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Alignment of Language Testing and Assessment Courses with International Language Assessment Literacy Frameworks: A National Review of ELT Programs in Türkiye

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the alignment of undergraduate Language Testing and Assessment (LTA) course in Turkish English Language Teaching (ELT) programs with international Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) standards. Using qualitative document analysis, publicly available course syllabi from 64 state universities were analyzed based on the CEFR, ALTE, ILTA frameworks, and LAL models. A deductive–inductive coding scheme was employed to identify the presence and distribution of core assessment competencies. The findings indicate a strong emphasis on foundational and technical aspects of language testing, such as item writing, reliability, and exam preparation and underrepresentation of ethical practice, fairness, feedback literacy, score interpretation, and digital assessment. These results suggest a partial and uneven alignment between current LTA curricula and international LAL standards. The study highlights the need for systematic curricular revision to ensure that future language teachers are equipped with a broader, practice-oriented assessment literacy responsive to contemporary educational and technological demands.

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Language assessment has always played a prominent role in the field of language teaching and learning. In the beginning, it served as a technical and diagnostic tool. In time, it has predominantly become a tool for learning. Moreover, current global emphasis on accountability, transparency, and quality assurance in language education has increased the importance of language assessment literacy for language teachers. Since Stiggins' (1991) definition of assessment literacy as the knowledge, skills, and ethical principles required to interpret and use assessment data, the term has expanded significantly across educational domains.

In terms of foreign language teaching, this shift has led to a more specialized notion of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), which combines technical expertise in test design with contextual, ethical, and socio-cultural dimensions (Davies, 2008; Fulcher, 2012). More recent models consider LAL as a dynamic and context-dependent construct shaped by teachers' beliefs, professional identities, and institutional environments rather than as a static set of testing skills (Taylor, 2013; Xu & Brown, 2016). Within this multidimensional and evolving nature of LAL, establishing clear reference points for what constitutes high-quality assessment competence has become increasingly important.

In this regard, international assessment frameworks such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) shape national policies and curricular expectations by prompting various countries to align teacher education programs with global benchmarks. Since English is a Lingua Franca, it has a decisive role in academic progression in Türkiye, especially at the tertiary level. Therefore, the Turkish context aims to be in alignment with these global trends. In this regard, the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) has made an Assessment and Evaluation course a must within English Language Teaching (ELTE) programs. However, both international and national studies have emphasized that English language teachers and/or instructors have consistently stated either their insufficient preparation in language assessment or feeling less competent in their in-service assessment practices. (Büyükkarcı; 2016; Çankaya, 2022; Doğru, 2020;

Giraldo, 2018; Ölmezer- Öztürk, & Aydın, 2019; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014).

These findings have highlighted the importance of pre-service training regarding language assessment and evaluation by underscoring the mismatches between the theoretical aspect of language assessment and evaluation and the practice of in-service language teachers (Hatipoğlu, 2015; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Köksal, 2004; Ölmezer-Öztrürk, 2021; Sarıyıldız, 2018; Yastıbaş, 2018). In this regard, this article seeks to refer this gap by analyzing how Turkish language assessment courses address to internationally recognized frameworks and principles. By doing so, it aims to contribute to ongoing discussions about LAL, inform future curriculum design in Türkiye, and support broader efforts to enhance the quality and consistency of language assessment in Türkiye.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual Foundations of Assessment Literacy and Language Assessment Literacy

Assessment literacy (AL) was first coined by Stiggins (1991) as the basic knowledge, skills, and principles teachers need to make sound assessment decisions. Following work made AL broader to integrate technical competence, interpretive judgment, ethical considerations, and understanding the consequences of assessment practices (Popham, 2009; Scarino, 2013). Within language education, AL has evolved into more specific construct which is Language Assessment Literacy (LAL). LAL highlights the complexities and multi-layered dimensions of assessing communicative competence in diverse contexts by referring to various aspects such as practical skills for administering language assessment practices; theoretical understanding of core concepts like validity, reliability, fairness, and washback; and ethical and sociocultural awareness regarding how assessment is shaped by contextual environments (Davies, 2008; Fulcher, 2012; Taylor, 2013). In that, LAL is now considered as dynamic rather than static affected by teachers' beliefs, contextual realities, professional identities, and reflective practices (Xu & Brown, 2016). In a nutshell, LAL has

gone beyond a checklist of technical abilities toward a socially situated and context-responsive professional competence. Despite all this consensus on LAL's multidimensionality, scholars state persistent ambiguity in the definition and operationalization of LAL (Pill & Harding, 2013). This ambiguity makes curriculum design for teacher education programs in the national level more complex and points out the importance of aligning local practices with established international frameworks.

