

An Evaluation of the Websites Used by Turkish EFL Teachers

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Abstract

This study was a component of a large-scale Marie S. Curie Grant that aims to revitalize English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers' professional development through innovative programs. The objectives of the study were, first, to uncover the descriptive features of the websites that were most commonly used by Turkish EFL teachers, and second, to identify the common features of these websites in terms of their usefulness for teachers' instructional practices and professional development. To this end, 70 websites that were most commonly used by 847 EFL teachers in Turkey were reviewed based on a set of evaluation criteria developed based on a literature review. The criteria for the descriptive analysis included such variables as availability of membership/subscription, registration, authorship, up-to-datedness, accuracy, presentation, usefulness along with the description of the website and its content. Additionally, content analysis was conducted on the reviews of the selected features of the websites such as the content of the website and its usefulness. The results demonstrated that most of the websites utilized by Turkish EFL teachers were rated as good quality; they served as teaching and learning sources and were used for promoting teachers' professional development.

Keywords: Website evaluation, Internet-based technologies, professional development, English language teaching, Turkish EFL teachers

Introduction

The advent of Internet technologies has altered the landscape of language teaching by offering new opportunities for increasing the effectiveness of language learning and teaching (Raygan & Moradkhani, 2020). Across the world, there has been a shift towards the widespread adoption of Internet-integrated language teaching due to the great potential of the Internet in language classes (Aşık et al., 2020). One big advantage of the Internet is that it enables language learners not only to have individualized learning at their own pace (Carhill-Poza & Chen, 2020; Lai et al., 2016) but also to engage in online collaborative activities with even learners from other parts of the globe (Canals, 2020;

Thelmadatter, 2007). Especially in EFL contexts, where language practice is a more immense need, learners can practice with native and non-native speakers of English without any time and place barriers (O'Dowd, 2018; Warschauer et al., 2000). Language learners can also gain access to a plethora of audio-visual materials and many other resources, which they can utilize to improve all four language skills (Liu & Song, 2020; Nah, 2011). In addition to the above-mentioned benefits, 3D virtual worlds and online games are other bonuses of the Internet as a great way of promoting meaningful contexts for language use by L2 learners (Liu et al., 2011; Ranalli, 2008) while providing them with goal-based and collaborative learning opportunities (Wang et al., 2019). With all these affordances, language learning is no more limited to the confines of a four-wall classroom but can be extended to outside the classroom through blended instruction which gained popularity over years (Leis & Brown, 2018).

With all these developments, the number of websites for language teaching and learning has mounted in the last decades. Research already reveals the usefulness of these websites for L2 teachers and learners (e.g., Chang & Sun, 2009; Roy, 2014; Shen et al., 2015). Considering the abundance of these websites, it has, however, become a challenge for L2 teachers to choose the good websites among all others since they are not all of good quality (Yang & Chan, 2008). Choosing the ones that meet their needs and interests, therefore, has become an essential skill for L2 teachers (Son, 2005). As pivotal actors in technology infusion (Taghizadeh & Yourdshahi, 2020), L2 teachers have a vital role in harnessing the potential of language learning/teaching websites in their classes (Egbert et al., 2009). Former research shows that to exploit these language learning and teaching websites fully, it is important to employ certain evaluation criteria (e.g. Aly, 2008; Dogoriti & Pagge, 2012; Kır & Kayak, 2013; Liu et al., 2011; Yang & Chan, 2008).

The EFL teachers need to be fully aware of the potential that the Internet promises to them. They are not bounded by using websites for material hunting per se; as also mentioned by Alhabahba and Mahfoodh (2016): They can use these resources to collaborate with others in this global world, and to incorporate them into their classroom teaching to promote student learning (e.g., phonetic websites, Sadeghi & Heidar, 2016; websites for young learners, Taghizadeh & Yourdshahi, 2020), and furthermore, to invest in their development as teachers through online professional development opportunities. Built on these premises, this study seeks to evaluate the 70 most commonly reported websites by EFL teachers in Turkey, selected from a total of 283 websites based on a set of criteria. It also sets out to investigate the common features, functions, and usefulness of these websites for L2 teachers.

All in all, the study is significant in two ways. First, no other studies examining the websites used by Turkish EFL teachers have yet been located. Second, although previous research focuses on EFL teachers' perceptions, beliefs, knowledge, and attitudes towards technology (Aydin, 2013), the common features of the websites that EFL teachers find useful in their professional development and teaching practices remain as yet as an inadequately-addressed area of research. It is postulated that by addressing these gaps, this study will contribute to the body of research related to the Internet literacy of EFL/ESL teachers.

