English Language Testing and Evaluation Course in English Language Teacher Education Programs in Türkiye: Who, What, and How?

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the current state of a language testing course taught in Foreign Language Education Departments in Türkiye. It examines who teaches the ELTEC, how course content is determined, and which topics and textbooks are covered. The participants of the study included 21 ELTEC instructors from 13 universities. Semi-structured interviews and documentation were utilized to collect the data. Adopting a mixed-methods research design, the researchers collected qualitative data and employed a rigorous systematic content analysis. Then they quantized the content analysis results to provide descriptive findings. The results reveal that teacher educators often use a textbook-based approach to create the ELTEC content; therefore, it falls behind the recent developments in LTA. The content coverage is heavily summative assessment-oriented with little or no focus on formative assessment and giving feedback. It is suggested that the ELTEC instructors and curriculum developers make qualitative and quantitative changes to the ELTEC to improve the Language Assessment Literacy of future EFL teachers by means of a situated-LTA training approach.

Testing and assessment are among the cornerstones of teaching (Alderson, 2005; Hatipoğlu, 2010, 2017; Popham, 2006). Teaching must be supported with appropriate testing and assessment applications for high-quality learning. Such intertwined nature of testing and teaching (Heaton, 1988) assigns language teachers a binary role as teachers and assessors of learner achievements in the teaching and learning cycle (Inbar-Lourie, 2008a; Zimina, 2018). For example, teachers regularly prepare assessment tasks to show how much of the course content has been obtained, write tests diagnosing students' needs, and put together activities tracking learner progress. Teachers are also expected to adapt exams and spend considerable time scoring and giving feedback to students' exams, projects, portfolios, etc. All these add up to almost 50% of their overall time in the profession (Stiggins, 1999). Moreover, teachers in examination-oriented countries such as Türkiye are expected to prepare learners for local and international high-stake tests that determine whether students get into their target schools (Hatipoğlu, 2010). Therefore, if teachers design and apply

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assessment instruments inaccurately, they are likely to affect learners and their progress negatively and sometimes even harmfully (Inbar-Lourie, 2008a; Shohamy, 2001). That is why acquiring a high level of Language Assessment Literacy (LAL) is a requirement for language teachers. Research shows that this is only achievable when prospective teachers receive proper training that will enable them to develop situation-appropriate, high-quality assessment tools (Bailey & Brown, 1996; Brindley, 1997; Brown & Bailey, 2008; Can Daşkın, 2022; Farhady & Tavassoli, 2018; Coombe et al., 2020; Popham, 2011; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014) because of contextualized nature of LAL (Giraldo & Murcia, 2018; Mede & Atay, 2017; Tsagari & Vogt, 2017; Weng & Shen, 2022). Despite this, few teachers possess the expected qualifications to hurdle the challenging nature of language testing and assessment applications owing to low-level assessment (Brookhart, 2001; Campbell et al., 2002; Farhady & Tavassoli, 2017, 2018) often resulting from insufficient or ineffective training (Deluca & Klinger, 2010; Inbar-Lourie, 2008a, 2008b; Stiggins, 2002; Şahin, 2019; Tsagari & Vogt, 2017). The same problem prevails in the Turkish educational system (Hatipoğlu, 2010; Köksal, 2004; Sarıçoban, 2011; Şahin, 2015, 2018, 2019). Moreover, despite the highly exam-oriented educational system in Türkiye (Hatipoğlu, 2010, 2014, 2016), training prospective English language teachers in language testing and assessment (LTA) was never a priority but an afterthought (Hatipoğlu & Erçetin, 2016; Hatipoğlu, 2017).

EFL teachers' insufficient LAL level has directed researchers' attention to the issues of LTA in recent years (e.g., Hatipoğlu, 2010, 2014, 2015; Işık, 2021; Işık & Sarı, 2021; Jeong, 2013; Ölmezer-Öztürk & Aydin, 2018; Sevimel-Şahin & Subaşı, 2021; Şahin, 2015, 2018, 2019; Taylor, 2009, 2013; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014; Wu, 2014; Yatıbaş & Takkaç, 2018). However, despite its critical role in EFL teacher education, research on LAL development and the LTA courses offered in English Language Teacher Education Programs (ELTEPs) is still insufficient (e.g., Bailey & Brown, 1996; Csépes, 2014; Hatipoğlu, 2010, 2015). Furthermore, in their thorough review of research on LAL, Sevimel-Şahin and Subaşı (2019) emphasize the higher number of studies carried out with EFL teachers than those with prospective EFL teachers. Therefore, there is an increasing and urgent need for a more effective and detailed understanding of prospective teachers' LTA skills acquisition and the competency of teacher educators who teach LTA courses in language teacher education programs.

Scrutiny of the studies on language assessment literacy has also shown that current teacher education programs are unable to train teachers to align learning objectives with test tasks (Kao, 2023; Koh, et, al., 2018), and most of them fall behind the recent testing and assessment developments. Thus, the concept of LAL and the content of LTA courses for future teachers should be revisited (Jing & Zonghui, 2016) through learning, unlearning, and relearning about the construct (Coombe et al., 2020; Giraldo, 2021). Nevertheless, this should be done cautiously because assessment cannot be considered separately from its close relationship with the learning objectives and instructional process in schooling (Scarino, 2013). They clearly show that LTA instructors should follow situated-LAL training to meet the urgent assessment needs of future EFL teachers who will follow the ELT curricula in their own countries, which are revised regularly in light of recent language teaching and learning developments. However, to what extent these curricular changes are reflected in the LTA practices and LTA courses in language teacher education programs needs closer examination. To this end, the current study aims to be the first of its kind to examine the characteristics of the ELTEC offered to prospective English language teachers in Türkiye in terms of instructor qualifications, course contents, and teaching materials.

2. Literature Review

Despite the importance of testing and evaluation in the education system, the number of studies focusing on ELTEC courses is still very small and can be divided into two sub-groups: international and country-specific. One of the earlier pioneering studies in the first group was conducted by Bailey and Brown (1996).