2.2. Research on LAL and Teacher Preparation: International and National Perspectives

Teachers reporting lack of competence to meet the demands of language assessment, especially in areas going beyond traditional testing formats have been highlighted in various contexts by different international research studies. In these studies, teachers state confidence in using multiple-choice items; however, they also address their struggles with ensuring validity, interpreting assessment results, designing performance-based tasks, alternative assessment techniques, test fairness, and implementing formative feedback practices (Lam, 2014; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014; Yan, Zhang & Fan, 2018). This global trend of language assessment and evaluation research is reflected in the Turkish context as well. National studies indicate that pre-service and in-service English language instructors often perceive their assessment literacy as insufficient, particularly in relation to test development, assessing productive skills, validity and reliability, rubric design, and alignment with learning outcomes (Arslan, 2022; Büyükkaracı, 2016; Çankaya, 2022; Doğru, 2020; Genç, 2019; Hatipoğlu, 2015; Mede, & Atay, 2017). Language teachers from Türkiye also highlight their low self-efficacy when designing classroom-based assessments or interpreting test results of their learners, for undergraduate Language Testing and Assessment (LTA) course offers limited practical training (Hatipoğlu, 2015; Ölmezer-Öztürk, & Aydın, 2019; Sarıyıldız, 2018; Sevimel-Şahin, 2019; Yastıbaş, 2018). Empirical work also shows an overemphasis on theoretical foundations and lack of opportunities for hands-on assessment design in the pre-service

LTA courses (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010; Giraldo, 2018).

In Türkiye, this challenge is deepened by variation in course content across universities and a general lack of explicit reference to international assessment standards such as the CEFR or Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) within undergraduate syllabi (Çankaya, 2022; Doğru, 2020). Besides, current international and national research studies underscore the changing demands of contemporary education like the integration of digital and blended assessment modalities including the integration of AI into language assessment (Cui, Meng & Tang, 2025; Estaji, Banitalebi & Brown, 2024). In the Turkish context, these developments are highly relevant because digital assessment systems and online learning platforms have been adopted, especially at the tertiary level, despite teachers' lack of sufficient preparation for these emerging forms of assessment (Gezder, 2022). Both international and national literature show that existing language teacher education programs provide enough conceptual and theoretical knowledge for language assessment, but they still fall short in offering practical, contextualized, and technologically integrated curricula necessary for contemporary language assessment. These concerns accentuate the need for systematic curricular alignment with internationally recognized frameworks in the Turkish context to empower language assessment literacy.

2.3. A Brief History of Curriculum Changes in Turkish ELT Undergraduate Programs

Throughout the history, English has become the language of the world; hence, it has gone beyond a tool for communication for reflecting some socio-political and economical dimensions. Likewise, both the Türkiye's socio-economic and political aspects and changing global trends have had an impact on ELTE programs in Türkiye (Balbay & Doğan, 2021; Kırkgöz, 2007). Although the origins of foreign language teaching date back to the second half of the 18th century in the Turkish context, English gradually became more dominant over other languages in line with the global changes. This

shift was not sudden as it developed when Türkiye started taking active roles in international political structures. This demand for English in diplomatic, educational, and professional domains gained speed after Türkiye's NATO membership in 1952 (Balbay & Doğan, 2021; Köksal & Sönmez, 2022). Since the role of English became broader, the need for more structured and formalized teacher preparation became more urgent. These changes affected teacher training, and as a crucial milestone, CoHE was established in 1981-1982. This new administrative institution had an authority over all teacher education programs, set standardized curricula for ELTE programs, and introduced nationwide uniformity in the preparation of English language teachers (Yaman, 2018). Over the years, there have been four major curriculum reforms of ELTE programs to meet the standards of evolving needs of English Language Teaching (ELT).

The first curriculum reorganizations were set in 1997 and formally implemented in the 1998-1999 academic year (Yaman, 2018). The extension of compulsory basic education from five years to eight years necessitated this curriculum update, since it decreased the starting age of compulsory English instruction to Grade 4 (age 10) from secondary school. Therefore, it led to a need for restructuring pre-service programs so that pre-service English language teachers would be better equipped to teach young learners (Yaman, 2018; Balbay & Doğan, 2021; Kırkgöz, 2007).

Another dimension necessitating the change in the curriculum was the introduction of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach because CLT highlights the importance of student-centered learning and functional language use. To meet the standards of this shift, the curriculum reduced theoretical load, increased methodology-focused courses, and placed more emphasis on practical experience (Yaman, 2018). Upon the change, mandatory courses such as School Experience I, School Experience II, and Teaching Practice were included in the program (Yaman, 2018; Topkaya, 2013). These courses goals were to narrow the gaps between university coursework and real classroom practices. Despite these goals, it was revealed that CLT practices were rarely

adopted in classrooms, and instruction frequently turned back to more traditional methods, underscoring challenges in transferring theoretical reforms into routine teaching practices (Kırkgöz, 2007).

