innovation in multilingual academic environments. Current research explores academic literacies, curriculum development, and management perspectives on improving graduate-level learning and teaching outcomes.

Dr. Damir Dyussekenev is a researcher interested in educational technology, digital learning environments, and innovative approaches to teaching and learning. Their work focuses on integrating digital tools into higher education, academic skills development, and student engagement. Current interests include technology-enhanced learning, applied research methods, and interdisciplinary educational innovation.

*“The Impact of a World Englishes Course on Pre-Service English Teachers’ Cognition and Pedagogical Orientations”*

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The study explored pre-service English language teachers’ (PELTs) attitudes toward a World Englishes (WE) course within an English Language Teaching (ELT) program at a state university in Türkiye. Grounded in Global Englishes scholarship (Jenkins, 2015; Galloway & Rose, 2021), the study investigated how structured exposure to WE perspectives shapes pre-service teachers’ cognition and pedagogical orientations. Addressing the conference theme, the study highlights the role of teacher education in preparing PELTs for linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms shaped by global English use. It employed an exploratory qualitative case study with a comparative design. The data were collected through focus group interviews: one with PELTs who completed the WE course and one with those without WE course exposure. The data were analyzed using MAXQDA-supported thematic analysis. Three overarching themes were identified: World Englishes (intelligibility, native–nonnative speaker dichotomy, and language ownership), culture (integration of cultural diversity), and perceived course impact (engagement with course content and instructional mediation). PELTs who completed the WE course emphasized intelligibility over native-speaker norms, critically problematized the native–nonnative dichotomy, and demonstrated familiarity with English as a Lingua Franca and language ownership, with greater confidence in integrating diverse cultural perspectives into language teaching. However, those without WE course exposure expressed lower confidence, relying on intuitive or prescriptive views of English. The findings underscored the pedagogical value of integrating WE perspectives into ELT curricula to foster critical language awareness, culturally responsive pedagogy, and inclusive teaching orientations in teacher education, with an explicit focus on conceptual scaffolding and instructor mediation.

**Keywords:** Global Englishes, WE-informed language teaching , Pre-service

Işıl Günseli Kaçar is the vice-chair and a faculty member at the Department of Foreign Language Education at Middle East Technical University in Turkey. She is interested in pre-service language teacher education, English as a Lingua Franca, global Englishes, flipped learning, (e.) mentoring, information technologies, virtual exchange.

Rüveyda Betül Asmacı is an English teacher currently working in Hakkâri and an MA student in English Language Teaching at Middle East Technical University (METU). Her research focuses on intercultural communication, translanguaging, and World Englishes in multilingual classrooms.

*“Beyond the Prompt: How Pre-Service Teachers Humanize AI-Generated Lessons in Practicum”*

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As artificial intelligence tools increasingly support lesson planning and material development, teacher education must critically examine how future teachers transform algorithmic outputs into pedagogically meaningful classroom practice. This study explores how ELT pre-service teachers adapt and humanize AI-generated materials during their practicum, foregrounding the role of teacher agency in technology-mediated instruction. Research consistently shows that the educational value of technology integration does not lie in the tools themselves, but in teachers’ professional judgment, pedagogical mediation, and context-sensitive adaptation (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Hockly, 2023; OECD, 2026).

The study employs a qualitative research design. Participants were 68 fourth-year ELT pre-service teachers attending practicum at different educational levels. Data were collected through an in-class pedagogical task requiring participants to select an AI tool, generate lesson materials through prompting, implement the AI-supported activity in their practicum classrooms, and submit structured reflective reports explaining their adaptations and classroom observations. The reports were examined using inductive thematic analysis to find common themes in how the AI outputs were modified and humanized for teaching purposes.

Findings indicate that participants treated AI-generated materials as preliminary resources rather than ready-made solutions. Teachers enacted agency by simplifying language and instructions, adjusting level and vocabulary, adding interaction through group work or competition, scaffolding learning through modeling and monitoring, pausing audio or reformulating prompts during instruction, and personalizing content through culturally familiar or learner-relevant examples.

These findings emphasize the necessity of developing adaptive pedagogical decision-making and teacher agency in teacher education programs, which prepare teachers for AI-supported classrooms.

**Keywords:** ELT, Practicum, Artificial Intelligence, Teacher Agency, Humanizing

İlknur Yüksel works as an associate professor in English language teaching with a PhD in ELT. Her research interests include language teacher education, reflective practice, AI in education, and digital pedagogy. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on ELT methodology, practicum, materials development, and applied linguistics

*“Empowering the Inner Voice through Metacognitive Scaffolding in the Primary ELT Classroom”*

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In a post-algorithm world, the human touch involves the teacher’s ability to recognize, validate, and amplify learners’ inner voices rather than relying solely on digital tools. Particularly in the early years of education, teachers are often assigned the onerous task of promoting learner autonomy (Dam, 2003) since they play a decisive role in fostering students’ self-regulation skills (Chalkiadaki, 2018; Dignath et al., 2008). Conducted with 30 fourth-grade students in a primary school, this study investigates the development of metacognitive awareness, examining how structured planning, self-monitoring, and reflection help learners move from external regulation toward internal agency.

Adopting a two-phase research design, the study was conducted as part of an ongoing PhD dissertation and adhered rigorously to ethical standards in educational research. The initial Explanatory Phase utilized a triangulation strategy integrating multiple data sources that aimed at identifying gaps in learners’ metacognitive awareness. Based on a thematic analysis of the classroom observation checklist, student reflections, and a parent questionnaire, the findings revealed limited learner agency and a strong dependence on externally imposed instructional routines. The subsequent Action Research Phase, implemented a series of pedagogical scaffolds designed to elevate the students’ inner voice. These included visual goal-setting charts and reflective “think-aloud” routines. Data analyzed through Narrative and Critical Discourse lenses revealed a profound shift in learner identity.

By bridging exploratory inquiry with action research, the findings ultimately suggest that when teachers act as metacognitive mirrors rather than mere content deliverers, they provide a “primary compass” that algorithms cannot replace.

**Keywords:** learner autonomy, metacognitive scaffolding, young learners, ELT

İnci Boz received her BA in 1996 and an MA in ELT in 2021. Throughout her extensive teaching career in public institutions, she has worked with learners of almost all ages, fostering a deep understanding of developmental pedagogy. As a dedicated lifelong learner herself, she is committed to professional development.

*“Enhancing Vocabulary Acquisition Through Humor and Visuals: The Role of Memes in EFL Learning”*

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This ongoing study investigates the effectiveness of using memes and funny pictures in English vocabulary learning, comparing it with traditional textbook-based instruction. The study explores whether visually enriched and humorous materials enhance vocabulary acquisition by increasing learner attention, emotional engagement, and memory processing. A pilot study was conducted with ELT students who had no prior knowledge of Korean, using Korean as the target language. Employing an experimental design, participants (n=10; age=15) were divided into two groups: one (n=5; f=3, m=2) received instruction through conventional textbook materials, while the other (n=5; f=3, m=2) was taught the same vocabulary items through memes and funny pictures. The findings from this pilot phase revealed that although both groups demonstrated improvement, the group exposed to memes and funny pictures showed substantially higher and more consistent vocabulary gains across all target items. Based on these promising results, the study is being extended to beginner EFL learners to further explore the pedagogical potential of multimodal and humor-based instructional materials in foreign language vocabulary learning. We expect to find that multimodal input combined with humor may facilitate more effective lexical processing and retention. The study highlights the potential pedagogical value of integrating visually engaging and emotionally supportive materials into foreign language vocabulary instruction.

**Keywords:** Memes, vocabulary acquisition, humorous materials, multimodal instruction

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*“Human Academic Writing in the Age of AI: Teaching the Language of Positioning and Context”*

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When learning to write a research paper, many English learners must perform functions that are new or unfamiliar. In earlier essays, they typically learn to persuade, describe, and compare, but they often struggle to contextualize sources, position their ideas within a broader conversation, and hedge claims appropriately. These more complex academic moves are also areas where generative AI tends to produce uneven results. As a result, when students cannot perform these functions effectively, their writing may be mistaken for AI-generated text. To support more human, discipline-appropriate academic writing, instructors must teach not only the language needed to achieve these functions, but also how to use it strategically.

In my classes, I use academic phrasebanks to support this development. In this session, I will demonstrate sustained classroom activities that introduce phrasebanks, require students to integrate them into drafting and revision, and reference them in instructor feedback. The goal is to normalize phrasebanks as tools students use independently in class and beyond. I have implemented this approach with undergraduate and graduate research writing students.

Participants will leave with a practical framework and adaptable activities for process-based academic writing courses. Previously, I shared phrasebanks as optional resources, but students rarely used them without structured integration. In the Q&A, I will invite participants to share strategies for encouraging students to use digital tools as enhancements to thinking rather than replacements for it.

**Keywords:** academic writing, process writing, phrasebanks, rhetorical moves

Jordan Brown is an English Language Fellow at Baku Eurasian University, where she supports curriculum development and delivers teacher training. She conducts workshops across Azerbaijan for both learners and teachers. She holds a BA from St. Olaf College in Classics and an MA from American University in TESOL.

*“Developing Preliminary Sequences for Assessment in Peer Feedback Interaction”*

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This longitudinal conversation-analytic study examines how L2 learners come to develop preliminary sequences for launching assessments in peer-feedback conferences in an exam-oriented L2 study group setting. Drawing on screen-recordings of peer feedback interactions, the analysis traces changes over time in how participants prepare the interactional environment prior to producing negative evaluations. In the early phases of the dataset, learners often move quickly toward negative assessments, displaying limited use of prefatory practices. Over successive interactions, however, they increasingly deploy alignment-seeking practices including mitigated prefaces, candidate understandings and formulations of shared assessment criteria that create sequential space for securing co-participants’ affiliation before delivering criticism. These emergent practices index growing competence in managing the interactional and normative demands of assessment and contribute to shifting identity positions, as learners come to be treated and to treat themselves as more knowledgeable and accountable assessors of oral performance. The analysis demonstrates that preliminary sequences are not peripheral but constitute a central interactional locus for the accomplishment of assessment actions and the in situ display of interactional competence. At the same time, the findings demonstrate how trajectories of interactional competence and participant identity are accomplished through the step-by-step organization of preliminary work, showing how sustained participation in peer-feedback conferences provides a local environment for the gradual socialization into assessment practices.

**Keywords:** peer feedback; preliminary sequences; L2 interactional competence

Kübra Ekşi is an English language lecturer at National Defense University and holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics. Her research interests include peer feedback conferences, L2 learning/teaching and video-mediated interactions from a conversation analytic perspective. Her recent publications have appeared in *Applied Linguistics Review* and *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*.