These two researchers focused on language assessment literacy development of prospective EFL and LTA courses offered in teacher education programs around the world. Using a questionnaire, they collected data from 84 language testing instructors in different countries, and their results showed important similarities and differences between the foci of these courses. Most of them were largely theory-based and covered topics such as item writing, test evaluation, assessing different language skills, criterion-referenced testing, proficiency testing, and validity. The most frequently listed compulsory books for these LTA courses were Henning (1987), Madsen (1983), Hughes (2002), Bachman (1990), Oller (1979), Shohamy (1985), Cohen (1980) (see Table 7 for the textbook titles).

Twelve years later, Brown and Bailey (2008) conducted a parallel study to identify the developments and changes in the LTA courses' structure and content. The findings of the new study were at large similar to those reported in 1996. Once again, it was uncovered that the content taught in LTA courses varied from one instructor to the other and that they decided which topics to include based on what they considered to be fundamental topics in LTA. Interestingly even after more than a decade, LTA topics attempted to teach to language teachers in language testing courses had remained almost unchanged. Only a few new topics, such as classroom testing practices, alternative assessment procedures, washback, consequential validity, and computer-based LTA were added to the existing base. The most noticeable change was in the list of commonly used textbooks. The most popular textbooks in the 2008 study were: Bachman & Palmer (1996), Brown (2005), Alderson, Clapham & Wall (1995), Hughes (2003), Bachman (1990), Bailey (1998), Brown (2004) (see Table 7 for the textbook titles).

Mendoza and Arandia (2009) explored Colombian EFL teachers' perceptions and uses of classroom assessment, administering a questionnaire to 82 teachers, and they investigated the curricula from 7 graduate and 27 undergraduate programs. They found a higher tendency to prefer summative assessment and traditional language testing tools over formative assessment instruments. They also found that some teacher education programs only offered elective language assessment courses. This reveals that some pre-service EFL teachers graduate without any LTA instruction in assessment practices.

Conducted in a different educational setting, a study by Csépes (2014) explored 10 MA English teacher training programs in Hungary, analyzing the program structures on institutions' websites and course syllabi. She found that four teacher training programs did not offer a separate LTA course. Only five out of ten provided targeted LTA applications for prospective teachers in a seminar course, and one offered the seminar as optional. This reveals a similar finding to that of Mendoza and Arandia (2009), indicating that some EFL teachers graduate without any LTA instruction or practices. The analyses of the course syllabi for their content coverage also uncovered that all courses included the basic concepts and assessment of the four language skills and vocabulary and grammar, mostly eliminating the topic of statistical analyses. The researcher justifies this on the grounds that classroom-based assessment does not require expertise in high-level statistical analyses. Overall, LTA courses in Hungary appear to reflect a "testing culture" because only two courses include formative assessment tools, including portfolio, self-, and peer assessment.

In another study, Jin (2010) examined the current situation of LTA courses in training tertiary-level language teachers in China in terms of teacher educators, content, instructional technique, course materials, and student perceptions regarding the lesson. Similar to Mendoza and Arandia (2009), the results of this study revealed a theory-focused tendency to LTA with the least attention to classroom-based assessments, alternative assessment tools, and statistics for language testing. However, reliability, validity, and item writing, particularly multiple-choice were most prominent in these courses.

Lam (2015) investigated the overall picture of LTA training in five ELTEPs in Hong Kong. He collected the data through a survey, documentation, focus group interviews, and student assessment tasks. He found that LTA courses failed to combine theory with practice in LTA. This was reported as a problem for language teachers because they needed to receive the necessary training to conduct assessment applications for formative and summative assessment practices in a testing culture. Moreover, the

researchers argued that most prospective language teachers had doubts about the benefits of certain LTA topics for their future professional careers. The study revealed similar results to those by Jin (2010) who concluded that most LTA courses were typical language testing courses with a more traditional language testing approach.

Hatipoğlu (2010) investigated the ELTEC taught in ELTEPs in Türkiye for the first time. She used a questionnaire and interviewed 81 prospective EFL teachers at a public university. The findings uncovered that the participants found some of the topics and textbooks covered in the course too abstract and theoretical. Therefore, they distinctly underlined the need for easy-to-understand course materials and hands-on tasks. Additionally, the participants stated that assessing language skills, reliability, validity test types, writing multiple choice test items, relationship between language assessment and teaching, and testing types were the most helpful LTA topics for their future careers. Five years later, Hatipoğlu (2015) conducted a similar study focusing on future EFL teachers' LAL level and their expectations from the ELTEC. The findings showed that even after four-year training in their university and taking an LTA course, they still had a minimal level of skills and knowledge in LTA.

Taking the findings of the earlier studies discussed above as a springboard, we believe that uncovering how pre-service EFL teachers are trained in language testing and assessment is vital since the level and quality of LAL training prospective EFL teachers receive can have various social consequences (Bailey & Brown, 1996). Thus, the current study aims to investigate the status quo of the English Language Testing and Evaluation course taught in English Language Teacher Education Programs in Türkiye, specifically focusing on the qualifications of the course instructors, course content development, topics, and textbooks covered in the course.

For this purpose, the following research questions are formulated:

1. What are the qualifications of the instructors who teach and should teach English Language Testing and Evaluation course in English Language Teacher Education Programs in Türkiye?
2. How do instructors plan and organize English Language Testing and Evaluation course in English Language Teacher Education Programs in Türkiye?
2.1. How do they decide on the content of the English Language Testing and Evaluation course?
2.2. What are the topics covered in the English Language Testing and Evaluation course?
2.3. Which textbooks are taught in the English Language Testing and Evaluation course?

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The data discussed in this research were gathered from 21 (10 M, 11 F) university instructors working in English Language Teaching Programs (ELT) in 13 universities (10 state, 3 private) located in 8 different cities in Türkiye (see Table 1). All the participants had taught the ELTEC course at least once in the last five years and agreed to be interviewed face-to-face (N=14) or on the phone (N=7) (see Section 4.1 for details related to the participants). The age of the participants ranged from 36 to 78, and the mean age was 49.