The needs for eliminating existing curriculum limitations and to harmonize Turkish higher education with European Union (EU) standards necessitated another curriculum update in 2006 (Kırkgöz, 2007; Köksal, & Sönmez, 2022). Since Türkiye started engaging with international frameworks and modernization initiatives more, this reform's main goal was to create a more contemporary and communicative structure for teacher education. In this regard, the revision formalized the use of the Constructivist Approach in teacher training. Another important shift took place in language assessment was Performance-based language assessment whose aim is to reflect learners' language acquisition process was proposed (Kırkgöz, 2007; Köksal & Sönmez, 2022).

The implementation of the "4+4+4" system in 2012 by the MoNE extended mandatory education to 12 years made the revision of ELTE's curriculum compulsory because the starting age for English education was changed from grade 4 (age 10) to grade to (age 7) (Köksal & Sönmez, 2022). This earlier introduction of English resulted in additional demands on pre-service ELTE programs, mostly in terms of materials implementation, teaching pedagogy, and language assessment practices appropriate for young learners. To meet these demands, a spiral curriculum replaced the one which taught the content separately. The daily use of language, focus on individual and cultural diversity, and integration of families for extracurricular activities were other updates. Moreover, the practicality issues affecting English language teaching like large classrooms or the integration of technology into language education were also addressed in this curriculum update (Çelik & Karaca, 2014; Köksal & Sönmez, 2022).

Upon these systemic changes and ongoing discussions on ELTE quality, the most recent comprehensive curriculum update took place in 2018 (Balbay & Doğan, 2021; Yaman, 2018). Key aspects of the update were decreasing total credits

from 159 to 148, reducing course hours from 175 to 155 to lower students' overall workload, and expanding elective course offerings to 25% of the curriculum in parallel with the Bologna Process (Balbay & Doğan, 2021; Yaman, 2018). On the other hand, the revisions also introduced changes that brought about criticism. For example, courses such as Effective Communication and Contextual Grammar I were removed, and credit hours for core teaching courses like Approaches to English Learning and Teaching were decreased (Öztürk & Aydın, 2019; Yaman, 2018). Some scholars stated that these updates were mainly superficial adjustments such as renaming, recrediting, or reorganizing courses, and they failed to provide in-depth pedagogical innovation (Öztürk & Aydın, 2018). Furthermore, the reductions in practical course components were considered as reducing the applied aspect of language teacher training, and it raised the questioning whether new graduates of ELTE would be adequately prepared for classroom realities (Balbay & Doğan, 2021; Yaman, 2018).

To conclude, the history of Turkish ELTE curriculum updates shows a cyclical pattern of large-scale, centrally designed reforms whose aims were to align teacher education with international pedagogical approaches, including CLT and Constructivism. In line with these updates, this history also demonstrates criticisms regarding the limited involvement of practitioners in decision-making processes and the ongoing challenge of establishing a balance between theoretical knowledge and meaningful and sustainable classroom practices offered by curricular changes (Uztosun & Troudi, 2015; Yaman, 2018). These patterns highlight the importance of analyzing both the structure of ELTE curricula and their capacity to prepare teachers effectively for the authentic demands of ELT across Türkiye.

2.3. Need for an Alignment Study

Considering the central role of English language assessment across Türkiye's education system from primary and secondary schools under the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) to English-medium programs and preparatory schools at the tertiary level, language teachers with sufficient LAL is of

strategic importance. ELT curricula in Türkiye are designed to prepare both future schoolteachers in MoNE and pre-service instructors. Although they address a wide range of contexts and learner profiles, both stakeholders' assessment purposes are similar. Nonetheless, national studies demonstrate persistent challenges in administering language assessment practices such as assessing different skills, integrating alternative assessment, rubric use, validity considerations, and navigating the pressures of an exam-driven system in the Turkish context (Arslan, 2022; Büyükkarcı, 2016; Çankaya, 2022; Doğru, 2020; Genç, 2019; Hatipoğlu, 2015; Mede, & Atay, 2017). These issues are also present in international findings that highlight current gaps between pre-service assessment training and the complex realities of real-life assessment practices (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010; Giraldo, 2018). In Türkiye, some studies have analyzed the curricula of ELTE; however, these were broad analyses of the curricula mainly focusing on the updates in the curricula (Balbay & Doğan, 2021; Kırkgöz, 2007; Köksal & Sönmez, 2022; Öztürk & Aydın, 2019; Yaman, 2018). Despite this growing emphasis on LAL in ELTE teacher education internationally and nationally, there is no systematic analysis of Turkish ELT assessment courses' alignment with international principles and frameworks such as the CEFR and ALTE. Addressing this gap is essential for ensuring coherence, comparability, and quality in language assessment practices across all educational levels in Türkiye. In this regard, this study investigates the following overarching research question: *To what extent are the contents of compulsory undergraduate language testing and assessment course in Türkiye aligned with internationally recognized standards in language assessment?*

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study is a qualitative research study to investigate the extent to which undergraduate LTA must course in Turkish ELTE programs align with internationally recognized standards in language assessment. Since the aim of the study was to

examine the alignment between Turkish ELTE LTA course curricula and international LAL frameworks, document analysis was used as the primary research method. Document analysis involves the systematic procedure of reviewing and analyzing both printed and electronic documents (Bowen, 2009; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This method was particularly suitable for the nature of this study because it enabled the examination of official curricular documents related to Turkish ELTE LTA course and international standards of LAL.