*“A Workshop on Staying Human: AI versus Human Authorship in Children's Literature Texts in ELT”*

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This workshop aims to deepen the understanding of human voice and creativity in ELT by using comparisons from children's literature and artificially generated texts that benefit ELT classrooms. Busselle and Bilandzic's (2009) "Narrative Engagement Theory" stands as the foundation of this workshop, as it allows participants to delve into topics such as "perspective taking", "presence in a narrative world" and "flow and presence in narrative" when comparing the texts.

At the beginning of the workshop, participants will be presented with various examples of texts taken from children's literature (tales, stories, poems) versus texts generated by Artificial Intelligence used in ELT. Participants will actively engage with the material by trying to correctly guess the one written by a human. They will be asked to reflect on their feelings and ideas regarding which texts made them feel more in the narrative, empathize with the character, and whose narrative flow was more coherent. After announcing the results, the presenter will initiate a discussion regarding the observed differences and how to distinguish between texts produced by humans and those produced by Artificial Intelligence. Upon analyzing the stylistic differences, emotions, and the creative voice behind the texts, participants will be asked to produce their own ELT material (a tale, a short story, or a poem) with some guidance from the presenter, focusing on a specific proficiency level with the objective of teaching vocabulary or grammar.

**Keywords:** Children's Literature, ELT, AI, Narrative Voice, Creativity

Lara Su Yaman is a first-year student in the English Studies MA programme at Vilnius University. She is currently a Vilnius University and an ARQUS (European University Alliance) Ambassador. Her research interests include the Victorian era, gothic genre and gender studies.

*“EFL Teachers’ Perspectives on Artificial Intelligence in English Language Education:  
Opportunities, Challenges, and Ethical Considerations”*

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This study examines EFL teachers' views on artificial intelligence (AI) in English language education. As AI continues to develop, this research explores the perspectives of EFL teachers at Turkish high schools regarding its advantages, disadvantages, and ethical aspects. The study employs a hybrid methodology to collect both quantitative and qualitative data on AI integration in the classroom. Thirty-two teachers from different high schools participated in the study, with five of them engaging in semi-structured interviews for more in-depth insights. All teachers participating in the study were actively using AI in their lessons. The findings indicate that chatbots and AI-powered feedback systems, which provide personalized exercises and guidance, can enhance students' speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills. AI-driven platforms such as ChatGPT are considered particularly beneficial for students struggling academically. However, ethical concerns persist. Some teachers fear that excessive reliance on AI could hinder students' creativity and critical thinking skills. Additionally, AI systems collect vast amounts of student data, raising concerns about privacy, security, and fairness. While some teachers hesitate to fully embrace AI due to a lack of familiarity with the technology, most acknowledge its potential to support language learning. The study also reveals differing opinions on whether AI could replace human teachers. While some view AI as a valuable educational tool, the majority emphasize the essential role of teachers as mentors and facilitators, highlighting the importance of human interaction in language learning.

**Keywords:** AI, EFL Teachers’ Perspectives, English Language Education

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*“Test-Taker Preferences for National and International English Proficiency Exams in Türkiye and Influencing Factors”*

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The growing diversification of national and international English proficiency examinations in Türkiye creates extensive opportunities for test-takers while simultaneously complicating the decision-making process. Previous studies have explored factors influencing test-taker choices across the world, but few, if any, have examined how these factors operate across the growing range of national and international English proficiency exams in Türkiye. To bridge this gap, the present study aims to find out about (1) which English proficiency exams students in Türkiye are most likely to prefer and (2) what the underlying factors for these preferences are. Using an explanatory mixed-methods design, a questionnaire will be implemented to collect data from test-takers who have taken at least one English proficiency test in Türkiye. The main goal of the instrument will be to identify the most commonly preferred English proficiency exams and to what extent factors such as perceived difficulty, institutional requirements, global recognition, cost, accessibility, format, tested skills and score validity have an impact on these preferences. Quantitative data will be analyzed via descriptive and inferential statistics, while open-ended responses will undergo thematic analysis. The findings of the study will shed light on how perceived test characteristics, regional and global recognition, and practical and economic considerations affect test-taker preferences in Türkiye. Thus, the results are expected to provide insights for English language programs, offering both theoretical and practical implications for educators and policy-makers.

**Keywords:** English Proficiency Testing; Test-Taker Preferences; Decision-Making Factors

Mehmet Emre Altınbaş is an English instructor at Necmettin Erbakan University School of Foreign Languages. He holds a PhD in English Language Teaching from Middle East Technical University. His professional and academic interests include English for Academic Purposes and Computer-Assisted Language Learning.

*“The affordances of virtual exchange for promoting wellbeing among pre-service language teachers”*

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While the past few years have witnessed a growing volume of scholarship on the wellbeing of pre-service language teachers, how to promote it in practice remains underexplored and insufficiently understood. The present study adopted a qualitative case study design and was guided the PERMA model of wellbeing to investigate the potential role of virtual exchange (VE) in facilitating wellbeing among 28 geographically dispersed pre-service teachers of English Language Teaching in the context of a three-week Turkish-Polish VE project. The project was designed around three consecutive tasks completed using various online tools. Task reflections and focus group interviews were analyzed through thematic analysis, which demonstrated an overall positive trajectory in the participants' wellbeing, as shown by their reports of having experienced positive emotions, high engagement, satisfactory relationships, and improved sense of meaning and achievement in the virtual space. The findings suggest that if designed carefully and supported by instructional guidance, VE might serve as a promising pedagogical tool to facilitate wellbeing in initial teacher education with its potential to create space for an increased sense of emotional connectedness and empowerment among pre-service teachers, which in turn generates a psychologically safe and nurturing community. In particular, tasks that are structured around trainees' shared interests and experiences, and those encouraging self-reflection appear to be well-positioned to support their wellbeing, as they enable to make the VE experience more relevant, meaningful, and engaging. Findings further indicate that wellbeing within VE environments is mediated by sociocultural factors and determined through shared interactions.

**Keywords:** teacher wellbeing, pre-service teacher wellbeing, virtual exchange

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*“A Comparison of AI and Human Judgment in Sociopragmatic Assessment”*

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As AI becomes increasingly integrated into language assessment, its capacity to evaluate various aspects of pragmatic competence remains underexplored. While recent research highlights promising levels of agreement between AI and human scoring, it also demonstrates its limitations in capturing aspects such as sociocultural norms and relational meaning. These findings suggest that the role of AI in pragmatic assessment requires further empirical investigation.

Aligned with the theme “Voices Beyond Algorithms”, this study aims to investigate the extent to which AI ratings align with trained human evaluations of sociopragmatic competence. A previously validated Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT) will be used to collect responses from university level EFL learners. Two human raters will evaluate the responses using an analytic rubric which was also previously validated and tailored to the WDCT. Using the same rubric, the responses will also be evaluated by the latest version of ChatGPT (5.2) with numerical scores and justifications.

Quantitative analyses will examine interrater reliability between human raters and agreement levels between AI and human scores. Qualitative analysis of AI justifications will explore its capacity to account for contextual sensitivity, power relations and mitigation strategies.

The findings are expected to shed a light on both alignment and discrepancies between automated and human evaluations of sociopragmatic competence. Overall, the study aims to contribute to the ongoing discussion on AI-mediated assessment and human judgment in evaluating learner voice within increasingly technologized ELT contexts.

**Keywords:** Sociopragmatic competence, AI-mediated scoring, Human judgment, WDCT

The presenter has been teaching English at university level for over 10 years. They hold a PhD in ELT with a research focus on interlanguage pragmatics and pragmatic assessment. Their work explores pragmatic development, assessment practices and validation of pragmatic assessment instruments.

*“Feedback Stance and Corrective Moves in AI and Instructor-Mediated Email Writing”*

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Effective communication in a language requires more than grammatical accuracy; learners must also make context-appropriate choices in tone, politeness, and speech act realization. These demands become particularly salient in academic email writing, where power relations and formality expectations shape how messages are interpreted. In many instructional contexts, however, providing timely and individualized feedback that targets pragmatic appropriateness is difficult, and feedback often remains limited to surface-level language issues. This study explores the potential of AI-mediated feedback as a complementary resource for developing learners' pragmatic competence through email writing. The study employs a concurrent embedded mixed-methods design within a longitudinal classroom intervention with 108 intermediate-level EFL learners. Participants receive formative feedback from either a custom-configured AI feedback system or human instructors, and their performance is being tracked through repeated email writing tasks and measures administered before and after the intervention. Qualitative analysis of feedback texts and learner reflections is conducted using a structured code system to examine recurring feedback moves as well as learners' reported uptake and perceptions of the feedback source. Preliminary observations from the first half of the ongoing intervention suggest that AI and instructor feedback differ not only in the density of linguistic correction but also in interpersonal stance and the extent to which comments explicitly address appropriateness, formality, and indirectness. By documenting these emerging discourse-level contrasts, the study aims to inform pedagogical decisions regarding the integration of AI tools into pragmatics instruction and feedback practices in technology-mediated writing contexts in EFL classrooms.

**Keywords:** Pragmatics, Feedback, Email, Artificial Intelligence.

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*“Reclaiming the Human Touch on Young Learners’ Critical Socio-Cultural Language Awareness Development through Linguistic Landscapes”*

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This project increases critical sociolinguistic and sociocultural awareness development of a group of older young English language learners (ages 10 to 13) attending middle schools in Turkey. Linguistic Landscape (LL) research—the visibility of languages in public spaces (Landry & Bourhis, 1997) — is a sustainable effort to help learners gain sociolinguistic and cultural awareness.

Addressing this gap, this study explores how participation in a voluntary LL-awareness modular intervention supports young learners’ sociolinguistic and sociocultural awareness, as well as critical LL literacy grounded in everyday public spaces. The study adopts a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design within a quasi-experimental framework. Participants include 120 Turkish EFL middle-schoolers. Sixty join the LL-focused intervention, while the remaining sixty form a comparison group, completing the pre- and post-intervention questionnaires only.

Over eight weeks, the experimental group completes LL activities focusing on multimodality, linguistic choices, semiotics and symbolism, and pragmatic and discourse related to public signage. Quantitative data tools consist of questionnaires measuring linguistic awareness and perceptions of public space. Qualitative data are from reflective journals, Photovoice artifacts, and semi-structured interviews.

Preliminary findings suggest that intervention participants develop increased sensitivity to multilingualism, gain greater empathy toward diversity in public signage, and stronger engagement in interpreting language encountered in everyday spaces compared to the comparison group. The study highlights the potential of reclaiming human-centered, community-connected, sustainable learning experiences and discusses implications for integrating learners’ everyday linguistic environments into EFL education to support meaningful reflection and critical engagement with language in society.