Table 1
Demographic information of ELTEC instructors

University	Gender					
	Male		Female		Total	
	N.	%	N.	%	N.	%
1. Gazi University	1	4.7	2	9.5	3	14.2
2. Hacettepe University	3	0	0	0	3	14.2
3. Middle East Technical University	1	4.7	2	9.5	3	14.2
4. Süleyman Demirel University	1	4.7	1	4.7	2	9.5
5. Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University	1	4.7	0	0	1	4.7
6. Akdeniz University	0	0	1	4.7	1	4.7
7. Kocaeli University	1	4.7	0	0	1	4.7
8. Boğaziçi University	0	0	2	9.5	2	9.5
9. Pamukkale University	1	4.7	0	0	1	4.7
10. Ondokuz Mayıs University	0	0	1	4.7	1	4.7
11. Bilgi University	0	0	1	4.7	1	4.7
12. Başkent University	1	4.7	0	0	1	4.7
13. Ufuk University	0	0	1	4.7	1	4.7
Total	10	47.6	11	52.4	21	100

3.2 Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

The data for the current study were collected from three different sources. The first data source was a semi-structured interview with the instructors. The second data source was the ELTEC syllabi, and finally university course catalogs on department websites (i.e., documentation). By using different data sources, the researchers aimed to ensure data triangulation for in-depth, valid, and reliable analyses (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 1988).

3.2.1. Interviews

The instructor interview created by Jeong (2013) was taken as a basis for constructing the interview questions of the present study. However, to make the instrument more suitable for the Turkish context and to answer the research questions better, several new questions and sub-questions were added, while some others were rephrased and reordered. Three experts examined the new version of the interview in LTA, after which it was piloted and finalized. The final interview included questions grouped into six sections: (i) instructors' educational background (ii) the planning process of the course, (iii) the application of the ELTEC, (iv) opinions about the course, (v) challenges related to teaching and planning of the course, and (v) suggested solutions to the problems in the ELTEC.

The interviews were conducted in Turkish or English depending on the participants' preferences. They lasted for about 40 minutes, and all of them were recorded. The respondents were also asked to share their ELTEC syllabi and any other materials/sources that they thought would help researchers better analyze the courses they taught.

3.2.1. Documentation

The documents used as the data for this study included ELTEC course syllabi which were collected from the instructors interviewed. Besides, all the Foreign Language Education Department catalogs on the university websites were scrutinized to gather the course syllabi and other relevant documents.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

Analyzing qualitative data is a rigorous act of transforming qualitative data into clear, valid, and reliable interpretations (Gibbs, 2007). Scrutiny of the literature shows that there is not a widely accepted method of analyzing qualitative data (Creswell, 2013). Thus, in this study, the data were analyzed by adapting a principled combination of content analysis steps and suggestions by Cresswell (2013, pp.197-200) and Tesch (1990, pp.142-149), Miles and Huberman (1994, pp.245-246), Auerbach and Silverstein (2003), and Vogt et al. (2014) (see Şahin (2019) for a detailed explanation of the data analysis procedure). Moreover, a prior coding scheme was prepared using the interview question categories.

As the first step in the content-analysis procedure, the researchers transcribed the recorded interviews verbatim. Then, all responses to each interview question were read twice and analyzed by identifying and color-coding the relevant sections of the interviewees' answers. In the meantime, the researchers also allowed data-driven themes as they emerged in this cyclical analysis process and added these new codes to the coding scheme. In the end, the whole data were sorted manually using the codes with highlighters and entered into an Excel Spreadsheet as a qualitative codebook (Creswell, 2013) to easily track the emerging themes and codes. Finally, these emergent themes were gathered into coherent groups, then merged into the relevant list of categories (Tesch, 1990).

Moreover, to ensure the reliability of the coding process, three independent coders (i.e., an LTA expert and two academics specialized in qualitative research in applied linguistics, all with Ph.D. degrees) were also asked to analyze two randomly selected interview transcripts using the data coding matrix. Examination of the coding process results showed that the coders agreed 90% of the time (i.e., an acceptable consistency score, Miles & Huberman,1994). To resolve the 10% disagreement, coders and researchers had meetings where divergent codes and themes were discussed and reviewed to finalize inter-coder reliability checks.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. What are the Qualifications of the Instructors who Teach and Should Teach English Language Testing and Evaluation Course in English Language Teacher Education Programs in Türkiye?

In the first part of the interview, participants were asked to talk about their educational and professional background in the field of LTA (i.e., degrees attained, major field of study, number of LTA, measurement and evaluation, and statistics courses taken, experience in teaching the ELTEC) (see Table 2).

The answers to those questions showed that all except one participant received at least one degree in ELTEP and that the majority (N=13, 61.9%) held BA, MA, and/or Ph.D. degrees in ELTEP from various universities either in Türkiye or abroad. The remaining one-third of the participants received their degrees from programs other than ELTEP (e.g., Linguistics (N=5, 23.8%), English Language and Literature (ELIT) (N=2, 9.5%), Translation and Interpretation (N=1, 4.7%)), Curriculum and Instruction (N=1, 4.7%), and LTA (N=1, 4.7%). These findings display that the instructors who participated in this research received ELTE training in some part of their academic life. The problem is, however, that only one holds an MA and

another instructor 2 Ph.D. degrees in LTA. It can, therefore, be claimed that the majority of the ELTEC instructors (86%) did not receive education specifically focusing on LTA.