3.2 Data Corpus

The data were gathered from three main categories of documents. Firstly, CoHE's 2020 ELTE undergraduate program framework was the primary document showing requirements for LTA courses across universities (CoHE, 2020). Secondly, undergraduate LTA course documents such as course syllabi, course descriptions, and weekly plans were taken from publicly accessible university websites. These documents represented the implementations of CoHE guidelines at the institutional level and provided in-depth information about course contents, goals, and objectives. Lastly, international reference frameworks, manuals, and models were retrieved from publicly available websites to set international standards. These were the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and its companion volume (CEFR, 2020), the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE) Principles of Good Practice (2020), ALTE Manual for Language Test Development and Examining (2011), International Language Testing Association (ILTA) Guidelines for Practice (2024), ILTA Code of Ethics (2000), and influential LAL models developed by leading scholars in the field (Giraldo, 2018; Kremmel & Harding, 2019).

3.3 Data Analysis

The document analysis followed a systematic and multi-stage process. Initially, upon the search on CoHE Atlas website, it was found that 71 universities offer ELTE programs. However, seven universities' websites did not include detailed

information related to LTA must course content, so they were excluded from the corpus. Overall, all collected documents coming from these 64 universities' websites were organized and catalogued in a word document digitally according to universities and the course contents coming from the course syllabi. After that, international documents like the frameworks and manuals were analyzed deeply to set the deductive codes. Codes coming from this analysis were written in a digital table including three categories: sources, deductive codes, and description of codes. Based on these codes, a detailed content analysis was performed on the LTA course contents. Each course document was examined to identify the presence, depth, and emphasis of LAL competencies outlined in international standards. The data were also coded inductively, since some of the LAL competencies were Turkish context specific.

3.4 Trustworthiness

Several measures were taken to increase this study's trustworthiness. Dependability was set via clear documentation of all procedures like using word and excel documents. Confirmability was addressed by basing all interpretations on documents which are publicly available to support findings. Transferability was referred by providing detailed descriptions of the Turkish ELTE context like the history of curriculum changes and the characteristics of the sampled documents, enabling readers to assess the applicability of findings to other contexts.

4. Findings

Upon the analysis of the documents, it was found that compulsory undergraduate LTA course was given in the 4th year across all universities. Except two universities offering the course for two terms in the 4th year with similar content, the course is offered for one term, mostly spring term. Although the course's content was similar, it had different names across universities (see Figure 1 below). A little less than half of the universities offered the course as *Exam Preparation in English Language Teaching* or *Exam Preparation and Evaluation in ELT*.

Five universities referred to it as *Assessment and Evaluation in ELT*, and four of them named it *Measurement and Evaluation in English Language Teaching*. *English Language Testing and Evaluation* is another name given by three universities. Other nine names were only given by one university, and these names are *Testing in English Language teaching*,

Testing and Evaluation in ELT, *Test Preparation in English Language Teaching*, *Test Preparation and Assessment in ELT*, *Preparing exams in English language education*, *Measurement and Evaluation*, *Assessment and Evaluation Practices in Foreign Language Teaching*, *Language Assessment*, and *Assessment methods in ELT*.