**Keywords:** Linguistic Landscape, Sociolinguistic Awareness, Turkish EFL, Mixed-methods.

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*“What Lies beyond the Plan? Reflecting on the Psychological Dynamics of Classroom Teaching”*

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In an educational landscape increasingly defined by artificial intelligence, the complex reality of the classroom remains a uniquely human domain. While digital tools efficiently generate materials and analyze performance metrics, they inevitably fail to capture the subtle psychological dynamics underlying instructional preferences and learner behaviors. Aligning with the convention's focus on "Voices Beyond Algorithms," this workshop examines teaching practices as they unfold in authentic settings to reaffirm the educator's critical role.

Drawing on qualitative data collected from extensive classroom observations, this session moves beyond surface-level behavioral analysis to investigate the psychological constructs shaping student engagement and teacher decision-making. Rather than presenting prescriptive conclusions, the workshop facilitates a collaborative inquiry into common classroom scenarios, ranging from interaction patterns to implicit teacher assumptions. Through this process, attendees will analyze observed realities to identify potential cognitive biases and psychological factors that may implicitly govern classroom dynamics.

By utilizing observational evidence, participants will critically examine how these invisible psychological elements influence the "human touch" in language education. Ultimately, the workshop aims to generate research-informed perspectives and equip educators with flexible, context-sensitive strategies for fostering a more empathetic and psychologically aware learning environment.

**Keywords:** psychological dynamics, human touch, teacher decision-making, bias

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*“Exploring the Human Core of Teaching Through the Film "Her"”*

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Recent advances in artificial intelligence and digital technologies have significantly reshaped English Language Teaching by offering increased personalization, efficiency, and learner autonomy. However, these developments also raise critical questions about the nature of human connection in education. This workshop invites participants to critically explore the human, emotional, and ethical dimensions of teaching in an increasingly digitalized learning environment.

Based on the view that teaching is fundamentally a interpersonal practice rather than a purely technical process, the workshop uses selected scenes from the film *Her* (2013) as a reflective and metaphorical lens. The film’s portrayal of a relationship between a human and an artificial intelligence system offers a powerful parallel to contemporary classrooms, where learners may feel supported by digital tools yet lack meaningful recognition as individuals. Through cinematic narrative, participants are encouraged to question the limits of algorithmic interaction and to reflect on what remains uniquely human in teaching.

The workshop follows a participant-centered structure. Participants will begin with a warm-up discussion reflecting on their own experiences with AI and digital tools in education. Short film scenes will then be analyzed collaboratively, focusing on emotional engagement, recognition, and ethical responsibility. Through small group discussions, participants will connect AI functions to teacher roles and identify moments where meaningful relationships begin to fail. Rather than focusing on technical skills, the workshop aims to develop pedagogical awareness and to position teachers as relational practitioners whose professional value goes beyond what algorithms can replicate.

**Keywords:** Digital Pedagogy, Human–AI Interaction, AI in Education

Dr. Şeref holds a B.A. in English Language Teaching and an M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction. With over 15 years in ELT, she serves as Assistant Director for Academic Affairs at TOBB ETU DFL. Her research interests include learner empowerment, curriculum development, materials design, and critical pedagogy.

*“Voices Beyond Algorithms: Fostering Critical AI Literacy in L2 Academic Writing through the APSE Framework”*

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As generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tools become increasingly embedded in academic writing practices, the conversation is shifting from whether students use AI to how they critically engage with it. In line with the 16th International METU ELT Convention theme, “Voices Beyond Algorithms: Reclaiming the Human Touch in Language Learning,” this study examines how L2 learners navigate AI-supported revision processes while maintaining authorial agency.

Moving beyond technology acceptance models and surface-level usage patterns, this classroom-embedded study investigates students’ reflective engagement with AI through the lens of Critical AI Literacy, operationalized via the Awareness, Positionality, Strategies, and Evaluation (APSE) framework. Fifty undergraduate students revised their essays following instructor feedback and subsequently produced AI-enhanced drafts. Through structured reflective prompts, they articulated their tool selections, revision decisions, negotiations of voice and responsibility, and future-oriented learning intentions.

Qualitative thematic analysis reveals how students (a) recognize AI’s affordances and limitations (Awareness), (b) negotiate authorship and accountability (Positionality), (c) strategically integrate or resist AI-generated suggestions (Strategies), and (d) critically assess AI’s influence on their writing development (Evaluation).

Findings indicate that reclaiming the “human touch” in AI-mediated classrooms does not necessitate rejecting technological tools; rather, it involves cultivating reflective, ethically grounded, and agentic engagement. The study offers a replicable course-embedded methodology for documenting authentic human–AI interaction and proposes pedagogical templates to strengthen Critical AI Literacy in L2 writing contexts. By foregrounding student voice and ethical awareness, the research contributes to ongoing conversations about preserving agency, dialogue, and humanity in algorithmically mediated learning environments.

**Keywords:** Critical AI Literacy, Academic Writing, AI-Supported Writing

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Dr. Merve Savaşçı is a lecturer in English Language Teaching whose research focuses on L2 skills development, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking, as well as pre-service and in-service language teacher education. She has published in national and international peer-reviewed journals and serves as a reviewer for international academic journals.

*“Promoting Mindful Use of AI by Students: A Case of Creative Drama Activities”*

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In our context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), we frequently ask our learners, studying at the Tourism Faculty, to get into groups and perform drama activities, especially job-related ones. However, they, particularly lower level students, usually tend to use AI to design their roles and decide what they will say. In an attempt to promote critical and metacognitive thinking skills, we decided to conduct an action research and address the issue of mindful use of AI by students in creative drama activities. We decided to restrict the use of AI, closely observe the micro-processes during the planning of these tasks by the students, and raise their awareness in what they can do with and without AI and how AI can actually be used to boost their cognitive and metacognitive skills. As such, we identify students' self-perceived critical and metacognitive skills both quantitatively (questionnaires and checklists) and qualitatively (focus group interviews and stimulated recalls), as they prepare for drama activities with and without AI. The anticipated results include an increased use of critical thinking and metacognitive skills and higher self-awareness about purposeful use of AI for curricular task demands. It is assumed that the implications of the study are of significant relevance to the rapidly growing literature on the dichotomy of GenAI versus human-skills.

**Keywords:** Creative drama activities, Mindful use of AI

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*“Beyond One-Size-Fits-All: Proposing a New Model of Professional Knowledge for ESP Teachers”*

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Teaching effectively requires solid professional knowledge (OECD, 2009). When teachers lack it, their instruction suffers—they lose confidence, lean too heavily on textbooks, and struggle to handle unexpected classroom situations (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Rubio, 2009). Several frameworks have tried to define what professional knowledge looks like for language teachers, but most stay general and do not speak to the particular demands of specialized contexts such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Very little research has asked whether ESP teachers actually need a distinct kind of professional knowledge that goes beyond what we expect of general EFL teachers. This study tackles that question. Building on Shulman’s (1986) taxonomy and Farhady’s (2014) cross-contextual model, it puts forward a new framework called Knowledge for Specific Purposes. The framework adds a new layer to subject-matter content knowledge—Awareness and Understanding of Subject Matter—covering linguistic analysis, contextual relevance, and community-specific communicative events. A mixed-methods design was used. First, 423 stakeholders in Maritime English programs (teachers, subject specialists, students, administrators, and professionals) completed a needs assessment survey. Next, classroom observations, field notes, and interviews with 20 ESP teachers helped triangulate the survey results. These data informed the development of a Professional Knowledge of Maritime English Test, together with a Needs Assessment Scale, a Content Knowledge Test, and a Pedagogical Content Knowledge Test—all psychometrically validated. The findings point to a distinct body of professional knowledge for ESP teaching that can be reliably measured. Implications for teacher education and curriculum design are discussed.

**Keywords:** professional knowledge, ESP, teacher assessment, Maritime English

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*“Autoethnography as Powered-up Reflexive Research: Rethinking Graduate ELT  
Education through Critical Autoethnographic Narrative”*

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We are two doctoral students and English language practitioners (Presenter1 and Presenter2) and a faculty member (Presenter3) in our ELT program. In this presentation, we explore the role of autoethnography in our academic journeys, focusing on how the Critical Autoethnographic Narrative (CAN; Yazan, 2019) component of Presenter3’s doctoral-level qualitative research course reshaped our understanding of language teacher education. Drawing on Cochran-Smith and Lytle’s (1999) framework, we consider the transformation of teacher knowledge from knowledge-for-practice to knowledge-of-practice. Using CAN, we reflect on our development as teacher–researchers and the ongoing (re)construction of our professional identities through practice (Yazan, 2019) and praxis (Freire, 1972).

During Presenter3’s course, we developed our CANs collaboratively, guided by Presenter3. For this study, we revisited these narratives to examine how the process shaped our identities as English language teachers. Our preliminary findings suggest that CAN enabled us to: (a) revisit, reconstruct, and reinterpret past experiences and present practices; (b) challenge dichotomies such as heart/mind, literary/scientific, and researcher/researched; and (c) disrupt hierarchical relationships, including teacher/student and supervisor/supervisee, humanizing professional interactions. At the same time, prior assumptions about traditional “scientific” research sometimes made us question autoethnography’s legitimacy. We initially perceived CAN as overly personal, hesitated to show vulnerabilities, and produced narratives closer to autobiography than full autoethnography. Overall, we believe our collaborative work contributes to the ongoing conceptualization and application of CAN and autoethnography in ELT research.

**Keywords:** Critical Autoethnographic Narrative; Self-study, Teacher Identity; Reflexivity

Meryem Büşra Ünsal is an ELT instructor and coordinator of the Modern Languages Unit at FSM University in Istanbul. A British Council-certified IELTS instructor, she holds an MA in ELT and is a PhD candidate. Her interests include qualitative and autoethnographic research, teacher education, EAP/ESP, Aviation English, and educational technology

Esra Meşe is an ELT instructor at ITU. She has held various administrative and academic roles and is currently a PhD candidate in English Language Teaching. She has published in international peer-reviewed journals. Her research interests include in-service teacher education, educational technologies, self-regulated learning, and teacher and learner emotions.

Ufuk Keleş is an assistant professor at Bahçeşehir University's ELT Department. His teaching interests include learners' emotional narratives, multicultural education, and social justice in ELT. His research includes L2 socialization, critical discourse analysis, narrative research, autoethnography. He is interested in humanizing academia through social justice and critical pedagogy.

