PROFESSIONAL ELT MAGAZINE ONLINE #12

TESOL
TÜRKİYE

TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 12th issue of our Professional ELT Magazine Online, proudly presented by TESOL Türkiye! We are thrilled to bring you another diverse and inspiring collection of articles, reflecting the dynamism and passion of our community.

In this issue, there is a remarkable group of contributors whose insights and expertise will undoubtedly enrich your professional journey. Our presenters in this issue include Eda Asılmaz, Emrah Geniş, Pınar Sekmen, William Travers, Aman Rassouli, John I. Liontas, Burcu Çubukçu, Lucy Griffin, Ahmet Hamdi Balkaş and Zeynep Su Yavuz. We would like to thank all our contributors for their invaluable effort.

Finally, we would like to extend our sincere appreciation to our readers for their support and enthusiasm. We also encourage you, our valued readers, to actively participate in shaping the future of our magazine! Thank you for joining us on this journey of professional growth and discovery. Enjoy the 12th issue of our Professional ELT Magazine Online!

TESOL Türkiye Promotion Council

CONTENTS

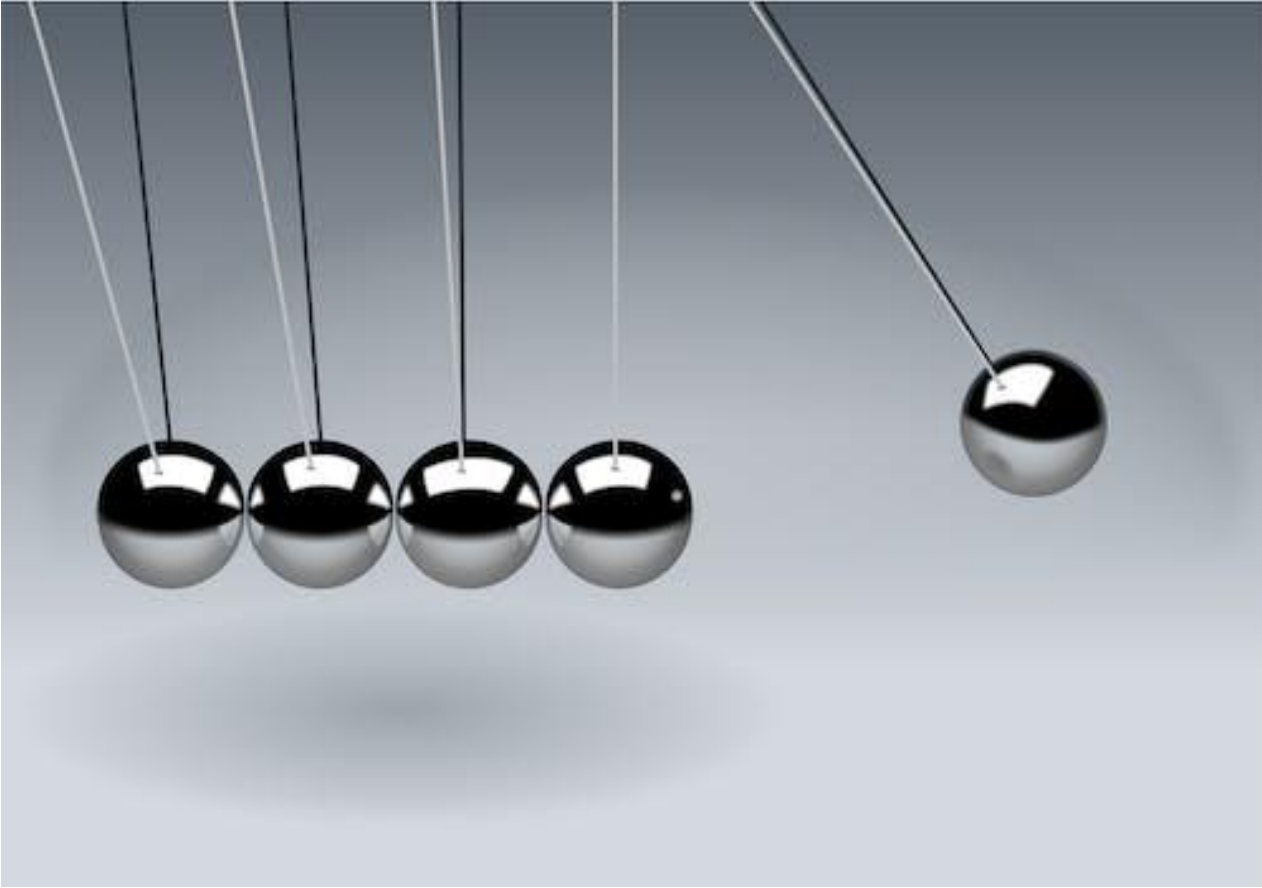*"Explain how your EFL/ESL teacher's teaching methods have helped you better understand your own personal traits?"*
"How has your language learning journey changed your thoughts or behaviors?"

1. REFLECTIONS

EMBRACING DIFFERENCES: TRANSFORMING LANGUAGE TEACHING FOR HETEROGENEOUS LEARNERS

Eda Asılmaz

In an era marked by burgeoning globalization and heightened mobility (Burridge, Markoff & Rossi, 2023), the realm of higher education has experienced a remarkable surge in the enrollment of students hailing from multifarious socio-economic, cultural, and familial backgrounds in international universities. This mosaic of diversity permeating educational institutions has necessitated a fundamental transformation in language teaching methodologies to meet the varied needs of this diverse student cohort. The emergence of Language Preparation programs has underscored the significance of linguistic readiness. Undoubtedly, English stands as the preeminent language sought by tertiary education applicants for several compelling reasons.

