A Country in Focus

Selected research in applied linguistics and English language teaching in Turkey: 2010–2016

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In this state-of-the-art review, we aim to build on Alptekin & Tatar's (2011) article covering research conducted in Turkey between 2005 and 2009, and survey published research in 31 Turkey-based journals between 2010 and 2016. As the second review paper on Turkey's English language teaching (ELT) agenda, our goal is twofold: first, to introduce the research of those researchers whose high-quality, Turkey-based work may not be known outside Turkish academia; and second, to point to recent scholarly developments that have occurred in Turkey and set these in the context of recent shifts in language teaching research worldwide. This paper presents approximately 140 articles that appeared in locally published peer-reviewed academic journals, and clearly demonstrates that Turkey as an English as a foreign language (EFL) context presents a vibrant research scene in language teaching. The reviewed works cover a wide spectrum of timely topics (e.g., computer-assisted language learning (CALL), the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL), language assessment, affective factors), and present findings that have much to contribute to current discussions in the field. Nevertheless, our review also reveals some concerning trends, including an almost exclusive emphasis on practical concerns over conceptual development; shortcomings in locating research within broader disciplinary debates; and few efforts to bring together and build on local research in a manner that might allow for original and creative influences on the broader discipline. It is therefore the further aim of this article to spark debates on these issues among Turkish scholars and contribute to the strengthening of the local disciplinary community.

1. Introduction

As this is the second such review paper on ELT research in Turkey, we will not be repeating Alptekin & Tatar (2011) by presenting a detailed review on the history of ELT in Turkey. Instead, we will provide some background context by focusing on recent governmental policies and on the professional and academic organizations that shape the research potential in Turkey.

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1.1 Recent governmental policies shaping ELT research in Turkey

In Turkey, as in other countries, the primary institutions for research are universities, all of which are directed by the Council of Higher Education. The language-related departments in these universities are ELT, foreign language teaching, English language and literature, linguistics, and translation and interpretation, and it is the faculty in these departments that conduct the majority of ELT-related research. In addition, in many universities there are schools of foreign languages, called *hazırlık*s, which provide one-year intensive English instruction for undergraduate students before they start their programs in various departments. English instructors who work in these schools also conduct research on language teaching. Moreover, although not common, research studies do occasionally come from the individual initiatives of language teachers who work at primary or high schools governed by the Ministry of Education. Another important institution that needs to be listed here is the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK), which supports both national and international research and the exchange of information and ideas in various fields including language teaching. TÜBİTAK not only provides funding for small-to large-scale projects but also for attendance at national and international conferences.

Turkish academics, as is the case in most parts of the world, are required to publish in both international and national journals, and engage in various academic activities (Alptekin & Tatar 2011; Uysal 2014, Özmen, Cephe & Kınık 2016). The Council of Higher Education, which is in charge of, among other things, the academic promotion process, has recently changed its requirements for those who would like to be appointed as an associate professor in Turkey, having added citations received and funded projects as part of its point-based system. According to these new regulations, as of October 2016, an assistant professor seeking promotion receives 20 points for an SSCI-indexed article, while a national publication cited in ULAKBIM (The Turkish Academic Network and Information Centre) is accredited only eight points. While this gap clearly encourages Turkish scholars to publish more in international journals as there are currently only two national-based SSCI-indexed journals, the new requirements also demand at least three ULAKBIM-cited national publications, creating a conundrum for Turkish academics, who have to make strategic moves to gain promotion.

The 2014 law has also provided some privileges for the Turkish academics who work in state universities. According to these changes, Turkish academics are given the opportunity to apply for academic incentives based on a review of their annual academic performance, which is evaluated by a committee formed in their home institutions. More specifically, at the end of each year, Turkish academics fill out performance review forms indicating their national and international publications, presentations, projects, citations received, awards, etc. and earn up to 100 points, which is then converted into a monetary award by the Council of Higher Education.

A discussion of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) is also worthwhile as all K-12 schools governed by the Ministry of Education (as indicated in the 2002, 2011, and 2013 curriculum changes) as well as many higher education institutions in their *hazirlik* programs, design their curricula and syllabi according to the guidelines presented by the CEFR, and use English Language Portfolios (ELP) for assessment purposes. In addition,

the EPOSTL is recommended for teacher education programs at the undergraduate level, especially to promote student teachers' reflective practice through self-evaluation (Mirici & Hergüner 2015).[2]

1.2 Academic and professional organizations contributing to ELT in Turkey

There are several Turkish organizations that are worth mentioning in terms of their contributions to ELT research potential in Turkey. One of the oldest, the English Language Education Association (ELEA, or by its Turkish acronym, INGED) was founded in 1995 with the aim of bringing together those interested in ELT to improve language teaching practices in Turkey. As an International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) Associate and a Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Affiliate, ELEA can be considered the first organization in Turkey to create a community of practice for language teachers. The organization not only provides professional development opportunities for language teachers with seminars and workshops organized throughout the year but also hosts an annual international convention with plenary speakers from both inside and outside Turkey. Trainers' Professional Learning and Unlimited Sharing, or T-PLUS Turkey, has a slightly different focus than ELEA, with its emphasis on higher education. Their first event having been held in 2012, T-PLUS Turkey aims to contribute to the professional development of English language teachers in Turkey and Northern Cyprus. As a more research-oriented initiative compared to ELEA and T-PLUS, English Language Teacher Education Research (ELTER) aims to improve the quality of English language teacher education in Turkey by providing a venue for both pre-service and in-service teacher educators to share their practices, experiences, and research. Promoting a platform for collaborative research among ELT educators through the discussion of recent research findings and an exchange of ideas for further research is also one of ELTER's missions. Since its establishment in 2011, ELTER has organized six colloquiums, the latest one in June 2016.

Having celebrated its 75-year presence in Turkey in 2015, the British Council has been actively contributing to ELT in the country with its conferences, seminars, webinars, workshops, as well as resources since 1940. While it is impossible to mention all the ways the British Council has helped improve the ELT arena in Turkey, we would like to focus on the two nation-wide needs assessments they conducted: first of all in state schools in 2013 through the partnership of the Ministry of National Education and the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey, and then at university level in 2015 at the invitation of the Council of Higher Education. The Turkey National Needs Assessment Report released in 2013 revealed deficiencies in language teaching in primary and secondary schools, especially in speaking. The striking finding in this report was that the proficiency level of language learners remained 'rudimentary' even after more than 1,000 hours of instruction by the end of 12th grade. This problem extends through the university preparatory schools, as these language learners are expected to reach B2 level

[2] Interested readers can refer to Mirici (2015), probably the most-published researcher on CEFR, for a more detailed description of how CEFR, ELP, and EPOSTLE shape ELT practices in Turkey.

proficiency in eight months, an almost impossible task that puts a tremendous burden on preparatory school teachers' shoulders (British Council 2015 report). While interested readers should refer to the 2013 and 2015 reports to get a clearer picture of ELT in Turkey at the K-12 and university levels, we would like to start our own discussion on language teaching practices in the country, based on our review of articles published between 2010 and 2016.

2. Writing the review

2.1 Selection of data sources among possible alternatives

Unlike Alptekin & Tatar's review (2011), which covered journals, conference presentations, and theses and dissertations, we have limited our data source to only journal publications. The primary reason for this decision is that we would like to conform to the purpose of this review: to make the research conducted in Turkey available to an international audience. As discussed in Alptekin & Tatar's (2011) review, access to the proceedings of conferences is quite difficult. This is true even in the case of conferences organized by the country's flagship ELEA (INGED), due to the lack of a systematic policy of making them accessible for a broader audience. While our original plan was to also include conference proceedings, the fact that they were not available online, and given the difficulties we faced even locally in trying to retrieve the paper versions, made us question the suitability of including these publications in a paper that aims to enable non-Turkish scholars to gain awareness of the research conducted in Turkey and to gain access to these studies if desired. For this reason, with the agreement of the editor of *Language Teaching*, we decided to exclude conference proceedings. Due to similar concerns, we excluded those articles that did not have at least an abstract in English as this would make even the basic ideas of the article inaccessible to the vast majority of non-Turkish scholars. We also excluded dissertations as the trends in doctoral research are already examined by Özmen, Cephe & Kınık (2016) in the journal of *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice*. M.A. theses also are not included in this review as *Language Teac*hing is soon to publish another paper that will specifically look at theses and dissertations in Turkey.

Hence, we started our search to survey journal articles published in Turkey between 2010 and 2016. The relevant journals are published by the Faculties of Education at various universities (e.g., *Hacettepe University Faculty of Education Journal*)—focusing on education topics in general; by the departments of foreign language (FL) teaching—focusing on language teaching more specifically (e.g., *The Journal of Language Teaching and Learning*); and by semi-independent organizations with university affiliations.

2.2 Rationale and criteria for selecting articles

In selecting the articles to be included in this review, we followed a rigorous three-step process that enabled us to decide not only whether a paper could be considered as research or not but also to assess its significance in relation to its wider audience and the global implications.

Therefore, after identifying the complete list of journals that are available online, the first step was to go through each journal to identify articles related to ELT. Our selection criteria were:

1. Turkey-based journals with double blind review
2. Articles written in English or with at least an abstract in English
3. Articles focused on ELT and applied linguistics.