*“Modeling Values Beyond Syntax: Teacher as a “Democratic Agent” in the Age of Algorithms”*

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In the evolving landscape of English Language Teaching (ELT), the integration of AI has automated linguistic instruction. However, literature (e.g., Westheimer & Kahne, 2004; Banks, 2017) suggests that education's essence lies in developing "democratic citizenship competencies"—a human endeavor algorithms cannot replicate. This study explores the teacher's role as a moral and democratic agent, countering the rise of the "technician-teacher" profile. Directly relevant to the theme “Voices Beyond Algorithms,” this research seeks to reclaim the "human touch" by prioritizing empathy and critical inquiry over algorithmic efficiency. The purpose is to investigate how senior academics conceptualize the democratic teacher and identify uniquely human competencies required for 21st-century classrooms. Adopting a qualitative phenomenological design, the study utilized semi-structured interviews with senior academics in Turkey. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis using MAXQDA software, involving systematic coding to ensure inter-coder reliability. Findings reveal a discrepancy between the ideal "intellectual democratic educator" and a systemic drift toward an apolitical "technician" profile. Academics emphasized that while AI mediates syntax, only human teachers can model democratic values and foster genuine dialogue. Key barriers identified include a lack of democratic climate and increasing social isolation among educators. Insights gained suggest that "reclaiming the human touch" requires enriching teacher identity with proactive agency. Implications for ELT include reimagining classrooms as spaces for democratic participation. This shift necessitates teacher training programs to prioritize philosophical dialogue over mere algorithmic compliance.

**Keywords:** Teacher Identity, Democratic Citizenship Competencies, ELT Pedagogy.

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*“Artificial Intelligence and Translanguaging For Pre-Service Teachers’ Teaching Competencies”*

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Recent studies have highlighted the potential benefits of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and translanguaging in education. Despite the growing recognition of these concepts, pre-service teacher education programs rarely offer courses that integrate both to enhance pedagogical and technological competencies. To address this gap, this qualitative study investigates pre-service teachers’ perceptions of their teaching competencies after completing a course focused on the intersection of translanguaging and AI, with an emphasis on generative AI. Technological pedagogical content knowledge forms the theoretical framework. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and reflective journals and analysed using thematic analysis. The findings indicate that pre-service teachers evolved from AI alarmists to critical and optimistic AI users, and from mono-oriented pedagogues to multi-oriented pedagogues. Implications are discussed.

**Keywords:** artificial intelligence, translanguaging, pre-service teachers, teaching competencies

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*“Humanising Speaking Assessment through Digital Mediation: A Pathway to Learner Agency and Well-Being”*

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Speaking assessment in EFL contexts is often associated with high levels of anxiety, particularly when conducted face to face in classroom settings where peer presence, noise, and fear of judgment may negatively influence learner performance. This classroom-based action research investigates how redesigning speaking assessment through a digitally mediated format can support learners’ agency and emotional well-being while preserving the human dimensions of language learning.

The study was conducted with 11th-grade EFL students at B1–B2 proficiency level. In the first phase, students completed traditional face-to-face speaking exams administered individually in the classroom. Observations revealed heightened anxiety and concentration difficulties, which were later confirmed through student feedback collected via Google Forms. In response, the assessment method was redesigned. In the second phase, speaking exams were conducted in a digital environment where students selected their preferred date and time, received speaking topics in advance, and participated in group-based tasks accompanied by unique follow-up questions. To enhance transparency and trust, students were provided with voice recordings of their performances and detailed feedback sheets.

Data were collected through questionnaires and teacher observations. Findings indicate a notable reduction in reported anxiety levels, increased learner agency, and more positive perceptions of fairness and focus in the digitally mediated assessment. Importantly, the use of technology did not diminish teacher presence; rather, structured feedback and transparency practices strengthened the human connection between teacher and learners. This study argues that technology, when used ethically and reflectively, can serve to reclaim empathy, trust, and student voice in language assessment.

**Keywords:** human-centred assessment, digital mediation, learner agency

Dr. Nevin Avci is an EFL teacher and curriculum scholar with a Ph.D. from METU. Her work focuses on digital pedagogies, multiliteracies, and teacher agency. She conducts classroom-based research on technology-enhanced assessment, learner well-being, and transformative learning, including recent studies on fostering learner agency in speaking assessment.

*“Students’ Preferences and Experiences with Peer and Teacher Feedback in English Language Learning”*

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This study examines how second language learners experience and evaluate peer and teacher feedback in English language learning. The participants were 70 freshman students studying English as a second language at the International University of Sarajevo during the 2025 academic year. Data were collected in December 2025 to explore students’ perceptions of feedback and differences in their preferences across receptive skills (reading and listening) and productive skills (writing and speaking).

A qualitative research design was adopted. Data were gathered through online focus group discussions conducted via Zoom and Teams. The sessions, guided by 20 open-ended questions, lasted about 90 minutes and produced approximately 40,000 words of transcribed data. A deductive qualitative content analysis was conducted using MAXQDA 2020. To ensure reliability, the researchers coded the data independently, with no major discrepancies identified.

Three main themes emerged. First, teacher feedback was the dominant form of feedback, while opportunities for peer feedback were limited, especially in receptive skill tasks. Second, students preferred peer feedback for receptive skills, describing it as interactive, supportive, and less stressful. In contrast, teacher feedback was favored for productive skills because it was viewed as more accurate and authoritative. Finally, peer feedback was associated with positive emotional and motivational effects, whereas teacher feedback was valued for its precision and instructional reliability.

Overall, the findings highlight the importance of balancing peer and teacher feedback to address both emotional and academic needs.

**Keywords:** peer feedback; teacher feedback; L2 Learning skills, ELT

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*“Teacher Research Literacy as Professional Culture: Institutional Contexts, Professional Identity, and Pathways to Sustainable Engagement”*

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Research literacy constitutes a central dimension of teacher professionalism, enabling educators to critically engage with academic literature, evaluate its relevance, and integrate research findings into pedagogical practice. Despite its recognized importance for strengthening professional identity and instructional effectiveness, engagement with research among ELT practitioners remains uneven and context-dependent, shaped by institutional conditions, prior research training, motivation, and professional self-conceptions. This study seeks to develop a comprehensive understanding of how ELT practitioners conceptualise and enact research literacy, the factors that facilitate or constrain their engagement, and how research literacy can be more effectively embedded in professional development. The study was conducted in two higher education institutions in Türkiye, a state university and a foundation university, to ensure institutional diversity, and sixteen EFL instructors working in schools of foreign languages participated. A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was employed, in which quantitative data were collected through the Teacher Research Literacy Scale and qualitative data were generated via in-depth semi-structured interviews. The two datasets were analysed separately and integrated during interpretation. Findings reveal considerable variation in teacher research literacy engagement, with postgraduate education emerging as a key differentiating factor, as instructors holding advanced degrees reported more frequent and confident engagement due to structured exposure to research methods and academic writing. However, institutional contexts were generally permissive rather than directive, and sustained development of research literacy appeared to depend less on formal qualifications alone and more on ongoing, practice-oriented, and collaborative professional learning opportunities embedded within institutional cultures.

**Keywords:** teacher research literacy, professional development, ELT practitioners

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*“Human Factors Contributing to Success in a COIL Program”*

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In today’s interconnected world, language learners need to improve their skills to communicate more efficiently with people from various backgrounds. Pre-service language teachers themselves need advanced speaking skills and improved intercultural communicative competence to equip their future students with the necessary skills in the 21st century. This presentation examines how some specific human factors contribute to the success of a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) program designed for pre-service language teachers by enhancing their oral proficiency, fluency, and confidence through authentic and cross-cultural interaction.

Through COIL programs, participants engage in real-time conversations with peers from different countries, which provides them with an opportunity to practice spontaneous communication and get exposed to diverse cultural communication styles. However, being able to collaborate efficiently within international teams requires improved communication skills and being able to get on well with their teammates since they play a significant role in the success of such programs.

Drawing on reflections and outcomes from a study conducted by the presenters, this presentation highlights what human factors may enable participants to have a smoother COIL experience and hold more efficient international online meetings to be able to complete the assigned tasks more appropriately. The human factors which will be shared may help program designers and staff to guide their students better for effective global communication.

**Keywords:** COIL, human factors contributing to success

Öznur ALVER graduated from Middle East Technical University and completed her MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (MATEFL) in 2017. She earned a PhD in 2025 from METU (8ELT). Her interest areas are Intercultural Communicative Competence and COIL programs, internationalized higher education, digital collaboration, and intercultural learning.

*“Teacher as Curator: Integrating Micro-Video Content to Foster Human Connection in Algorithm-Driven Language Classrooms”*

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In many English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms, students spend more time with short social media videos (TikTok, Reels) than with formal learning resources. While these videos can expose learners to real-world language use, they often lack pedagogical structure and can easily lead to student distraction. With upper-secondary and young adult learners (A2–B1), teacher intervention is essential.

Grounded in Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982), Vygotsky’s ZPD (1978), and Sweller’s Cognitive Load Theory (2010), this session presents a practical approach where the teacher acts as a digital curator, filtering and contextualizing short videos for meaningful classroom use. This role directly aligns with the conference theme Voices Beyond Algorithms, emphasizing the teacher’s human guidance in algorithm-driven environments.

The main objective is to demonstrate how micro-videos can foster emotional engagement, cultural awareness, and language analysis. I will introduce a three-stage routine: pre-viewing (lowering anxiety), guided micro-viewing (managing cognitive load), and post-viewing tasks (scaffolded academic output). Currently implementing this with A2–B1 learners, I will share preliminary observations, challenges, and student responses.

By the end, participants will be able to critically evaluate videos, design simple pre/post-viewing tasks, and identify key ethical considerations (age-appropriateness, source attribution, algorithmic diversity). In the Q&A, we will discuss adapting the “teacher as curator” framework to diverse contexts.

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**Keywords:** Social media in ELT; Teacher as Curator

Özge Hüseyinoğlu is a third-year undergraduate student in English Language Teaching at Yıldız Technical University, Turkey, with research interests in digital tools, learner engagement, and teacher agency.

*“Designing for Quality in ELT: From Principles to Practice”*

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Quality in English language teaching is often articulated through standards, quality assurance processes, and accreditation frameworks. Yet many language programs struggle to translate these formal quality commitments into coherent and sustainable practices across units and stakeholders. This workshop reframes quality as an ecosystem-level design challenge rather than a compliance exercise.

Drawing on quality culture and quality leadership perspectives, the session introduces a practical “quality-by-design” approach that academic leaders can use to align strategy, support structures, and learner experience within language programs. The session examines how leaders intentionally shape the organizational conditions in which quality can emerge and be sustained.

Through an interactive Quality Design Lab, participants will work in small groups to map a familiar language program process (e.g., student support flow, feedback loops, or co-curricular engagement) and identify hidden quality gaps and misalignments. Using three quality-design lenses—alignment, visibility of learning value, and sustainability—participants will (re)design the process and stress-test their solutions through structured peer dialogue.

The workshop emphasizes how small but intentional structural adjustments at the program level can generate meaningful and visible improvements in student experience and program effectiveness. By the end of the session, participants will leave with (1) a practical quality-mapping template, (2) a rapid facilitation protocol for leading quality conversations, and (3) at least one immediately applicable enhancement idea for their own context.

**Keywords:** Quality culture; Quality leadership; Quality by design

Dr. Özge Coşkun Aysal is Assistant Director at the School of Foreign Languages, İzmir University of Economics, leading quality assurance initiatives. She is a CEA and DEDAK reviewer, Equals consultant, former TESOL Türkiye LAMSIG Coordinator, and current Executive Board Member of TESOL Türkiye QUASIG.

