RESEARCH ARTICLE

Training Needs of In-Service Efl Teachers in Language Testing and Assessment

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Abstract

The present research reports the findings of the study that sought to examine the in-service training needs of in-service EFL teachers in the language testing and assessment field. With this aim, four domains of language testing and assessment field were identified which were classroom-focused LTA, knowledge of testing and assessment, purposes of testing, and content and concepts of LTA. Quantitative research design was employed in this study and quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire. A total of 300 in-service EFL teachers working in different formal and non-formal education institutions participated in this study. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results indicated that these in-service EFL teachers need an intermediate level of further training in the LTA field. The area where need for training was expressed more was "content and concepts of LTA" and "classroom-focused LTA" was the domain where need for in-service training was revealed less. The findings of this study will serve as needs analysis for in-service programs and will be beneficial for curriculum development, teacher education programs, and more specifically assessment courses offered in pre- and INSET programs.

Keywords: language testing and assessment, language assessment literacy, in-service training needs, in-service EFL teachers

Introducton

Testing and assessment are of the utmost importance to the curriculum and education system (Alderson, 2005) as educational practices including teaching and learning processes are closely related to testing and assessment practices. Taking the importance of testing and assessment practices for qualified learning and teaching processes into account, it is fundamental for teachers to have adequate knowledge and skills of designing, evaluating, and applying various assessment practices, which is referred to as "assessment literacy". In this regard, being assessment literate is enunciated as one of the vital competencies of teachers for achieving quality in teaching practices. In the same vein, language teachers are expected to be competent at language assessment, which is described as "language assessment literacy". As Davies (2008) stated the construct of LAL (Language Assessment Literacy) consists of three elements: knowledge, skills, and principles. Knowledge pertains to understanding language, evaluation techniques, and contextual factors. On the other hand, skills involve the ability to design language tests and derive meaningful insights from the outcomes. As to the principles, they encompass utilizing appropriate assessments, fairness, and considering the effects of assessment on diverse individuals and institutions.

There is a huge demand for language teachers to have adequate background and training in the language assessment field given the growth and significance of tests and assessments in the language field (Lam, 2015). Within this context, language assessment literacy (LAL) is crucial in language education since it allows teachers to comprehend and implement information about student achievement and contributes to the language learning process. In spite of the importance of assessment in language education context, teachers are not trained adequately in language testing and assessment, hence most of them have lack of knowledge, practice, experience and confidence in assessment (Brookhart, 2001; Taylor, 2009).

As highlighted by Jeong (2013) and Vogt and Tsagari (2014), in the last two decades, researchers' attention has been directed to the issue of language teachers' testing and assessment knowledge and practices with regard to the problems and insufficient LAL level of teachers. Nonetheless, research on LAL and the course-based language testing and assessment training provided to pre-service and in-service ELT teachers are not enough considering its pivotal role in language learning and teaching processes. Language teachers' preparation regarding language assessment prior to their entry to their professions plays a significant role in enhancing language assessment literacy and improving their professional identity as well as the quality of language assessment and teaching practices (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Despite the importance of language assessment literacy in foreign language teacher education, limited research has been carried out to investigate in-service FE teachers' level of LAL and perceived LAL training needs in Turkey (Mede & Atay, 2017).

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When analyzing research conducted in this particular area, there is still unresolved aspect that requires comprehensive investigation, which is the LAL training needs of in-service English language teachers working in different educational settings in Turkey.

1. Do in-service EFL teachers perceive a need for in-service training in language testing and assessment? If so, what are the training needs of in-service EFL teachers regarding LTA?
    1.1. In which field of LTA do in-service EFL teachers need more training?
    1.2. In which field of LTA do in-service EFL teachers need less training?

To sum up, this present research aims to explore LAL training needs of in-service EFL teachers and regarding the research gap in this field, this study sought to answer the given main research question and sub-research questions.

Literature Review

Language Assessment Literacy

Language assessment literacy has derived from the generic term "assessment literacy" and they have common constituents; however, LAL differs from AL in terms of the understanding of language, usage and pedagogy of language (Brookhart, 2001; Giraldo, 2018). LAL is defined as having a sound grasp of assessment including the knowledge, principles and functions of various assessment methods as well as evaluating the results of these assessment procedures accurately and making precise decisions about learners (Lam, 2015). In this regard, a language teacher who has an adequate level of LAL has sound principles and knowledge of language assessment and various assessment methods so as to grasp, design, examine and interpret her/his assessment procedures in the language classroom (Malone, 2013; Scarino, 2013). Another definition of LAL was put forward by Fulcher (2012) following the research on investigation of training needs of teachers regarding language assessment. As for the components of LAL, he asserted that there are three components, which are having the grasp and ability to create, analyze and interpret different kinds of tests and assessments, being aware of different principles and constructs for effective assessment practices, and having the capability to put theoretical knowledge and abilities into broader social, historical and political contexts as well as analyzing the effect of testing on people, community and several foundations.

