



## **Using Alternative Assessment to Engage Preservice Language Teachers in the Assessment Process: A Case Study in Turkish Higher Education Context**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study aims to explore preservice language teachers' views on the use of peer and self-assessment techniques and also to investigate whether there is a correlation between peer/self-scoring and teacher scoring. In data collection, both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were utilized. SPSS was used to analyze quantitative data and thematic analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data. Twenty-one pre-service language teachers participated in the study by first carrying out peer assessment for midterm exam and then self-assessment for final exam. The scorings of both assessments were compared to teacher scoring. The findings showed that the students scored both their peers and themselves in a similar manner as the teacher did, and therefore, both assessment scorings were revealed to have a high correlation with teacher assessment scoring. Qualitative data involves mostly benefits of this process and depicts that the participants favored self-assessment over peer assessment. This study has clear implications for the curriculum designers, classroom teachers, and researchers.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Assessment, as one of the most important component in teaching and learning process, has been a commonly discussed issue. There have been many studies to investigate how effective various types of assessments are for language learners. Traditional and alternative assessments have often been compared and contrasted, and with the emphasis put on utilizing innovative ways in teaching and learning environment, alternative assessment has been acknowledged to contribute to the learning process by a growing number of teachers and researchers. Crooks (2001) identified the main difference between the two kinds of assessments by stating that traditional assessment aims to make a summarization of what students acquired at a certain time, while alternative ways employed in assessment process aim to make way for further improvement in their learning. The purpose in alternative assessment would be using information acquired through assessment and the feedback provided accordingly to benefit in the process of teaching and learning. Black and William (1998) define this kind of assessment as a platform where information is provided to be

used as feedback to improve the teaching and learning activities that are utilized. However, as Sadler (1989) suggests that giving feedback to the learners will not always be enough for such improvement to take place. He states that the learners should have a notion of the desired goal or standard, the ability to compare the actual performance and the desired performance, and should take actions in order to close the gap between them. The purpose here is to enable learners to monitor their progress in a similar manner with the teacher's. In the constructivist theory, assessment is viewed as a learning tool, a process in which students engage by judging their own progress. The teacher in a constructivist classroom aims to understand how the learners learn, and she or he acts as a guide for them to build up on what they already know by combining both knowledge. Alternative assessment could allow for an opportunity to change the passive role of students observed in the traditional classroom environment and to equip them with courage to take initiatives, use the ability to employ self-discipline, and make choices. Through this process, students engage in self-evaluation and set goals for their learning. In this sense, a collaborative environment for this approach to be embraced will help students receive effective feedback and become autonomous in such environment since they will be benefiting from the advantages of the process.

This point of view brings us to peer and self-assessment, two of the commonly discussed techniques of alternative assessment, which have gained importance with the acknowledgement of increasing learner autonomy as vital in language teaching. Isaacson (1999) points out these two assessments by emphasizing the fact that they bring assessment and instruction very close to one another. Peer and self-assessment give the learners the opportunity to monitor their own and peers' learning, which eventually helps them to know more about their capabilities and progress. This ability brings the learners closer to being autonomous learners and takes them away from the dependency on teacher assessment. What brought popularity to these two assessments is the change in goals in education where it is aimed to make the students competent learners and more effective team members. It is about preparing them for life itself and giving them the ability to use their skills to achieve their goals.

About peer assessment, Toppings (1998) suggests that peer-assessment is a process that provides students with skills to form judgments about what high-quality work consists. Vygotsky (1986) also states that both the giver and the receiver of peer feedback could benefit from each other in the process since a mutual scaffolding process for learning takes place within their zone of proximal development (ZPD). ZPD is defined by Vygotsky (1987) as the extent of tasks that a learner can perform with the help and guidance of others, adults or more competent peers, but cannot yet perform independently, which emphasizes the importance of peers in the process of learning through scaffolding. Topping (2009, p. 20) defines peer feedback as a setting through which learners evaluate "the level, value, or quality of a product or performance" of other learners who are in equal positions. Peer assessment is appreciated as an essential part of student-centered classes since this process turns learners from passive to active observers, improves critical thinking skills, and allows for individualized feedback for students (Patterson, 2014).

A case study conducted by Cirit (2014) with the participation of 40 undergraduate students from a state university in Turkey, aimed to explore the views of the ELT preservice teachers regarding the traditional, alternative, and online assessment methods through surveys and open-ended questions before and after the tasks are carried out. The findings revealed that the perceptions of the participants toward the alternative assessment via web 2.0 tools were positive before and it became even more positive after the process. The participants preferred alternative assessment to online or traditional assessment since they believed alternative assessment is one that motivates learners, enhances learning, and provides continuous assessment of student progress. The data also

depicted that the most participants render this assessment as an experience that improves interaction, provides feedback in a more detailed and practical way, and enhances critical thinking skills. Thus, the study calls for further research focusing on a certain type of alternative assessment to explore the preservice teachers' views on how to implement alternative assessment.