Primarily, English has entrenched itself as the global lingua franca, serving as the primary medium for international communication, commerce, and diplomacy. Its widespread usage in business, academia, technology, and entertainment has solidified its status as the de facto language of global interaction. Consequently, proficiency in English grants individuals' access to a vast repository of knowledge, academic resources, and global opportunities, enabling seamless engagement in a wide array of fields and disciplines.

Moreover, the dominance of English in academia (Friedman, 2023) extends beyond its utilitarian function. It serves as the medium through which cutting-edge research, scientific advancements, and scholarly discourse are disseminated worldwide. Most academic publications, prestigious journals, and educational conferences predominantly employ English, making proficiency in this language imperative for academic success and global scholarly participation.

Furthermore, English proficiency is often a prerequisite for admission into esteemed international universities and programs, where courses are frequently conducted in English. As a result, prospective students recognize the necessity of acquiring a strong command of English to navigate the academic landscape and compete effectively on a global scale.

As a response to this growing role and importance, many universities around the globe, even in non-English speaking countries, have implemented English Medium Instruction (EMI) curricula (Sano, Zheng & Griffiths, 2023) and have established English Preparatory Programs to attract and accommodate a wider array of students. However, this transformation calls for a concerted effort to embrace socio-economic, socio-cultural, and family differences among learners while ensuring equitable educational opportunities. In other words, while EMI curricula and English Preparatory Programs aim to bridge linguistic gaps, achieving proficiency in a language encompasses more than just vocabulary and grammar. It involves understanding cultural nuances, idiomatic expressions, and contextual usage. To

accommodate heterogeneous learners effectively, language teaching should focus on fostering communicative competence, encouraging interaction, and embracing diverse linguistic capabilities.

The convergence of students from diverse countries, socio-economic backgrounds, cultural upbringings, and varied family backgrounds within educational settings presents a dual spectrum of challenges and opportunities. This diverse amalgamation mandates a critical reassessment of conventional teaching methods to uphold inclusivity and achieve effective learning outcomes for all individuals, irrespective of their multifaceted backgrounds.

The challenges are differences in learning styles and levels of proficiency in language of instruction, and prior educational experiences. Addressing these divergences requires a nuanced approach to teaching that accommodates various learning preferences and levels of understanding. Furthermore, cultural differences might sometimes lead to misunderstandings or communication barriers, demanding sensitivity and proactive measures to foster a harmonious learning environment.

Moreover, socio-economic disparities among students can significantly impact their educational experiences (Sung, 2022). Recognizing and addressing these differences is crucial to create a more equitable learning environment. Institutions can introduce scholarship programs, offer financial aid packages, or establish mentorship initiatives to level the playing field. Additionally, fostering a supportive and inclusive atmosphere where students feel valued irrespective of their background is essential for their academic success and overall well-being.

Cultural diversity is a hallmark of international universities, enriching the educational landscape. However, it requires sensitivity and understanding. Embracing cultural differences through a diverse representation in the curriculum, inclusive pedagogies, and intercultural activities can foster a harmonious learning environment. Encouraging open dialogue, celebrating cultural festivals, and promoting cross-cultural collaborations can facilitate mutual respect and appreciation among students.

Family background also significantly influences students' educational journeys. While some students come from supportive environments that prioritize education, others may face familial challenges or responsibilities. Implementing flexible learning approaches, such as offering online resources, recorded lectures, or extended support services, can accommodate diverse family situations. This approach enables students to balance their academic pursuits with their personal commitments more effectively.

Furthermore, adopting a student-centered approach to teaching is pivotal. Recognizing individual learning styles, preferences, and strengths empowers educators to tailor their teaching methodologies accordingly. Incorporating innovative pedagogical tools, interactive technologies, and collaborative learning platforms can cater to diverse learning needs, fostering an inclusive and engaging classroom atmosphere.

In conclusion, the increasing diversity of students in international universities necessitates a transformative approach to language teaching and an unwavering commitment to embracing differences. By prioritizing communicative competence, addressing socio-economic disparities, celebrating cultural diversity,

accommodating family backgrounds, and adopting student-centered teaching methodologies, educational institutions can create an inclusive and equitable learning environment. Embracing heterogeneity not only enhances educational experiences but also equips students with the skills to thrive in a multicultural and interconnected world.

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EMBRACING CLASSROOM ROUTINES TO DECREASE TEACHER TALKING TIME IN LOWER-LEVEL EFL CLASSES

Emrah Geniş

Flying back to the first few years of my teaching, I can easily visualize a teacher who prioritized classroom management over anything; honestly speaking, even ignoring the emphasis on how his learners may have benefited from him. However, I was super lucky to have experienced teachers around me, ready to share their best practices with me. And the following years I spent in the classroom have taught me how to manage the classroom by prioritizing students' motivation and well-being – and at that very moment I learnt the importance of reducing students' affective filters on the learning process.