On the other hand, Davies (2008) asserted that LAL is composed of three factors that are knowledge, skills and principles. While knowledge is related to the language, evaluation and context, skills are explained with regard to creating language tests and drawing conclusions from the results. The principles refer to employing convenient tests, justice and impacts of assessment on a variety of subjects like people and institutions. As for Scarino (2013), two components were claimed to compose LAL, which are knowledge and process base. While the former refers to the theories of the language field that support assessment practices, the latter indicates progressive stage of assessment in language as analyzing and commenting on the notions of assessment.

Moreover, as Newsfield (2006) asserted, being aware of assessment concepts, following the procedures, evaluating the findings will both contribute to students' achievement and motivation towards the foreign language learning besides helping language teachers to cater to the needs of learners during foreign language learning process. Also, as stated by Hismanoglu (2019), the presence of an effective language teacher will be a prominent factor in activating students' learning process and pace. In a similar vein, in addition to scaffolding learning, language teachers' competency in language assessment makes a huge contribution to their professional development (Büyükkarcı, 2016). Another reason for the requirement of LAL on the part of language teachers is that new advancements in language teaching entails brand new qualifications by language teachers. Language teachers are expected to keep up with these developments and obtain these qualifications for professional development and quality teaching. One of these areas is related to assessment in that the European Language Portfolio (ELP) highlights peer- and self-assessment as key components of education, and language teachers' awareness and competency in these key concepts is of paramount importance (Morrow, 2004). Therefore, these have to be included in the pedagogy of language teachers and should be possessed by them to have a higher level of LAL considering the limited training and pronounced need for advanced training in these crucial concepts as expressed in a growing body of research (Lam, 2015; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014; Volante & Fazio, 2007). In short, supporting learning and promoting teacher development as well as keeping pace with new developments in the field and increasing the positive washback on educational practices is enhanced through LAL.

EFL Teacher Education in Turkey

Teacher education in Turkey has a long history and English Language Teacher Education has been one of most crucial areas in teacher education policies in Turkey. In accordance with recent changes and reforms in foreign language education and teaching policies, there has been a crucial focus on teaching English intensively to both young learners and adults, which entails the need for qualified and competent English language teachers. To this end, English Language Teacher Education (ELTE) has gone through various changes (Mahalingappa & Polat, 2013) and a recent update in 2017 was issued by the

Higher Education Council, which describes the structure of the initial teacher training program.

Pre-service English language teachers get training at the education faculties of the universities in Turkey and all ELTE programs in all universities follow the curriculum designed by the Council of Higher Education in Turkey (CoHE). Pre-service ELTE program consists of a four-year training and all ELTE departments employ a standardized curriculum and three different kinds of courses are provided. These courses are field knowledge courses (e.g., Teaching English to Young Learners, Materials Adaptation and Development, English Literature I, Linguistics I and II, Language Acquisition, ELT Methodology, Testing and Evaluation in ELT), pedagogical knowledge courses (e.g., Turkish Education System & School Management, Instructional Technology, Educational Psychology, Research Methods in Education, Turkish Education History, Teaching Principles and Methods), and general knowledge courses (e.g., Community Service, Information Technologies, Non-Departmental Electives).

In-service training (INSET), which has been an umbrella term for teachers' professional development, is regarded as one of the most important parts of continuing professional development (CPD). It has been defined as any type of activity in which teachers are engaged to develop their knowledge, skills and professionalism processes following their undergraduate training and to enhance the quality of learning and teaching (Ryan, 1987). In other words, INSET seeks to equip teachers with necessary knowledge and skills required in the twenty-first century and to fill in the gaps from undergraduate programs. To this end, a variety of activities are held including courses, workshops, seminars, postgraduate programs, conferences and certificate programs.