Another research was carried out by Patterson (2014) on student attitudes toward peer assessment of small group in Japan. Eighty-eight students attending to an elective content-based English language course at a small university participated in the study in 2011-2012 Fall Term. The participants, who were both the evaluators and the evaluatees, performed peer assessment over two presentations and expressed their opinions on this experience by means of a Likert scale and by responding to questionnaires and open-ended questions. The findings suggested that nearly all the students agreed that being an evaluator had helped them become a better presenter, with 96.25% indicating some form of agreement and 42.5% expressing strong agreement. Students stated that they were content with the richness of feedback provided. Most of them also indicated that they actually paid attention to the comments from their peers and benefitted from them while preparing for their next presentation. This study only focuses on students' perceptions related to the peer assessment experience.

Owen (2016) conducted a research on the impact of feedback as formative assessment on student performance in her *Research Methods* course. The course participants were required to complete the assigned tasks before submitting their final project. The assignments were assessed using scoring rubrics, and during the process, feedback from both tutor and their peers was offered. This process was evaluated by using a survey involving 23 students and the findings revealed that 82% of the participants stated that they learned somewhat or much more than they had in previous classes. Students also expressed that the most meaningful part of the experience was to see their progress as well as improving their self-reflection skills before they submit the final paper and understanding what elements they needed to work on, which suggested that embracing a scaffolding approach and the use of feedback within this approach was helpful. Despite the students' positive views on the experience, the findings acquired from their task performance scores yielded mixed-results in terms of improvement, which deemed it necessary to carry out further research with some changes into the procedures.

The other assessment that is commonly employed as an alternative to traditional assessment is self-assessment. Self-assessment enables the learners to be engaged in reflective practice, which brings them awareness about the purpose and skills to help identify issues that do not provide what is expected in terms of quality (Andrade & Brown, 2016; Brown & Harris, 2013).

Logan (2009) explored how peer and self-assessment can enhance teaching and learning effectiveness with the participation of learners who were a group of 11 higher education students studying in a further education college for a foundation degree in early childhood studies. She used semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, students' self-assessment sheets, and observations of peer assessment feedback between students to collect data. The findings uncovered that self and peer assessment can positively affect student learning since they help them improve their reflective and critical thinking skills as well as their self-confidence as learners. She also suggested (2009) that peer assessment provides learners with a better understanding of assessment criteria and allows a deeper learning. The participants reported that peer assessment helped them improve their critical and reflective skills on evaluating their work. The study displays no comparison between student scoring and teacher scoring.

A study conducted by Lew, Alwis, and Schmidt (2010) involved 3588 participants in their first year of studies at a polytechnic in Singapore in the academic year 2007–08 for the first study carried out to collect quantitative data and 936 participants again on their first year and from the

same institution for qualitative data. A Likert five-point scale was used as data collection instrument. The findings revealed that students who are considered to be more competent in terms of academic skills were able to achieve higher accuracy in self-assessment than their less competent peers. According to the findings, no significant association was found between learners' beliefs about the effectiveness of self-assessment and the accuracy of their self-assessments. The findings also pointed weak to moderate accuracy of student self-assessment ability. However, seeing if such assessment use would yield different results with future language teachers is essential as they will become evaluators themselves one day. Moreover, qualitative data regarding the students' views would also enhance the study content.

The study carried out by Sendziuk (2010) students to grade their essay writings without being given the rubric used by the teacher and then they were asked to submit 100-word statements that engaged with the assessment criteria and justified their scoring. The findings depicted that the self-assessment process encouraged the students to get actively engaged with the feedback they were offered and provided them with a greater understanding of the assessment criteria and what is required of them for academic essay writing.

A study by Ndoye (2017) involved 16 participants who were enrolled in a graduate course Northern Kentucky University. Through this study, he explored graduate students' perceived ways in which peer and self-assessment can help engage them in their own learning, make them take responsibility for it, and develop their collaborative learning skills by promoting a positive and supportive learning environment. The data was collected using anonymous online survey, and for analysis, axial coding was conducted. The findings revealed that, students believed peer and self-assessment contributed to their learning as it provided effective feedback, a supportive learning environment, and collaboration among learners. Being more aware of the course expectations and requirements, and acquiring abilities to identify and solve learning problems helped them become more responsible in the process of their own learning. It was found out that a deeper understanding of students' perceived benefits of peer and self-assessment was provided.

This review of literature brings us to the conclusion that the use of peer and self-assessment as two of the alternative assessment techniques, appears to help students in terms of becoming more critical, autonomous and responsible in the process of learning. Besides, there are studies cited focusing on the accuracy of the student scorings of both their own and peers' course performances. Although both quantitative data regarding accuracy concerns and qualitative data focusing on students' views on the experience were addressed by various scholars, there seems to be limited number of researchers displaying the results of both accuracy-related quantitative data and the qualitative data exploring students' views on alternative assessment. The combination of both data sets needs to be further investigated especially in a context where student teachers are to be given adequate training to become reflective practitioners, which is very vital as Schön (1982) suggests. Kolb (1984) also states that effective learning only occurs through experiencing and reflecting on the process. This study involving both phases can allow for an environment where the future teachers could take a step closer to implementing reflective teaching as they would learn efficiently by exposure to these alternative techniques. With this concern in mind, answers to the following questions will be sought in this study:

1. What are the views of pre-service language teachers on their peer and self-assessment scoring experience in a higher education context?
2. What is the correlation between pre-service language teachers' peer assessment scoring and teacher assessment scoring in a higher education context?