In the first place, it is imperative to revisit the pivotal concept highlighted by Krashen as one of the hypotheses in his studies: Affective Filter. As Krashen proposes, learners need a certain level of motivation and self-confidence to welcome the input, thereby avoiding the mental block. An exemplary definition that underscores the authority of the term is stated as follows: "The Affective Filter is a mental block that prevents language learners from being receptive towards comprehensible language input, thereby disrupting their acquisition process (Dulay, H., & Burt, M. ,1977)." This paper will highlight how incorporating classroom routines may decrease the affective filter, consequently increasing student talking time among lower-level EFL students.

The power of classroom routines cannot be ignored throughout the process of teaching English as a Foreign Language as it leads educators to shift in reducing TTT and empowering lower-level students to be on the stage during their learning journey. Thus, soon after having focused on learner motivation and confidence in lesson planning, I realized how learners started to utilize the components in my teaching and stick to the familiar. I particularly concentrate on low-level EFL learners to increase their self-confidence as well as their production in L2. Combining the traditional and time-saving classroom idea of "work in pairs" with "classroom routines" has helped me a lot during my journey of teaching low-level EFL students in recent years. With all these in mind, I have started to embrace classroom routines to decrease TTT and eventually increase STT. Once students have become familiar with the classroom routines, a single gesture (or sometimes a single picture) may initiate the desired reaction from the students.

To share some concrete practices from my classes, I observed my latest class at Izmir University of Economics. The class has 19 students. The class consists of elementary-level preparatory class students. I taught them 20 hours weekly for 7 weeks. The first 3 days did not go well as I had difficulties in reaching them through the target language. Many of them failed to get even the simplest instructions in English. Commencing from the second week, I began to embrace teaching routines and indirectly made

them familiar with each routine. For example, whenever I had a board marker with distinct colors in each hand, students were instructed to start getting ready to ask and answer questions. The student that my right hand pointed to asked a question while the student that my left hand pointed to answered – sometimes I kept pointing to the same students (or different ones) to make the conversation flow longer. The best thing here is the minimal verbal intervention by the teacher. The same technique can be used to make students paraphrase what their pair has just uttered, or to make students turn their peer's sentence into a negative structure, and so on.

Another example from the same class is using pictures to signal a message. I always decide on a single picture that will refer to a single message throughout the module. The picture that you can see below (figure 1) was a nonverbal instruction for these elementary-level learners of English to ask them to work in pairs.
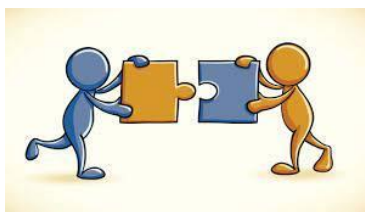

Figure 1: "work in pairs"

These basic samples helped me address effectively to the low-achieving EFL students during my classes, and consequently, I had the opportunity to observe how they gained confidence in their use of target language throughout the module. At the end of the module, I held a whole-class interview session about the routines in the classroom. I gave examples of the teaching routines that I employed during the module and showed some pictures that I frequently used in the class to give certain instructions and asked them what message(s) these pictures or utterances convey. Almost all the students managed to share the message they represented. Also, many of them said they were nervous about understanding the instructions and afraid of getting lost in the classroom in the first week of the class, but when they became familiar with the routines, some level of decrease in stress was observed.

The challenge of embracing these kinds of routines with low-level EFL students is the amount of time spent on nonverbal communication, which means less exposure to the target language by the instructor. However, producing utterances in the target language and having the opportunity to chat with their peers in the target language may potentially benefit the learner more than the exposure in the long run.

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THE POWER OF ELT GATHERINGS: INTERVIEW WITH TESOL UKRAINE

Pınar Sekmen

Networking and developing a strong social antenna play a significant role in the personal and professional growth of ELT educators. As English Language Teaching (ELT) is a dynamic field, participating in ELT networking activities, conferences and online or on-site events is so valuable in terms of building a supportive community, collaborating nationally and internationally, staying up-to-date with the new trends and expanding new horizons.

In this article, I would like to share my interview with two great participants of the 5th TESOL Türkiye International ELT Conference held in Bartın in 2023. Maryna Tsehelska and Olena Halapchuk-Tarnavska are not only two esteemed colleagues from TESOL Ukraine but also two big kind hearts that I feel honored to have met and shared three full days with in and out of the conference venue. We experienced the times of sharing and caring and also understanding how crucial it was to gather and feel the power of belonging. I am so thankful to them for taking their time to reflect on the impacts of this conference and convey the "big message" here.

Q: What were you expecting from the 5th TESOL Türkiye International Conference? And did the event meet your expectations?

M&O: Being a participant in the 5th TESOL Türkiye International Conference was a tremendous honor and source of excitement for us. TESOL stands out as a distinguished global network comprising dedicated professionals committed to enhancing the quality of English language teaching through continuous professional development and research.

Our primary expectations for the conference revolved around gaining insights into the challenges faced by TESOL professionals in Turkey and understanding the solutions they are implementing within their respective professional communities. The event provided a valuable platform for teachers to engage in discussions on various aspects, including the organization of online teaching, the integration of AI in classrooms, and strategies to overcome burnout.

The conference highlighted the global similarities and differences among educators, showcasing their shared commitment to addressing common issues and embracing innovative approaches. Witnessing discussions on adapting to online teaching methods, incorporating AI

into educational practices, and addressing burnout resonated with my own experiences and professional concerns.