As stated by Mirici and Pulatsü (2022), undergraduate education can not provide an adequate knowledge base in teaching occupation and INSET programs are substantially important to enhance teachers' knowledge and skills. In this regard, INSET programs should be revised and renewed constantly to provide sound basis in teaching including LTA and adequate to meet the needs of EFL teachers regarding LTA field. However, INSET in Turkey has been addressed as inadequate for catering to the needs of language teachers in the literature (Günel & Tanrıverdi, 2014; Küçüksüleymanoğlu, 2006; Özer, 2004; Uysal, 2012; Uztosun, 2018). The problematic aspects involve both the number and the quality of training programs including the plan, application and review of training. As stated by Küçüksüleymanoğlu (2006), in-service training courses given to English teachers from 1998 to 2005 were not adequate with regard to the number of INSET courses for all teachers irrespective of their majors. In a similar vein, the study of Uztosun (2018) investigated the beliefs of English teachers on the strong and weak sides of in-service training programs in which they participated. It was found that the

number of the available programs was few and there were some problems in different stages of the courses offered such as the plan, implementation, follow-up and evaluation of the courses.

Planning of the courses is stated to be problematic (Özer, 2004; Uysal, 2012; Uztosun, 2018). More specifically, needs analysis has not been carried out prior to these programs, which causes the scope of the programs not to be related to the actual needs of teachers. Therefore, a top-down approach has been adopted in terms of the determination of the scope of the course without analyzing the actual needs of teachers. As highlighted by Ataberk and Mirici (2022), "qualified and well-designed teacher training curricula is of great importance" (p.1514). In this regard, it is of paramount importance to state that planning of these programs should focus on bridging the gaps and including relevant needs of teachers.

Related Research Conducted in Turkey and Abroad

There are a limited number of studies on the training needs in language testing and assessment of in-service EFL teachers as well as their beliefs and practices of assessment (Al-Bahlani, 2019; Cirit, 2015; Han & Kaya, 2014; Köksal, 2004; Mede & Atay, 2017; Vogt and Tsagari, 2014; Yastıbaş & Takkaç, 2018).

In 2017, Mede and Atay examined LAL of EFL instructors who were working at preparatory schools of universities in Turkey. The research encompassed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in that in the quantitative part of the study an online questionnaire was employed and in the qualitative part focus group interviews were used. EFL teachers were found to have limited LAL levels and to need further training in three areas of language testing and assessment. Of all areas, classroom focused language testing and assessment was the most stated area for further training and as for the purposes of testing, the participants regarded themselves as sufficient in this area. They also specified a further training need in assessment of speaking skill. Moreover, participants indicated that the training they received was not adequate since the training was focused mostly on exams and for once. In light of these findings, it was suggested that in-service training in language testing and assessment should incorporate an intense focus on putting several forms of assessment into practice in preparatory schools.

As for Vogt and Tsagari's (2014) study, they sought to investigate the LAL of language teachers and their training needs in the LTA field. They employed this to 853 EFL teachers from various European regions including Turkey. Following the questionnaire, they had an interview with 63 EFL teachers. More specifically, through questionnaires it was aimed to uncover the training they received and needed in various domains of LTA and via interviews it was sought to find out their individual needs in these domains and to specify the ways they employed to make up for problems in specialty in these areas. The findings demonstrated that many

of the respondents did not receive advanced training in three domains of LTA and they highlighted the need for further training in these three domains. Moreover, it was found that the majority of EFL teachers stated that their training in LTA did not suit the realities of classroom context. As their training mainly included conventional forms of assessment and the classroom context required them to implement various forms of assessment, they underscored the insufficiency of their assessment training in teacher education programs. Besides, alternatives in assessment were indicated as one of the areas that they lack adequate knowledge and practice and stated as one the crucial topics to be included in in-service training programs.

Al-Bahlani (2019) examined LAL of EFL teachers in Oman in addition to the assessment theory and applications in real classroom settings. Mixed-method research design was used in that self-assessment surveys, a language assessment knowledge test, an assessment evaluation task, classroom observations and teacher interviews. The results demonstrated that there was both harmony and disharmony between their self-assessed LAL and showed assessment knowledge. As to the perceptions of these teachers regarding their competency in LAL, it was partial. Also, among the variables that were measured, pre-service training in assessment was the most influential variable on their LAL. It was pointed out that assessment courses given in preservice education was critical for sound assessment practices and knowledge, and the current programs were suggested to be revised and re-evaluated taking the immediate necessity of elaborating on these programs into account. Another suggestion was that those who received in-service training and not received any in-service training in assessment did not differ from each other much. Accordingly, it was stated that in-service trainings provided at present ought to be reviewed and changed to fulfill the needs of EFL teachers.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The current study is a descriptive study that employed a quantitative approach. This study adopted a quantitative approach through survey research as the study sought to examine the training needs of in-service EFL teachers related to language testing and assessment in Turkey. As the study did not intend to assess the variables' changes over a period, it employed a cross-sectional design.