To identify their LTA knowledge base, ELTEC instructors were also asked to state if they had ever taken any LTA-related courses. Apart from the two participants who did not take any testing courses because they were not a part of the ELTEPs in Türkiye at that time, all other informants (N=19; 90.4%) stated that they had taken at least one LTA course during their undergraduate and/or graduate education. However, the results showed a considerable variation in the number and type of testing/LTA courses they took. A closer examination of the data in Table 2 shows that about two-thirds (61.9%) of the respondents did not take any LTA courses during their undergraduate education. However, many were offered field-specific courses during their MA and Ph.D. studies. In contrast, the majority (80.9%) took MEC only at BA level. Another interesting finding was that none of the informants took a statistics course at the BA level because such a course was added to the ELTEP curriculum only in 2006. So, it looks as if the ELTEC instructors in Türkiye learned about language testing and statistics mainly during their postgraduate education or self-taught themselves LTA and statistics by doing research and reading related books (N=2, 9.5%).

Table 2
Frequency of LTA-related courses taken by ELTEC instructors

		None		1 +	
		N.	%	N.	%
LTA course	BA	13	61.9	8	38
	MA	8	38	13	61.9
	PhD	11	52.3	10	47.4
Measurement & evaluation course (MEC)	BA	4	19	17	80.9
	MA	21	100	0	0
	PhD	21	100	0	0
Statistics course	BA	21	100	0	0
	MA	6	28.5	15	71.4
	PhD	5	23.8	16	76

Inbar-Lourie (2008a, 2013) categorizes general testing and assessment knowledge in education as a pre-requisite for LAL because the assessment of specific content areas is built on the essentials of the testing and assessment field in general. So, the ELTEC instructors who participated in our study had the chance to acquire the foundational skills and knowledge related to LTA in the Measurement and Evaluation courses they took during their undergraduate education.

To build a complete picture of the ELTEC instructors, we asked them to discuss their experience teaching ELTEC. The results showed that the group was heterogeneous. There were four (19%) "novice ELTEC instructors" (i.e., with 1-5 years of experience in teaching ELTEC), eight (38%) instructors with 6-9 years of experience, and nine (48%) "experienced instructors" (i.e., 10-17 years of experience). Additionally, more than half of the respondents (N=9, 57.1%) stated that they taught the course to both undergraduate and graduate students. So, it can be concluded that although most participants did not have MA or Ph.D. degrees in LTA, more than two-thirds were experienced ELTEC instructors.

When asked to evaluate their level of expertise in LTA, eight respondents (38%) classified themselves as non-experts stating one or a combination of the following reasons:

(1) they had not majored in LTA

(2) LTA was not among their fields of research

(3) they had not been involved in professional LTA practices such as constructing standardized tests or working as raters for a standardized language test.

Once again, it was seen that instructors teaching ELTEC knew the LTA field since Malone (2013) and Pill and Harding (2013) listed these three features among the prerequisites for being an LTA expert. The remaining 13 respondents (61.9%) said they were experts since they wrote either MA or Ph.D. theses on LTA (7 out of 13; 54%) and/or were engaged in professional LTA practices (e.g., constructing standardized tests, working as raters). All were also involved in LTA-related research and/or published articles on various aspects of LTA. That is, they ticked two more criteria to be an LTA expert on the list proposed by Malone (2013) and Pill and Harding (2013).

The respondents were also asked whether they usually volunteered to teach the ELTEC. The overwhelming majority's answer was 'Yes'. Nineteen (13 experts and six non-experts) of the 21 participants (90.5%) stated that they volunteered to teach the ELTEC. Experts said they teach it because LTA is among their primary research areas and because they like teaching the course. The six 'non-experts' voluntarily taught the ELTEC since they loved teaching it, and even though they are 'non-expert in LTA', having many years of teaching experience helped them to teach the course effectively. Only two of the 'non-expert' participants stated that they were assigned to teach the course since there was no one else to teach it in the department (i.e., neither an expert nor a volunteer).

Another question in the interview aimed to elicit instructors' opinions about what qualities instructors should possess to teach ELTEC effectively in ELTEPs in Türkiye. The results in Table 3 show that the participants listed six qualifications that they expected from ELTEC instructors. These qualifications were listed as either essential or optional, and as the ones that should/could be acquired before or after graduation.

Table 3
Frequency of ELTEC instructors' opinions about who should teach the ELTEC

	Qualifications expected from the ELTEC instructors	**Essential**		**Optional**		**Total**	
		N.	**%**	**N.**	**%**	**N.**	**%**
Before graduation	graduating from an ELTEP	14	66.6	7	33.3	21	100
	writing an MA or PhD thesis on LTA	13	61.9	0	0	13	61.9
	taking at least one statistics & one LTA course	2	9.5	7	33.3	9	18.5
After graduation	hands-on LTA experiences	14	66.6	7	33.3	21	100
	conducting research in LTA	13	61.9	2	9.5	15	71.4
	interest in the assessment & teaching profession	3	14.2	3	33.3	6	28.5

'Graduating from ELTEP' and 'having field experience in LTA' were the two most frequently listed main features (66.6%; N=14), which were closely followed by 'writing an MA or Ph.D. thesis in LTA' and 'conducting research in LTA' after graduation. The latter pair were mentioned as essential by 61.9% (N=13) of the participants. Some commented on the benefits of having field experience in LTA (e.g., constructing standardized tests, scoring proficiency tests) and working as an EFL teacher constantly applying classroom-based assessment instruments. They argued that such field experiences could help ELTEC instructors to master and exhibit good assessment examples that could serve as models for prospective teachers. This finding is important since teacher educators were influential role models for future teachers (Al-Issa, 2005).

In that vein, the respondents highlighted the critical role of the ELTEC instructors' assessment practices in the ELTEC on the LTA skills of pre-service EFL teachers. They stated that students also learn by observing the instructors. They argued that ELTEC instructors should apply the principles of LTA in their own courses, such as reliability and validity to be a good role model for pre-service teachers. This finding can be further supported by Lortie's term "apprenticeships of observation" (1975), highlighting the peripheral learning that occurs when students observe the instructors' applications to develop their skills.