The conference exceeded our expectations by offering a rich tapestry of perspectives and experiences from educators worldwide. It was a rewarding opportunity to connect with fellow teachers, learn from their diverse experiences, and feel a sense of belonging to the broader community of dedicated educators.

Q: What was your favorite experience and the most inspiring moment of the event?

O: My favorite experience during the event was witnessing the dedicated focus on implementing inclusion in the English classroom. The discussions surrounding topics such as building an inclusive classroom environment, addressing micro-aggressions as a barrier to inclusion, and providing training for teachers in inclusive education were not only pertinent but also resonated deeply with the challenges faced by educators, including those in Ukraine. The diverse range of research reports and interactive papers addressing these urgent and essential topics was particularly noteworthy. The insights shared by presenters shed light on practical strategies and considerations for fostering inclusivity in language teaching. As an educator from Ukraine, these discussions were not only relevant to my own experiences but also reflected the concerns of many teachers in my country.

The most inspiring moment for me occurred during the question and answer session following my report on implementing inclusion in Ukraine. The engagement and interest exhibited by the audience affirmed the significance of the topic. Realizing that my presentation had sparked genuine curiosity and involvement among the attendees was both validating and motivating. It underscored the shared commitment of educators in exploring and implementing inclusive practices, making the event a truly enriching and inspiring experience for me.

Q: What are your takeaways and how likely do you think they will affect you as an educator in ELT and your future plans?

M&O: The most significant takeaway from the conference is the exemplary inclusive environment fostered by the educational facilities in Bartın. The design of the university building and campus serves as a model for a student-friendly and comfortable milieu that actively contributes to an enhanced learning experience.

Observing the emphasis placed on inclusivity in the physical learning spaces has inspired me to reassess the design and atmosphere of my own educational environment. The importance of creating an inclusive and supportive setting for students has become even more apparent, and I am eager to explore ways to implement similar principles in my own teaching context.

O: As an ELT educator, I believe that adopting elements of the inclusive environment showcased at Bartın can positively impact my teaching practices. By prioritizing the creation of a comfortable and accessible learning space, I aim to facilitate better engagement, participation, and overall learning outcomes for my students. This experience has heightened my awareness of the role physical environments play in education, and I am enthusiastic about applying these insights to enhance my effectiveness as an ELT educator.

Pınar Sekmen has been teaching English for 25 years. She is the founder and academic coordinator of PS:Professional Support in Education for teachers and learners. She has been working in the fields of TESOL, teacher training and education and training management programs. Her interests include SEL, autonomy in teaching and learning, PBL, educational technologies and management, mindfulness and sustainability in ELT.

FROM TOKYO TO TURKEY: DOING A DELTA COURSE IN ISTANBUL AND RETURNING AS A NEW AND IMPROVED TEACHER

William Travers

In February 2022, my Cambridge Delta journey began by studying a distance course for module 1, a two-part paper test to be taken in June. My hard work resulted in a distinction, so I moved on to module 3 in September 2022, a 4500-word extended assignment on ELT management. Those modules are ideal for distance learning, but module 2, an assessment of one's teaching, is challenging to do online. In-person intensive courses are plentiful, but not in Japan, forcing teachers to go further afield to do so (Ingham & Entwistle 2022). Thankfully, Walter Curti, a teacher in Brazil who I had been studying with, was also looking for intensive courses starting in early 2023, and the timing and cost (1400GBP) of the one offered by ITI Istanbul suited us both.

Sadly, our arrival coincided with the Turkey-Syria earthquake so the atmosphere in Istanbul was subdued. Walter and I shared a flat in Şişli, commuting to Levent, where we worked with four other teachers of a similar mold: young, ambitious, and hard-working. The students were mostly CEFR B1 young professionals whose enthusiasm to ask unprompted questions and talk together in English during lessons was a refreshing change from Japanese university classrooms where you could hear a pin drop. Their efforts to travel from both sides of the Bosphorus to learn from us made us work harder for them and has since made me more sympathetic to my students who travel long distances to come to class in Tokyo.

The cliché about Delta module 2 is that it breaks you down and rebuilds you as a teacher (Millin 2015), and I wholeheartedly agree. Our tutors had infinite wisdom, yet only six weeks to pass on as much as possible via input and feedback sessions which could be promptly acted upon by candidates. Following an unassessed lesson, my tutor's feedback was relentless, but it was accurate. The students had not been challenged and the lesson aim had not been met. Your teaching needs to demonstrate A to B movement, what can the students do better now than at the start of the lesson?

This is not a course where you could polish your best lesson plans from your normal teaching context and hope to pass. There are four assessed lessons on a different system or skill which have to be researched and written about in a 2500-word background essay, then a detailed lesson plan written up in a document which is rarely under twenty-five pages, unfamiliar territory for most educators. While tutors give advice and recommend sources and materials, candidates receive less and less support as the course goes on. Consequently, it has given me the confidence to write ELT articles in my spare time.

Additionally, candidates have to teach an experimental practice lesson as part of a professional development assignment. The Silent Way, where teaching is subordinate to learning in this highly student-centered approach (Gattegno 1972), intrigued me, and teaching it was eye-

opening. In a 60-minute student-led lesson using a Fidel chart, Cuisenaire rods and a pointer, I only spoke 820 words, but 105 of them were "ok", so that revelation has helped me to further cut my teacher talk time (TTT) and use more non-verbal communicative gestures. Moreover, surveyed students indicated they spoke more than usual in that lesson. This approach has become useful when teaching pronunciation, for example differentiating 'the' as /ðə/ and /ðiː/, only tapping different colored phrases written on the board, and the students working out the correct pronunciation by themselves.