3. What is the correlation between pre-service language teachers' self-assessment scoring and teacher assessment scoring in a higher education context?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Context of the Study**

The study was carried out at English Language Teaching Department at Cukurova University, a state university in Adana, Turkey. The department is regulated by Higher Education Council as part of tertiary level education. The students are placed at this department by Assessment Selection and Placement Centre (OSYM) depending on their average scores from the two-stage University Entrance Exams. The basic components of this program consist of ELT methodology, linguistics and literature as well as elective courses such as French and German. The objective of the program is to help students to achieve mastery of the English Language and thus provide them with the knowledge and practical skills for teaching English as a foreign language. The department also organizes practice teaching in selected schools of the Turkish Ministry of Education. As stated in the "Programme Information" (2011), the department trains and educates prospective English teachers for institutions of elementary, secondary, and higher education. In the senior year, they also attend practicum where they teach sample lessons. The students who have successfully accomplished this program gain the bachelor's degree of English Language Teaching.

### **Participants**

The participants were selected using convenience sampling technique due to participants' accessibility and proximity to the researchers. Twenty-one participants (5 males and 16 females) aged 20-21 who speak Turkish as their mother tongue contributed to the study. Their English proficiency level is B2 with the exception of one student whose level of English is C1. The participants are second grade pre-service language teachers from the ELT department who take the required course titled *Approaches and Methods in ELT* (conducted by one of the researchers) during 2017-2018 Fall Term. The objectives of this course are to bring awareness to the students about the distinction among the basic concepts of approach, method and technique; about language and language learning theories; and to teach them main points, strengths and drawbacks of various teaching methods and techniques used in language teaching (see Appendix I for course details). The evaluation of the course consists of sit-down midterm and final exams which would constitute the 40% and 60% of the total score respectively. The students are obliged to attend 70% of the classes. The students are expected to read the relevant chapter before coming to class. The first half of the lesson is a teacher-centered, theoretical lesson which is then followed by a student-centered one that involves a great number of student discussions.

### **Data Collection and Data Analysis**

This study adopted mixed-methods sequential explanatory design and the quantitative data comprised of the preservice language teachers' scorings for both their peers' and their own papers as well as the teachers' scorings on both exams while the qualitative data was collected through open-ended questionnaire (See Appendices C & D). The first author/researcher had the role of nonparticipant observer while the second author/researcher conducted the course and integrated

alternative assessment into the methodology course. Two researchers were actively engaged in each phase of data collection and analysis process.

The participants were asked to carry out peer assessment first for the midterm exam and then self-assessment for the final exam. The reason for assigning peer assessment first rather than self-assessment is that self-assessment process may have the potential risk of over-grading (Özdemir & Özkan, 2017). Therefore, it was aimed to eliminate the risk by introducing the participants to alternative assessment by this ordering. The students were provided with a scoring rubric to help them with the assessment process. Both scoring results were analyzed in terms of correlation with teacher assessment scoring using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 23). Immediately after experiencing these types of alternative assessments, two times following both midterm and final exam scoring, all the students who participated in the assessment process were asked to take the open-ended questionnaire in order to share their views on this experience. The researchers ensured that the participants had no prior experience in utilizing any of the alternative assessment techniques before initiating this research. The participants were asked two main questions related to peer and self-assessment processes which would provide a platform for them to elaborate on the aforementioned processes. The questions focused on their views regarding the perceived benefits and challenges; advantages and disadvantages. The reason why it was determined to ask open-ended questions is that it was sought to attain respondents' expression of thoughts and views in their own manner, allowing them to generate unexpected but insightful data (Mackey and Gass, 2005). Open-response questions provide flexibility for the researcher and allow for a wide range of potential answers helping to develop and deepen the researcher's understanding regarding the participants' views. They were given an hour to complete the questionnaires and asked to express their opinions on the experience without putting limitations on which aspects to comment on. The participants were allowed to use a monolingual English dictionary in order for them not to feel restricted due to any lack of linguistic competence. They were also informed that they were allowed to use L1 when they felt they were not able to express their views sufficiently.

For the analysis of qualitative data, the responses given to the open-ended questionnaire were analyzed using thematic analysis which is, as Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79) suggest, "a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data". Thematic analysis was determined to be employed due to its flexible nature and usefulness in terms of its potential to create a rich account of data in the process of revealing the most-frequently-mentioned themes or views. The method allowed the researchers to identify specific words or phrases, and these answers were examined, coded and categorized. As responses were being collected, emerging themes were presented since distinct views were sought from the participants and expected to form the base for the qualitative data. This method allowed identifying and categorizing the frequently used themes without specifying expected responses in advance. During this process, the two researchers discussed on the emerging themes in order find a common ground to present and explain the qualitative data.