*“Transcending Borders: The Role of Global Exposure in the Development of English Language Teacher Identity”*

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The increasing global interaction of today's classrooms has brought with it various requirements in terms of teacher capabilities. International experiences serve as a catalyst for strengthening the language and cultural competencies needed to meet these requirements. This study examines intercultural interactions of Turkish language teachers instructing English in schools both in Europe and in Türkiye. Eight participants with a variety of international experiences—particularly Erasmus+ internships—were interviewed one-on-one through video conferencing to discover how their intercultural experiences affected their language, cultural, and pedagogical growth. Despite the differences in their experiences, participants reported being more innovative in their teaching approaches and encouraged to take risks in terms of adaptability, in particular their developing language proficiency and intercultural competence. The vitality of multicultural encounters for language instructors in improving and transforming their capacity to comprehend and incorporate the unique aspects of teaching English into the globalized classroom was highlighted by these results. This research offers concrete outcomes for language instructors who want to broaden their horizons and cultivate a culturally sensitive attitude to satisfy the varied expectations of students in multicultural and multilingual classrooms.

**Keywords:** International experiences, Intercultural competence, Language instructions, Multiculturalism

Özgönül Yılmaz is a graduate student in English Language Teaching at Ondokuz Mayıs University. During her undergraduate studies, she conducted a TÜBİTAK 2209-A research project and gained teaching experience in Poland through the Erasmus+internship program. Her professional interests include language teacher education, culture teaching, intercultural competence, and World Englishes.

Assoc. Prof. Betül Bal Gezeğin is an Associate Professor in English Language Teaching at Ondokuz Mayıs University. She leads multiple TÜBİTAK-supported projects, supervises graduate theses, and has published extensively on corpus linguistics, applied linguistics, and teacher education in peer-reviewed journals, books, and international conferences.

*“My multiple languages mirror my plural identity”: Dialogue through language portraits in transnational higher education”*

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The multi/plural turn in applied linguistics has progressively legitimized plurality and hybridity in language use and identity (Kubota, 2016). Given the internationalization of higher education and expanding study abroad experiences (Hernandez-Torrano et al., 2024), fostering awareness of linguistic identities has become pedagogically crucial. This study explores how postgraduate students articulate and reflect on their multilingual selves through identity-oriented classroom practices.

Adopting a mini-ethnographic case study design (Fusch et al., 2017), the research draws on short-term yet intensive engagement during an Erasmus mobility visit to an English language department at a Tunisian university. The case comprises five master’s students who participated in a seminar introducing the multilingual subject (Kramersch, 2009). Data were generated through field texts, a demographic/background survey, language portraits accompanied by written narratives, and a creative bumper-sticker task eliciting concise multilingual self-definitions, alongside digitally mediated prolonged engagement via WhatsApp discussion prompts.

Preliminary cross-case analysis reveals that participants positioned their languages beyond communicative function, perceiving them as personally meaningful resources closely linked to belonging, aspiration, and self-expression. The visual and metaphorical affordances of the portrait activity enabled students to verbalize otherwise tacit dimensions of identity, while reflective tasks supported the articulation of multilingual self-concepts. The study further demonstrates how guided pedagogical spaces can foster recognition of the dynamic and layered nature of linguistic repertoires.

By highlighting the pedagogical potential of language portrait practices (Busch, 2018), this paper contributes to ongoing discussions of multilingual identity and offers practical implications for integrating identity-focused reflection into transnational higher education contexts.

**Keywords:** multilingualism, linguistic identities, language portraits, transnational dialogue

Pınar Yeni-Palabıyık is an assistant professor at Sakarya University of Applied Sciences, Türkiye. She holds a PhD in English Language Teaching from Middle East Technical University. Her research focuses on multilingualism, linguistic identity, transnationalism, language teacher identity, teacher professionalism, and language education policy.

*“Technical and Pedagogical Feasibility of AI-Mediated Chatbots for Assessing Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Speaking Skills”*

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This study aims to investigate the technical and pedagogical feasibility of an AI-mediated chatbot to assess the English speaking skills of B1-B2 level pre-service EFL students at a Turkish state university. By offering interactional environments with rich language input and personalized feedback, generative AI (GenAI), like ChatGPT, is changing the field of ELT. (Sim, Kim, & Ku, 2025). Drawing on Nguyen and Kim's (2025) chatbot-based assessment framework, the study extends prior research conducted with low-level learners to an upper-intermediate EFL context. The participants of this study will be comprised of freshman students at the Department of English Language Teaching who are enrolled in the Oral Communication course, which is one of the compulsory courses in the program. A chatbot-based English Speaking Test (C-EST) will be administered and scored by independent evaluators. Afterwards, it will be compared with a traditional face-to-face speaking test (F-EST) to examine score equivalence and task effectiveness across small talk, mission-based interaction, and imitative speaking tasks. Secondly, students' perceptions of speaking anxiety related to chatbot-mediated assessment will be explored. To explore participants' perceptions of speaking anxiety levels, a qualitative, face-to-face interview approach will be employed. Based on quantitative data from pre-test and post-test results and qualitative data from interviews, a mixed-methods study approach will be conducted as the research design for this study. The findings are expected to contribute to ongoing discussions on the pedagogical and technical viability of AI-assisted speaking assessment and its potential role in supporting scalable and sustainable assessment practices in resource-constrained EFL contexts.

**Keywords:** AI-mediated chatbot, English speaking assessment, EFL

Sakibe Özdemir I am an English teacher and MA student in English Language Teaching at Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University. With a high academic English score and international study experience in Hungary, I actively teach English to diverse age groups. My research interests involve meaningful task implementation with technology.

Ahmet Mahmut Oturak is an MA student in English Language Teaching at Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University. As a Bartın University graduate, his primary research interests encompass AI-assisted language learning, teacher education, and exploring the ethical dimensions of AI integration in EFL contexts.

*“Are you in The Loop? Mediating Idioms through Cultural and Personal Connection”*

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This workshop transforms idiom instruction into a dynamic process of linguistic mediation through an energetic, participant-centered approach. Moving beyond rote memorization, 'The Loop' guides attendees through a six-stage collaborative framework ranging from initial decoding and translanguaging to historical context and personal relevance. Through hands-on, station-based activities that bridge language and culture, participants navigate these layers to facilitate the co-construction of meaning. Attendees will leave with a replicable framework and adaptable classroom strategies suitable for various proficiency levels, equipped to help learners bridge the gap between literal decoding and authentic, nuanced fluency.

**Keywords:** idioms, collaborative, active learning, figurative language, translanguaging

Sarah is a U.S. Department of State English Language Fellow at the Izmir University of Economics. She teaches undergraduate English courses and leads innovative workshops throughout Türkiye and the Caucasus region. With global experience in higher education and K–12 settings, she brings an energetic, learner-centered approach to language education.

*“A Comparative Analysis of (Multimodal) Metadiscourse Markers in Printed and Digitalised “Empower” EFL Coursebook Series”*

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Today, the increasing integration of digitalised EFL coursebooks has mostly altered language classrooms, enabling them to transform from largely print-oriented textual materials into a more dynamic multimodal learning environment. Although previous studies on metadiscourse have extensively investigated how authors organise their discourse and engage readers across various fields, little attention has been paid to how metadiscursive devices function within instructional discourse in digital EFL coursebooks, particularly to the comparison between the use of metadiscourse resources in printed and digitalised coursebooks. This comparative corpus-based study investigates how (multimodal) metadiscourse markers are distributed and function across printed and digitalised Empower EFL coursebook series. Drawing on Hyland’s (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse, visual and layout-based realisations will be operationalised following De Groot et al. (2015), with semiotic interpretation informed by Kress and van Leeuwen’s (2001) visual grammar. A corpus of equivalent units from printed and digitalised units from the Empower series was compared to identify the distribution of metadiscourse markers and to examine how metadiscursive resources are re-semiotised across different modes. The findings of this study are anticipated to show that digitalised versions display a higher density and diversity of interactive metadiscourse markers, such as clickable glosses, whereas interactional metadiscourse markers were utilised less overall. Also, this study was expected to reveal the shift in redistribution of metadiscourse resources from textual to other modalities. Accordingly, the study's findings might inform teachers and (digital) coursebook and material designers in constructing the pedagogical voice and relational presence within the digital learning environments.

**Keywords:** multimodal metadiscourse markers, printed, digitalised coursebooks

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*“Telecollaboration and Dialogic Engagement as the Core of Language Education”*

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As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly embedded in language education, contemporary discourse on artificial intelligence in language education frequently frames learning in terms of optimization, personalization, and adaptive efficiency. Such developments are pedagogically valuable; however, they are grounded in an understanding of learning that treats language learning as an individual cognitive process responsive to predictive systems. Language learning, however, is not solely the refinement of linguistic performance. It is a relational process in which meaning is co-constructed, identities are negotiated, and ethical positioning unfolds in interaction with others. The human dimension of language education lies in the unpredictability, vulnerability, and ethical responsibility that arise when learners encounter difference in real interaction. Telecollaboration represents a form of digital mediation grounded in this dialogic understanding of learning. Telecollaborative exchanges require participants to negotiate meaning across linguistic, cultural, and ideological boundaries. Because they are unscripted and ethically situated, they create conditions for the development of intercultural awareness, recognition of plurality, and dispositions associated with global citizenship. Within this framework, artificial intelligence provides a supportive role in task design, preparatory scaffolding, or reflective structuring, yet it does not replace the ethical and relational work of human dialogue. Re-centering telecollaboration foregrounds relational mediation as the core of language education and reframes innovation as the design of digital spaces that sustain, rather than simulate, human encounter. In this session, we will discuss the implications of telecollaboration exchanges referring insights drawn from telecollaborative projects we have conducted since 2015.

**Keywords:** Telecollaboration, dialogic engagement, intercultural awareness, relational learning

Sedat Akayođlu is a Professor at the Department of Foreign Language Education, Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University. His research interests include CALL, virtual exchange, and culture in English language teaching. His current projects include designing and implementing telecollaboration initiatives to enhance pre-service teachers' intercultural communicative competence.

Baburhan Uzum is a Professor in the Bilingual/ESL Education in the School of Teaching and Learning at Sam Houston State University. He is currently preparing teacher candidates in the US to teach emergent bilingual students in content area classrooms. His research focuses on teacher identity, teacher agency, technology-enhanced teacher education.

*“Beyond Algorithms: Structured AI Interaction to Support Speaking and Writing  
Development in Language Classrooms”*

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As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes increasingly embedded in language education, a critical question emerges: who remains in control of the learning process? This sharing session presents a Human-in-the-Loop (HITL) AI model implemented at Bahçeşehir University Preparatory Program to support the development of productive skills through structured and guided in-class and out-of-class practice. Rather than allowing students to engage with AI tools in unstructured or random ways, this model, implemented for nearly two years, positions teachers as active designers of the interaction loop.