Setting and Participants

The current study was conducted in the formal and non-formal education settings in Turkey. More specifically, it was carried out in different education settings which are public schools, private schools and private language schools. The data for this study were collected from one major informant group: in-service EFL teachers who work at formal and non-formal education institutions at different grade levels (primary, secondary and high school) in Turkey.

The selection of participants for this study was based on convenience sampling, which is described as selecting people who are available for the research (Mackey & Gass, 2005). As Muijs (2004) states, it is one of the most utilized sampling methods in educational research as well as being considerably effective regarding effort, time and money.

There were 300 participants in this study. Among them, there were 171 female teachers and 129 male teachers. Their ages ranged between 22 to 54 years old. As to their teaching experience, they had various levels of experience as English teachers in that 37.3% of them had 6-10 years of experience, and 31.7% of them had 1-5 years of teaching experience. The rest of them (31%) had 11 or more years of experience in teaching. Also, 108 of them declared that they are working at private schools while 99 and 93 of them are working at public and private language schools, respectively. They were stated to be working at various levels (primary (n=102), secondary (n=101), and high school (n=97)). When they were asked to express their first language, most of them (90.7%) stated it to be Turkish. Other participants listed different languages that are English (4.3%), German (3.3%) and Arabic (1.7%). As to their education levels, 261 of them told that they were BA graduates while twenty-seven of them stated that they hold or study for MA degrees and 12 of them hold PhD degrees.

Data collection procedure

In-service EFL teachers teaching at different grade levels and working at various formal and non-formal education institutions were asked to participate in the study through an online questionnaire. The researcher provided details about the questionnaire's objective in relation to the study's goal and assured participants that the data collected from the questionnaire would not be shared with any other individuals or institutions as well as highlighting that it would be used only for the purpose of this study. Also, they were asked to sign the official consent form. The researcher would answer the questions and explain the points that need clarity. Before employing the questionnaires, a pilot study was conducted with some in-service ELT teachers to figure out how well it works in the authentic context. The pilot study was conducted in the spring term of 2020-2021 academic year. While participants were answering the questionnaires, they were asked to read the instructions and items carefully and state the items that they do not comprehend. The instrument was revised based on the possible feedback from the pilot study. Following this, the main study was carried out in the fall term of 2021-2022 academic year.

Data Collection Tool

For the current study, quantitative data were collected using the questionnaire consisting of two parts. The questionnaire was employed to in-service ELT teachers and in the first part of the questionnaire there were questions like age, gender, education level and years of teaching experience, type of school/institution they teach at and the grade level they are teaching at present. The second part was adapted from Vogt and Tsagari's (2014) Teachers' Questionnaire that has three sections and is in the Likert-scale format. These sections are classroom-based language testing and assessment (LTA), purpose of testing, and content and concepts of LTA. Participants were requested to assess their training needs for the provided items using a 4-point Likert-type scale (ranging from None to Advanced training).

This questionnaire was adapted since the items of the instrument are parallel to the information the current study is seeking, which is to explore the current level of in-service teachers' LAL and their training needs in this field. Another reason for adapting this questionnaire is that its reliability and construct validity has been proven with high Alpha coefficient (ranging from .80 to .93 for individual scales) following factor analysis process. However, some changes were made in line with the aims of the current study by including a new section "Knowledge of Testing and Assessment" based on Brown & Abeywickrama's (2010) book and excluding some items from three sections as well as making some modifications in the Likert scale to have a better grasp of LAL training needs of in-service ELT teachers. After these changes, this instrument was piloted with a group of participants who are similar to the target group for whom the questionnaire was designed.

Data analysis

In this part, statistical procedures employed for the quantitative part and coding procedures utilized in the qualitative part of the current study are presented, respectively. For the data analysis of the quantitative data, descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. With the aim of determining the kind of inferential statistics test to be utilized, the normality of the data was assessed using statistical tests such as the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests. Both Kolmogorov-Smirnov (p=.200 > .05) and Shapiro-Wilk tests (p=.447 > .05) show that the data are normally distributed; therefore, parametric statistical tests could be utilized. To answer the research question, they were analyzed by using descriptive statistics that include percentages, frequencies, mean values and standard deviation scores. In this regard, descriptive statistics would be applied to investigate the training that in-service language teachers need by calculating mean values, frequencies, and percentages.