In their review of research in Israel between 2004 and 2009, Aronin & Spolsky (2011) discussed the issue of what is local and what is global, as many Israeli scholars are trained abroad and are required by their institutions to publish internationally. A similar situation exists in Turkey as many Turkish scholars receive their doctoral degrees abroad, mostly in the U.S. and the U.K., and are required by their institutions to publish in international rather than national journals. However, unlike Aronin & Spolsky (2011), we decided not to include international publications by Turkish scholars, as our purpose was to give recognition to those publications which remain at the periphery and about which the wider international audience would not be aware if not discussed in this review. In that sense, we followed Alptekin & Tatar's (2011) work and limited our search to Turkey-based journals and Turkish scholars who work in Turkey and Northern Cyprus. One difference between our review and Alptekin & Tatar's (2011) is that while they included a few studies on other languages acquired as a second or third language (e.g., French), we only focused on English.

After this initial selection process, we identified more than 400 papers retrieved from 31 Turkey-based journals. The second step was to narrow down the list based on empirical aspects of the publications themselves. For this second step, we excluded articles which:

a. Developed teaching material but did not test its effectiveness on learners;
b. Presented a literature review of teaching methods without contributing to the field with some new discussions/insights;
c. Were based on the analysis of a policy or practice in Turkey that no longer exists (e.g., TÜBİTAK journal classification, the KPDS exam);[3]
d. Provided only teaching tips/suggestions;
e. Presented a textbook evaluation-—not a selection of coursebooks or story books but one particular book or a couple of books;
f. Presented a case study research based on one institution's policy.

This second step enabled us to exclude almost 200 publications, reducing the number to about 200 in total.

The third step was to examine the articles in terms of their research quality and scope. To achieve this, we adapted the American Educational Research Association's (AERA, 2016) Standards for Reporting on Empirical Social Science Research by using the first five categories (problem formulation, design and logic, sources of evidence, measurement

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[3] The KPDS language proficiency exam was offered by the government for employment in state offices.

and classification, and analysis). We then developed a sixth category called 'significance,' comprising the following criteria:

- Has relevance to issues and topics which are under discussion internationally
- Has an important theoretical stance
- Presents adequate data/examples and discussion to contribute to the literature
- Deals with local data and issues but has implications that may apply to other countries.

In their review, Alptekin & Tatar (2011) focused on those studies that have an important theoretical stance or that include quasi-experimental research. We decided not to limit our review to experimental studies because of the relatively recent shifts first noted in Firth & Wagner's (1997) article, which calls for a balance between cognitivist, mentalistic orientations and social, contextual ones. Hence, we arrived at 140 articles, thematic analysis of which led to three main areas of interest which overlap with the previous reviews on ELT in Turkey (Alptekin & Tatar 2011; Özmen, Cephe & Kınık 2016; Yağız, Aydın & Akdemir 2016):

- English language learning and language learners
- ELT and language teachers
- In-service and pre-service teacher education/professional development.

Readers should note that these three broad categories should not be perceived as distinct, but rather as complementary since they both overlap and provide implications for each other.

3. English language learning and language learners

3.1 Anxiety

Being a multifaceted concept, anxiety has been examined by Turkish scholars in relation to reading, assessment, and FL learning in general. In a qualitative case study on reading anxiety, Bektaş-Çetinkaya (2011) observed the academic reading process (i.e., reading habits and strategies) of a Turkish graduate student for a semester by collecting data through in-depth interviews, think-aloud and recall protocols, and text analysis. The findings were surprising in the sense that although the participant had majored in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) and was pursuing his doctoral degree also in TEFL at the time of the study, he was found to have 'great difficulties in processing what he read in English' (Bektaş-Çetinkaya (2011: 51). While the researcher explains this as possible unfamiliar vocabulary or the context itself triggering reading anxiety, or his negative beliefs about his English skills, we find this very alarming in terms of the quality of TEFL programs both at the undergraduate and graduate level. Another study highlighting the gravity of the present situation in teacher education programs comes from Tüm & Kunt (2013). The 131 soon-to-be EFL teachers in their study reported experiencing FL anxiety when speaking in English, which negatively affected their oral performance and emotional well-being. Their two-part action plan (i.e., recognize anxiety and respond in appropriate ways) offers remedies to help student teachers have a smoother transition into becoming language teachers.

Anxiety has also been approached from a testing-related perspective by Önem (2010). In a purely quantitative study with Turkish students of English at a preparatory school in central Turkey, he found statistically significant correlations between state–trait anxiety and FL anxiety, and between FL and test anxiety, the latter two being more strongly correlated than the former. According to Önem (2010), since the participants were preparatory school students, they might have associated studying English with the proficiency exam they had to pass at the end of the academic year, an explanation that seems to be in line with the 2015 British Council report on higher education in Turkey.

3.2 Language learning strategies and learning styles

Both instructional (interventionist) and descriptive investigations were conducted by Turkish ELT scholars to understand the range and type of language learning strategies and learning styles which influence Turkish EFL learners' metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective processes of language learning. The two studies focusing on EFL learners' use of communication strategies examined the issue in terms of proficiency and gender (Yaman, Irgın & Kavasoğlu 2013; Uztosun & Erten 2014). In Uztosun & Erten's (2014) interaction-based research, high proficiency learners were found to use more body language (e.g., mime) as opposed to the low proficiency counterparts, who seemed to have relied more on strategies of message reduction and topic avoidance. On the other hand, Yaman et al.'s (2013) female participants used more communication strategies overall; advanced learners' favorite strategy was 'getting the gist,' as opposed to intermediate learners' preference for 'negotiation for meaning.'

Arpacı-Somuncu's (2016) study related the use of oral communication strategies of EFL learners to cognitive flexibility and willingness to communicate, two personality traits that were not mentioned in Alptekin & Tatar's 2011 review. In a comparative study examining Turkish and Romanian EFL learners' willingness to communicate, Asmalı, Bilki & Duban (2015) revealed that the former group had lower willingness to communicate and lower self-perceived communicative competence than the latter, while, interestingly, both groups had low levels of communication apprehension. This result is explained by the researchers as apprehension being 'a trait-like, personal way of acting independent of learning' (Asmalı et al. 2015: 69) i.e., introverted. While further studies are needed to explain this finding, it might also be related to what Uztosun & Erten (2014) suggested in relation to how some learners might want to stay out of the game. On the other hand, both Asmalı et al. (2015) and Şener (2014) revealed that EFL learners felt more confident while communicating with friends and least confident when at meetings; in the former it was strangers who were the least preferred interlocutors while in the latter students mentioned classroom teachers as their least preferred interlocutors. Şener's (2014) interview data explained this finding as teachers' being 'critical and intolerant to their mistakes' (p. 105), drawing attention to teachers' role in guiding the communicative contexts in EFL classrooms. These findings confirm Çokal-Karadaş' (2010) study, which suggested that 'other-initiated other-repair should not be performed only by instructors' (p. 158) and instead students should be encouraged to realize the problems in their own speech and initiate self or other-repair.

Highlighting the difference between context visuals and content visuals, Göktürk & Altay (2015) investigated whether EFL learners with different learning styles were (dis)favored by different channels of input (i.e., audio vs. media-mediated) while listening in English. Their results indicated that when learning styles is not a variable, the channel of input did not make a difference in the overall listening scores of these learners. Yet, when learners were grouped into different learning styles (i.e., auditory, visual, and kinesthetic), the visual learners were at a disadvantage with audio-based listening tests. Their implications are worthy in terms of designing appropriate test tasks and their alignment for the target language use domains as video-based materials are not only widely used in EFL classrooms, but watching movies and TV shows is an activity that more and more learners engage in even outside the classroom.

Studying pre-service EFL teachers as her unit of analysis, Karabınar (2014) investigated participants' experiences of writing as well as the strategies they used within the framework of deep (e.g., self-regulation) and surface level (e.g., rote memorization) writing approaches. Given that her participants were prospective language teachers and already at an advanced level of English proficiency, it was not a surprise to see that the majority of them used deep writing approaches. On the other hand, female participants were found to be adopting a deep approach more than the males, a finding explained by Karabınar (2014) as female learners being more elaborative and reflective.

Finally, Er, Altunay & Yurdabakan (2012) suggest that active learning based on constructivist theory enhances EFL learners' reading comprehension but does not make a difference in their FL self-concept. While the researchers do not provide much information about the ways the participating teachers who were trained in active learning implemented cooperative learning techniques in their classes, they do provide a list of suggestions for cooperative learning techniques so that teachers can encourage active learning in EFL classes. This study therefore can be considered to be a response to Chamot's (2005) call for teacher preparation in learning strategy instruction. Again following Chamot (2005), we hope to see more studies on the development of language teacher expertise to integrate language learning strategies into language teaching curricula, as well as the cultural and contextual factors influencing language learners' strategy use in EFL settings.

3.3 Learner autonomy

Learner autonomy and self-directed learning have also turned out to be areas that widely attracted Turkish researchers' attention (Balçıkanlı 2012a; Altunay 2013; Mede, İnceçay & İnceçay 2013; Mutlu & Eröz-Tuğa 2013; Tanyeli & Kuter 2013). In an attempt to explore freshmen Law students' perceptions of learner autonomy in writing classes, Tanyeli & Kuter (2013) surveyed 200 students and interviewed six of their English teachers using a mixed-method case study design. Their observations were not surprising in that both students and teachers confirmed the lack of learner autonomy despite students' positive attitudes toward learning English. While lack of confidence was considered to be one of the factors leading to dependent learners, the main problems, according to the teachers, were the education system, the curriculum, and the physical classroom environment, which allowed no opportunity for collaborative work to promote learner autonomy.