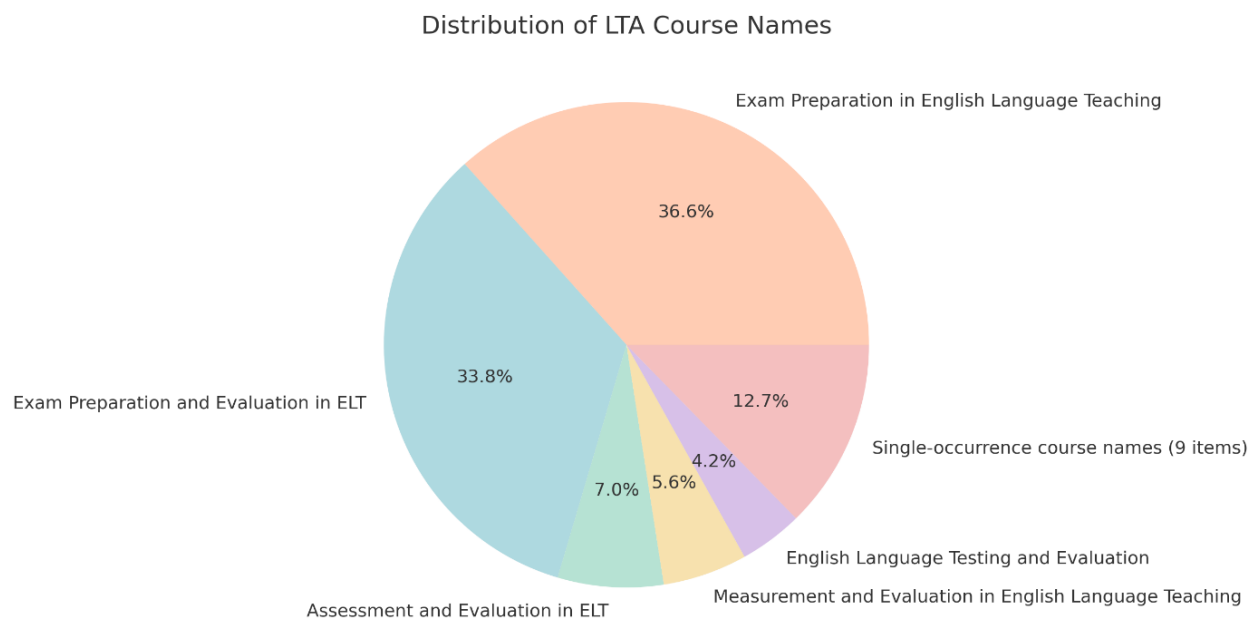


Figure 1
Language Testing and Assessment Course's Names and Its Frequencies Across Universities

After careful analysis of the course's contents, 547 coded instances were found. From these 547 instances, 21 deductive codes and 6 inductive codes were yielded. The findings are presented in two main categories. Deductive codes were set before the course content analyses, and they represent international standards, and inductive codes emerged during the document analyses, and they are Turkish context specific.

4.1 Alignment with International Standards

21 distinct themes were identified upon the analyses of the deductive codes. The distribution of the deductive codes is represented in bar charts (see figure 2). These codes represent core language assessment competencies framed in international language assessment frameworks such as the CEFR, ALTE, and ILTA guidelines, as well as prominent

LAL models. The higher frequency levels included themes like *Assessment Knowledge*, *Developing Language Assessment Tools*, *Skill-Based Assessment*, *Ability Measurement*, and *Assessment Methods*. It was revealed that *Assessment Knowledge* emerged as the most frequently addressed competency, and it is covered by all universities. *Developing Language Assessment Tools* and *Skill-Based Assessment* were the second dominant themes covered in the course with 75 percent each. *Ability Measurement*, 78 per cent, and *Assessment Methods*, 75 percent further underscore the focus on how language proficiency is conceptualized and measured through various testing approaches.

The middle-frequency codes were *Test Types*, *Scoring and Rating*, *Evaluation of Language Assessment Tools*, *Contextual Awareness*, and *Alternative Assessment*. *Test Types* and *Scoring and Rating* with

59 percent each were the most dominant ones in the middle-frequency group. *Evaluation of Language Assessment Tools* came next with 53 percent. Followingly, *Contextual Awareness* was addressed by half of the universities analyzed, and *Alternative Assessment* and *Basic Statistics* were covered by 25 percent each.

Final group is the lower-frequency group. It included themes such as *Providing Feedback*, *Fairness*, *Washback and Impact*, *Language Assessment Administration and Safety*, *CEFR*, *Interpreting Scores*, *Ethics and Professional Responsibilities*, *Technology*

Integration, and *Communicative Competence Assessment*. *Providing Feedback* appeared in 12.5 percent of the universities. *Fairness*, *Washback and Impact*, and *Language Assessment Administration and Safety* each accounted for 9.4 percent each. The least represented ones were *CEFR* 7.8 percent, *Interpreting Scores* 6.3 percent, *Ethics and Professional Responsibilities* 4.7 percent, *Technology Integration* 3.1 percent, and *Communicative Competence Assessment* 1.6 percent.