As time went by, winter turned to spring, and we bloomed as teachers. Each lesson was better than the last, and regularly observing my course-mates was highly effective as the ten observation tasks we were set focused on different areas (instruction giving, interaction patterns, etc.). It is great to watch a lesson unfold and learn how other teachers deal with things like classroom management and emergent language, but I can also reflect on my own teaching and consider how I could improve my own performance.

In conclusion, taking an intensive Delta module 2 course has made me a much more well-rounded teacher, willing to experiment with new approaches and be more reflective of my work. I currently teach the same lesson content five times a week, but each lesson is different as I consider how the previous lesson could have been better and differentiate tasks for lower-level classes. "My TTT was too high when giving instructions and the students got confused about how to do the task", "the controlled speaking task should be modelled twice for the next class before they do it". Personally, I was fortunate to do the course in the charming surroundings of Istanbul and make connections with amazing course-mates who I can count on as friends as well as peers.

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SKILL-BASED ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT: ENHANCING MOTIVATION AND LEARNING PERFORMANCE

Aman Rassouli

English stands as the dominant language for academic instruction globally, reflecting its role as a global lingua franca. Its prevalence extends far beyond native English-speaking territories, permeating diverse educational settings (Song, 2019) for various compelling reasons.

The ascent of English as a global language for academic discourse is intertwined with globalization, fostering cross-cultural connections, economies, and academic collaborations (Salomone, & Salomone, 2022). English has emerged as a unifying medium for international communication and collaboration, facilitating knowledge exchange and cooperation among scholars from diverse linguistic backgrounds. This prevalence is reinforced by its extensive use in scientific research, technological advancements, and scholarly publications. Many influential journals, prestigious conferences, and academic forums predominantly operate in English, making proficiency in the language a necessity for researchers aiming to disseminate their work globally.

Moreover, its significance as a language of instruction in higher education institutions surpasses its practical utility. It symbolizes prestige, with universities offering courses in English often perceived as internationally-oriented, attracting a diverse pool of students and faculty from worldwide.

In Cyprus, English has become the primary language for academic instruction, reflecting the nation's commitment to internationalization and adherence to global educational standards. However, this language policy encounters multifaceted challenges.

A primary challenge lies in balancing the integration of English as the medium of instruction while preserving the significance of native languages like Turkish. While English proficiency is crucial for academic success and global competitiveness, concerns arise regarding the potential erosion of Cyprus's linguistic heritage. The prominence of English in academic settings raises apprehensions about preserving local languages and cultures.

Additionally, the shift to English as the primary language of instruction poses challenges for non-native speakers among students and educators. International students, especially those whose first language isn't English, encounter linguistic barriers (Siripipatthanakul, et.al, 2023; Tavares, 2021), impacting their understanding of complex academic subjects and communication within educational environments. Such disparities in language proficiency may lead to unequal learning opportunities and academic outcomes, raising concerns regarding fairness and equality in education (Tavares, 2021).

Addressing these challenges requires substantial investments in teacher training, curriculum development (Subtirelu, 2022), and language support services. Equipping educators with language proficiency and pedagogical skills to deliver quality instruction in English is crucial. Providing language support and resources for students to enhance their English proficiency becomes imperative to bridge potential gaps in understanding and academic performance.

Moreover, the conventional approach of English Preparatory programs focusing on enhancing General English proficiency has shown a decline in learner motivation. To address this, we explored the impact of skill-based English language teaching aligned with skill-based assessment on students' motivation and language learning performance. Employing a mixed-methods approach, we analyzed students' experiences across various universities in Cyprus, collecting data through surveys, interviews, and English language proficiency tests. Participants underwent skill-based teaching methods emphasizing practical language skills tailored to academic requirements and real-world contexts. Our findings showcased a notable increase in student motivation through skill-based English language teaching and assessment. Tailoring the curriculum to address specific linguistic needs heightened enthusiasm and engagement among learners, with skill-based assessment fostering a sense of progress and accomplishment, amplifying students' dedication to enhancing their English language skills.

In conclusion, aligning language instruction with learners' practical needs elevates motivation levels and fosters more robust language learning outcomes. A transition towards skill-based teaching and assessment strategies presents an opportunity to invigorate English language education, ensuring its relevance in diverse academic settings beyond native English-speaking environments.

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IDIOMATICS—MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING?
AN OPEN INVITATION TO ALL TESOL TÜRKIYE MEMBERS

John I. Liontas

Friends, TESOLers, colleagues, lend me your ears. I come to invite you to join the field of Idiomatics. John Liontas is my name, id· i· o· mat· ics the claim I here so proclaim. So read this invitation without annotation, from beginning to end, soon you'll apprehend what I recommend, in full gear, that much is clear, far and near.

Now think on this: Idiomatics—much ado about nothing? Au contraire, I say! Idiomatics is much ado about something. About the naturalness of language. The fluency of it. About cultural norms and practices. The peculiarities of verbal and non-verbal conventions. About values, beliefs, and principles. The human story since time immemorial. The story of us all. Echoes from the past. Voices not heard. Memories lived. Imagined. Expressed in single words, phrases, formulas, sayings, and truisms, short and long alike, in literal and formulaic ways, tomorrow's headlines today. Hiding in plain sight. Reading between the lines, a skill not soon learned.