Studies have also been conducted to find ways to promote learner autonomy through the use of oral book reports in extensive reading courses (Mede et al. 2013); CALL, to raise awareness of web-based resources for ESL/EFL; social media; and TV programs (Altunay 2013). For instance, Mutlu & Eröz-Tuğa (2013) designed a mixed-method study comparing two groups of learners, one of which received a five-week language learning strategy training course through CALL while the other continued their regular studies as preparatory students. The experimental group became more autonomous in that they improved their language learning strategy use; demonstrated higher motivation; and were more willing to take responsibility for their learning by engaging in more outside-of-class activities than the control group. In another study relating the use of technology to learner autonomy, Balçıkanlı (2012a) investigated pre-service ELT teachers' experiences of using XLingo, a social networking site for language learners. XLingo provides its users with a language exchange community in which they can interact with other language learners as well as native speakers, thus, according to the author, it compensates for the lack of comprehensible input and authentic conversation in EFL settings and boosts self-confidence and learner autonomy. His participants also reported benefits in terms of language development through the use of daily expressions and conversation skills, yet these findings call for further research to describe the ways language learners use XLingo, whom they interact with and how often, the topics discussed, etc. Ortaçtepe (2014), on the other hand, examined the second language (L2) socialization processes of Turkish students studying in the United States by looking at their social interactions with American speakers of English. Her findings indicated that the participants adopted similar discursive strategies (i.e., establishing common ground and positioning) used by the native speakers in the U.S. Both Balçıkanlı's (2012a) and Ortaçtepe's studies highlight the importance of transforming Turkish language learners' classroom experience by providing them with a socializing space in which they can interact with native speakers and perceive language use as social practice.

3.4 Attitudes toward language learning

EFL learners' attitudes toward learning English in general (e.g., Kazazoğlu 2013) or toward various specific language learning factors has been a prominent concern of Turkish ELT scholars. In Akay & Toraman's (2015) study, among all the variables considered (i.e., age, gender, faculty, time spent learning, and proficiency level), only the faculty that the students were preparing to study in seemed to have made a difference in their attitudes toward learning grammar. More specifically, students in Science, Humanities, Education, and Engineering faculties were found to have more positive attitudes than those studying in Economics, Business Administration, and Communication. While the researchers think this is explained by the former group's greater reliance on reading and writing in English, as opposed to the latter's need to use all four skills, we believe that only a thorough needs analysis can give fuller understanding. The researchers' assume that the problem of learning EFL in Turkey results from 'the weak emphasis on four skills of the language and lack of communicative teaching, as well as the ineffective teaching of grammar' (Akay & Toraman (2015: 68). No research support has actually been provided for this and it is contradictory to Kılıç's (2013) findings.

According to Kılıç (2013), tertiary level EFL teachers claimed that their role in teaching English is precisely to 'equip language learners with linguistic and general skills' (p. 57). Akay & Toraman's (2015) claim regarding the ineffective teaching of grammar also contradicts the common belief that Turkish learners of English are good at grammar but lack the necessary knowledge and skills in the functional use of language (e.g., Akpınar 2012). Uzun's (2013) study also contributes to this debate on grammar teaching in Turkey by revealing Turkish EFL learners' preference for explicit, focus-on-form types of grammar teaching rather than implicit, focus-on-form approaches.

3.5 Motivation

Similar to Alptekin & Tatar's (2011) review, learner motivation was found to be one of the most popular issues discussed in relation to Turkish EFL learners and their language learning processes (Genç & Kaya 2010; Solak 2012; Öztürk & Gürbüz 2013; Tarhan & Balban 2014). Among these studies, both Öztürk & Gürbüz (2013) and Tarhan & Balban (2014) indicated that integrative and instrumental motivation are two interrelated concepts feeding into each other and should not be perceived as two different entities. More specifically, in Tarhan & Balban's (2014) study, which related motivation to learner identity by drawing on Norton's notion of investment, possessing both integrative and instrumental motivation helped language learners invest more in English language learning, as opposed to having only instrumental orientations. On the other hand, Öztürk & Gürbüz (2013) found that their participants enrolled in an English preparatory program had a moderate level of foreign language learning motivation overall, but in terms of their motivational orientations they had a moderate level of INTEGRATIVE motivation but a high level of INSTRUMENTAL motivation. In another study, Öztürk (2013) also found language learners' low level of motivation to be one of the factors influencing ELT teachers' job burnout.

3.6 Pragmatic competence

EFL learners' pragmatic competence has been a blooming area of interest for Turkish scholars, mostly focusing on speech acts and the acquisition of formulaic expressions. Pragmatic transfer from Turkish to English while performing refusal and complaint speech acts has been discussed by both Çiftçi (2016) and Bikmen & Martı (2013) respectively. In the former study, comparison of both native speakers of English and Turkish EFL learners' responses to a ten-item discourse completion task revealed that Turkish learners employed similar complaint strategies (e.g., annoyance, hints, and requests) as their native speaker counterparts, and positive pragmatic transfer was observed in ANNOYANCE and BLAMING A PERSON and BEHAVIOR, while instances of weak negative transfer were found in MODIFIED BLAME and INDIRECT ACCUSATIONS (Bikmen & Martı 2013).

Highlighting the role of formulaic expressions in vocabulary and language learning, Mutlu & Kaşlıoğlu's (2016) study involving 326 EFL learners studying at five high schools revealed a positive relationship between vocabulary size and receptive and productive knowledge of

collocations. Turkish EFL learners' use of formulaic language in oral proficiency exams has been found to be correlated with the task type as well as their fluency and overall language proficiency scores (Üstünbaş & Ortaçtepe 2016). In order to examine the use of lexical bundles, Öztürk & Durmuşoğlu-Köse (2016) compiled a corpus of 150 texts containing both Turkish and native English postgraduate students' M.A. and Ph.D. theses and native scholars' published articles. The results revealed that the Turkish students used more lexical bundles than their native speaker counterparts, indicating verbose and repetitive language, pragmalinguistic transfer of Turkish (e.g., 'it can be said that') and lack of mastery of certain lexical bundles that were more common in the native speaker corpus. While the findings of this study will be useful for both practitioners and researchers, a more detailed discussion on how the native speaker corpus was compiled would have increased the validity of their findings, and thus, the rigor of their research.

In a small-scale study on idiom-focused instruction, Pfeiffer, Ortaçtepe & Çorlu (2016) examined whether formulaic expressions congruent to those in an individual's L1 have an effect on the production of those expressions. Comparing the three categories of idioms (word-for-word translations of the idiom used in L1, conceptually similar versions of the idiom used in L1, and, idioms specific to the L2), their results revealed that (a) idiom-focused instruction improved learners' accurate production of the expressions in all categories at an even rate, and (b) L2 learners had an affinity toward using more conceptually similar idioms.

3.7 Interlanguage and bilingual development

In their study, Özdemir, Haznedar & Babur's (2012) comparison of nine bilingual and nine monolingual children in terms of word reading performance revealed positive relationships between phonological awareness and reading as well as phonological memory, only in monolingual children but not in bilinguals. One interesting observation in their study was how bilinguals, despite having lower phonological awareness, could read as much as their monolingual counterparts. The researchers explained this was as a result of the mechanism of cross-linguistic transfer that enabled bilingual children to transfer their phonological awareness skills from Turkish in order to decode English words. Looking at the effect of bilingualism on L1 metalinguistic awareness, Beceren (2010) compared one Turkish monolingual and one Turkish-English sequential bilingual child in terms of their phonological and word awareness in Turkish. While the bilingual child performed better in word segmentation and symbol substitution, the phonological awareness tasks revealed no bilingual advantage, a finding explained by the researcher as resulting from the formal instruction on Turkish phonemes both students received at school.

Putting a new face on interlanguage studies by using spoken language corpora, Şahin- Kızıl & Kilimci (2014) compared a native speaker corpus (the Louvain Corpus of Native English Conversation) and sub-corpora of a non-native speaker corpus (the Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage) including Turkish EFL learners' speech in terms of the structural and functional properties of recurrent phrases in spoken English. The findings indicated that Turkish EFL learners underuse vagueness tags and hedging devices (e.g., sort of, you know, things like that) which is interpreted by the researchers as an idiosyncratic

feature of Turkish EFL learners' spoken interlanguage. This corpus-based study provides many implications for the explicit teaching of word combinations and the use of authentic materials to increase EFL learners' awareness of the linguistic properties of spoken English.

Interlingual and intralingual errors have been an object of study especially on Turkish EFL learners' use of definite articles (Koban-Koç 2015), prepositions (Özışık 2014), and morpho-syntactic structures such as adverbial clause morphemes (Dönük & Tezbaşaran 2013). In Özışık's (2014) study, upper-intermediate level preparatory school students could only answer correctly half of a 60-item test, the errors mostly resulting from Turkish interference. Koban-Koç (2015), on the other hand, investigated whether 50 intermediate and 50 low-advanced learners of English overused the definite article 'the' in null article contexts while omitting it in cultural, situation, structural, and textual contexts. The results were not surprising as the entire sample was found to omit 'the' rather than overuse it. Overall, both studies present a good overview of the interlingual vs. intralingual sources of one of the most difficult grammatical aspects of English language for Turkish EFL learners.