Results

This part presents the results of data analysis based on descriptive statistics in order to shed light upon the research question and aim of the study. The findings were given under four different sections which were Classroom-focused LTA, Knowledge of Testing and Assessment, Purposes of Testing, and Content and concepts of LTA. In total, there were 56 items, and the participants completed a four-point Likert scale (None; Basic training; Intermediate training; Advanced training). The findings of each item that show participants' perceived LAL in-service training needs are shown under these four categories.

In the first part, the participants' requirements for training in the classroom-focused LTA field is shown in Table 1

The analysis revealed that the average score across all participants is 1.43 (SD=.386). That revealed that in-service EFL teachers' need basic training in this domain. Of all the items related to classroom-focused LTA, "preparing achievement tests" has the highest mean score (M=1.56, SD=.85). That's, 40.3 and 36% of in-service EFL teachers reported that they needed intermediate and basic training, respectively. The second highest mean score was identified for "preparing placement tests" (M=1.54, SD=.84) since 39.3 and 37.7% of the participants revealed intermediate and basic training, respectively. On the contrary, "grading" has the lowest mean score with 1.26 (SD=.79) and "adapting ready-made tests for the needs of students" has the second lowest mean score with 1.30 (SD=.82) since 17.7% of the participants stated no further training need in these two items.

As for the second domain, which was Knowledge of Testing and Assessment, the findings are shown in Table 2 below.

Descriptive statistics shows the results of the further in-service training stated in the area of "knowledge of testing and assessment" with an overall mean score of 1.65 (SD=.56). In-service EFL teachers were found to perceive a need for further intermediate training in this field. "Alternative assessment" has the highest mean score (M=1.73, SD=.903). This reveals that more than one third (36.3%) of in-service EFL teachers uttered intermediate training need in this item. "Formative / summative assessment" follows it with 1.72 mean score (SD=.81) as nearly half of them (47.3%) stated training need at intermediate level. The minimum mean score was found for "approaches to language testing" (M=1.56, SD=.90) since nearly one in ten (12.3%) of them did not state any further training need. It was followed by two components which are "direct / indirect testing" (M=1.62, SD= .90) and "computer-based testing" (M=1.62, SD=.97).

Following this domain, training needs of in-service EFL teachers in "purposes of testing" domain were found and reported as in Table 3.

Table 1: Summary of the findings for in-service training needs in classroom-focused LTA

	N	Mean[a]	SD	None		Basic training		Intermediate training		Advanced training	
				freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
Preparing classroom tests	300	1.43	.895	49	16.3	108	36	109	36.3	34	11.3
Preparing diagnostic tests	300	1.51	.848	34	11.3	116	38.7	114	38	36	12
Preparing achievement tests	300	1.56	.850	32	10.7	108	36	121	40.3	39	13
Preparing proficiency tests	300	1.52	.795	28	9.3	118	39.3	125	41.7	29	9.7
Preparing placement tests	300	1.54	.843	31	10.3	113	37.7	118	39.3	38	12.7
Preparing progress tests	300	1.51	.844	34	11.3	114	38	117	39	35	11.7
Preparing language aptitude tests	300	1.44	.810	37	12.3	117	39	122	40.7	24	8
Using ready-made tests from textbook packages or from other sources	300	1.35	.831	49	16.3	117	39	114	38	20	6.7
Adapting ready-made tests for the needs of students	300	1.30	.824	53	17.7	121	40.3	109	36.3	17	5.7
Stages of language test construction	300	1.35	.763	41	13.7	126	42	121	40.3	12	4
Scoring	300	1.31	.788	50	16.7	119	39.7	120	40	11	3.7
Grading	300	1.26	.796	53	17.7	130	43.3	104	34.7	13	4.3
Giving feedback to students based on information from tests/assessment	300	1.33	.802	48	16	120	40	117	39	15	5
Interpreting test scores	300	1.46	.786	33	11	117	39	128	42.7	22	7.3
Using self/peer assessment	300	1.51	.791	31	10.3	110	36.7	134	44.7	25	8.3
Using informal, non-test type of assessment	300	1.45	.858	46	15.3	101	33.7	126	42	27	9
Using continuous type of assessment	300	1.45	.900	48	16	104	34.7	112	37.3	36	12
Using European Language Portfolio	300	1.50	.867	40	13.3	105	35	120	40	35	11.7

a. Means are based on a 4-point scale: 0, None; 1, Basic training; 2, Intermediate training; 3, Advanced training.