But learning it we can. Developing it we must. Controlling it we should. The earlier the better. Resorting to polemics need not occur so long as eyes can hear and ears see—figuratively, metaphorically. Accurately and appropriately. In spades. One expression at a time. Another one to follow soon. And still another after that. Enough said.

To state the obvious now, Idiomatics is the scientific study of idiomatic language and figurative language, bar none (Liontas, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c). It is part and parcel of human languages and cultures worldwide. It is what makes language whole. Complete. Perfect. Warts and all. The whole is greater than the sum of its linguacultural parts. Without exception. Without excuses. Without exaggeration. And yes, without rhetorical hyperbole or hyperbolic rhetoric—that much is certain.

In more ways than one, axiomatic truths aside, idiomatics is the seeds planters use to grow fertile crops, the building material architects employ to erect sky-piercing towers, the marble blocks artisans sculpt to liberate figures already existent in the stone—the ideal form within. Over time, crops are harvested, building material is enriched, and Michelangelo's David stands a Giant, "*il gigante*". Head and shoulders above the rest. Alone. A masterpiece of Italian Renaissance sculpture unlike any other. Need I say more?

Synchronically and diachronically, idiomatics is omnipresent in an array of topics involving language, literature, linguistics, applied linguistics, language teaching, and language technology, among many (Li & Liontas, 2023; Liontas, 2009, 2023; Liontas & Raafat, 2024; Liontas et al., 2019). Said simply, idiomatics is the glue that holds it all together, the foundation upon which human communication rests, breaths, evolves, pulsating rhythmically as ever across time and space. Always in context. Never in isolation. With a purpose. For a purpose. Anything less than that and language proper idiomatics would be no more. Technical yes. Natural no. Artificial maybe so.

Yet still, how to problematize idiomatics per se, how to address the challenges associated with teaching and learning idiomatics, and, more importantly, perhaps, how to assess and evaluate idiomatic-figurative language development among second and foreign language learners

TESOL TÜRKİYE, Professional ELT Magazine Online, 12

remains a call for action. A call not yet answered. Not yet understood. Not yet realized. Across the curriculum that is (Liontas, 2018, 2019)!

Consistently so portrayed in study after study, barring a few exceptions (Liontas, 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2002d, 2003, 2007, 2013, 2015), this open invitation to all TESOL Türkiye Members (and everyone else around the world wishing to help me advance the field of idiomatics) confronts these issues head-on, unapologetically. It calls upon invitees to contemplate the multidimensional nature the nomenclature of idiomatics presently occupies in human communication the world over, from simplest to most complex. This must be done first in order to establish a baseline understanding between and among the many terms and concepts proliferating in the extant literature (Liontas, 2019), thereby ensuring the viability of the system itself irrespective of contexts where it is utilized in conventional, institutional, or creative ways. The domain areas and fields of inquiry to which idiomatics teaching and learning is systematically situated, along with prime examples epitomizing effective and efficient application of idiomatics knowledge, must follow the exposition of idiomatics nomenclature proper (Liontas, 2002e, 2008, 2015, 2018d). Finally, research-based practices resulting from 'theorizing practice' and 'practicing theory' must be offered to underpin the pedagogical structure envisaged herein today, tomorrow, and the day after tomorrow (Liontas, 2017, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c). Three steps to ponder, three steps to take, one call to answer.

Don't delay! Let the voyage of discovery begin today. Let idiomatics be your Stella Polaris. And let Polaris be the peg that holds the idiomatic-figurative world together. Together we can change the world—the world of idiomatics. After all, idiomatics is much ado about something. Something idiomatic. Something figurative. Where nothing is everything. And everything is nothing. Nothing more, nothing less.

PS: To join the International Society of Idiomatics, please email expressions of interest to liontas@usf.edu. Your participation and contributions are always welcome. Onwards we go to the world of idiomatics, where the sun never sets on so glorious a human expression.

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THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: PUTTING PD INTO PRACTICE

Lucy Griffin & Burcu Çubukçu

Professional development activities are pivotal in shaping teachers' beliefs and values regarding pedagogical practices. As K-12 English teachers, we had the privilege of participating in Dylan Wiliam's Formative Assessment Workshop (Wiliam (a)). This article shares the impact that our exploration of formative assessment (FA) has had on lesson plans and instructional practices, and on our beliefs and practices.

Formative Assessment-Need for Change

FA, often described as assessment for learning, is defined as "…all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" (Black and Wiliam qtd. in Wiliam (b) 37). Prior to our participation in the workshop, our assessment practices mainly revolved around weekly FA tasks, and related end-of-unit summative tasks. While this design has many advantages, we were questioning whether we were truly embracing FA.

FA Review Project

After participating in this course, we decided to launch an FA Review Project. Since we wanted teachers to take ownership of the changes, we borrowed elements from Leahy and Wiliam's Embedding FA Pack (Leahy and Wiliam) and designed a project that 'activated teachers' prior knowledge, guided them to explore the topic, and gave them space to draw their own conclusions and to implement changes tailored to their students. To maintain the project momentum, teachers then observed each other

putting the changes into action and gave feedback.