"…. There are some teachers who really like teaching but not testing. I mean they are not really maintaining the reliability and validity measures. They do not pay attention to these features that much. To be a good role model as well, as an ELTEC teacher first the teachers themselves should really apply those features, and then some field experience can be good for these teachers as well" (Instr. 1).

If the ELTEC instructors and other teacher educators themselves do not apply the theoretical principles of LTA when assessing students' learning in their own courses, then *"the pre-service EFL teachers have difficulty in relating what is taught and what is applied in the class because they state that instructors teach something, but they do not see them do these things in the class" (Instr. 17).*

Overall, it can be concluded that the respondents emphasized being an LTA expert as an entailment for teaching the ELTEC because, as clearly underlined in the following quotations by two instructors:

"This course necessitates expert background knowledge. Instructors with a Ph.D. degree in LTA, who keep track of the development in the field, go to related conferences, and who are members of field-specific organizations should teach this course" (Instr.6), and "it won't be beneficial if a non-expert in LTA teaches the ELTEC" (Instr. 4).

Teacher educators significantly contribute to the total ecology of language teacher training (Lunenberg et al., 2007). The quality and quantity of teacher trainers' skills and their teaching and assessment methods influence how future EFL teachers theorize or put the theory into practice (Shagrir, 2010) in their profession. Therefore, based on the findings, hands-on experience in LTA, and expertise in the field of LTA are expected qualifications from ELTEC instructors to develop prospective teachers' language assessment literacy effectively.

4.2 How do the ELTEC Instructors Plan the Course Program?

4. 2.1. How do they decide on the content of the ELTEC?

One of the interview questions aimed to investigate how ELTEC instructors determined the course content. The analyses of the instructors' responses revealed, as shown in Table 4, that most instructors tended to adopt a textbook-based approach to determine the ELTEC course content (N.14, 66.6%). Those who used the content page of the textbook chosen as the primary course material also expressed that they added the core LTA topics required to develop prospective EFL teachers' level of language assessment literacy whenever the textbook did not cover them.

Table 4
Frequency of how ELTEC instructors determine the ELTEC content

Ways of determining the ELTEC topics		N.	%
Textbook-based approach	using textbook contents	14	66.6
Content-domain analysis	selecting required core concepts	8	38
	taking the course description by COHE as a departure point	6	28.5
	doing needs analysis	3	14.2
	following recent LTA developments	2	9.5
Others	reflecting their academic and professional background	3	14.2
	taking previous course syllabi as the baseline	1	4.7

The second approach to determining the ELTEC content was content-domain analysis. Namely, the instructors used varying techniques (e.g., selecting core LTA topics (N.8, 38%), taking the course description provided by CoHE (N.6, 28.5%), doing needs analysis (N.3, 14.2%), and integrating recent LTA developments (N.2, 9.5%) to identify relevant and necessary LTA domain-specific topics for the pre-service EFL teachers who are expected to apply localized assessment-related practices after graduation.
This can be clearly seen in the following statements:

> *Instr. 2: "The content of the undergraduate program is dictated. I look at for example the general content. Does it include, for example, principles of assessment, does it include different types of assessment, so if there is something missing, in my opinion, I try to add some extra materials, maybe chapters, maybe some other exams, samples of exams actually".*
> *Instr.10: "I looked at the course description given by CoHE. I thought about what the graduates will need. Then, I examined the available language testing books, and looked for a book with clear explanations and good examples...".*

These findings clearly reveal that textbooks become the instructors' syllabus for the ELTEC course, as vividly observed in one of the instructors' responses: "I use Heaton's book. I directly follow the contents of that book" (Intstr.4). A plausible explanation for this might be that students and teachers often consider textbooks as the visible heart of any ELT program, and teachers perceive them to be the route map (Sheldon, 1988). They are "sometimes even viewed as providers of readymade syllabi" (Hatipoğlu & Can Daşkın, 2020, p. 1). It can also be argued that being non-expert in the field of Language Testing and Assessment, the ELTEC instructors often resort to textbooks as a safe zone to determine the course content.

4.2.2. What are the topics covered in the ELTEC?

The rigorous analyses of 36 course syllabi and interview data coming from 21 participants uncovered 28 LTA topics included in the ELTEC in ELTEPs in Türkiye (see Tables 5 and 6).

All ELTEC instructors and course syllabi were found to have covered the first six LTA topics listed in Table 5 with varying degrees of coverage. Accordingly, ELTEC instructors started their courses with "interface between language teaching and LTA" followed by basic LTA terms, such as "testing", "assessment", "evaluation", "measurement", "formative assessment", and "summative assessment" either in the same week or the second instructional week. This was followed by "principles of LTA", often taught in the third or fourth week of the academic term. Besides, while it was taught as a concept related to validity in the rest of the data, "backwash" was also mentioned as a separate weekly content in 10 ELTEC syllabi focusing on the significance of positive backwash.

Table 5
Frequency of the LTA topics covered in the ELTEC

LTA Topics	N.	%
1. role and importance of LTA in teaching & learning	43	100
2. basic terms in LTA	43	100
3. principles of LTA	43	100
4. test types	43	100
5. item types (multiple-choice, gap filling, true/false, matching)	43	100
6. assessing language skills and areas for different ages & levels	43	100
7. testing types	37	86.0
8. alternative assessment tools	28	65.1
9. basic statistical terms & analysis of testing data	24	55.8
10. approaches to LTA	23	53.4
11. standardized tests	22	51.1

The findings also revealed that "assessing four language skills and sub-skills" as a topic was taught in all ELTECs. All participants drew attention to the significance of teaching how to assess language skills to prospective ELF teachers. However, their courses differed in terms of time allocated for teaching how to assess each language skill. For

instance, the overarching number of ELTEC syllabi and instructors reserved two weeks (i.e., 6 class hours) for teaching how to test and assess learners' reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary skills and knowledge in English. However, they once again tended to allocate only one week of the instructional period to teach assessing listening and speaking skills in English. These findings supported the results of Tsagari and Vogt (2017) and Vogt and Tsagari (2014) who argued that EFL teachers often focused on assessing reading, vocabulary, and grammar, with very little focus on listening, speaking, and writing.