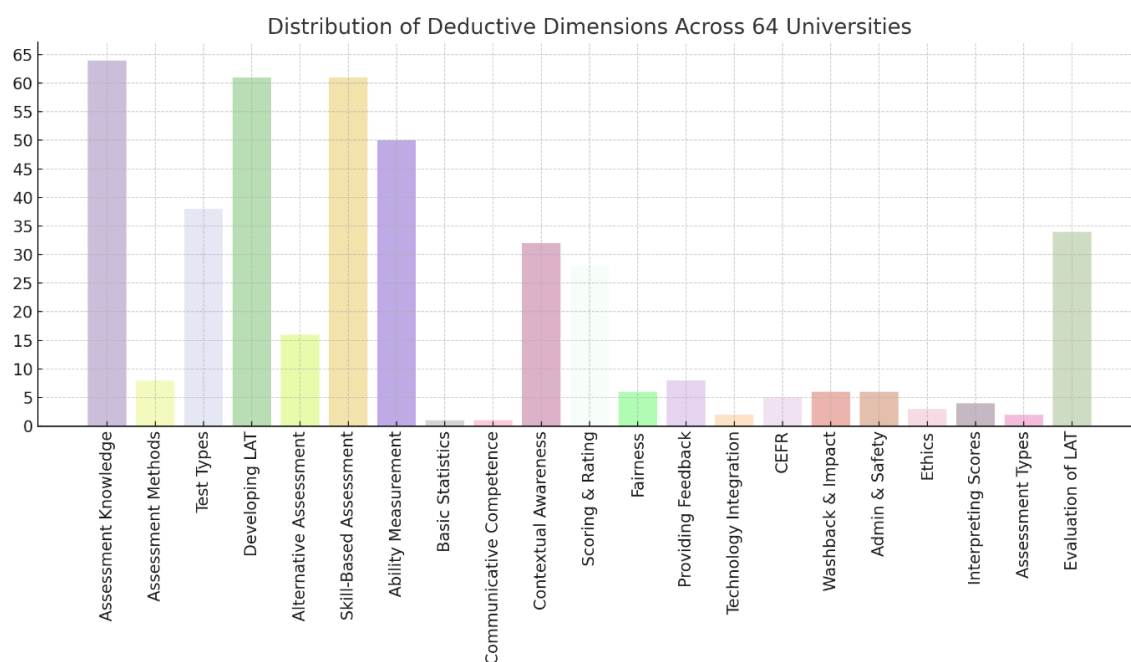


Figure 2
Distribution of Deductive Dimensions Across 64 Universities

4.2 Turkish Context-specific Dimensions

Upon the inductive analyses, six codes emerging from the data were identified. These inductive codes are *Hands-on Practice*, *Assessment and Curriculum*, *Assessment for Young Learners*, *Assessment for MoNE*, *Integration of Stakeholders* and *Recent Developments in Language Testing*. These are inductive codes because they are specific to the Turkish context, and they are not explicitly addressed in international manuals or frameworks. The distribution of these inductive codes is

represented in bar charts (see figure 3). *Hands-on Practice* focusing on item writing was addressed by 42 percent of the universities. *Assessment and Curriculum* was the second mostly addressed inductive code with 20 percent. *Assessment for Young Learners* appeared 3.1 percent. On the other hand, *Assessment for MoNE* appeared in 1.6 percent of the universities. Similarly, *Integration of Stakeholders* and *Recent Developments in Language Testing* each accounted for 1.6 percent of all the universities.