Quantitative data analysis results were used to support the qualitative data attained through thematic analysis. The results were attained using SPSS for the correlation analysis of both assessment scorings with the teacher assessment scorings. For peer assessment, the participants were asked to score the complete exam paper of their peers whereas for self-assessment they were asked to score only two sections of their own exam papers as it was a more extensive paper including several sections with different types of questions. The midterm exam consisted of

multiple-choice questions, gap filling, and open-ended questions. Similarly, the two sections the participants were asked to score in final exam involved gap-filling and open-ended questions in order to make the evaluation process more meaningful.

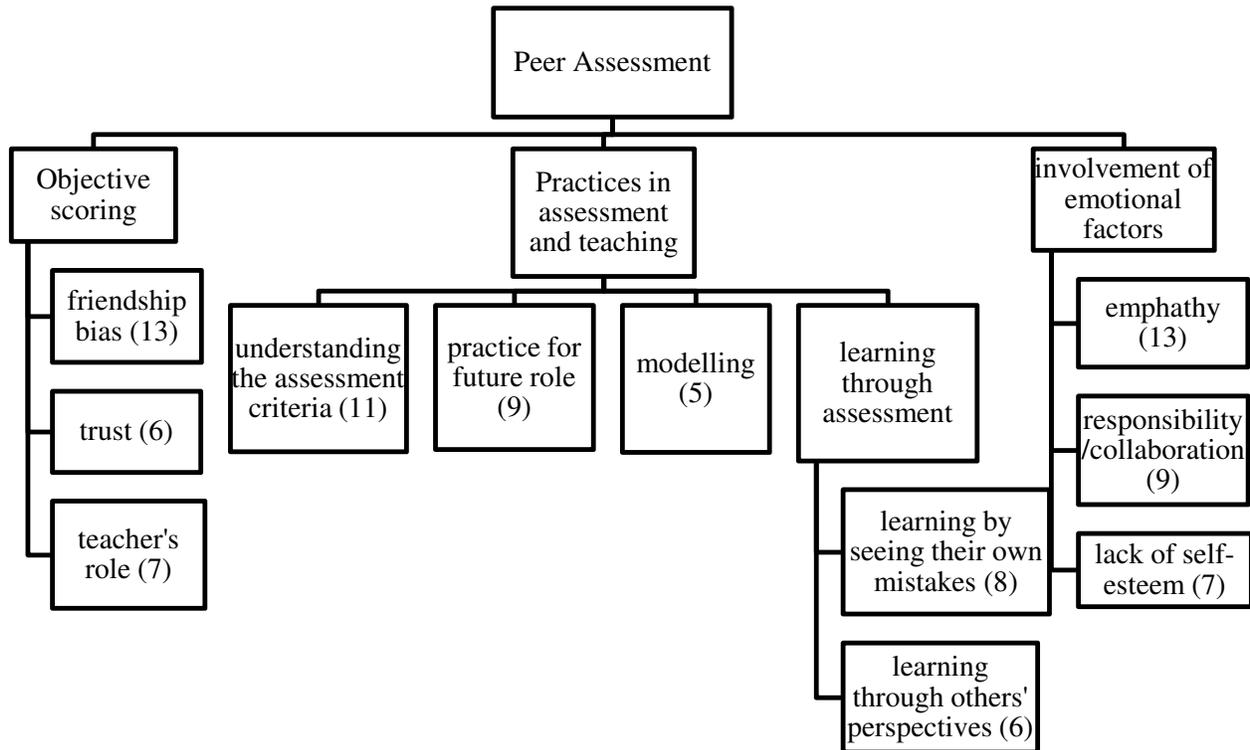
### **Trustworthiness**

At the beginning of the study, detailed information about the study was provided for the participants and they were given a consent form (See Appendix B) to complete in order to state that they were willing to participate in the study. They were told that their participation was entirely voluntarily and their grades would not be affected by this study. At the end of the data analysis, the member checking method was used in order to ensure the validation of the results of the study both for teacher scoring and for the analysis of data. In order to eliminate any bias, the two researchers discussed on the emerging themes in order find a common ground to present and explain the qualitative data. Therefore, during this process, they collaborated in each phase to examine the coding and categories, and agreement was made on most of the themes; however, minor changes were also made in the light of the feedbacks they exchanged.

## **RESULTS**

In this study, both qualitative and quantitative data were presented and the findings attained following the analysis of the data will be displayed and discussed in this section.

The findings for the qualitative aspect of this study were obtained by conducting thematic analysis on the participants' responses. The qualitative data is presented in Figure 1 with related verbatim along with participant numbered labels (P1-P21). With the aim of providing fluency, some linguistic features including punctuation, subject-verb agreement and word order were rectified. For the purpose of data verification, member checking process was carried out on the transcripts.