The overall mean score is 1.86 (SD=.57), which reveals that in-service EFL teachers' further training need in this domain is intermediate level. Of all the items, "identifying what has been learned" has the highest mean score (M=2.16, SD=.906). That's, 44 and 33.7% of in-service EFL teachers reported that they needed advanced and intermediate training, respectively. The second highest mean score was identified for "measuring general ability to learn a foreign language" (M=2.1, SD=.91) since in-service EFL teachers reported advanced and intermediate level of further training with the percentages of 40.7 and 35.7, respectively. Conversely, "giving grades" has the lowest mean score with 1.44 (SD=.89) since 17% of the participants stated no further training need in this item.

The last domain in which the needs of participants were identified was "content and concepts of LTA". The findings are shown in Table 4.

The overall mean score of training needed in the field of content and concepts of LTA is 1.94 (SD=.384). This shows that their further training need in this domain is intermediate level. The items of "testing integrated language skills", "practicality",

Table 2: Summary of the findings for in-service training needs in Knowledge of Testing and Assessment

	N	Mean[a]	SD	None		Basic training		Intermediate training		Advanced training	
				freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
Informal/ Formal assessment	300	1.71	.788	21	7	86	28.7	152	50.7	41	13.7
Formative/ Summative assessment	300	1.72	.814	21	7	89	29.7	142	47.3	48	16
Norm /Criterion-referenced assessment	300	1.64	.883	34	11.3	88	29.3	130	43.3	48	16
Discrete point/Integrative testing	300	1.64	.872	30	10	98	32.7	123	41	49	16.3
Direct/Indirect testing	300	1.62	.898	35	11.7	95	31.7	120	40	50	16.7
Objective/Subjective testing	300	1.66	.935	36	12	92	30.7	111	37	61	20.3
Approaches to language testing	300	1.56	.907	37	12.3	107	35.7	107	35.7	49	16.3
Alternative assessment	300	1.73	.903	25	8.3	99	33	109	36.3	67	22.3
Computer-based testing	300	1.62	.972	44	14.7	87	29	107	35.7	62	20.7

a. Means are based on a 4-point scale: 0, None; 1, Basic training; 2, Intermediate training; 3, Advanced training.

Table 3: Summary of the findings for in-service training needs in Purposes of Testing

	N	Mean[a]	SD	None		Basic training		Intermediate training		Advanced training	
				freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
Giving grades	300	1.44	.888	51	17	96	32	123	41	30	10
Finding out what needs to be learned/taught	300	1.71	.936	35	11.7	83	27.7	117	39	65	21.7
Placing students onto programs, courses, etc.	300	1.72	.982	39	13	81	27	105	35	75	25
Testing competence in a language	300	1.88	.974	30	10	72	24	102	34	96	32
Identifying what has been learned	300	2.16	.906	18	6	49	16.3	101	33.7	132	44
Measuring general ability to learn a foreign language	300	2.10	.914	20	6.7	51	17	107	35.7	122	40.7
Awarding final certificates	300	2.03	.993	28	9.3	59	19.7	89	29.7	124	41.3

a. Means are based on a 4-point scale: 0, None; 1, Basic training; 2, Intermediate training; 3, Advanced training.

Table 4: Summary of the findings for in-service training needs in Content and concepts of LTA