Other topics common to all the course syllabi and instructors' course contents were "types of tests", "test items", "assessing language skills for different ages and levels", and "testing types" (N.43, 100%). The interview data analyses revealed specific emphasis placed on "achievement and proficiency tests" and their differences because the students generally found them confusing. In contrast, the participants underlined that other test types, such as "placement and diagnostic tests", were explained superficially in their lessons. This was further explained by the participant instructors arguing that pre-service EFL teachers will be expected to construct classroom-based achievement tests as their professional requirements rather than engaging with assessment-related practices including "standardized tests", "statistical terms" and "analyzing test scores". That said, they still included "standardized language tests" and "basic statistical terms and analyzing test scores" as separate weekly topics (N.22, 51.1%; N.24, 55.8%) in their course syllabi at basic level. These results are different from the findings revealed by Bailey and Brown (1996), Brown and Bailey (2008), and Jin (2010) because in their study "test analysis", "item analysis", "descriptive statistics", "test consistency", "item writing", "item facility and discrimination" were found to be commonly taught topics by LTA instructors.

Types of testing, such as "direct and indirect testing", "integrative testing", and discrete-point testing" were the topics covered in the majority of the ELTECs (N.37, 86%). More specifically, the participants explained that the types of testing were theoretically taught to develop a good understanding of different test purposes and differences often in one week (i.e., 3 lesson hours).

The topic "alternative assessment instruments" was found to be taught in almost two-thirds of ELTEC courses (N.28, 65%), often covered in one instructional week through the end of the academic year. However, what was interesting about this finding was the contradictory statements elicited from the participants. Almost all of them reported that although they included the topic in the course outline, they often briefly and superficially defined alternative assessment tools such as portfolios, projects, and learner diaries. Or they ended the academic term without focusing on the topic due to time constraints. Such a low frequency of "alternative assessment tools" was anticipated because Türkiye has a very test-oriented educational system (Hatipoğlu, 2010) reflecting a strong "testing culture" instead of "assessment culture".

Table 6
Frequency of the LTA topics covered in the ELTEC-Cont'd.

LTA Topics	N.	%
12. evaluation language tests	17	39.5
13. stages of test development/test specifications	17	39.5
14. scoring	14	32.5
15. assessing young learners	13	30.2
16. interpreting and using test results	10	23.2
17. rubric design and use	10	23.2
18. administering language tests	9	20.9
19. giving grades	9	20.9
20. giving feedback	9	20.9
21. reporting test results	6	13.9
22. CEFR and Language Assessment	4	9.3
23. computer-based testing	3	6.9
24. test ethics	3	6.9
25. testing and social issues	2	4.6
26. adapting language tests	2	4.6

27. standards-based assessment	1	2.3
28. testing in ESP	1	2.3

On the other hand, the lack of "formative assessment tools" in the ELTEC was surprising because the ELTEC description prescribed by CoHE (2007), which was reported as a baseline by the instructors to determine the ELTEC contents, included "alternative assessment tools".

Similar results were also found by Vogt and Tsagari (2014), and Tsagari & Vogt (2017). They stated that most of the EFL teachers across Europe had only basic knowledge of the alternative assessment tools because they received either 'no' or 'a little' training about such formative assessment tools.

The findings of the current study were also in parallel with those of Bailey and Brown (1996), Csépes (2014), Jin (2010), Lam (2015), and Mendoza and Arandia (2009). They found that alternative assessment tools such as portfolios, project works, self-and peer-assessment, and learner diaries received little or no attention in LTA courses. They argued that it was mostly because the educational system in their countries belongs to a testing culture rather than an assessment culture or because one single LTA course is insufficient to cover them all. However, little or no focus on alternative assessment tools in LTA courses to train future EFL teachers cause a lack of awareness in recent formative assessment movements such as assessment for learning, which helps construct alignment among instruction, learning, and assessment (Farhady & Tavassoli, 2021).

Another alarming result was the low frequency of the topic "test development stages" covered in ELTEC (N.17, 39.5%). Although it is one of the core LTA topics (Bailey & Brown, 1996; Brown & Bailey, 2008; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014), such a low frequency for this topic might be attributed to the fact that ELTEC instructors teach these stages incorporating them into the other topics of assessing language skills and areas. Yet, research shows that little or no instruction on constructing tests results in invalid and ineffective assessment practices (Brown & Bailey, 2008; Köksal, 2012; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014).

The core LTA topics "administering language tests" (N.9, 20.9%), "giving grades" (n.9, 20.9%), "rubric design" (N.10, 23.2%), and "scoring" (N.14, 32.5%), were found to be covered in almost only one-quarter of the ELTEC syllabi. Most ELTEC instructors complained about the lack of time they could allocate for test construction and test application with students, although needed. So, they emphasized that these contents were mainly theoretically covered in their courses. Yet, EFL teachers are also engaged directly with the administering and marking of these tests (Plake & Impara, 1997). That's why all ELTEC syllabi and instructors were expected to allocate two or three weeks of instruction on administering and scoring a test, with a suitable scale or rubric, giving grades and feedback. This finding contradicts the results of a study conducted by Mede and Atay (2017) where they explored EFL teachers' university training. They found that EFL teachers reported having received extensive training in giving grades and using rubrics.

The results of the current study also revealed few occurrences of specific LTA topics in the ELTECs, such as "Common European Framework of Reference" (CEFR) (N.4, 9.3%), "computer-based testing" (N.3, 6.9%), "test ethics" (N.3, 6.9%), "testing and social issues" (N.2, 4.6%), "adapting language tests" (N.2, 4.6%), "standards-based assessment" (N.1, 2.3%), and "testing in ESP" (N.1, 2.3%). The over-neglected topic of CEFR-informed LTA in the ELTEC syllabi is especially noteworthy because, in our national ELT curricula in Türkiye, it is clearly articulated that the language teaching methodology and LTA are based on CEFR standards (MEB, 2018a, 2018b). It is, more or less, the case throughout the world that the curricula are based on CEFR; therefore, the link to the CEFR is essential for language teachers (Tsagari, 2010; Vogt, 2016).