**Figure 1.** Organizational chart representing the emerging themes regarding peer assessment process with reference to number of participants.

As depicted in Figure 1, for the data from peer assessment process, three main themes emerged as a result of this analysis: *objective scoring*, *practices in assessment and teaching*, and *involvement of emotional factors*.

The first main theme, *objective scoring*, consists of three subthemes: friendship bias, trust and the teacher's role. For the first subtheme, most of the participants (n=13) stated that it was difficult to be objective while evaluating their peers' papers. Four of these participants also stated that they were too generous while scoring their peers. Following statements reveal this difficulty:

- *I was given the paper of a friend that I really like. I wanted give her a high score. (P4)*
- *When I evaluate the paper, I try not to think that it's my one of my friend's paper. I think this is one of the hardest things when one scores a paper.(P10)*

The second subtheme emerged to be *trust* which was an issue pointed by six participants as seen in the following statements:

- *Considering that we are all rivals to each other in the classroom, I do not think that my friends will be objective while scoring. Problems between friends can affect the results.(P3)*
- *I do not think the evaluation can be objective when two people have problems.(P5)*

The last subtheme in this first category is the *teacher's role*. Some participants (n=7) pointed their lack of knowledge and experience in scoring and two of them explicitly emphasized the importance of the teacher's role as the scorer as follows:

- *I think the lecturer of the course herself should evaluate the papers according to her teaching style.(P5)*
- *It was hard for me to give points to the answers because I don't know my teacher's style. If I had prepared the exam paper, it would be much easier for me to read the paper.(P7)*

Meanwhile, five different participants implicitly supported this by stating how hard it was to score the open-ended questions with the following statements:

- *It is confusing to score the open-ended questions.(P11)*
- *There were not specific answers for some questions. It was hard to score open-ended questions.(P16)*

The second main theme emerged to be *practices in assessment and teaching* which consists of four subthemes: understanding the assessment criteria, practice for future role, modeling and learning through assessment. The first subtheme was rendered as an important and helpful result by the participants (n=11). Seven of the participants also expressed that they enjoyed contributing to the criteria during the process as they added a few items to the rubric provided by the lecturer.

- *It was nice to see the assessment criteria that our teacher refers to.(P11)*
- *This way, we see the right and wrong answers and expect a realistic score, which makes sure we do not feel disappointed by the score we get.(P1)*
- *I think this is a helpful activity as it allowed the students to add or correct some items that the teacher had originally missed out.(P4)*

The second subtheme, practice for future role, was also frequently mentioned (n=9). They all considered the activity as a helpful practice as they agreed upon the following statement:

- *It is practical for us to learn how to score as we will be teacher in the future.(P2)*

*Modeling* emerged as the third subtheme as five of the participants pointed out that the process could be much effective if the teacher modeled her way of assessing first with similar statements to the following:

- *In order for us to score easier, it would be better if the teacher modeled the assessment process first.(P2)*

The last subtheme is learning through assessment which divides into two categories: learning by seeing their mistakes, and learning through different perspectives. Eight of the participants stated that this process enabled them to see their mistakes, which contributed to their learning.

- *The scoring process also enables a revision of the topics.(P9)*
- *When I evaluated the paper, I learnt new information. I could understand what I got wrong and my lack of knowledge.(P15)*
- *With this study, we can realize our mistakes while scoring another paper.(P19)*

Six participants reflected that it was effective to learn about different perspectives allowing them to see the topic more thoroughly.

- *We can also evaluate ourselves by seeing others' answers: we see their answer and think about our own answer and see the different answers.(P12)*
- *I was able to look at the questions from a different aspect.(P16)*
- *Evaluating different perspectives teaches us even more.(P21)*

The third and last main theme is *the involvement of emotional factors* which covers the affective aspect of the process from the participants' perspectives. The subthemes are empathy, responsibility/collaboration and lack of self-esteem. The first subtheme emerged as most (n=13) participants indicated that they had difficulty in evaluating especially in terms of objectivity. Some of these participants (n=4) implicitly emphasized that they were not aware of the difficulties of

scoring until they experienced it themselves. The following are examples from participants' statements that reveal this aspect:

- *Evaluating other students' paper sheets was really hard. I guess I have learned how hard it is to evaluate exams.(P13)*
- *I empathized with the teacher and realized the difficulties she faced and the mistakes she could make.(P16)*