In conclusion, Turkish scholars have dealt with various language learning factors, though there are just a few studies that have delved into language learning processes in the Turkish context. Given that ELT researchers now perceive language learners as 'possessing different kinds of abilities and predispositions that influence learning in complex ways' (Ellis & Shintani 2014: 20), future research on individual learner differences might adopt a more holistic approach to explore how they influence the way a language learner performs a classroom activity, responds to a teaching method, and benefits from instruction generally.

4. ELT and language teachers

4.1 Assessment

In a country like Turkey in which assessment is such an important issue and in which so much of life is based on high-stakes tests, from getting into the right high school to getting a good job, it is perhaps surprising that there are so few studies on assessment-related issues. Of these few, some are related to general assessment questions—e.g., ways of improving test reliability and validity or comparing types of assessments—and others relate specifically to assessment issues in the ELT community in Turkey, for example, obtaining students' opinions about portfolio assessment (a practice which has been fairly recently introduced into the national curriculum for ELT in public schools), or seeking teachers' ideas about the integration of performance tasks into the public primary school curriculum for English. While the latter studies are naturally of greater interest largely within the Turkish context, the former more general works may have broader appeal internationally.

Çakır (2013) for example, compared three different methods of assessment in EFL classes: multiple-choice tests, presentations, and translations. He found that students were able to achieve the highest scores on multiple-choice tests, followed by presentations, with the lowest scores on translations. Most importantly, the study reveals that there is not a consistent correlation between students' scores on each type of test, since each of these test types taps

into different skills. A strong argument is therefore made NOT for using one type over another, but for a multiple approach to assessment so as not to favor certain learner types/test-taker types.

Turning to test design and development, Razı (2012) presents a study on the processes of developing and establishing the reliability and validity of a reading test, specifically through the use of analyzing vocabulary frequency. When it comes to reading tests, the author states that testers tend to use readability analyses to determine text difficulty, but such formulas have been criticized since they merely take into consideration word count and sentence length. Razı argues that we need to investigate other aspects of the texts—in this case, word frequency calculations, which can be done using corpus linguistics. He then provides a detailed description and analysis of the various aspects of a reading test's reliability and validity which, together with the actual reading test in the appendix, makes the study useful for both those specifically interested in ELT assessment research as well as for those with a more general interest in reading test preparation.

4.2 Curriculum development and evaluation

A considerable amount of research has been conducted on the broad topic of curriculum development and evaluation, perhaps reflecting the reality of rapidly changing national curricula in Turkey and the need to understand both the reception and adoption of these changes, as well as exploring ways of managing such transitions. It is encouraging in that the volume of such studies shows an awareness of the need for continuous evaluation of curricula, and the importance of gathering various stakeholders' views when doing so. One issue with this area of research is that since these studies are by nature focused on Turkey or Turkish examples, a strong case really needs to be made for how they will be relevant and useful outside of the country or for non-Turkish audiences. This case, frankly, tends not to be convincingly made in many of these studies. Nevertheless, a few may be highlighted.

From a historical perspective, Köksal & Şahin (2012) present an analysis of national education council meeting notes since 1939, focusing on discussions about and decisions made regarding FL teaching in Turkey. The piece is interesting mainly in its descriptive account of the amount and type of discussion that has occurred over the years, though it does not delve into any discussion of why the approach to FL teaching fluctuated. For those interested in a historical overview of FL teaching in Turkey, however, it will be of interest. Similarly, for readers seeking a detailed consideration of the most recent changes to the national English language curriculum in Turkey, Kırkgöz, Çelik & Arıkan (2016) provide a step-by-step description of the collaborative effort to design a curriculum that reflects both recent methodological and technological developments and current research-based practices.

One evaluation study with an interesting take is Salı & Gürsoy's (2014) look at Global Issues in Language Education, a newly offered elective course for undergraduate students of ELT. Focusing on environmental issues, the course aims to make global issues part of language teacher training, thus improving both students' linguistic and social development. It was found

that while the teacher trainees understand the potential value of such a course and are aware of the content knowledge they could gain from taking it, they have very little recognition of the potential linguistic benefits. While the article does not discuss this, the findings seem to have an interesting tie-in with content-based instruction and, notably, point to the teacher trainees' apparent lack of awareness of content based instruction (CBI) principles.

For the most part though, the common theme in the curriculum-based articles is a focus on the process of curricular change, and the conclusion that it is flawed and therefore ineffective. Demirbulak (2012) frames this problem within a discussion of the process of curricular deliberation—a process that is in fact required by the Ministry of Education to occur in public schools via meetings at the start and end of each semester, and is intended to provide feedback on the curriculum. Sadly, Demirbulak's results are a striking example of how well-intentioned directives can be inappropriately followed, and how widely ranging the experiences of different schools can be. This finding is echoed in Küçüktepe, Küçüktepe & Baykın (2014), who focus in particular on the changes regarding the age of first starting English language education. Their survey of teachers' ideas about the curricular shift to starting English instruction at a younger age in public schools shows mixed responses, but the main point comes back to the problems with top-down curricular change, and once more highlights the need for teacher training before any change is implemented.

Such problems of top-down curricular change are shown to extend beyond K-12 education in Uztosun & Troudi's (2015) higher education study. In 2006, curricular changes were made in the undergraduate English language teacher training curriculum in Turkey. According to the faculty lecturers surveyed in this study, while some of the specific changes in courses were found positive and others negative, the main complaint they have is the lack of transparency in the process itself.

4.3 L1 use/code-switching

Use of Turkish (the L1) or code-switching in EFL classrooms is a highly researched topic in Turkey, and therefore one that is clearly deemed important in the local disciplinary community. This emphasis may stem from the inherent clash many EFL teachers and researchers here experience between what the core literature appears to promote (sole use of the target language in the classroom) and what the reality is (a certain degree of L1 use, at best a judicious one, but in some cases extensive). Among the many studies on the topic, there are descriptive ones showing that L1 use is happening in EFL classes and attempting to understand when and why; there are also perception studies exploring teachers' and/or students' opinions about why it is happening and whether it is a good thing. With only studies like these one might think that it is simply easier to use L1 and that these studies are excuses for imperfect practices, but there are also a growing number of works looking for empirical evidence of the results of such practices. In these studies it is revealed that L1 use has, at worst, no effect on language acquisition, and at best, may even improve performance. These works may contribute greatly to a reconsideration of the strong view of L2-only prescriptions for effective FL teaching.

Turning to the specific studies, among the basic perception studies on whether L1 use is a positive or negative practice, Kayaoğlu (2012) surveyed EFL teachers' opinions on the use of L1 in the classroom and their reported practices of using L1. The findings highlight the reality that the vast majority of these teachers assume the pragmatic position that strategic use of L1 can be practical and useful—despite having been trained to think otherwise. Şimşek (2011) reports similar findings. Noting the apparent contradiction between theory and practice regarding use of the L1 in FL classrooms, Şimşek surveyed young student teachers of EFL for their perspectives on their mentor teachers' use of the L1 in their classes (its frequency and whether it was random or purposeful), and how they viewed that usage based on what they had been taught in their teacher training. The observations seem to have implications both for the discussion on use of L1 in the classroom but also for teacher training, as they show that not one of the student teachers had received any conscious education or training on the use of L1 (strategic or otherwise) in teaching. Rather, the theory and instruction they received was quite consistent in being against the use of L1, yet in their observations it became immediately obvious to them that in reality teachers do use it, and often quite a lot (sometimes as much as 80% of the class or more).

A series of works have combined perception studies with actual in-class investigation of what is done and trying to understand why. Bensen & Çavuşoğlu (2013) looked at four university level EFL teachers' use of code-switching in the classroom. They provide interesting examples of actual classroom discourse, and through the application of existing frameworks of analysis for uses of code-switching, their findings on the reasons for L1 use can be easily compared with the findings of previous studies. Kafes (2011) also explores how and why L1 is used in an EFL classroom. Through observations and recordings of different teachers, the author provides further evidence for when and how L1 may be used in the classroom.

Horasan (2014) also studies classroom interaction, this time both students' and teachers', to look at code-switching activity. The study explores the actual amount of code-switching that occurs (high among students, higher than expected among teachers), when it takes place (more often inter-sententially than intra-sententially) and the purposes it seems to be serving (mostly for meta-language talk about grammar or language tasks or as a tool for attracting attention or making jokes). It reveals as well the overarching perception among the participants that as students' proficiency level increases, the use of code-switching should be reduced. Raman & Yiğitoğlu (2015) also looked at teachers' and students' ideas about this practice of code-switching and discovered that it serves for a variety of educational functions, from creating a sense of connectedness to expressing emotions and abstract concepts. As with other studies noted here, this one also found generally wide agreement on the idea that code-switching can contribute positively to the teaching and learning environment. In yet another classroom interaction study, Şen (2010) focuses particularly on the use of L1 for the specific purpose of clarifying and explaining language features. The author makes the argument that research should move beyond studying L1 use only within a code-switching paradigm and instead consider it as a means of a focus-on-form approach to instruction, and discuss its use within that framework.