Within this framework, the program designers create tailor-made prompts aligned with institutional objectives, proficiency levels (A1–B2), and specific skill outcomes in writing and speaking. Students access Custom GPTs, designed for tasks such as brainstorming, paragraph development, essay writing, and guided speaking practice, where context, criteria, and overall objectives are carefully embedded. Therefore, AI provides immediate, formative feedback, while human oversight ensures pedagogical alignment, ethical use, and skill-focused progression.

By maintaining a human agency within the system, the model transforms AI from an autonomous content generator into a scaffolded learning partner. To this end, this session will outline the conceptual distinction between Human-on-the-Loop and Human-in-the-Loop approaches and demonstrate how structured prompting enhances feedback quality, keeps learners on track, and strengthens productive skill development.

Participants will leave with a practical, replicable framework for integrating AI into their own contexts while preserving the human touch at the heart of language learning.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Human-in-the-Loop, Structured Teaching, Feedback, Scaffolding

Senanur Çınar is an Assistant Professor and Professional Development Specialist at Bahçeşehir University. Beyond her role as an EFL instructor and teacher trainer, she specializes in AI integration, lesson design, and program evaluation. Her research focuses on bilingualism, second language acquisition, corrective feedback, and innovative instructional design in higher education.

Mürüvvet Çolakoğlu, PhD, is an English Language Instructor and Curriculum Developer at Bahçeşehir University Preparatory Program. With extensive experience in language assessment and program design, she focuses on improving productive skills in higher education. Her research interests include assessment, learning design, technology-enhanced learning, and principled integration of AI-supported classroom practices.

*“The Intersection of Emotional Labor and Identity Construction in Alternative English Language Teacher Certification”*

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Through a qualitative approach, this study aims to uncover the emotional labor strategies utilized by pre-service English language teacher candidates during their practicum, specifically addressing how such experiences inform and transform their emerging teacher personas. The study is designed to capture the cognitive and emotional dimensions of how pre-service teacher candidates evolve professionally. It specifically investigates the complex interplay between emotional labor and identity formation within a pedagogical formation course, serving as an alternative path to teacher certification. Data were collected through eight-week teacher candidate diaries and semi-structured individual interviews. The participants consisted of six pre-service English language teacher candidates who are enrolled in the pedagogical formation program. The data were analysed using the thematic analysis method suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). The findings indicated that emotional labor processes were not only a burden but also a core element in the formation of teacher identity. The participants' intense feelings of anxiety, inadequacy and excitement in the first weeks progressively transformed into a more conscious emotional awareness. Empathizing, developing emotional control and developing classroom strategies skills were effective in strengthening their identities. These findings suggest that pre-service teacher candidates should be equipped not only with technical knowledge but also with emotional resilience.

**Keywords:** Emotional labor, teacher identity, alternative certification

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*“The Potential of ChatGPT-5.0 for Syntactic Simplification and Complexification”*

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Syntactic complexity is a key indicator of language development and an essential component of L2 writing performance. This study investigates the potential of ChatGPT-5 as a text editor for syntactic simplification and complexification across different proficiency levels. While previous research has primarily focused on ChatGPT’s role in automated scoring and feedback, its capacity to align text difficulty remains largely unexplored. To address this gap, CEFR-aligned reading texts were selected from widely used EFL coursebooks in Turkish university preparatory programs: Speak Out, Language Hub, Headway, and Empower. One non-dialogic reading text was chosen from each unit, resulting in a corpus of 208 texts across multiple proficiency levels. Large-grained syntactic complexity measures were analyzed using L2SCA, while fine-grained measures were examined through TAASSC. A mixed-model ANOVA was conducted to assess the effects of proficiency level and text version on syntactic complexity. Qualitative analysis further explored structural changes. The study aims to provide empirical evidence for modeling text difficulty and to evaluate ChatGPT-5’s potential in assessment contexts such as placement testing, achievement exams, and materials development.

**Keywords:** Syntactic complexity, AI-assisted text generation

Sibel Avcı Korkmaz holds a BA degree in English Language Teaching and is currently completing her MA thesis in the field of English Language Education at Ankara Social Sciences University.

*“Mapping AI Use in ELT: EFL Instructors’ Decisions, Boundaries, and Justifications”*

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Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are increasingly available to language teachers, yet instructors differ widely in how they incorporate these tools into everyday teaching work. This qualitative study explores where AI fits and where it does not in EFL instructors’ instructional practices by examining their most common AI uses, deliberate non-uses, and the rationales shaping these decisions. Using convenience sampling, the study will recruit approximately 8–12 EFL instructors. Data will be collected through structured interviews designed to elicit concrete classroom and professional scenarios and the decision-making principles behind them. The interview focuses on instructors’ typical AI-supported tasks, tasks from which instructors intentionally exclude AI, and the criteria and contextual factors influencing their choices. Interview data will be analysed using reflexive thematic analysis to identify patterns in instructors’ decision-making, boundary-setting, and trust-building practices. By mapping practical uses alongside explicit constraints and justifications, the study aims to present an empirically grounded picture of AI adoption from instructors’ perspectives in ELT. Findings are expected to clarify how teachers negotiate utility and risk in AI adoption and to inform professional development and institutional guidance that supports responsible, pedagogically meaningful AI use.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, English Language Teaching, Instructional Decision-Making

Şeyma Yıldırım graduated from Gazi University in 2011. She earned an MA in ELT from Çağ University (2014) and a PhD in ELT from Çukurova University (2021). She is an Assistant Professor at Hasan Kalyoncu University, focusing on teacher education and AI and educational technology in ELT.

*“We Keep the Human Touch: Developing and Implementing an In-House Proficiency Exam”*

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This presentation highlights the vital role of human expertise in crafting and delivering high-stakes proficiency tests. Drawing on Middle East Technical University's (METU) English Proficiency Exam (EPE)—developed for an English-medium instruction institution—it provides a practical roadmap for creating, administering, and sustaining an in-house test within a university context.

The session begins with an overview of the EPE's structure and underlying construct, then examines core practices ensuring test quality, including a rigorous multi-stage item review process. Next, it explores reliability and scoring consistency through rater training, standardization protocols, and double marking. Finally, the session addresses large-scale administration, covering coordinated scheduling, accessibility measures, secure delivery, and comprehensive documentation for proctors, assessors, and test takers.

**Keywords:** Language proficiency, language assessment, test development, test administration

*“Stable WTC, Shifting Goals: A Mixed-Methods Study of Intercultural Interaction in EFL”*

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This mixed-methods study examined whether intercultural interaction through exchange shifts EFL learners' willingness to communicate (WTC) and how learners describe motivational change beyond what scales capture. Over two semesters, three intact classes participated: one exchange cohort (Group A), one non-exchange cohort (Group B, comparison), and a second exchange cohort (Group C). All groups completed anonymous pre- and post-WTC surveys (10 items; 6-point Likert; adapted from Peng & Woodrow, 2010) (Group A n=22/22; Group B n=23/16; Group C n=78/75) and provided open-ended pre- and post-responses on learning goals and strategies. In Group C, post-measures also assessed the effects of intercultural exchange on confidence, anxiety, and “willingness to try,” which made speaking feel possible and fostered future contexts for English use. Quantitative results showed stable WTC means across cohorts (no significant pre-to-post differences), suggesting that short-term intercultural experiences may not immediately increase readiness to speak in class. Open-ended responses were coded thematically, guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) categories: attitudes, subjective norms, perceived control, and intentions. Qualitative findings showed shifts in learner voice in the exchange cohorts: goals often shifted from test- or requirement-driven orientations toward communication, interaction, and real-world use, alongside more concrete action plans (e.g., increased output practice and strategic use of digital tools). Interpreted through TPB, these shifts suggest changing intentions and attitudes alongside persistent norms and control constraints, helping explain stable WTC scores. Findings highlight the value of pairing WTC measures with learner-voiced, motivation-sensitive prompts to reclaim the human dimensions of language learning in intercultural ELT.

**Keywords:** Intercultural interaction, WTC, Theory of Planned Behavior

Tomoe Sato is an assistant professor at Toyo University in Japan. Her research focuses on learner motivation, intercultural communication, and EMI readiness in higher education. Using a classroom-based mixed-methods design, she examines how pedagogical experiences shape students' goals, engagement, and perceived challenges.

*“Voices Beyond Algorithms: Co-constructing Responsible Well-being in the Secondary EFL Classroom”*

Tuğba Kahraman

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In an era dominated by algorithmic precision and AI-driven instruction, the human essence of the language classroom resides in the relational space between its participants. This study investigates the formation of learner well-being within secondary-level English classes, moving beyond individualistic psychological metrics. Instead, it adopts the lens of responsible well-being (adapted from Herrera & Darragh, 2024), which posits that flourishing is an ethical, shared process rooted in social responsibility and mutual care. Grounded in Complex Dynamic Systems Theory (CDST), this study conceptualizes learner well-being as an emergent and non-linear phenomenon that is co-constructed through the real-time fluctuations of classroom interactions and pedagogical activities.

Through a qualitative lens, the research examines how classroom activities, teacher-student rapport, and peer-to-peer interactions serve as sites for reclaiming the human touch. Data collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews reveal how well-being is dynamically shaped not by technology, but by empathy and agency exercised in human connection. Preliminary analysis revealed that responsible well-being functions as a complex, emergent system where teacher rapport and task relevance act as co-dependent variables, collectively shaping the resilience and emotional engagement of secondary school learners. By highlighting these “Voices Beyond Algorithms”, the study argues that the future of ELT instruction must prioritize the cultivation of resilient, emotionally engaged learning environments that safeguard the humane dimensions of education against increasing automation.

Reference: Pentón Herrera, L. J., & Darragh, J. J. (2024). Social-emotional learning in English language teaching. University of Michigan Press.

**Keywords:** Responsible well-being, positive psychology, humanistic education.

Tuğba Kahraman has been working as an EFL teacher for the MoNE for 16 years. She is also an MA student at Aksaray University ELT Department. Currently, she is conducting her thesis research on student well-being. Her research interests are qualitative research and positive psychology in ELT.

Ayşe Kızıldağ has worked as a teacher educator at Aksaray University since 2012. Her research interests are qualitative methods, classroom research, and emotional engagement of preservice EFL teachers. Her most recent publication is a peer-reviewed article titled "Fostering EFL pre-service teachers' language activism in Türkiye", co-authored with Amber N. Warren.