	N	Mean[a]	SD	None		Basic training		Intermediate training		Advanced training	
				freq	%	freq	%	freq	%	freq	%
Testing reading in English	300	1.87	.962	29	9.7	74	24.7	105	35	92	30.7
Different test items/task types to test reading in English	300	1.82	1.008	32	10.7	87	29	83	27.7	98	32.7
Testing listening in English	300	1.85	1.047	40	13.3	69	23	86	28.7	105	35
Different test items/task types to test listening in English	300	1.81	.929	28	9.3	79	26.3	115	38.3	78	26
Testing speaking in English	300	1.81	.968	32	10.7	78	26	105	35	85	28.3
Different test items/task types to test speaking in English	300	1.66	.977	38	12.7	98	32.7	93	31	71	23.7
Testing writing in English	300	1.69	.995	35	11.7	104	34.7	80	26.7	81	27
Different test items/task types to test writing in English	300	1.66	.963	37	12.3	95	31.7	100	33.3	68	22.7
Testing Grammar in English	300	1.86	.927	21	7	90	30	100	33.3	89	29.7
Different test items/task types to test grammar in English	300	1.94	.934	25	8.3	65	21.7	113	37.7	97	32.3
Testing Vocabulary in English	300	1.95	.956	28	9.3	61	20.3	110	36.7	101	33.7
Different test items/task types to test vocabulary in English	300	2.05	.913	23	7.7	49	16.3	119	39.7	109	36.3
Testing integrated language skills	300	2.14	.970	30	10	33	11	103	34.3	134	44.7
Testing pronunciation in English	300	2.12	.957	24	8	49	16.3	94	31.3	133	44.3
Different test items/question types to test pronunciation in English	300	2.08	1.002	30	10	49	16.3	88	29.3	133	44.3
Practicality	300	2.14	.924	20	6.7	50	16.7	99	33	131	43.7
Reliability	300	2.14	.986	27	9	46	15.3	84	28	143	47.7
Validity	300	2.14	.947	22	7.3	50	16.7	92	30.7	136	45.3
Authenticity	300	2.04	.958	24	8	59	19.7	97	32.3	120	40
Washback	300	1.98	1.080	47	15.7	37	12.3	92	30.7	124	41.3
Using statistics to study the quality of tests / assessment	300	1.95	1.000	32	10.7	62	20.7	96	32	110	36.7
Alternatives in assessment	300	1.95	.972	30	10	59	19.7	107	35.7	104	34.7

a. Means are based on a 4-point scale: 0, None; 1, Basic training; 2, Intermediate training; 3, Advanced training.

Table 5: Summary of the findings for in-service training needs in four areas of LTA

Areas of LTA	N	Mean[a]	SD
Classroom-focused LTA	300	1.4315	.38639
Knowledge of Testing and Assessment	300	1.6548	.56057
Purposes of Testing	300	1.8624	.57087
Content and Concepts of LTA	300	1.9380	.38429
Total	300	1.7202	.26392

a. Means are based on a 4-point scale: 0, None; 1, Basic training; 2, Intermediate training; 3, Advanced training.

which is 2.14. For "testing integrated language skills" (SD=.97), the majority of respondents stated advanced or intermediate levels of training (44.7% and 34.3%, respectively). "Different test items/task types to test speaking in English" and "different test items/task types to test writing in English" have the lowest same mean score, which is 1.66. 12.7% and 12.3% of the respondents did not express any training need for "different test items/task types to test speaking in English" and "different test items/task types to test writing in English", respectively.

When these four domains were analyzed with the aim of identifying further need areas, the overall training need of in-service EFL teachers in the field of LTA was found to be at intermediate level. Table 5 below summarizes the results.

The overall mean score of these four domains was 1.72, revealing that in-service EFL teachers' further in-service training needs in these domains is intermediate level. Of all the domains of LTA, "content and concepts of LTA" has the highest mean score (M=1.94, SD=.384). The second highest mean score was the domain of "purposes of testing" (M=1.86, SD=.57) and it was followed by the domain of "knowledge of testing and assessment" (M=1.65, SD=.56). "Classroom-focused LTA" has the lowest mean value with 1.43 (SD=.386). All in all, the need for further training perceived and uttered by in-service EFL teachers in the domain of "content and concepts of LTA" was more than other three domains and need for further training in "Classroom-focused LTA" was found to be less than other domains.

Discussion

The research question of the study was "Do in-service EFL teachers perceive a need for in-service training in language testing and assessment? What are the training needs of in-service EFL teachers regarding LTA?". There were four components of LTA: (1) Classroom-focused LTA, (2) Knowledge of Testing and Assessment, (3) Purposes of Testing, and (4) Content and concepts of LTA. In order to answer this question data gathered through the questionnaire were analyzed. The results showed that the area in which the need for training was stated to be more was "content and concepts of LTA". The second most stated area was "purposes of testing", and "knowledge of testing and assessment" was ranked in the third place. The area in which need for training was expressed less compared to the others was "classroom-focused LTA". Overall, in-service training needs in these four areas were in moderate level and in-service EFL teachers expressed the necessity to receive training in these areas, which corroborates the findings of other studies in the literature to a certain extent (Hasselgreen, Carlsen, & Helness, 2004; Vogt & Tsagari, 2014). In these studies, further training need in these areas is uttered across the board similar to the finding of the current study; however, some fields are regarded as "more or less urgent" than the others. In the study of Vogt & Tsagari (2014), "content and concepts of LTA" was found to be the field in which more need for advanced training was stated, which was similar to the finding of the current study.