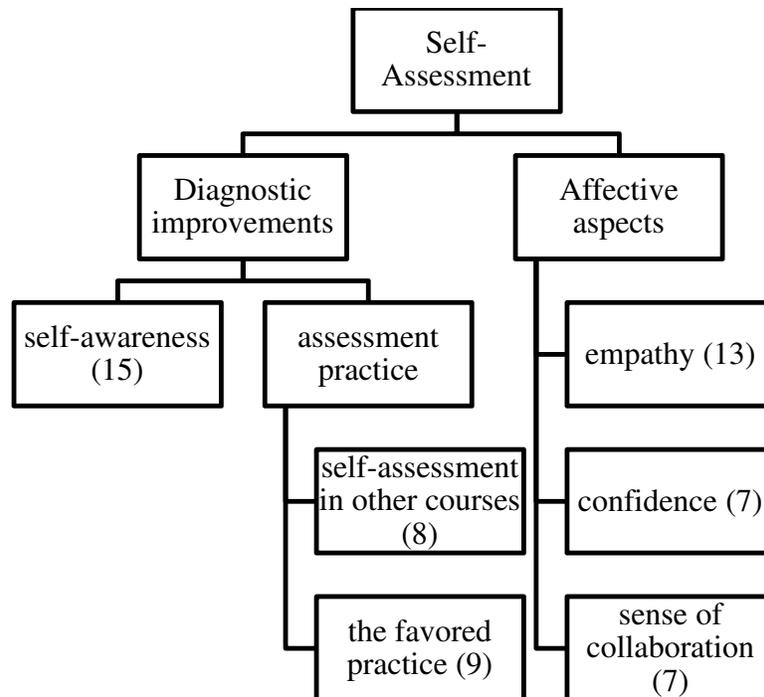
The second subtheme was pointed out by nine of the participants who stated that during the process they felt responsible and even a few of them expressed their worries about being able to score fairly. Accordingly, they stated that they felt the need to consult with their friends over the scoring of some questions, which, as they emphasized, contributed to their collaboration with each other. The following statements reflect their views on this:

- *I felt responsible and sometimes I couldn't be sure about my scoring. So I asked my friend about her opinion.(P17)*
- *It was nice to be in interaction with our friends during the process. We exchanged ideas and that was very effective.(P8)*

The third subtheme, lack of self-esteem, revealed itself in the participants' comments where they reflected how difficult it was to score when they do not have enough information on the topic. Some participants (n=7) reflected about how they felt responsible scoring their peers, and stated they feared that they could score them unfairly due to lack of knowledge on the relevant topic.

- *The process was hard for me as it was a big responsibility.(P8)*
- *As I am not experienced in scoring, I was too afraid at the beginning. I feared that I could take too many points off the student.(P10)*

For the second phase of the study, the participants were asked to write about their opinions on self-assessment the same way they were for peer assessment. Their responses which were in the form of a paragraph were analyzed through thematic analysis. Emerging themes were identified, coded and categorized in accordance with how frequently they were pointed out by the participants. The process ended up revealing two main themes: diagnostic improvements and affective aspects as displayed in Figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Organizational chart representing the emerging themes regarding self-assessment process with reference to number of participants.

Under the first main theme emerged two subthemes: *self-awareness* and *assessment practice*. The first subtheme emerged as most of the participants (n=15) stated that they were able to see how they were doing and the process enabled them to realize their mistakes. Also the participants pointed out the importance of the elimination of disappointment. They indicated that seeing their paper in the assessment process was favorable as they would see how they did and therefore would not expect a higher score, which would eliminate a possible feeling of disappointment. Following statements are examples of such expressions:

- *...but at least, I was able to see the points that I missed out...I was able to see what I did wrong and where and how I did those mistakes.(P12)*
- *I was able to see my own weak spots, which was positive for me as I have found out the points that I should be focusing.(P19)*
- *It is fair because I can see my paper and expect a realistic score. I do not feel disappointed as there is not a big gap between the score I expect and the one I actually get.(P7)*

The second subtheme is assessment practice which comprises of other subthemes: *self-assessment in other courses* and *the favored practice*. Eight out of 21 participants stated that they believe the self-assessment process should be utilized in every course as they render the engagement of the students in the assessment process is helpful and fair. Following statements reflect the participants' opinions:

- *This is a method that is definitely fair and should be carried out in every course we take.(P15)*
- *I would like to see this method being implemented in my other courses as well.(P8)*

The subtheme *avored practice* emerged since the participants appeared to have compared peer and self-assessment. Three of the participants stated that peer assessment was a more eminent practice because it was more objective and easier to carry out and pointed out the downsides of self-assessment. They indicated that they had to check with their peers while scoring their own paper as they could not be sure whether their scoring was fair or not and rendered this situation as an indication of their insufficiency in scoring. Besides, they pointed out that they were tempted to score themselves higher, which posed a danger to objectivity. Their opinions are reflected in the following statements:

- *While scoring open-ended questions, as the answers might differ, I had to ask my friend how to score in order to be fair.(P5)*
- *The only downside is that it makes you want to score yourself higher. That's why I think it is easier to score a peer's paper.(P9)*
- *While scoring open-ended questions, I felt that I could not be objective, so I felt the need to ask my friend about how to score.(P4)*

Nine out of twenty-one participants; however, favored self-assessment because they believed the process helped them see their weaknesses and led them to work on those points. Also they indicated that this process was more reliable as they were able to evaluate their own responses more accurately since they knew what they meant and interpreted the responses more correctly. They expressed their views through the statements below:

- *It was easier to score my own paper than my friend's because seeing what I did right and wrong helped me with self-criticism and the weak points that I needed to focus on.(P10)*
- *It was better and easier because we know what we mean in different parts of exam. Even teachers cannot understand what we mean.(P21)*
- *This activity is more beneficial because I get to see my mistakes and learn from them.(P15)*
- *Scoring my own paper rather than having someone else score it was much more reliable.(P6)*

One of the students stated that he realized that he was tougher on himself during the self-assessment process and another student pointed that the fact that she felt the need to check the way she scored with her peers made her realize she was not ready to carry out such a process on her own and that she needed support.