*“A Formative Evaluation of an English for Academic Purposes Course Using the CIPP Model”*

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This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the English for Academic Purposes II (ENG102) course given at a foundation university based on the opinions of the students. The study was designed as a descriptive design and the student-level adapted version of the teacher-based CIPP program evaluation scale was used as the data collection tool. 404 undergraduate students who completed the ENG102 course participated in the study and the collected data were analyzed through descriptive statistics. The findings reveal that the students generally approached the context, input, process and product dimensions of the program positively. The findings suggest the need for improved alignment with classroom conditions and learner backgrounds, enrichment of instructional materials and resources, increased time for engaging and interactive learning activities, and more personalized, motivation-enhancing practices to better support students' academic English development. The study aims to contribute to the student-centered improvement of EAP-based programs.

Keywords:

**Keywords:** CIPP model, English for Academic Purposes, evaluation

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*“Teaching Minds, Reaching Hearts: Social Emotional Learning in the Language Classroom”*

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This workshop is grounded in the belief that effective language learning is fundamentally a dialogic meaning-making process in which emotions play a central role. Language classrooms are not only cognitive spaces but also social environments where learners negotiate identity, take risks, and construct meaning through interaction. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) offers a human-centered framework that supports these processes by fostering empathy, self-awareness, and meaningful relationships.

Aligned with the theme “Voices Beyond Algorithms: Reclaiming the Human Touch in Language Learning,” the workshop positions SEL as a way of foregrounding the human dimensions of language education. It invites participants to reconsider teaching as a relational and ethical practice in which learners’ voices, emotions, and lived experiences shape engagement and communication.

The session aims to help teachers understand what SEL is, why it matters in the language classroom, and how it can be integrated into everyday practice without adding curricular burden. Designed as an interactive experience, the workshop begins with a brief mindfulness warm-up, followed by three stages: an introduction to SEL concepts with guided reflection, collaborative discussion of its relevance to communication and learner participation, and hands-on exploration of sample activities where participants adapt or design tasks incorporating SEL principles. The session concludes with a whole-group reflection.

Participants will leave with practical classroom strategies and a deeper awareness of how emotionally supportive environments enhance interaction, confidence, and belonging, reaffirming the teacher’s role in placing human connection at the heart of language learning.

**Keywords:** SEL, Humanistic ELT, Learner Wellbeing, Emotional Engagement

Tuğçe Erkmen is an ELT professional holding a BA in English Linguistics and an MA in ELT from Hacettepe University. With 15 years of teaching experience, she has been working at İzmir University of Economics since 2016, where she serves as a course coordinator and contributes to teacher development initiatives.

*“Teaching Language through Literary Narratives: A Humanising Approach to English Language Teaching”*

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Language learning extends beyond the acquisition of linguistic structures; it involves interaction with meaning, emotion, and human experience. Literary narratives provide a powerful means of promoting such engagement in the English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom. Rather than functioning solely as sources of linguistic input, literary texts expose learners to diverse perspectives and lived experiences, encouraging empathy and deeper personal connection. In this context, this presentation examines the role of literary narratives as a pedagogical resource for developing empathy and meaningful learner involvement in English Language Teaching, arguing that the integration of literature supports not only linguistic development but also emotional awareness, interpretive agency, and deeper personal involvement in the language learning process. Drawing on humanistic language teaching and Louise Rosenblatt’s reader-response theory, which conceptualises reading as a transactional process between reader and text, this study highlights how literary texts encourages learners to move beyond mechanical language use toward deeper interpretive and affective involvement. Through interaction with literary characters, situations, and perspectives, learners develop empathy while strengthening their interpretive and expressive abilities. Although the integration of literature in ELT may present certain pedagogical challenges, literary narratives nonetheless create learner-centred environments in which learners actively construct meaning and participate in language in personally meaningful ways. This approach highlights the value of literature in supporting not only linguistic competence but also the development of empathetic, reflective, and engaged language users in diverse educational contexts today.

**Keywords:** Literary Narratives, ELT, Humanistic Language Teaching

Tuğçe SOYGÜL holds a PhD in English Language and Literature from Hacettepe University. Her research focuses on fantasy literature, mythology, and the contemporary British novel. She works as a lecturer at the University of Turkish Aeronautical Association. Her MA in British Cultural Studies focused on fan studies and reader-response theory.

*“Constructing Shared Meaning in Writing Assessment through Sequential Standardization Meetings”*

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In the diverse landscape of English Preparatory Programs, achieving interrater reliability is often a challenge that extends beyond simple rule following. This study investigates the impact of a seven-week writing standardization program conducted at a foundation university’s preparatory school. The primary aim was to move beyond mechanical grading and explore how 24 language instructors perceive and internalize standardized assessment criteria.

The intervention consisted of weekly sessions where teachers engaged in collaborative marking, moderated discussions, and "think-aloud" protocols to unpack the nuances of the writing rubric. To capture the qualitative shift in teacher cognition, data were collected through perception surveys and reflective focus group interviews. We specifically focused on the process of meaning construction and how teachers bridge the gap between a static document (the rubric) and the dynamic reality of student production.

Preliminary findings suggest that while initial sessions focused on "correcting" grades, the longitudinal nature of the standardization program allowed teachers to develop a shared pedagogical understanding. Results indicate that teachers felt more empowered and consistent in their feedback; however, they also reported a complex negotiation between their individual teaching philosophies and the institutional demand for standardization. This presentation will discuss the implications for professional development, suggesting that standardization is not a one-time event, but a continuous social process that significantly shapes how writing is valued and taught in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Writing Assessment, Interrater Reliability, Standardization

Dr. Tuğçe Temir works as the director at the University of Turkish Aeronautical Association. She received her MA and PhD degrees from Hacettepe University, ELT Department. Her interests include reflective practices, student empowerment, curriculum development, teacher development, and classroom discourse.

Ayşe Karataş holds a BA in English Language Teaching from Middle East Technical University and an MA in English Language Teaching from Gazi University. She has been working at UTAA for over ten years and currently serves as a curriculum developer. Her professional interests include curriculum innovation to enhance learning.

Betül Çelik received her BA in ELT from METU and her MA in ELT from Ufuk University. She has been working at University of Turkish Aeronautical University since 2015 and currently serves as Vice Director for Academic Affairs. Her work focuses on curriculum design, assessment practices, and teacher development.

*“Reimagining the Human Touch in ELT: Identity Negotiation among Literature and Translation Majors during Practicum”*

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In contemporary ELT teacher education, policy reforms emphasizing standardized competencies and measurable outcomes have reshaped the conceptualization of professional preparation. This shift raises questions about how relational, interpretive, and context-sensitive dimensions of teaching are recognized and enacted. These tensions are particularly visible among candidates entering the profession through alternative pathways, including graduates of English Literature and Translation and Interpreting programs. While these candidates are often perceived as lacking conventional pedagogical preparation within established ELT frameworks, they may offer an alternative perspective that foregrounds the interpretive and affective dimensions of language learning.

Teacher candidates in the Literature and Translation departments bring distinct disciplinary repertoires to the language classroom. While literature-based candidates draw on the interpretive, historical, and affective depth of texts, translation-based candidates furnish Turkish EFL classrooms with sensitivity to cultural mediation, plurality of meaning, and context-bound language use.

Grounded in situated learning theory, this qualitative case study examines how ten candidates navigate professional agency across two contrasting practicum contexts. Drawing on reflective journals and semi-structured interviews, the study explores how institutional environments shape identity negotiation.

Preliminary findings suggest that candidates from alternative pathways are uniquely positioned to foster learner voice and emotional engagement. Reclaiming the human essence of ELT may therefore require a shift from “teacher-as-instructor” to “teacher-as-mediator,” integrating literary and translational perspectives to sustain the profession’s human core.

**Keywords:** Teacher Identity, Alternative Pathways, Situated Learning, Practicum

Ufuk Ataş is an Associate Professor at Artvin Çoruh University, Türkiye. His scholarship examines language teacher and teacher educator identity, agency, and professional development, with attention to lived experience and meaning-making. He publishes internationally, collaborates in cross-European research initiatives, and co-chairs the ATEE Research and Development Community “Empowering Teacher Education.”

Özlem Erdem Çavdar is a researcher and instructor at Artvin Çoruh University. She holds a BA in English Language Teaching from METU and a PhD in English Language and Literature from Atatürk University (2025). Her scholarship explores innovative pedagogies, including flipped classroom, blended learning, translanguaging, and teaching writing.

Serkan Ertin received his DPhil degree in English Literature from METU in 2012. His research is pursued through an interdisciplinary framework bringing literature into dialogue with sociology, psychology, and philosophy. At his current university, he teaches various literature and translation courses alongside pedagogical ones, including teaching practice and ELT methodology.

*“Beyond the Game: The Human Dimension of Digital Game-Enhanced Pragmatic Learning”*

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As digital tools increasingly shape language education, questions arise about how technology can support rather than replace the human dimensions of learning. This mixed-methods study examines the role of digital game-enhanced language learning (DGELL) in the development of pragmatic competence among English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. Using a quasi-experimental design, the study compared a digital game-enhanced instructional condition with traditional classroom instruction over a twelve-week period. Forty-two undergraduate learners completed pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest measures of pragmatic competence, complemented by semi-structured interviews with participants in the DGELL group.

Quantitative findings showed significant improvement in pragmatic competence over time in both instructional conditions, with no statistically significant differences between groups. However, descriptive trends consistently favored the DGELL group. Qualitative data revealed that engagement with a single-player commercial off-the-shelf game heightened learners’ pragmatic awareness, sensitivity to context, and willingness to use appropriate language.

Rather than demonstrating technological superiority, the findings suggest that digital games are most effective when embedded in human-centered pedagogical practices. Guided discussion, reflection, and teacher mediation helped learners connect game-based experiences to real-world communication. In this sense, DGELL functioned as a complementary tool that fostered engagement and awareness while preserving the central role of human interaction in language learning. The study contributes to current discussions on balancing technological innovation with the human touch in ELT classrooms.

**Keywords:** DGELL; L2 pragmatics; CALL; human-centered pedagogy

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*“Translanguaging Practices of Arabic-Speaking Students in Türkiye: A Phenomenological Case Study”*

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This study examines the translanguaging practices of Arabic-speaking students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in a private university in Ankara. García (2009) defines translanguaging as "multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds" (p. 45). The ability of multilingual learners to employ their entire language repertoire to achieve the goal of learning English is known as translanguaging in EFL instruction (García & Li, 2014). Aiming to investigate the lived translanguaging experiences of 10 Arabic-speaking students attending university in Türkiye and their impressions and interpretations of these practices, the study employs a phenomenological case study design which combines Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Thematic Analysis (TA). The research also focuses on how their Turkish classmates and instructors interpret, negotiate, and legitimize these multilingual practices. The dataset consists of speech recordings, individual in-depth interviews with Arabic-speaking students, interviews with instructors, focus groups with only Arabic-speaking students, mixed focus groups with Turkish and Arabic-speaking students, and reflective journals. Preliminary findings indicate that students experience translanguaging for task management and cognitive scaffolding to bridge the semantic gap and maintain academic flow. They also experience it by hybridizing languages by living two languages in one system, and employing translanguaging as a regulatory filter for accuracy monitoring. Lastly, they experience translanguaging through address forms in their L1 by engaging emotional scaffolding and facilitating peer support and mediation to create a safe learning space.