Overall, the contents covered in the ELTECs reveal that the nature of the LAL training received by prospective EFL teachers in Türkiye differs from the LAL training in other countries to a great extent. Turkish ELTEC instructors tend to cover topics that will be helpful for future EFL teachers to prepare classroom tests for diagnostic and attainment purposes to assess language skills with traditional test methods. This might result from the fact that EFL teachers are expected to prepare their students for national

high school and university entrance exams. On the other hand, LTA courses worldwide give more comprehensive coverage to more technical issues such as item content analysis, item quality analysis, test analysis, descriptive statistics, test consistency, item facility and discrimination, and interpreting test scores focusing on different kinds of testing. This was not the case in the ELTEC syllabi in Türkiye as well as in LTA courses in Hungary (Csépes,2014) and in Hong Kong (Lam, 2015), which is justifiable on the grounds that EFL teachers do not need expertise in high-level statistical analyses as their contextualized assessment practices do not necessitate this.

Once again, the results of this current study call for redesigning the learning objectives and the contents of the language testing and assessment courses in EFL teacher educator programs because as Levi and Inbar-Lourie (2020, p.4) argue "the complex expanded contextualized and multifaceted language-learning construct and its corresponding assessment practices" require reconceptualizing the concept of Language Assessment Literacy considering the localized needs of prospective and practicing teachers.

4.2.3. Which textbooks are taught in the ELTEC?

One of the critical findings of this study is that ELTEC instructors identify the ELTEC content based on their textbooks. This raises a follow-up question of which textbook(s) the ELTEC instructors prefer to use. This is necessary because if the content is organized mainly around the textbook, such pedagogical tendencies create expectations about what the textbook should include for effective language assessment literacy development since very often an array of LTA textbooks could be utilized to guide newborns in the field of LTA in gaining sufficient level of language assessment literacy (Inbar-Lourie, 2012). So, it is vital to examine the textbooks selected to teach ELTEC.

The data analyses in this study revealed an excessive amount of diversity in the textbook preferences of ELTEC instructors. Seventy textbooks were used either as main textbooks (N.12), supplementary or additional reading sources (N.58). When compared to the results of the studies by Bailey and Brown (1996) and Brown and Bailey (2008), where they uncovered a list of 32 and 29 different textbooks, respectively, it is observed that even after 14 years, instructors' LTA textbook choices have almost doubled.

When examined in detail (see Table 7), the findings showed that the most frequently used required textbooks in the ELTEC were Hughes (1989, 2003): *Testing for language teachers* (N.28), Heaton (1975, 1977, 1989, 1990) (*Writing English Language Tests* (N.23), Brown (2003, 2004): *Language assessment: principles and classroom practices* (N.21), Madsen (1983): *Techniques in testing* (n.9), Coombe et al., (2007): *A Practical Guide to Assessing English Language Learners* (n.6), Bachman and Palmer (1996): *Language Testing in Practice: Designing and Developing Useful Language Tests*, (N.5), Genese and Upshur (1998): *Classroom-Based Evaluation in Second Language Education* (N.5), Bachman (1990): *Fundamental considerations in language testing* (N.5), Weir: *Communicative language testing* (n.5).

Almost all instructors said that they frequently preferred to use Hughes (1989, 2003): *Testing for language teachers*, Heaton (1975, 1977, 1989, 1990): *Writing English Language Tests*, and Brown (2003, 2004): *Language assessment: principles and classroom practices* because these textbooks are more appropriate at the undergraduate level with respect to relatively more simplified theoretical explanations.

When the most frequently preferred textbooks were analyzed referring to characteristics of LTA textbooks proposed by Davies (2008), overall, the instructors revealed a tendency to select books that display the features of textbooks and practical manuals (i.e., Heaton, 1989; Hughes, 2002; Genese & Upshur, 1998; Madsen, 1983). However, some preferred textbooks focusing more on the theoretical side of LTA (i.e., Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Davies (2008) suggested that these textbooks "can at best be

regarded as resource materials for teaching but are not easily put directly to use in a training program (p. 333).

Among the commonly utilized textbooks by the instructors participating in this study, only the books by Hughes (2003) and Madsen (1983) were common to the survey of LTA courses investigated by Bailey and Brown (1996). In contrast, four textbooks by Bachman (1990), Bachman & Palmer (1996), Brown (2004), and Hughes (2003) were common to the same survey conducted in 2008 by Brown and Bailey. According to Davies (2008), the textbooks by Bachman (1990), Bachman & Palmer (1996), Alderson et al., (1995), and Henning (1987) were very much on the theoretical side. It can be concluded that LTA courses around the world focus resource textbooks standing at the theoretical end of the continuum, while in Türkiye the instructors attempt to use books categorized as textbooks and practical manuals in LTA.

Table 7

A comparison of the five most common required textbooks in the ELTEC syllabi with those used around the world