Finally, at least one work has explored the question in an experimental design study. Şimşek (2010) is a rare effort to empirically measure the effectiveness of using L1 concepts on students' achievement and retention of L2 grammar concepts—an interesting follow-up to

Şen's study. In Şimşek's study, both immediate post-tests and delayed post-tests revealed that a group of university level EFL learners who were taught English using developed methods of L1 use—not simply translation but parallel sentences, bilingual texts, dual-language tasks, consciousness-raising, lexicalization/affixation, scaffolding, and code-switching—performed significantly better on grammar achievement tests than a group of similar students taught using exclusively the target language.

The works here all indicate that this is a topic on which expanding-circle countries in particular have a great potential to contribute to the broader discussion. While it is not surprising that the topic may be less likely to grab the attention of researchers in ESL contexts, it is ripe for exploration in EFL/expanding-circle countries like Turkey. Perhaps the most significant point that all of these studies seem to be emphasizing is that there should be a strategic use of L1 in FL classes. Şimşek (2011) also points to the need to critically engage with standard practices in teacher training, in which there is an impression of core values (L1 use is bad) being imposed on the periphery, not thinking about what might be the most appropriate for those different contexts. This area of research seems to suggest that in an era of increasing awareness of developments like English as an international language, world language or lingua franca, and generally, critical approaches to ELT, combined with the huge growth in the amount and quality of research coming out of the EFL periphery (non-inner/outer-circle countries), there is clearly space for rethinking the curricula of teacher training programs and seriously considering the inclusion of discussions on purposeful, strategic use of code-switching.

4.4 Teaching materials and methods

The bulk of the research in Turkey on language teaching involves, unsurprisingly, studies about various teaching materials and methods or studies focused on the instruction of particular skills. There is also a huge emphasis on research involving the use particularly of technology-related methods or materials, but we have chosen to discuss those studies under a separate heading of 'technology' because of the sheer quantity of that work. The following section focuses therefore on research that investigates non-technology-related materials and methods in the EFL classroom, broadly grouped according to the skills or topics considered: reading, writing, vocabulary, culture, and speaking.

4.4.1 Reading

The most frequently addressed topic in this area is that of reading. Several works have explored the effectiveness of different materials or methods (Kıroğlu & Demirel 2012; Göksu & Genç 2013; Koçer & Turgut 2013) on improving reading or reading-related skills. The materials covered are graphic organizers (Öztürk 2012), comic strips (Merç 2013), and graphic novels (Öz & Efecioğlu 2015). The first two of these are experimental design studies conducted with university level EFL students. In the case of graphic organizers, after a 12-week intervention, a treatment group showed significantly higher scores on a reading comprehension achievement

test than did a control group that had not been trained in the use of graphic organizers. Merç (2013) also set up an experimental design study comparing four treatment groups—both higher and lower proficiency students, working with or without the aid of comic strips and with texts of different levels of difficulty—and testing their comprehension by having them subsequently write what they recalled about the reading text. The findings lend support to Dual Coding Theory as in every case, regardless of student proficiency level or text difficulty, the comprehension levels were significantly higher when texts were accompanied by visuals in the form of comic strips. A final study on reading-related materials is that of Öz & Efecioğlu (2015), who also compared experimental and control classes, this time 10th grade high schoolers, and through questionnaires, interviews, and an achievement test, explored the effectiveness of reading graphic novels vs. regular text versions of the same work. The findings showed the graphic novel readers displayed higher critical thinking skills, a better grasp of literary elements such as symbolism, setting and foreshadowing, and vocabulary, but did not show a significant difference in terms of answering comprehension questions, understanding elements like cause/effect or compare/contrast, or when discussing quotations from the work. Overall, the elements showing better performance are attributed by the authors to increased motivation by the students in the graphic novels group.

Turning to particular methods of reading instruction, two focused on reading strategies and university level EFL students. Kıroğlu & Demirel (2012) make a powerful argument for the teaching of 'chunking' as a reading strategy, showing that, particularly for weaker readers, a treatment period in which chunking strategy was taught resulted in significantly higher scores not only on an immediate post-test for reading comprehension but also on a delayed post-test two months afterwards, suggesting that the students had indeed internalized that strategy use. On the other hand, Koçer & Turgut's (2013) study on students' use of various reading strategies found that even with explicit training, an experimental group failed to show a significant difference from a control group in terms of use of cognitive and, in particular, metacognitive strategies, nor did the treatment group score higher on a post-experiment reading comprehension test. Göksu & Genç (2013) also explored over two years the effects of using the ELP on a single group of high school students' reading scores on standardized tests. The authors conclude that the study provides evidence that ELP-based instruction can strengthen not only students' reading skills but also their confidence in reading.

Another study that related CEFR to EFL reading was conducted by Dolgunsöz & Sarıçoban (2016), who examined the differences between B1 and B2 level students' eye movements (i.e., first pass time, total fixation duration, single fixation duration, and second pass time). Their findings indicated that in both natural reading and isolated reading conditions, total fixation duration and first pass time (i.e., time spent in a region before moving on or looking back) were predicted by L2 reading proficiency with weaker L2 readers spending more time on words and revisiting words. In a similar study, Dolgunsöz (2016) found EFL learners' proficiency level to be a factor determining their success in guessing the meaning from context (i.e., using contextual clues) and vocabulary gains at large. Being the only two studies in this review using an eye-tracking technique, Dolgunsöz (2016) and Dolgunsöz & Sarıçoban (2016)'s studies, we believe, will pave the way for further studies on the development of L2 reading.

4.4.2 Writing

Far fewer studies considered materials or methods for writing instruction. Three are noted here. Turgut & Kayaoğlu (2015) explored the effectiveness of using rubrics as an instructional tool to improve students' writing performance in a university level EFL class. Through interviews with the students and an examination of their written essays, the researchers determined that the students who received training in the use of rubrics significantly outperformed students in a control group. Moreover, the students reported that while they initially found the training with the rubrics challenging, it later helped them appreciate the qualities of good writing in others' works and allowed them to utilize appropriate strategies to also improve their own writing. Using qualitative approaches, Yaylı (2012) explored the benefits of self-annotation writing, embedded into genre-based writing activities. Working with seven volunteer students, she found that self-annotation writing was an effective and enjoyable tool to use, with benefits for awareness-raising and learner autonomy. Finally, Demirel & Enginarlar's (2016) large-scale experimental study compared the effect of combined peer and teacher feedback with exclusively teacher provided feedback on students' L2 writing development. Results revealed no significant differences between the two groups either in the number of revisions made in students' drafts or in students' success (as measured by grades given) on the written works, This finding could be seen as a rebuke to the understanding that Turkish students tend to prefer teacher feedback.

4.4.3 Vocabulary

Three studies on vocabulary acquisition also warrant mention. Bayraktar (2011) studied the effectiveness of using lexical networks (semantic maps) to improve both text comprehension and vocabulary growth. Compared with a control group receiving more traditional instruction in word-definition matching, a group trained in using lexical networks showed greater success with vocabulary learning. Yılmaz (2011) also showed that a 'music-based vocabulary instruction' technique resulted in significantly higher scores on measures of vocabulary learning than those of a control group, and suggested that music helps as a way of coding new vocabulary into long-term memory. A third study, Önem (2015), looked at anxiety-reducing techniques of meditation and aromatherapy to provide optimal conditions for learning. In his study, again with an experimental design, two groups were taught vocabulary over a two-week period; the treatment group were given meditation sessions with lavender aromatherapy before each class. The post-test results showed not only reduced anxiety levels on the part of the treatment group, but also significantly higher performance on vocabulary tests.

4.4.4 Culture-related studies

A growing area of interest among ELT researchers in Turkey is that of culture: research ranges from a recent study showing that English teachers in Turkey—both native and non-native speakers—believe that teaching culture is important (Cansever & Mede 2016) to studies examining the incorporation of culture into EFL teaching materials and classrooms. Two

studies examined the cultural content of currently used textbooks in the Turkish context. Çelik & Erbay (2013) examined three current EFL texts prepared in Turkey and used as the core texts in public elementary schools, and evaluated them for coverage of diverse cultural content. Applying a clear framework of products, practices, perspectives, and people, the authors showed that, unlike past textbooks, the current ones did take diverse cultures into account, though an emphasis s still remains on Europe. Ekmekçi (2014) turned to the textbook used in one university level EFL classroom, and explored the students' opinions on the cultural content found in it. Two groups of students were compared: the first studied Engineering and the second, Theology. While the former group found the cultural content appropriate and balanced, the latter expressed more critical opinions about the book showing excessive British or American cultural content, and questioned whether the cultural content included was in fact interesting. Despite its limited focus on one case, the study serves as an important reminder of the heterogeneity that may exist within seemingly similar populations, and how different attitudes can be toward even a single textbook.

A third culture-related study, Üstünel & Öztürk (2014) investigated the impact of culturally enriched classes on 5th and 7th grade students' cultural knowledge, attitudes, awareness, and overall motivation. In their mixed-method study using surveys, interviews, and field notes from observations, the authors found that while the students were all generally motivated, the younger learners were more so, and girls showed higher motivation than boys. The data, which included interesting excerpts from the students' interviews, revealed that the students exposed to the culturally enriched classes increased not only their awareness and knowledge about other cultures, but also their interest in learning more about them.