As for the second main theme *affective aspects*, the thematic analysis process revealed three subthemes: *empathy*, *confidence* and *sense of collaboration* both with peers and teacher.

Similar to their views on peer assessment, majority of the participants (n=13) emphasized that the evaluation process was more difficult than they expected. They pointed that they were able to empathize with the teacher as the scorer, how difficult her job was and also that they realized they needed further practice to carry out this process more fairly and easily. Some of them reflected on their assessment performance and identified strong and weak points. The process seems to make them aware of their own strengths and weaknesses in the assessment practice. The following are examples from such statements:

- *I found out how difficult it was to be a teacher and how I was wrong to think assessing was easy.(P3)*

- *I saw that evaluating papers was not so easy since, especially with open-ended questions, every student comments on the questions differently, which makes it difficult to score.(P4)*
- *It is a good practice for us as future teachers. Assessment process is very difficult and I have found out that if I were a teacher, I would be the kind of teacher who scores papers unnecessarily high.(P1)*

The second subtheme that emerged under affective aspects is *confidence*. Seven of the participants suggested that they felt empowered as they were given the opportunity to have a say in the assessment process and expressed their views with the following statements:

- *It improves confidence. We get to have a say in the process.(P1)*
- *It contributed a lot to my understanding of assessment.(P12)*
- *It made me realize how difficult it is to score a paper. However, I believe I will gain more confidence as I practice.(P16)*

The third subtheme, *sense of collaboration*, was pointed out by seven of the participants. All of these participants emphasized that they liked how they collaborated with their peers and also with the teacher while scoring. Some examples from those statements are as follows:

- *It was nice to exchange views on scoring and work together with my friends and the teacher.(P19)*
- *Interaction with my friends while evaluating helped me feel more relaxed about my mistakes.(P7)*
- *The process allowed for what we call peer correction. We exchanged views with each other.(P1)*

The quantitative data was analyzed through correlation analysis in SPSS 23 and the answer to whether there was a correlation between peer scoring and teacher scoring for the midterm exam and between self-scoring and teacher scoring for the final exam was sought. The analyzed data as shown in Table 1 displays the similarity between peer and teacher scoring with a correlation value of 0.994, which means the two types of scoring are highly correlative.

**Table 1.** The Correlation Results between Peer and Teacher Assessment Scoring

|                 | Means | Pearson Correlation | Sig.  |
|-----------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| Peer scoring    | 60.75 | 0.994               |       |
| Teacher scoring | 62.51 | 0.994               | 0.000 |

Similarly, it is also revealed as seen in Table 2 that self and teacher scoring also share similarity with a correlation value of is 0.821. Both peer assessment scoring and self-assessment scoring has high correlation with teacher assessment scoring. The quantitative data which was collected with the aim of supporting the qualitative data served the purpose efficiently, revealing that utilizing alternative assessment in the assessment process can support the literature related to the positive correlation between teacher assessment scoring and peer and self-assessment scorings. Most of the participants emphasized how they liked being engaged in the process and that they believed alternative assessment should be a part of their education.

**Table 2.** The Correlation Results between Self and Teacher Assessment Scoring

|                 | Means | Pearson Correlation | Sig.  |
|-----------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
| Self-scoring    | 25.32 | 0.821               |       |
| Teacher scoring | 25.67 | 0.821               | 0.000 |

A common result of the processes of peer and self-assessment was the contribution to students' understanding of assessment criteria as seen in Logan's (2009) and Sendziuk's (2010) studies as well. This was also observed in this study both in peer and self-assessment processes as seen in participants' responses. It seems to be effective in making the participants more aware of 'what high quality work consists' (Toppings, 1998). Similar to Owen's study (2016), in this study, assessment served as a learning tool as suggested in constructivist theory as well since majority of the participants stated that engaging in this process made them learn about their progress and the elements they needed to work on further as pointed out in learning and self-awareness subthemes emerged as a result of the thematic analysis. The study yielded the fact that majority of the participants pointed out a considerable contribution to their sense of collaboration and self-confidence as a result of their engagement in the assessment process. According to the students' views, the processes allowed for increased interaction between the participants; and through their comments for each other, they stated that their self-awareness was also heightened which improved their critical thinking skills as well.