The greatest training need in "testing integrated language skills" was reported by the teachers, which was in line with that of Vogt and Tsagari (2014) that also found assessing integrated skills was the area to be desired more for training. This might be because of requirements and complexity of assessing different skills compared to assessment of one skill at a time. In the same vein, "alternative assessment" is another priority area for in-service training. In that, the findings of Hasselgreen et al. (2004) and Vogt and Tsagari (2014) were corroborated. The priority for alternative assessment formats may stem from its innovative nature and prevalence contrary to traditional formats of assessment, which makes further training in it more essential. Other items in which priority for further in-service

training was stated clearly were "identifying what has been learned" and "preparing achievement tests". Need for more training in "more concrete" areas can be attributed to the fact that after each unit/lesson or course, teachers have to be engaged in such practices frequently. In other words, they have to identify which knowledge or abilities are obtained both in and at the end of the process.

However, certain items like "giving grades, computer-based testing, adapting ready-made tests for the needs of students direct / indirect testing, different test items/task types to test speaking and writing in English" are not featured among the prioritized parts for in-service training. It is surprising because though these constitute remarkable parts of teachers' everyday activities, they are not highlighted to be "urgent" areas for further training. The finding that teachers did not wish to receive further training in "giving grades" aligns with the results of Vogt and Tsagari (2014) and Salami and Alharthi's (2022) studies.

Overall, the expressed need for in-service training in given areas of the LTA field differs with different priorities. Drawing upon the findings, it can be stated that in spite of varying "more or less urgent" components along with the extent of training enunciated, there is a training need across the board. The overall findings of the present study corroborate those of Hasselgreen et al. (2004), Vogt and Tsagari (2014) and Salami and Alharthi (2022) albeit the different amount of training for different aspects.

According to Vogt, Tsagari, and Spanoudis (2020), there are various factors at different levels that can impact teachers' perceived need for future training in language teaching and assessment (LTA). The teachers' own classroom experience plays a significant role in determining their desire for additional training, particularly in areas such as instructional decisions, practical assessment methods, and interactions with students and parents. Moreover, their institutions can influence their training needs through factors like effective communication and collaboration among teachers, available training opportunities, and the overall profile of the school or language institution where they work. Additionally, external factors at the macro level, such as educational policies and the culture of assessment, can also contribute to teachers' training requirements. All of these factors collectively shape teachers' preferences for certain domains and their perceived need for training, while influencing their perceived need for less training in other areas.

Conclusion

To conclude, this study sets out to investigate in-service EFL teachers' language assessment training needs. In this regard, a total of 300 EFL teachers took part in the study. In line with the purposes of the study, four areas were determined:

(1) classroom-focused LTA, (2) knowledge of testing and assessment, (3) purposes of testing, and (4) content and concepts of LTA. The results indicated a moderate level of in-service training in given areas of language assessment. The greatest need for training was stated for "content and concepts of LTA", which was followed by "purposes of testing", "knowledge of testing and assessment" and "classroom-focused LTA", respectively.

The findings of the present study indicated many pedagogical implications. Given the pivotal role of LTA for education practices overall, delving into the needs of in-service language teachers regarding LTA is crucial and informative. In other words, this functions as a needs analysis for designing in-service programs. Based on the needs uttered by them, in-service assessment programs could be informed and designed to include these components and specific courses could be integrated into these programs. Accordingly, effective and relevant INSET programs could be designed to increase teachers' LAL and this will ultimately benefit the learners, too.

Moreover, this will be helpful to encourage ongoing professional growth of in-service EFL teachers as teachers will increase their level of LAL and be engaged in reflective practice in their profession, which will also contribute to their being updated with the recent trends in LTA field and research. Lastly, carrying out such studies regularly contributes to the betterment of teacher training programs and enhancement of the education system.

Limitations

While the research reached its aim, there were certainly some limitations. First of all, 300 language teachers were included in the present study; therefore, more language teachers from different contexts could have participated in the study so that the results could be easily generalized. Also, other stakeholders like program designers, teacher trainers or Education faculty members were exempted from this study. Taking their ideas for in-service training programs could be related, too.

Another limitation of the study was the data collection method as a questionnaire was employed. Other methods like interviews along with observations could be included, too. Further research studies can focus on this topic since few studies have been carried out on that issue utilizing different data collection methods and integrating different participant groups.

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