**Keywords:** Translanguaging, Arabic-Speaking Students, Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, Scaffolding

Yaren Buse Özgenç is an Instructor at OSTİM Technical University and an MA candidate at METU (thesis stage). A valedictorian of the METU-SUNY dual program, her research interests include sociolinguistics, translanguaging, teacher education, and cross-cultural competence.

Betil Eröz is an Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Language Education at METU and a founding partner at FabuLAB Education and Information Technologies, Inc. at METU Technopolis. She specializes in teacher education and sociolinguistics.

*“EAP Assessment: Human Core, AI Support”*

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In the rapidly developing field of education, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to modify the way educators approach assessment in academic contexts. This approach should stress the need for a balanced approach to ensure that AI complements rather than replaces humans. The general understanding is that formative assessment, or assessment for learning, aims to promote students' learning, making it more effective. Employing AI assessment tools to assist, not replace, instructors can help enhance students' skills, and, as a result, their learning outcomes.

This talk, therefore, explains different ways EAP instructors can employ, utilizing AI as an assistive tool, in order to formatively assess students' academic skills. This kind of assessment aims to improve student performance and academic competencies. The talk will share three different formative assessment activities that have been used and found effective in assessing students' reading and writing. Each activity will be explained, including its aim(s), the AI tool(s) employed, and the steps followed in implementation, focusing on the instructor's human element. These activities offer practical ideas that the audience can adapt and implement in their own teaching contexts, considering factors such as class size, age, proficiency level, and technology resources available.

By adding an AI component to human feedback in assessing EAP skills, educators can focus on personalized insights, addressing students' individual challenges, therefore inspiring self-directed learning under human guidance. This hybrid approach amplifies the human touch, making feedback more meaningful, and as a result, impactful.

**Keywords:** EAP - Assessment - AI - Human

Yasmine Salah El-Din has an MA in TEFL from The American University in Cairo and a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from Cairo University. Her areas of interest include academic skills, sociolinguistics, error corrective feedback, and ethical use of AI. She has presented at national and international conferences, including METU.

*“Perceptions and Practices of English Preparatory Students Towards Self-Directed Learning Skills: A Mixed-Method Study”*

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Recently, self-directed learning (SDL) has been notable in higher education contexts where students are increasingly expected to take greater responsibility for their learning process, given that SDL is a pivotal skill in enhancing lifelong learning habits, motivation, and academic performance. Particularly within the realm of English Language Teaching (ELT) the students in preparatory programs may have difficulty in how to manage those skills or handle the possible challenges of being autonomous such as setting learning goals and raising motivation on studying independently. These difficulties stress the necessity of understanding students' needs for SDL and raising students' awareness towards self-directed learning skills. Therefore, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how students approach SDL, revealing how they define SDL and practices of English preparatory students related to SDL, pointing out their challenges they face within the process. This study has a mixed method research design which utilizes qualitative and quantitative analyses. Also, quantitative data were collected via the SDL Skills Scale (Ayyıldız & Tarhan, 2017), measuring learners' SDL competencies such as goal setting, maintaining motivation, self-monitoring, while qualitative insights were gathered through semi-structured interviews, providing examination of the participants' experiences, attitudes, and challenges regarding SDL. Overall, the preliminary findings suggest that many participants have limited understanding of SDL, resulting in low awareness of developing effective SDL habits. Based on the findings further research can focus on the detailed practices of SDL from the perspectives of stakeholders in language education.

**Keywords:** Key words: SDL, learners, practice, learning, autonomous

Yeliz Bolat is an English language instructor at a state university in Türkiye with over ten years of teaching experience. She teaches in an English Preparatory Program. Her research interests include self-directed learning, learner autonomy, and the integration of 21st-century skills into EFL contexts.

Gülsüm D. GÜLER has worked as an English language instructor at various universities since 2017. She has been serving as an instructor at Abdullah Gül University since 2023 and currently pursuing her Ph.D. in ELT at Erciyes University. Her research interests are extensive reading, ESP and learner autonomy.

*“The Development and Impact of Mentoring Practices in DBE In-service Training Program”*

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In this presentation, the design, implementation, and perceived impact of a mentoring program embedded within the in-service training of newly appointed English language instructors at METU DBE will be shared. Grounded in contemporary conceptualizations of mentoring as a collaborative, reflective, and context-sensitive process, the study adopts a qualitative case study design to examine how mentoring practices are experienced by mentees over time.

The mentoring program within the DBE in-service training program pairs novice instructors with experienced colleagues who voluntarily assume mentoring roles for one academic year. Mentors support mentees in areas such as institutional adaptation, lesson planning, classroom practice, and professional development tasks. Central to the study are the written reflections produced by mentees following mentor–mentee meetings, which serve as the primary data source. These reflections provide insights into participants’ emotional responses, perceived benefits, challenges, and evolving professional understandings.

Using qualitative content analysis, the study identifies key themes related to the development of mentoring relationships, the role of reflection in professional learning, and the contribution of mentoring to teacher identity formation. The findings highlight the importance of trust, mutual engagement, and flexibility in sustaining effective mentoring relationships. They also suggest that mentoring not only supports novice teachers’ transition into the profession but also fosters reflective practice and contributes to a collaborative institutional culture.

Overall, the research positions mentoring as both a support mechanism and a site of professional learning, offering implications for the design and evaluation of institutional mentoring programs in language teacher education.

**Keywords:** teacher education, in-service teacher training, mentoring

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Sema Üster has been working as an EFL instructor for 20 years. She has completed B.A., M.A. and PhD degrees at METU ELT Department. She holds Cambridge Delta and Train the Trainer Certificate. Currently, she is working as an instructor and teacher trainer, delivering the in-service training programs at METU Department of Basic English. Her research interests include teacher education, in-service training, and teacher cognition and identity.

Melike Demir Bektaş is an instructor of English at the School of Foreign Languages at Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Türkiye. She is currently a PhD candidate at Foreign Language Education Program (Language Studies Track) at METU. She is mainly interested in sociolinguistics, classroom discourse, teacher professionalism, and identity work.

*“Behind the Scenes: A DBE Exam Odyssey”*

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This presentation provides a look into our "exam odyssey" at the Division of Basic English (DBE) at METU. It will explore the collaborative workflow of the Testing Unit in the creation of written achievement exams for DBE. The session details a linear, nine-step creation process—from initial blueprinting and item writing to feedback loops involving coordinators, group instructors, and native-speaker language review. Finally, the presentation will introduce the announcement of an upcoming series of professional development sharing sessions designed to support new item-writers.

Çağlar Kök is an instructor and the Head of Testing Unit at Division of Basic English at METU.

*“How Well Can AI Understand Idioms in Essays? An investigation of ChatGPT, Gemini, and DeepSeek”*

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Figurative language is one of the most challenging areas in second language acquisition (Beck & Weber, 2021). This difficulty is not restricted to human learners, as AI models can also struggle with interpreting the meanings of figurative phrases, such as idioms. With the increasing use of Generative AI models for automated essay scoring, the investigation of this potential limitation is even more important. Critically, students with advanced L2 proficiencies who use one of the most challenging areas of the target language will be penalized unjustly if AI models fail to evaluate the nuances of idiom use and misinterpret phrases. On the other hand, students who memorize certain figurative structures and use them repeatedly in their essays will receive inflated scores in cases that Generative AI models cannot detect the overuse of such structures (see Oğuz, 2025). Based on experimental investigations, this study explores whether AI models can analyze idiom usage in L2 student essays and penalize potential overuse of certain structures.

**Keywords:**

essay scoring; AI; idioms; ChatGPT; Gemini; DeepSeek

Enis Oğuz is an English instructor at Middle East Technical University. He has completed his PhD in languages studies in Middle East Technical University. Enis is interested in computational linguistics, bilingualism, and psycholinguistics, and he develops his skills in statistics and computer programming continuously to create better experiments and research.

*“Building an English-Medium Community: METU Northern Cyprus Campus”*

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Established in 2005 as an international extension of Middle East Technical University, METU Northern Cyprus Campus (NCC) represents a distinctive example of a transnational higher education environment. Located in the Güzelyurt district of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, the campus brings together students from diverse cultural and educational backgrounds while maintaining English as the medium of instruction across all academic programs. Over the past two decades, the campus has developed into a dynamic academic community that combines METU’s established educational traditions with the opportunities of its local context.

This presentation introduces METU NCC to the ELT community by highlighting its campus environment, faculty and student profile, and English-medium academic culture. Representing the School of Foreign Languages, the session will briefly outline the role of the SFL in supporting students in their transition into departmental studies and throughout their academic journey, while highlighting its contribution to the wider academic and social life of the campus as well as its engagement with the broader community. The presentation will also reflect on insights gained through twenty years of experience and ongoing collaboration with METU’s School of Foreign Languages.

**Session Outline**

- Introduction to METU Northern Cyprus Campus
- Campus Environment and Faculty–Student Profile
- The Role of the School of Foreign Languages
- Contribution to the Campus and Wider Community
- Reflections and Collaboration

*“Evolving with the Times: Enhancements in the TOEFL iBT and Their Relevance to Modern Academic Life”*

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Given the speed at which academic and day-to-day language practices adapt to changes in technology and global connections, any assessment of language needs to change in order to keep up. The innovations introduced in the newly revamped TOEFL iBT (2026) seek to respond to the current changes that learners face in terms of information processing and communication.

In this sharing session, the updated TOEFL test features and their reflection of changes in our lives, such as exposure to multi-mode stimuli, shortened attention span, need for precise and concise communication will be discussed.

The aim of the session is to: (1) demonstrate the changes in TOEFL iBT test format and task design; (2) discuss how these innovations reflect actual academic skills, such as listening, critical reading and clear presentation of information; (3) analyze implications of knowing the relationship between tests and reality.

Throughout the session, participants will obtain insight into innovations in the TOEFL iBT and learn how they can best use these changes to prepare their students for success on the tests and in academia. This session will also highlight practical insights and challenges encountered. A brief interactive reflection and a 5-minute Q&A segment will encourage participants to connect these ideas to their own teaching contexts and exchange strategies.

*“PTE Academic”*

Fatih Özer

PTE is a computer based English Proficiency Test that includes 4 main skills (speaking-writing-reading-listening). PTE has YDS equivalence also it is accepted by more than 4.500 universities around the globe including UK, US, CAN, AU, Germany, Italy, Netherland, Finland universities. PTE time length is 2 hours, and test takers get score report approximately in 48 hours. Test taker responses are score by both AI and human scorer. The test must be taken at test center due to security procedure and there are 14 test centers based in Turkey. PTE has test sessions every day in Turkey, through this way you can easily find sessions availability as per your proper time.