4.4.5 Speaking-related studies

Finally, various studies have looked at speaking, ranging from investigations of broad level approaches encouraging speaking to focused examinations on particular ways of enhancing pronunciation. In the former category, Denkci-Akkas & Coker (2016) observed two high school EFL classrooms over a semester to see the extent to which a communicative approach is being used in Turkey. They found that practices varied greatly according to teacher and context, but that they never achieved the 'ideal' description of a communicative classroom as written in the national curriculum. In the latter group of focused studies, Kayaoğlu & Çaylak (2013) tested the Audio Articulation Method (AAM)'s effectiveness as a 'remedy for pronunciation errors', specifically the voiced and unvoiced inter-dental fricatives that pose such a problem for Turkish and other learners of L2 English. In an experiment conducted with Turkish university students, the researchers found that the AAM indeed raised the participants' post-training test scores; however, in regular classroom interactions following the treatment, they were seen to return to previous pronunciation habits. While the authors suggest more long-term exposure to the training and to the sounds in question is required, some of the students themselves raised the question of whether there actually was a need for native-like pronunciation. Clearly, studies like this indicate the need for on-going research on the broader question of attitudes toward native-like pronunciation.

Other notable speaking-related studies are Genç (2014) and Ölmezer-Öztürk & Öztürk (2016), both of which investigated Turkish university level EFL learners' preferences in terms

of spoken error correction. While Ölmezer-Öztürk & Öztürk explored students' general perceptions about the types and timing of correction, Genç focused in particular on whether there were differences in preference based on the students' proficiency levels. Both studies showed a general preference for more explicit correction, and for it to be done after an error is made rather than at the end of class. Genç found this to be particularly so for lower level learners. Lower level learners generally reported a preference for more explicit correction than did higher level learners, and while higher learners preferred correction by native English-speaking teachers, lower level learners expressed preference for correction by non-native English-speaking teachers. This latter finding can be supported by Karakaş et al.'s (2016) study examining 98 preparatory school students' perceptions of native (NESTs) and non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs). According to their findings, NESTs were found to offer good models of spoken English but at the same time to raise students' fears of failing to understand their instructors, and, concomitantly, their fears of humiliation. An overall comparison of NESTs and NNESTs indicate students' favorable attitudes for NESTs in linguistic and professional dimensions, and NNESTs in pedagogical dimension (Karakaş et al. 2016).

4.5 Technology

Turning to the final sub-category of articles related to language teaching the largest single group of studies falls under the heading of 'technology', clearly reflecting a recognition of the inevitability of technology integration into EFL teaching and a genuine search for answers to questions about how best to manage that integration and what types of technology warrant being used. Under the broad heading of 'technology', we can further categorize these studies into evaluation studies, attitude/perception studies, and, the largest group of all, studies exploring the effectiveness of particular technology-based materials and approaches on various aspects of English learning, in particular, vocabulary acquisition.

4.5.1 Evaluation studies

There have been a couple of evaluation studies of the DynED program, which was adopted in recent years by the Turkish public school system. Baz & Tekdal (2014) surveyed over 500 7th grade students and seven teachers, while Baş (2010) conducted in-depth interviews with 12 elementary school EFL teachers, both studies seeking the participants' opinions on the DynED software program. Findings from each revealed concerns with the software: the surveyed students expressed only moderate support, and the teachers expressed only slightly stronger appreciation. The reasons behind the teachers' position could be explained by some of the findings from the interview study, which, although it showed general appreciation for the potential value of DynED for learning purposes, nevertheless revealed so many technical and training problems that its usefulness was highly compromised. Another evaluation study (Genç 2012) looked at the BELT Success program, and found 5th–7th grade students had only moderately positive attitudes, with no difference in opinion according to grade level.

4.5.2 Attitude/perception studies

A large number of studies have explored students' and/or teachers' attitudes toward a variety of technology-based approaches or materials. While not all can be mentioned here, a few worth highlighting include Balçıkanlı's (2012b) exploration of a group of university level EFL learners' experiences using the online program Second Life as a means for interacting with a group of university students in the U.S. The author points to such benefits as the lowering of students' affective filters, the exposure to native speakers and thus for authentic interaction, and the allowing for autonomous learning, while also noting certain problems, most interesting perhaps the point that by using avatars in Second Life, you don't see the movement of the speakers' mouths when interacting so it is unhelpful for pronunciation purposes. In terms of pronunciation, Hişmanoğlu (2010) surveyed over 100 university EFL teachers on their use of a variety of online pronunciation teaching resources. He found that a full 75% were not using the resources at all, despite reporting that they thought they could be useful.

Two other attitude/perception studies looked at the use of weblogs (İstifci 2011) and interactive whiteboards (IWB) (Öz 2014). İstifci followed a group of 15 Turkish university students using weblogs in their elementary level EFL class and reported that they found the weblogs to be motivating, enjoyable, and encouraging as learning tools. Öz surveyed both teachers and students in Turkish high schools and also found overall favorable opinions of IWB technology and its use in EFL classrooms. In terms of any differences of opinion based on particular factors, Öz found no significant differences based on gender or teachers' years of experience, but confirmed the finding of an earlier study (Mathews-Aydınlı & Elaziz 2010) that had also found that for both students and teachers, opinions toward IWBs became even more positive with increased exposure to them.

Yet another survey-based study that should be noted here is Çelik, Arkın & Sabriler's (2012) descriptive investigation into learners' overall reporting of their use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in language classrooms. This broad survey of approximately 400 university level students revealed that they do indeed use ICT in their out-of-class learning activities and that they, regardless of gender, report benefiting from ICTs to regulate different aspects of their language learning, especially for motivational purposes and for practicing certain skills—mostly vocabulary learning and writing. The researchers emphasized the important role of teachers in training students in the use of ICTs inside and outside of class, and in developing both their knowledge and beliefs regarding the potential benefits of ICT use.

4.5.3 Materials and methods

By far the largest group of technology-related studies fall under the sub-category of research investigating the effectiveness of various materials and methods, and of these, the vast majority explore ways of improving students' vocabulary acquisition. The latter include the use of mobile phones (Başoğlu & Akdemir 2010; Saran & Seferoğlu 2010); the Facebook game Pearl Peril (Güvendir & Gezgin 2015); animations (Kayaoğlu, Akbaş & Öztürk 2011); quick

response codes (Arıkan & Özen 2015); and other comparisons of 'traditional' methods with comparable online methods such as Wordchamp (Kılıçkaya & Krajka 2010) or corpus-based approaches (Çelik 2011; Ünaldı et al. 2013; Uçar & Yükselir 2015). As a general rule, most of these studies found that the focus method or tool was effective at raising students' vocabulary learning and/or retention. Sending out two to three messages to a mobile phone improved students' performance, and was in fact even more popular a method than was found in earlier similar studies, arguably due to improvements in smartphone technology and screen size. The online program Wordchamp seemed to help students perform better not only in an immediate post-test situation, but even in a delayed vocabulary test three months after the treatment. Interestingly, in Çelik's experimental study comparing web-based 'data-driven' concordancing activities with online dictionary use, a group of advanced level EFL learners also showed that in a delayed post-test, the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group on retention of academic words and prepositional phrases, even though no significant differences had been noted in an immediate post-test.

More qualified results occurred in a few of these studies. The use of animations, for example, did not result in a significant difference between a control and experimental group of university EFL students, but still are recommended as a supplementary method, and while the vocabulary test scores of 4th graders using Quick Response codes on their tablets did go up, it was found that only a third of the students actually completed the activities, so it is hard to attribute their gains to the QR code use. Also, in Ünaldı et al.'s (2013) study comparing corpus-informed vocabulary instruction with both contextualized and decontextualized (schematic mapping of words) vocabulary learning activities, the participating high school students taught via decontextualized activities actually showed the greatest increase in scores.

A few studies also explored technological tools or methods for teaching particular skills in ELT. Two different works compared online vs. paper-based methods for teaching reading. Genç & Gülözer (2013) offer an interesting look at the effect of cognitive load (based on having comprehension questions placed at the end of a text—split-attention—or integrated throughout a text) and text presentation type (online versus paper-based) on EFL students' reading comprehension performance. While no difference was found based on cognitive load, both groups viewing the texts online outperformed the groups reading paper-based texts. In another reading-based study, Turgut & Tuncer (2011) investigated the impact of digital dual-language storybooks on a small group of bilingual (Turkish–Arabic) middle school students. Using think-aloud procedures, observations, and semi-structured interviews, the researchers presented a picture of how the students found these online dual-language books interesting and how they were useful for linguistic comparisons and supporting cultural understanding through recognizing the students' own multicultural backgrounds. One other study, Kırkgöz (2011), investigated a more 'traditional' technological tool, video recordings, and their effect on students' speaking skills. In the study, undergraduate students in an EFL teacher training program were video-taped over a series of sessions. By the end of the study students' oral communication skills had measurably improved, and the students reported a decrease in anxiety over speaking. Finally, Uçar & Yükselir (2015) conducted a short-term study testing the effectiveness of using corpus-based activities on students' acquisition of verb–noun collocations. Despite the short time frame (two 2-hour sessions), the study still revealed a significant difference between the post-test scores of the experimental group

and the control group taught via 'conventional' methods, with the former showing greater success.

All in all, the studies above and in the previous section on non-technology materials and methods show that a variety of teaching materials, from graphic organizers and graphic novels, music and meditation, to smart phones and computer programs, and their effect on skills such as reading comprehension and vocabulary learning, have been evaluated, mostly in experimental studies. Other materials, from textbooks to software programs, have been evaluated, and both students' and teachers' perceptions of and experiences with different approaches or materials have been surveyed. All of these studies reflect the practical (as opposed to theoretical or conceptual) tendency in ELT research in Turkey. The experimental design of these studies is generally fairly robust, though one might still caution that, in such studies, there is a tendency to find a positive benefit in the experimental group. While it is natural that researchers will test things that they believe are likely to show an effect, and therefore positive findings may be expected, a reminder for more mixed-method and alternative research designs to explore these questions in more depth and detail might be needed.