Bailey & Brown (1996) (No. of the syllabi=50)		Brown & Bailey (2008) (Total no. of the respondents=94)		The current study (Total no. of the syllabi=36; respondents: 21)	
Textbooks (N.30)	**N.**	**Textbooks (N.29)**	**N.**	**Textbooks (n.70)**	**N.**
Henning (1987): A guide to language testing **(textbook & practical manual)**	10	Bachman & Palmer (1996): *Language testing in practice: Designing and developing useful language tests* **(resource textbook)**	18	Hughes (1989/2003): *Testing for language teachers* **(textbook & practical manual)**	28
Madsen (1983): Techniques in testing **(textbook & practical manual)**	10	Brown (2005): *Testing in language programs: A comprehensive guide to English language assessment* **(textbook & practical manual)**	18	Heaton (1975/1977/1989/1990): *Writing English Language Tests* **(textbook & practical manual)**	23
Hughes (2002): Testing for language teachers **(textbook & practical manual)**	9	Alderson et al., (1995): *Language test construction and evaluation* **(resource textbook)**	13	Brown (2003/2004): *Language assessment: principles and classroom practices* **(textbook & practical manual)**	21
Bachman (1990): Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing **(resource textbook)**	8	Hughes (2002): *Testing for language teachers* **(textbook & practical manual)**	13	Madsen (1983): *Techniques in testing* **(textbook & practical manual)**	9
Oller (1979): *Language Tests at School* **(Resource textbook, practical manual)**	7	Bachman (1990): *Fundamental considerations in language testing* **(resource textbook)**	9	Coombe et al., (2007): *A Practical Guide to Assessing English Language Learners* **(textbook & practical manual)**	6

This study's findings also yielded valuable insights into certain critical criteria that the ELTEC instructors looked for when selecting their ELTEC textbooks. Almost all of them reported the necessity of the clarity and the appropriateness of the book's language to the undergraduate students' level. Secondly, ELTEC instructors mentioned the classical and well-known authors in the field of LTA, comprehensive coverage, and practical tasks and exercises as other essential criteria to consider when selecting the textbooks for the courses. Moreover, with four exceptions, almost all respondents said that one textbook is never enough to include the essential LTA topics. Thus, they suggested a compilation from several leading LTA textbooks.

The textbook selection criteria expressed by the respondents in this study mostly overlap with the results of Fulcher (2012) and Malone (2013), who argued that EFL teachers generally preferred language testing and assessment textbooks with basic-level theoretical explanations of LTA topics. They also stated that language teachers expected a practical know-how manual and a balanced approach to teaching both formative and summative assessment instruments with examples.

5. Conclusions and Implications of the Study

In our study, we aimed to draw a comprehensive portrait of the instructors who have taught the ELTEC and the instructors who should teach the course in ELTEPs in Türkiye. Moreover, we aimed to investigate the structure, content, and textbooks included in these courses. obliged to teach the ELTEC due to the scarcity of academics specialized in LTA in Türkiye.

The findings also show that ELTEC instructors still use LTA textbooks published almost 30 years ago as core course materials in their courses. It can be explained by referring to the discrete-point testing approach applied in the highly traditional testing system of the country. This finding is especially alarming now that ELTEC instructors often use a textbook-oriented approach to determine the ELTEC topics. And it risks excluding recent developments in LTA from their course contents, such as formative assessment and alternative assessment tools. This finding is especially supported by the high frequency of traditional test methods with an overreliance on summative assessment approaches and less or none for the LTA topics such as using rubrics, formative assessment tools, integration of CEFR with language assessment; test construction stages, test ethics, adapting language tests and providing feedback. There can be two explanations for this. First, LTA textbooks tend to be slow in reflecting improvements in the field because books tend to be conservative, following traditional methods. At the same time, the developments and recent ideas are often situated in articles (Davies, 1978); therefore,

The results reveal that most ELTEC instructors in Türkiye are not LTA experts, although it has been suggested by the participant ELTEC instructors that LTA experts teach this course. The participants also note that the instructors who are not LTA experts are often developments in the field and take some time to reflect themselves in the books. Second, there is only one 3-credit compulsory LTA-related course in English Language Teacher Education Programs in Türkiye taught in the last academic term in most universities. And it is often complained by ELTEC instructors that for such a highly theory-based and practice-oriented course, it is almost impossible to include all the necessary topics (Lam, 2015; Şahin, 2019). However, since teachers should be the center of classroom assessment applications (Purpura & Turner, 2014), future EFL teachers must be trained to enrich their assessment-related practices with more learning-oriented assessment tools. This can be possible with "a principled Concept-based language instruction approach to facilitating preservice teachers' awareness to assessment literacy and promoting their praxis" (Kao, 2023, p. 91).

Inbar-Lourie (2008a, 2013) and Taylor (2013) argue that language assessment literacy level and the content of LTA courses should be decided primarily depending on different stakeholder needs. This way, LTA concepts can be translated into such a language for these specific groups to have easy access to the necessary knowledge and skills allocating adequate time to bridge the gap between theory and practice too. Therefore, curriculum developers and universities should urgently take certain actions to increase the

number of LTA-related courses and provide the necessary training at the pedagogically most appropriate time possible in the curriculum.

Based on these findings as mentioned earlier and discussions, we suggest a measurement and evaluation course be taught in the 6th academic term in the ELTEP. This course will help prospective teachers acquire the basic principles, test methods, test and testing types in educational assessment, and test construction stages (Inbar-Lourie, 2008a, 2013). In the 7th academic term, pre-service EFL teachers should be taught an LTA course including practical applications with a specific focus on approaches to LTA, assessing language skills and sub-skills across age groups and language levels, preparing test specifications, writing items, evaluating items for validity and reliability, scoring, and interpreting the scores. Furthermore, a "classroom-based language assessment" course can be added to the curriculum as a third course either as a field elective or a must-course. This will ensure the necessary time to focus on formative assessment and alternative assessment tools, appreciating the "assessment for and as learning" purposes. The timing of these courses will then be more effective for prospective EFL teachers to apply the skills they have acquired in the practicum course they will take in the last semester of their program.

Last but not least, it can be suggested that ELTEC instructors take a more localized approach to LAL to fit the ELTEC to the needs of specific groups (Dimova et al., 2022; Jeong, 2013; O'Loughlin, 2013; Pill & Harding, 2013; Scarino, 2013; Taylor, 2013; Vogt et al., 2020a). This can be achieved in two ways: (1) by carefully analyzing what prospective EFL teachers will be engaged in terms of language testing assessment applications when they start working as EFL teachers in the Turkish educational context and (2) by regularly following the recent developments in the field of LTA and the ever-changing nature of LAL (Coombe et al., 2020; Jing & Zonghui, 2016).

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