The participants' responses also revealed that they are heavily depended on teacher scoring and experienced low self-esteem issues in terms of scoring due to their lack of knowledge and experience (as it was their first experience in utilizing alternative assessment in the program), which can be interpreted as an indication that alternative assessment engaging students in the process does not take place as often as it should in teacher education program. It is clear that the participants also believe that they need more practice in order to carry out such processes and to gain more confidence. Also, although they stated that they benefitted from the process in terms of learning, collaborating and improving their self-awareness as well as critical thinking skills, the fact that they focused intensely on the score may indicate that they tend to place more importance to the product than the process. This situation implies that incorporating a variety of assessment types into teacher education program would probably enable preservice teachers to become more process-oriented, which would make way for them to benefit from the process itself even more fulfilling the purpose of alternative assessment techniques.

The results attained through the analysis of quantitative data suggest that the students are capable of scoring both their peers and themselves in a similar way the teacher does. Combined with their positive attitude towards alternative assessment experience, it can be said the whole process contributed to the participants' understanding and conceptualizing of alternative assessment and as the majority of the participants suggested, the process of utilizing alternative assessment techniques (peer and self-assessment in this case) helped them become more actively engaged and rather responsible in their own learning in teacher education program.

## CONCLUSION

From the view of benefitting from utilizing alternative assessment techniques, this study aimed at engaging preservice language teachers in the assessment process through peer and self-assessment and investigating whether there is a correlation between their scorings and teacher scoring. The process yielded mostly positive results from both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Most of the participants expressed their positive attitude toward the processes and how they benefitted from them, and the scorings could imply that the participants would be able to carry out both peer and self-assessment processes with scores that are similar to the teacher's. However, their grade-orientedness and concerns on objectivity might put a limitation to potential advantages of these processes. From this view, it can be concluded that incorporating alternative assessment more often in teacher education program could be effective in eliminating such limitations. Further studies can be carried out to investigate what kind of activities could be effective in enabling the students to become more process-oriented allowing them to benefit from the process even further. Another study could be conducted to compare the views of participants of different genders.

As for the limitations of the study, one factor that might have affected the results of the study can be the fact that the students were informed that their scorings would not affect their official course performance score, which might have had an impact on their attitude towards scoring their own and peers' papers due to the lack of stress and pressure faced in the decision-making process. Another study where the students' scorings would constitute a certain part of the formal course performance score may yield alternative outcomes in terms of their attitude towards scoring themselves as well as their peers as well as scoring accuracy compared to the teacher scoring.

This study has also some significant implications for all stakeholders in language teacher education program. Curriculum designers and policy-makers could take potential uses of alternative assessment into account; course instructors could benefit from the utilization of such assessment techniques and design their courses in line with this alternative assessment paradigm; and teacher candidates could gain insights regarding how important the use of these assessment techniques in terms laying the foundation for their becoming empowered and reflective practitioners in their teaching practices.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank to the participants for their contributions in this study.

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## Appendix A

### YDI-205 Approaches and Methods in ELT– FALL 2017

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. Students will be aware of the distinctions among the basic concepts: approach, method, and technique.
2. Students will be aware of the language and language learning theories.
3. Students will learn the main points, strengths and drawbacks of various teaching methods and techniques used in language teaching.

#### **EVAULATION OF THE COURSE:**

There will be a formal sit-down mid-term and a final exam (40 and 60% each respectively). You should attend 70 % of the lessons, and you have to keep the record of your attendance. You are supposed to read the assigned chapter before the class.

#### **CONTENT OF THE COURSE:**

Week 1: Introduction to the Course; a brief history of language teaching; definition of terms: approach, method, technique  
 Week 2: Grammar Translation Method  
 Week 3: Direct Method  
 Week 4: Behaviorism  
 Week 5: ALM  
 Week 6: Cognitivism  
 Week 7: Silent Way  
 Week 8: Mid-term  
 Week 9: Humanism  
 Week 10: Suggestopedia  
 Week 11: Community Language Learning  
 Week 12: Total Physical Response (TPR)  
 Week 13: Revision

#### **REQUIRED READING:**

1. Larsen-Freeman, D. (2001). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. Oxford:UP.
2. Richards, J.C.& T.S. Rodgers. (1991). *Approaches and methods in language teaching: A Description and analysis*. Cambridge: CUP
3. Özkan, Y. (2012). *Introduction to Theory and Practice in ELT*. Adana: University of Cukurova.

Appendix B

CONSENT FORM

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please tick box as appropriate):

|    |   |                          |
|----|---|--------------------------|
| 1. | I have read and understood the information about the project, as provided in the Information Sheet dated _____.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study and my participation.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | I voluntarily agree to participate in the study.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be penalised for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymisation of data, etc.) to me.                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | I, along with the Researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Participant:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Researcher:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix C

### **Questionnaire for Peer Assessment Experience**

1. What are your views regarding peer assessment process in your midterm examination?
2. What are the benefits and challenges of the process of peer assessment?

## Appendix D

### **Questionnaire for Self-Assessment Experience**

1. What are your views regarding self-assessment process in your final examination?
2. What are the benefits and challenges of the process of self-assessment?