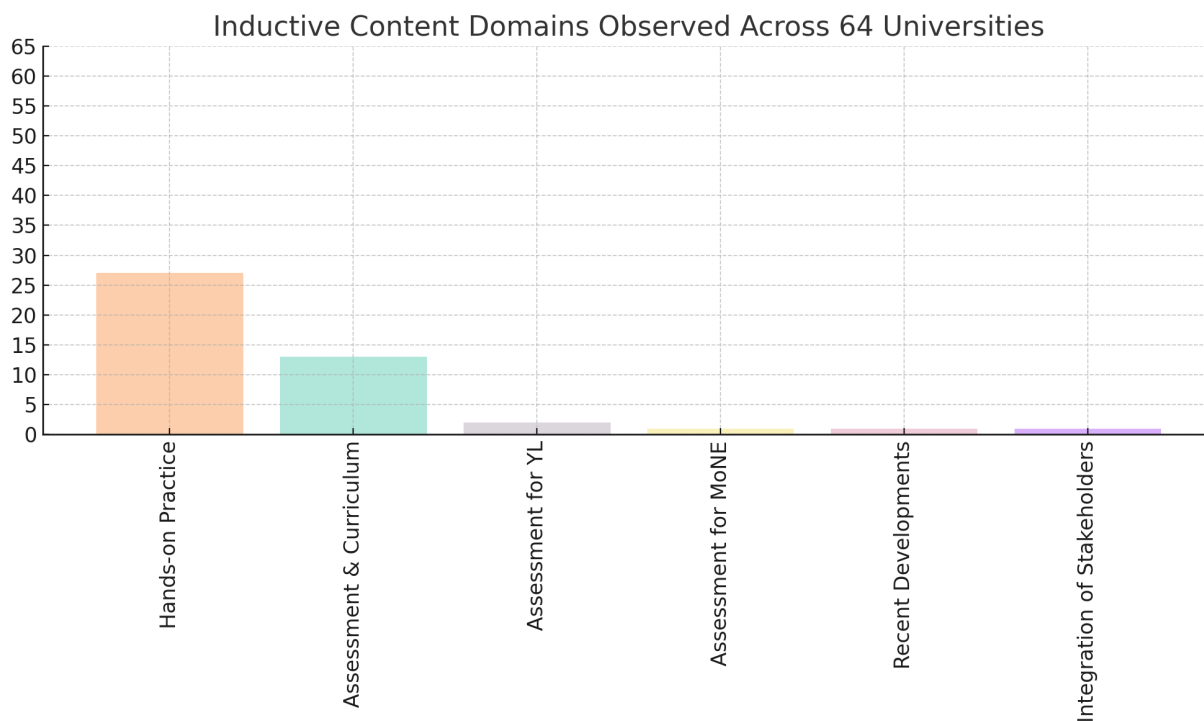


Figure 3
Inductive Content Domains Observed Across 64 Universities

5. Discussion

The findings of this study present some areas which align with international standards such as the CEFR, ALTE, ILTA guidelines, and contemporary LAL models. They also illustrate significant gaps between Turkish ELTE undergraduate must LTA course and those international standards. Initially, the findings of the study support most of the national and international concerns repeatedly addressed in the literature regarding teachers' limited preparedness for real-life assessment practices (Büyükkaracı, 2016; Çankaya, 2022; Giraldo, 2018; Hatipoğlu, 2015; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). Moreover, the findings are consistent language teacher education programs' tendency to focus more on theoretical foundations (DeLuca & Klinger, 2010; Fulcher, 2012). In that, the Turkish must LTA course contents strongly cover conceptual knowledge of language assessment. The dominance of deductive codes such as *Assessment Knowledge* (focusing on core concepts such as

validity, reliability, or approaches in language assessment), *Skill-Based Assessment*, *Ability Measurement* (assessment of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation), *Scoring and Rating*, *Assessment Methods*, and *Developing Assessment Tools* suggests that Turkish programs broadly reflect the technical aspect of LAL described in early definitions (Davies, 2008; Stiggins, 1991). In addition to these high-frequency themes, middle-frequency codes such as *Test Types*, *Basic Statistics*, and *Evaluation of Language Assessment Tools* are also a continuation of the conceptual–technical emphasis reported in the literature (Fulcher, 2012; Kremmel & Harding, 2019). Furthermore, this strong focus on conceptual knowledge also aligns with earlier national studies highlighting that teachers feel confident in test formats such as multiple-choice items but less competent in designing performance tasks, interpreting assessment results, or ensuring fairness (Arslan, 2022; Mede & Atay, 2017; Ölmezer-Öztürk & Aydın, 2019). However, there were two exceptions regarding the coverage of conceptual

knowledge, and these were addressing *Alternative Assessment* and *Assessment Types*. They are also core components of conceptual knowledge, yet they had lower frequency. The underrepresentation of *Alternative Assessment* shows that Turkish compulsory undergraduate LTA course puts less emphasis on performance-based, formative, and classroom-embedded assessment practices despite their growing importance in global assessment frameworks, and the less frequency of *Assessment Types* indicates that not all categories of assessment knowledge are addressed with equal depth across universities. Overall, most of these findings are expected, since the LTA course has traditionally been offered to set theoretical foundation of LAL across universities.

A second key finding is about the underrepresentation of contextual and socio-cognitive dimensions of LAL. International literature increasingly conceptualizes LAL as a dynamic construct shaped by teachers' identities, beliefs, classroom realities, and sociocultural environments (Taylor, 2013; Xu & Brown, 2016). In terms of deductive themes representing these broader dimensions, except *Contextual awareness* which was addressed by half of the universities, other codes like *Fairness, Washback and Impact, Ethics and Professional Responsibilities, Language Assessment Administration and Safety, Interpreting Scores, and Providing Feedback* were less frequently addressed in the Turkish undergraduate must LTA course. Furthermore, other socio-cognitive aspects like *Test Takers' Rights* (ILTA, 2024) and *Personal Beliefs and Attitudes* (Kremmel & Harding, 2019) are not addressed at all. This underrepresentation or the lack of representation reflects not only national but also international concerns about teacher education programs' insufficient reference to the interpretive and ethical aspects of assessment (Scarino, 2013; Yan et al., 2018; Sarıyıldız, 2018). The final gap between the Turkish undergraduate LTA course content and international standards is the limited reference to CEFR (7.8%) and *Communicative Competence Assessment* (1,6 %). Despite Türkiye's continuous efforts to align ELT curricula with European standards, there is still a gap in terms of

introduction of these standards. (Balbay & Doğan, 2021; Kırkgöz, 2007; Köksal & Sönmez, 2022).

Another misalignment between Turkish undergraduate LTA course and international standards is on *Technology Integration*. There has been growing international interest regarding technology, especially in terms of Artificial Intelligence (AI) mediated scoring, computer-based testing, automated feedback systems, and the pedagogical implications of digital assessment (Cui, Meng & Tang, 2025; Estaji, Banitalebi & Brown, 2024). Nevertheless, *Technology Integration* is only addressed by 3 percent of the universities.