5. In-service and pre-service teacher education/PD

5.1 Descriptive studies on teacher education

Relevant studies examine some in-service but mainly pre-service teachers' current status especially in regard to various affective and cognitive constructs such as beliefs, efficacy, motivation, anxiety, teacher cognition, and learning approaches, which are also widely examined in relation to language learners.

Erten (2014, 2015) conducted two studies on pre-service EFL teachers' reasons for choosing this profession. While the former study adopted a survey with only open-ended questions, the latter consisted of a similar survey, a ranking task for listing their reasons, and the FIT-Choice Scale (Watt & Richardson 2007). Relying on qualitative results, both studies confirmed that intrinsic motivations won over extrinsic ones, altruistic coming last. The researcher in the second study, however, gave attention to the FIT-Choice Scale, and this revealed that altruistic motivations prevailed over other reasons. Erten (2015) attributed the discrepancy between the survey results and the qualitative results to social desirability bias and called for the use of multiple data collection instruments to obtain more trustworthy findings.

Turning to studies exploring aspects of teacher beliefs, two, in particular, highlight a range of methodological approaches. Surveying 606 EFL instructors working in 15 higher education institutions in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, Öztürk & Yıldırım (2015) aimed to describe the language learning cognitions of the participants regarding linguistic aptitude, priorities in language learning, and what it means to be a good language learner. The participants revealed an interactionist perspective as opposed to an innate one, and they adopted a performance-oriented approach to language learning rather than a competence-oriented one. Legislative learners were favored more than executive and judicial ones, a finding in

line with the current research, as also described in the language learning section (3.3) of this review conveying the tendency toward having more autonomous language learners. At the other end of the methodological spectrum, Öztürk & Gürbüz (2016) presented case studies of three practicing EFL teachers, exploring how their early language learning experiences affected their later teaching beliefs. Given the primary role that earlier language teachers are found to have had, the researchers point to the need for further research on the idea of apprenticeship and observation of EFL teachers.

Efficacy seems also to have been popular in regard to pre-service EFL teachers. For instance, İnceçay & Keşli-Dollar (2012) conducted a study with 36 senior students in an ELT department to examine their level of efficacy and readiness for classroom management, two constructs that were found to be unrelated. Merç (2015a), on the other hand, found a negative, moderate relationship between self-efficacy and FL teaching anxiety, the source of anxiety for these pre-service teachers apparently being their mentor teachers in practicum classes. It is also of note that the novice teachers in Ercan-Demirel & Cephe's (2015) study were more liable to burnout due to factors such as teaching load and students' low proficiency levels.

ICT self-efficacy, or computer self-efficacy, has also attracted the attention of several researchers. While Bozdoğan & Özen (2014) used the Technology Acceptance Model to examine pre-service EFL teachers' use of ICT and possible factors affecting their ICT self-efficacy, Zehir-Topyaka (2010) related computer self-efficacy to general self-efficacy and explored these two constructs in relation to variables such as gender, grade differences, and frequency and intensity of computer use. Both studies draw attention to the need for teacher education programs in Turkey to equip pre-service teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to integrate ICT in their classes, or as Bozdoğan & Özen (2014) put it, to transform technology into *teachnology*. Yet, a lack of adequate training in their programs and insufficient facilities in practicum schools were the two main reasons mentioned by pre-service teachers for not being able to integrate technological tools in their classes, as stated in Merç (2015b).

When we examined the papers published in Turkey on language teacher education, two concepts seemed to have received less emphasis than those discussed above: pragmatic and intercultural competence. Interestingly, two of the three studies focusing on ELT teachers examined their perceptions about these issues rather than their actual teaching practices. For instance, while Kılıç (2013) examined tertiary level Turkish EFL teachers' beliefs regarding intercultural competence, Demircioğlu & Çakır (2015) had a larger focus in their study, which surveyed International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, English language teachers from five different countries, namely Turkey, the U.S., the U.K., New Zealand, and Spain, on their attitudes toward intercultural competence. On the other hand, Yıldız-Ekin & Atak-Damar (2013) not only examined pre-service teachers' pragmatic awareness but also the extent to which they integrated pragmatics into their teaching practices. Their results were not surprising in that the participants did show awareness of pragmatic knowledge, which was operationalized as their use of speech acts, and was measured by means of a discourse completion task. However, the analysis of the reflection papers, lesson plans accompanied by observations, and in-depth interviews revealed that they failed to transfer this knowledge into their classes, highlighting a gap in the curriculum of EFL teacher education.

Yeşilbursa (2011a), on the other hand, approached pragmatics from the perspective of face-threatening acts, and examined the mitigation strategies used in providing suggestions and advice during post-observation conferences that took place between three language teacher educators who observed each other. The number of both negative and positive politeness strategies used by these three teachers who had equal academic positions, as opposed to the hierarchical relationship involved in supervisor–supervisee dyads, indicates that reflective practice oriented observations, regardless of the parties involved, present themselves as face-threatening acts regardless of their (in)voluntary nature. In another study, Yeşilbursa (2011b) also presented a snapshot of pre-service ELT teachers' patterns of reflection (descriptive vs. dialogic, positive vs. negative) by examining their written reflections on their teaching experience. Her study is of interest to those involved in teacher education programs as the rubric she presented to evaluate the reflection patterns can be adopted by teacher educators and pre-service teachers to increase the depth and breadth of prospective teachers' reflective practice.

5.2 Intervention studies on teacher education

Intervention studies are understood here as those studies that explored the effect of a treatment, usually in the form of a teaching-based course/practicum, or a treatment within a course on pre-service teachers' beliefs, or teaching practice. Özmen (2011), for instance, examined the role of a Creative Drama course (an acting course designed specifically for ELT students) on pre-service teachers' beliefs on teaching and learning. The results indicated that the pre-service teachers' beliefs not only shifted from a behavioristic perspective to a more cognitive/constructive one but also from personal experience-based ones to more academic-driven ones. On the other hand, Kurt et al. (2014) explored how pre-service teachers developed Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), a conceptual framework designed by Mishra & Koehler (2006) to describe the knowledge base teachers from various fields need to have to integrate technology into their classes.

Methodology courses on ELT have been the focus of attention in several studies not only because they provide a foundation for language teaching methods but also because of their emphasis on relating theory and practice. Akcan (2011), for instance, examined the learning experiences of prospective teachers in her own methodology course to understand the ways participants built their own teaching philosophy. Savaş (2012) examined the use of digital videos recorded by pre-service teachers during their micro-teaching preparations for an ELT methodology course. While the opportunity for self-evaluation and correction was the most commonly mentioned benefit of these videos, some participants reported having recorded their videos after the actual preparation process, defeating the purpose of their use, and thus leading to an 'unnatural' and 'artificial' experience (Savaş 2012: 114). Cirit (2015), on the other hand, conducted a study comparing ELT pre-service teachers' perceptions of traditional, alternative, and online assessment tools. The researcher also examined the use of Web 2.0 tools for alternative assessment in a methodology course and looked at the change in the participants' perceptions after the implementation of Web 2.0 tools such as *Voki*, *Testmoz*, *Mindomo*, and *Glogster*. While the findings indicated pre-service teachers' preference

for alternative assessment both before and after the use of Web 2.0 tools, it is of note that the participants highlighted the need to use both alternative and traditional assessments, their least preferred assessment method. Cirit's (2015) discoveries indicate another conundrum: given more recent and traditional approaches in language teaching, how some pre-service teachers can still be resistant to change is yet to be explored.

There were also studies focusing on the effect of professional development (PD) on in-service teachers' beliefs or classroom practices. On the one hand, some studies emphasized the importance of in-house, teacher-led PD programs, such as Korkmazgil & Seferoğlu (2013), who described EFL teachers' PD practices, the challenges they face especially in relation to obligatory, top-down PD programs, as well as their perceived needs. On the other hand, Personn & Yiğitoğlu (2015) paid attention to externally designed PD courses such as the In-service Certificate in English Language Teaching (ICELT), while Aydın, Sağlam & Alan (2016) explored whether the Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) program can build a bridge between pre-service and in-service education. In the latter, the feedback sessions between the teacher trainers and trainees were found to be the most useful part of CELTA, giving insights on their strengths and weaknesses. The participating CELTA-holders also criticized their pre-service education programs as being overly theory-based, and thus they reported benefiting from CELTA due to its immediate implications for classroom practice. This heavy emphasis on theoretical rather than practical in pre-service teacher education programs was also mentioned by the participants of Yazan's (2016) study, which examined early-career EFL teachers' instructional challenges and their way of coping with them. Providing more opportunities for clinical experiences in various contexts and discussing case studies with emphasis on instructional challenges were some of the suggestions presented by Yazan (2016) to prepare EFL teachers for the challenges they might face in their early careers.