Exploring Wiliam's Strategies

The below strategies promoted by Wiliam are powerful tools for improving instruction in language classes. They provide teachers with practical approaches to engage students actively in their own learning, foster a growth mindset, and facilitate ongoing feedback.

1. *Clarifying Learning Intentions and Success Criteria*
With this strategy, teachers create a roadmap for students' language development (Hattie and Timperley). In classes, this means setting explicit goals so that students are aware of what they are expected to learn. Consequently, students are better able to self-assess their progress. This strategy promotes a shared understanding between teachers and students. Related to this criteria, teachers allocate introductory lessons explaining the clearly stated learning outcomes and success criteria for the unit.

2. Eliciting Evidence of Learning
The second strategy emphasizes the importance of, not only gathering evidence of students' learning throughout the instructional process, but also using it to enhance student learning (Schildkampf et al.). In our context, this involves employing a variety of FA tools, such as short quizzes, observations, and student self or peer-assessments. These provide valuable insights into students' understanding, allowing teachers to make timely instructional adjustments. By regularly eliciting evidence of learning, teachers

can address misconceptions promptly and offer targeted support, ensuring students' continuous progress in language acquisition. Related to this criteria, teachers created more space in the plans so that any adjustment could be embedded according to FA data.

3. Providing Feedback That Moves Learning Forward

Feedback is a crucial component of effective language instruction. Wiliam's strategy of providing feedback that moves learning forward focuses on offering specific, actionable guidance to students (Hattie and Timperley). Constructive feedback helps students understand their strengths and areas for improvement, guiding them towards their language learning goals. Additionally, feedback encourages a growth mindset, fostering student belief in the ability to improve and motivating them to persist in their language learning journey. Teachers make sure to design lessons that specifically address students' needs and provide targeted support where it is most needed. Especially, creating more work for students with the given feedback has gained much more importance.

4. Activating Students as Learning Resources for One Another

Collaborative learning plays a vital role in language instruction, as language acquisition thrives in meaningful social interactions (Vygotsky). This strategy encourages students to support one another's learning through peer assessment, group discussions, and cooperative activities. About this criteria, importance is given to ensuring student feedback, including that given between peers, is more than "telling" (Carless and Boud 1317) so that they can benefit from peer feedback as both provider and receiver.

5. Activating Students as Owners of Their Own Learning

The final strategy emphasizes student agency and autonomy (Deci and Ryan). In language classes, this means involving students in setting personal language goals, tracking their progress, and reflecting on their learning experiences. By encouraging students to take ownership of their language learning e.g. using self-assessment rubrics, peer-teaching, reflecting on learning experiences, etc., we foster self-directed learners who are actively engaged in their own growth. This strategy enhances motivation, metacognition, and self-regulation skills.

Our participation in Wiliam's FA Workshop has been a transformative experience, developing our beliefs and values surrounding FA. The power of FA lies not only in its ability to inform instruction but also in its potential to inspire educators. As we continue on our journey, we remain committed to FA and its profound impact on students' learning outcomes.

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4. LEARNER VOICES

"Explain how your EFL/ESL teacher's teaching methods have helped you better understand your own personal traits?"

"How has your language learning journey changed your thoughts or behaviors?"

ENGLISH AND ME

Ahmet Hamdi Balkaş

Foreign language classes offer different perspectives in life as you grow familiar with the language. As a student and a language learner since 7, I came across various styles teachers used when teaching ESL (English as a second language). In this essay, I want to discuss some of my insights as a typical student and draw conclusions from my English learning journey, so teachers can better understand us. I also want to emphasize how learning a different language expanded my worldview.

Interactive teaching methods encourage students to take part in class, which is why I stand behind them. Considering that my attendance at other classes is minimal and I prefer not to speak out in most formal settings, this offers a chance to express myself to my teachers and my peers.

One of my favorite English activities is solving crossword puzzles. It's great for expanding one's vocabulary. Although I'm not an expert at solving puzzles, I can say that filling blank spaces with words I found is satisfying and gives me joy. Crosswords are not only effective for learning new words, but they also broaden new horizons for me. We should always welcome new perspectives, as they help us understand the cultures not known to us.

At kindergarten, we used to sing English nursery rhymes. It was an enjoyable activity that increased my interest in foreign languages. These nursery rhymes included some of the most well-known kid's music like "Twinkle Twinkle Star" and "Baa Baa Black Sheep". The lyrics of these songs are engraved in my mind, and I often find myself singing those lyrics.

I want to talk about something that demotivated me. I remember my 4th grade English teacher forcing us to write sentences multiple times in our notebooks. It was frustrating at first, but now I understand her intention behind that. Writing repetitive sentences forces your brain to be more active, speeding up the learning case. Honestly, I am still not fond of her rather old-fashioned teaching style. How effective it might be, this style of teaching was tiresome and lacked any creative input. It heavily diminished my interest, forcing students to memorize words instead of learning them. I don't like being told what to do, and I feel like keeping the door of opportunities shut heavily restricts me.

In grade 9, our teacher in the elective English class employed crossword competitions and dialog enactments in his lessons. This has once again renewed my interest in English. In language learning where motivation is often the most important driving force, keeping that spirit up should be the primary goal. I felt motivated and full of myself collaborating with others and exchanging knowledge. It felt so great when we were the first group to finish the puzzle.