Apart from the deductive themes, inductive ones provide valuable insight into the contextual realities of Turkish undergraduate LTA course. The relatively high presence of Hands-on Practice (42%) reflects a valuable attempt to make up for the theory–practice gap stated in national studies (Hatipoğlu, 2015; Yastıbaş, 2018). However, the underrepresentation of themes such as *Assessment for MoNE, Assessment for Young Learners, and Integration of Stakeholders* shows that the course does not fully address different assessment needs of the Turkish educational ecosystem although undergraduate ELTE programs prepare English language teacher candidates both for MoNE and university settings.

In a nutshell, these findings indicate that although Turkish undergraduate LTA course mostly meet international standards in terms of foundational assessment knowledge, it is not broad and holistic enough to address all LAL competencies necessary in contemporary educational contexts. This misalignment mirrors the structural characteristics of Turkish curricular reform processes, which historically focus more on standardization and theoretical coherence despite putting less emphasis on practice-oriented and context-responsive training (Balbay & Doğan, 2021; Yaman, 2018). The findings show a need for a more systematic and balanced approach that combines international standards, local contextual needs, and recent assessment trends.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the alignment of Turkish ELTE undergraduate Language Testing and Assessment courses with internationally recognized language assessment standards through a comprehensive document analysis of 64 universities' ELTE undergraduate must LTA course syllabi. Based on the findings, it can be said that despite having a strong alignment with conceptual and technical components of LAL, ELTE undergraduate must LTA course underrepresents practical, contextual, ethical, and socio-cognitive dimensions, which are highly emphasized in contemporary frameworks such as CEFR, ALTE, ILTA, and recent LAL models. The dominance of theoretical content and little reference to alternative assessment, feedback literacy, fairness, score interpretation, washback, and ethical guidelines show an imbalance in formal pre-service LAL training. Moreover, insufficient reference to the CEFR and the absence of explicit European or international assessment standards demonstrate that curricular alignment is still implicit and inconsistent across institutions. The near absence of technology and AI related assessment competencies is another critical gap in terms of global shifts in language assessment practices. Based on the inductive dimensions of the document analysis, additional Turkish context specific concerns arouse, particularly the limited focus on MoNE assessment practices, young learner assessment, and stakeholder integration. Another issue is related to practices. Although some universities try to engage pre-service English language teachers with hands-on practices, these efforts remain narrow in scope and insufficient to fully bridge the theory and practice gap which has been underscored in national and international literature. Briefly, the findings show the necessity for a re-examination of how the undergraduate ELTE must LTA course is structured and offered across Turkish undergraduate ELTE programs. By aligning with international frameworks more; expanding practical and context-specific like MoNE, tertiary level, or young learner assessment training; and integrating digital and AI-based assessment

competencies would support the development of more comprehensive LAL among future English language teachers. Unequivocally, improving the coherence and depth of undergraduate compulsory LTA course is essential for enhancing assessment quality, promoting equitable learning experiences, and supporting national goals for quality assurance in English language education.

7. Implications

The findings of this study offer several important implications for curriculum development, teacher education practice, and national policy. Initially, Turkish ELTE programs would benefit from integrating CEFR-aligned task design, performance descriptors, and proficiency levels more explicitly into LTA syllabi. In that, pre-service teachers have a clearer understanding of internationally recognized assessment standards. Curriculum content should also move beyond foundational conceptual knowledge to incorporate contextual, ethical, technological, and socio-cognitive dimensions emphasized in contemporary LAL models. Following global trends, technology-mediated and AI-supported assessment practices should be systematically integrated into coursework to prepare future teachers for the changing assessment ways of Turkish tertiary institutions. In terms of practice, ELTE undergraduate LTA courses should provide learners with more practicum-based assessment training such as scoring practice, rubric development, feedback literacy, and classroom-based assessment scenarios in order to bridge the continuous gap between theoretical instruction and the realities of classroom assessment. Having stronger collaboration between ELTE departments and MoNE and tertiary level could also support the alignment between pre-service preparation and the real-life practices of language assessment. At the policy level, national accreditation bodies and CoHE may consider embedding to the point LAL standards into program requirements to ensure coherence, transparency, and comparability across institutions. Finally, systematic reference to CEFR, ALTE, and ILTA guidelines in national curriculum documents would promote alignment with

international benchmarks and contribute to greater standardization and quality assurance in English language assessment in Türkiye.

8. Limitations and Future Research

This study is limited to publicly available ELTE undergraduate LTA course documents and syllabi. Therefore, the study may not fully capture pre-service and in-service English language teachers' pedagogical approaches or unlisted course

activities. Future research could include interviews with in-service English language teachers from different levels like MoNE and tertiary along with interviews with English language teacher educators, analysis of their current practices, pre-service English language teachers' reflections to triangulate how LAL competencies are enacted in practice on the course. Carrying out comparative studies of other countries' teacher education programs may also highlight structural factors that frame LAL development.

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