Arranging a reflective development program for four tertiary level EFL teachers, Arslan & Basağa (2010) investigated the ways engagement in reflective practice through action research contributed to the participants' PD. Critical evaluation of their teaching practices and becoming a teacher researcher 'with the encouragement to think like a researcher' (Arslan & Basağa 2010: 21) were the two outcomes that the researchers felt were important for helping these teachers identify the problems they might face in the future and seek solutions. In a case study on EFL teachers' reflective practice, Yücel, Arman & Yapar (2016) investigated the role of video-coaching on in-service teacher training by examining 51 language instructors' attitudes toward video-coaching and reported professional growth. Constructive feedback as part of video-coaching was found to be the factor leading to positive changes in teachers' attitudes and improvements in teaching, confirming Aydın, Sağlam & Alan's (2016) findings mentioned earlier.

Because of their emphasis on actual teaching practice within host schools under the supervision of mentor teachers, practicum courses can also be discussed here in relation to their influence on pre-service teachers. For instance, in İnceçay's (2015) study, the effect of the practicum was examined in relation to the metaphors pre-service teachers used to describe the nature of FL teaching. The analysis of a metaphor completion task, semi-structured interviews and follow-up emails revealed how the use of metaphors enable pre-service teachers to conceptualize themselves as language teachers and how they reflect on their tacit knowledge

as well as the role of the practicum, that is, the experience of 'real-life'—as one of the participants stated— in this process.

There are also some researchers who brought in an intervention within a particular course (Savaş 2012; Cirit 2015; Okumuş & Akalın 2015). Okumuş & Akalın (2015), for instance, conducted a qualitative study on pre-service teachers' perceptions regarding the integration of the EPOSTL into the methodology course of their ELT curriculum. The integration of EPOSTL required pre-service teachers to complete the descriptors on the self-assessment section of the EPOSTL to evaluate their own micro- and macro-teachings. The interview data revealed that the use of EPOSTL increased pre-service teachers' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. Yet, not much evidence is presented by the authors regarding how the EPOSTL can help bridge the gap between theory and practice, a concern experienced by most ELT departments in Turkish universities.

6. Discussion and suggestions for future research

According to Tarone's (2015) description of the trajectory that second language acquisition (SLA) research has followed since 1925, the founding year of *Language*, the journal of the Linguistics Society of America, the focus of SLA researchers has expanded beyond the study of phonology, morphology, and syntax of the language learners to studies of pragmatic and sociolinguistic competence as well as individual factors affecting language learning, such as learner age and identity. Our review reveals that the research on ELT in Turkey has generally followed this shift, by placing the language learner more at the intersection of a highly complicated relationship between societal factors (e.g., English as a lingua franca (ELF), CEFR, high-stakes exams), the school/institution (e.g., teachers, teaching practices, the use of ICT), and themselves. The study of various factors affecting language learning processes, also recommended by the European Profile for Language Teacher Education (Kelly & Grenfell 2004), has been a particularly well-established domain of inquiry, apart from special educational needs, a field that should attract more attention by Turkish scholars to explore the learning difficulties and behavioral issues of these learners.

Tarone (2015) also adds that the analysis of both verbal and nonverbal discourses in terms of the power relationship between interlocutors, and the purpose and functions for which L2 is used, have also advanced among SLA researchers. In Turkey, conversation analysis (CA) has been a blooming area of research especially with the Hacettepe University Micro-Analysis Network (HUMAN) Research Center founded in 2015. With its ambitious agenda and very active schedule, HUMAN has since its founding organized one postgraduate conference on social interaction and applied linguistics, and five HUMANtalks, where scholars from different universities in Turkey are invited to give a seminar. During the 2014–2015 academic year alone, 33 weekly data sessions and eight bi-weekly reading group meetings were conducted to assist graduate students and other scholars interested in CA. While CA research is certainly gaining more interest, it remains still limited to the work of this center (e.g., Sert & Seedhouse 2011; Sert & Balaman 2015; Sert et al. 2015), and is therefore not reflected much in the studies we reviewed between 2010 and 2016. We believe that more research on CA will contribute to our understanding of Turkish EFL learners' engagement in

social interaction both with native speakers and in ELF contexts. As far as discourse analysis or critical discourse analysis is concerned, one can easily say that Turkey is behind on these developments, at least in the field of ELT.

In addition to these observations on the topics dominating research attention among SLA/ELT researchers in Turkey, certain points can also be made with respect to methodology. The overview offered here shows in general a lack of interdisciplinary research, a fact that may possibly stem from the Turkish Higher Education Council's system of designating academics according to clear-cut fields, and then, when making decisions on academic promotion, not always recognizing work that seems to fall outside of an individual's narrowly defined field.

Easier to address but harder to explain are the relative lack of genuine mixed-method studies. While there is work combining, for example, surveys and interviews, or surveys with both closed and open-ended questions, true variety and true adherence to the principles of mixed-method research—e.g., having two or more sets of data or methodologies to address one broad question or phenomenon—are still not common, a shortcoming also noted in both Özmen, Cephe & Kınık's 2016 survey of doctoral research in Turkey and Yağız, Aydın & Akdemir's (2016) analysis of research designs used in ELT research in Turkey over the past decade. Overall, the notion of mixed-method ELT research seems to remain underdeveloped in Turkey. It is interesting that a recent survey of Turkish ELT faculty and graduate students did not even include the term 'mixed-method' when asking about methodology types used, and that the research type that might be considered closest, 'conducting both quantitative and qualitative', ranked last according to participants' reported experience (Köksal & Razı 2011). All of this suggests the need for a greater understanding of what mixed-method research actually is, including, for example, fundamental steps like introducing courses in graduate ELT programs focused particularly on mixed-methods research, rather than offering only general research methods courses or courses specifically in qualitative and quantitative research.

One obvious takeaway from this study is that, undeniably, there is a huge amount of research being conducted, written up, and published in Turkey. Optimistically this means there is a heightened awareness of research as a concept, even among the many teachers and students serving as participants in these studies, and suggests an awareness of the value of research for both theoretical and practical progress. More pessimistically, however, the explosion in research from Turkey often seems more a pragmatic response to mandates from above requiring publications for purposes of advancement, rather than a 'pure' search for disciplinary knowledge and understanding.

Because of the strict promotion process determined by the Council of Higher Education, Turkish scholars are required to publish extensively, and are generally awarded for quantity rather than quality. During the process of reviewing 400+ articles, we have come to realize that researchers seem to be making the most of resources at hand to produce research papers (e.g., an activity they use in class, or a novel approach they implemented in a course) rather than addressing a genuine need or a problem they notice in the field. Köksal & Razı's (2011) study examining ELT professionals' research culture in Turkey, in a way, supports such an observation. In their study, the researchers administered a survey to 159 ELT academics and postgraduate students to examine their experiences in conducting research and writing

research papers. Turkish scholars reported being least comfortable with longitudinal studies in the form of action research, case study and ethnographies—confirmed by our study in which we encountered very few ethnographic studies/longitudinal studies. More radically, the participants in that earlier work indicated that writing up the discussion section, in which the findings are discussed in relation to the presented literature, was the most difficult part of writing a research paper. Again, our review process confirms this as at least half of the 400+ papers we examined lacked a discussion section altogether or failed to relate the results to the body of knowledge on ELT or Applied Linguistics, and instead merely provided a summary of the main findings.

On a related note, the literature reviews in the works we examined all too often seemed to be included more for displaying background knowledge of an area than building up to the current study, in other words, a description of an area of research rather than a rhetorical effort to implicitly show what is known and thus justifying the need for the current study. The practice of, explicitly or implicitly, describing a 'gap' in the research that the current study is aiming to fill, is not regularly adhered to, and even when done, may be little more than a somewhat limp, under-justified reference to either cultural differences (such a study hasn't been done in Turkey . . .), or to a pained agglomeration of methodological circumstances (such a study hasn't been done with THIS population, under THESE conditions, using THIS method of data collection . . .). While there is of course the possibility of differences in context (with all that that entails) leading to different results we would still caution against an overreliance on such relatively easy gaps. One might even question whether their existence relaxes local researchers from pushing the envelope and seeking new directions for research.

While these observations about local scholars' efforts to link their works to the literature of the broader disciplinary community shows certain weaknesses, comments can also be made about the building up of the local disciplinary community. Although there is definitely citing of other Turkish researchers' works in these pieces, it seems to be primarily for the purpose of showing that someone looked at a certain angle of a problem or issue in order to justify the current study's consideration of a different angle. There does not seem to be a conscious effort to build theoretically on the work of others in the local disciplinary community. Clearly there are areas of research that are of particular interest to Turkish researchers of ELT, but within these areas, it is hard to find evidence of anyone locally taking a broad look at what all these individual efforts have accomplished and suggesting broader messages that have emerged from them. This issue is also reflected in the overall tendency toward applications of others' (generally core) theory or frameworks rather than attempts to critically extend or even initiate new theories. It would be exciting to see in the future more evidence of ELT researchers in Turkey seeking out those realms where local voices might serve as more than layers of bricks in existing walls of knowledge (albeit still a valuable task), and become architects of entirely new structures.

The current respect for research among ELT/SLA scholars in Turkey, even if externally imposed, and the resulting energy and volume of research being conducted in Turkey, are to be applauded. The local disciplinary community's recognition of diverse research methodologies and the obvious awareness of past and present research on a wide range of topics are also worthy of note. As the local disciplinary community becomes increasingly established it is likely that it may shift from its current individualism, pragmatism, and tendency toward

'application' of core theories and frameworks to a bolder, more creative, and more progressive community that can serve as a generator, rather than only an applier, of ideas.

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