In grade 10 though, we moved to another city, because of my father's job. It was a painful

process and I couldn't see my father for months. Moving out to a different town was already a burden on me, and now I had to start anew. I left all the things I knew and all the friends I made. Adapting to a new environment was already hard for me. In a situation like this, teachers should comfort the students and make sure they're accepted by their peers. My English teacher here has been a very prominent figure in my school life, supporting me in this journey. He let us debate some rather controversial topics in his class, offering everyone a chance to speak their minds. It was a bit like brainstorming, where everybody expressed their opinions and was influenced by others' opinions.

Learning a new language also opened new perspectives on the internet. I wasn't just stuck to the Turkish side of the internet and media. I sometimes read news articles in The Guardian, BBC, and NPR. I also watch videos on the internet regarding all kinds of topics like pop culture, fashion, art and culture, informative guides, and entertainment in general. Seeing how other people who are raised in different environments than me think about the world, made it easier to understand why certain people do things in a particular way. I even adapted some of these worldviews.

In conclusion, learning a new language has shaped my worldview. It helped me understand my personal traits. It made me understand myself firstly. It also helped me, but the new language widened my viewpoint through diverse media. I wish to stress the importance of my teacher's help in my journey and I thank all of them.

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MY LEARNING JOURNEY

Zeynep Su Yavuz

Firstly, I have always been interested in learning foreign languages because I believe that learning foreign languages can improve us in many ways. For example, when we learn a new language, we can have knowledge about a country's culture, lifestyle, and communication. In addition, our perspective starts to expand and we try to perceive people's perception that is related to the language we have been learning. Briefly, I love learning languages because I want to develop myself in all areas. However, everyone knows that this is not easy at all. I have been learning English in Route 3 for 2 months at Sabancı University and I didn't have much experience before I started. As a result, I faced many challenges, especially at the beginning. For instance, as I didn't feel confident about my speaking skills and I was not comfortable writing paragraphs.

On the other hand, I realized that if I focus on my aim, which is improving my English level, no difficulties will bring me down. To achieve this ultimate goal, I need to have learning strategies. First of all, I think that self-study could be effective for me to address these challenges. Because I strongly believe that if a student doesn't make time for self-study after class, they can't improve as much as they want. Moreover, when I self-study, I get the chance to define the areas that I need to work on, correct my mistakes and practice what we learn in the class. One of the other strategies that I used is looking for ways to incorporate English into my daily life. I started

to watch English series such as "How I Met Your Mother" and "Friends" by using original dubbing and English subtitles. While I was watching, I realized that the series includes familiar vocabulary and grammar items and there were also settings from real life and examples of daily conversations. Moreover, this strategy helped me learn the correct pronunciation, new word formations and identify some grammar structures.

Another effective strategy that I use is collaborating with my classmates. My friends and I decided to take time off speaking English when we meet. In the beginning, it was hard for us to express every detail in English. However, I realized that we enhanced our speaking skills day by day. As a result, this experience has shown us that learners can improve their English by both having fun and practicing language outside class. I think it's crucial to discover strategies that personally resonate and then incorporate them into daily life in a balanced way.

In addition to these learning strategies, I'm aware that there are other factors that affect my learning. The most important one is the teaching methods of my teacher because they have a large impact on learning processes. I find my teacher's teaching methods adaptable, changeable and supportive. For instance, we stated to our teacher that we wanted to improve our speaking skills and particularly speak English more fluently. Therefore, she organized a project where we had a video chat with students who study at a

university in the U.S. While most of them were American, some of them were international students from Eastern Asian countries. Our topic in class was nonverbal communication that week. Our online conversations with them in small groups helped us discuss similarities and differences in nonverbal communication among our cultures. Moreover, I learned how to be a group member. I felt responsible for my group. As a result, I tried to fulfill all my responsibilities. This experience allowed me to practice my language skills, improve my collaboration skills, share my culture and learn about different cultures.

Another method that my teacher has is practicing language by playing games. They help us practice what we learn in class. I think this method is so useful for us, especially when we learn too many new things. Having some relaxing and enjoyable activities help us practice these subjects. There is one aspect of these games. I like that we have fun while we are playing them, but they also include challenging questions. I think some level of challenge is helpful in language classrooms as it helps us push our limits.

Feedback is another important factor that affects my learning. At the beginning of my learning journey, it was challenging to understand all the words my teacher used. My vocabulary was insufficient and I was unfamiliar with pronunciations, complex grammar structures. Additionally, I refrained from speaking in English all the time due to a fear of making mistakes. However, I realized later that making mistakes is a part of learning. I received feedback from my teacher regularly and it contributed to my improvement. Consequently, my mistakes turned into opportunities for learning.

Overall, my learning journey has both lots of challenges and improvements. Over time, I began speaking more in class, improving my writing, listening and reading. Furthermore, my learning journey has changed and improved my thoughts and behaviors. For instance, I have more efficient study habits and improved planning. I also learned how I maintain a balance between my social life and education. My own perspective of life has extended. I learned that I shouldn't give up and focus on overcoming my mistakes while I pursue my goal.
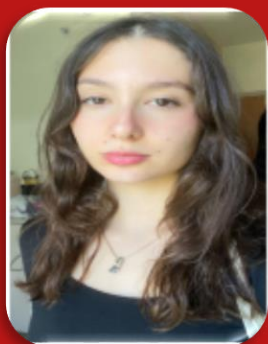
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