Literature review

EFL teachers' usage of ICT

Former research demonstrated that there were variations in the ways and extent of teachers' technology use depending on a variety of factors (Alhabahba & Mahfoodh, 2016). A host of studies reiterated the importance of attitude towards technology for effective Information and Communications Technology (ICT) usage in language classes (e.g. Allam & Elyas 2016; Borthwick & Gallagher-Brett, 2014; Sun & Mei, 2020). These studies showed that positive perceptions of educational technology affected EFL teachers' use of Internet technologies. In their study in the Malaysian context, Thang et al. (2014), for example, found that "resistance to technology" resulted in "failure in technology integration" for EFL teachers who were trained to use digital storytelling in their classes (p. 311). Additionally, language teachers' perceived competence in technology use was a paramount factor that affected their technology implementation (Cardenos-Claros & Oyanedel, 2016). Lack of resources and time (Egbert et al., 2002) and lack of technology-focused pre-service education (Aşık et al., 2020) were among the other factors.

Many studies revealed that teacher support was needed to motivate and enable language teachers to use technology (Gruba & Nguyen, 2019; Taghizadeh & Yourdshahi, 2020; Zou, 2013). Professional training was required for language teachers to improve their skills in integrating CALL into their pedagogical practices (Chen, 2008; Tai, 2015). As a common finding in many studies, teachers needed help from their colleagues and/or outside experts while they tried out new ways of integrating CALL into their classes (Balchin & Wild, 2020; Farshad Nia & Davey, 2014). Therefore, providing them with a collaborative and supportive environment during technology integration was found to be significant for the effective utilization of technology by language teachers (Balchin & Wild, 2018). Additionally, continuing support following the professional development programs was also shown as crucial in many studies (e.g. Giordano, 2007; Lee, 2011).

Research points out that teacher and student roles needed to change for effective technology use by language learners and teachers (Lai, 2015). With increased access to Internet technologies, learners are better positioned to harness the potential of these technologies for language learning purposes with teachers being facilitators during this process (Hampel, 2019). Therefore, it becomes important that teachers support their students by providing them with new strategies for using technology autonomously to improve their language skills (Lai et al., 2016). In his longitudinal study, Kitade (2015) examined two Japanese EFL teachers' experiences with using CALL in their classes for 16 years. The findings of the study revealed that the effective use of ICT happened when these teachers made substantial changes in their roles as a concomitant of the positive changes in their own and students' attitudes towards ICT. By the required changes in language teacher/learner roles, it was revealed that technology integration should be done not in a teacher-centered but a student-centered manner (Brandl, 2002). For instance, Wesely and Plummer (2017) examined how Spanish teachers in four US high schools utilized CALL in their classes and pointed out that CALL tools were used in "presentational communication mode" without much focus on "interpersonal communication" (p. 186). Hence, language teachers need to benefit from the interactive and collaborative aspects of technologies, which is often not the case in EFL teachers' technology integration (Al Musawi et al., 2016).

Earlier research also focused on the extent of technology integration by language teachers. Meskill et al. (2006) showed that ESL teachers' use of technology was quite limited

despite the great increase in technology access in US schools. In the Malaysian context, Yunus (2007) found that ESL teachers did not utilize ICT for language teaching and learning purposes although they had positive attitudes towards its use. Egbert et al. (2002) had similar findings in that even those L2 teachers who took a graduate CALL course did not use CALL activities in an expected amount. In a similar vein, Chen (2008) investigated Taiwanese EFL teachers' use of the Internet in their classes and demonstrated that the class time devoted to Internet integration was quite low. Moreover, the Internet was mainly used for e-mail, browsers, search engines, and online dictionaries by most of the teachers.

As one of the most recent offspring of the Internet, social media usage has been a focus of attention in the last years. Dennis and Boonprasit (2015), for example, showed that notwithstanding the EFL teachers' efforts to integrate social media into language classes, the teachers needed extra help and support, which accentuated the importance of teacher training for these teachers. Along the same lines, in his study in the Iranian context, Dashtestani (2013) revealed that Iranian EFL teachers did not have the capabilities to utilize and prepare Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) activities. Therefore, it arises from these findings that language teachers' use of technology is multifaceted, and to prepare them for successful technology integration, it is worthwhile to first investigate their preferences and tendencies in using ICT. Thus, it is argued that the current study will contribute to this body of research by providing an analysis of the websites commonly preferred by Turkish EFL teachers.

ICT usage in the Turkish setting

In the Turkish setting, many studies noted that EFL teachers had a positive attitude towards technology (e.g. Aydin, 2013; Celik, 2013). Despite having positive perceptions of Internet technologies, Turkish EFL teachers were devoid of knowledge and skills to integrate these technologies into their classes (e.g. Solmaz & Bekleyen, 2011; Yükselir, 2016). In his survey study with 157 EFL teachers, Aydin (2013) stated that the teachers lacked sufficient knowledge of software and Internet technologies due to lack of teacher support and guidance. In his case study with 5 teachers, Alkan and Durmuş (2013) posited that these EFL teachers felt inadequate in their knowledge and their capabilities of learning about new technological tools.

Numerous studies showed that the quality of ICT utilization by Turkish EFL teachers was not satisfactory (e.g. Akcaoğlu, 2008; Celik, 2013; Karakaya, 2010; Kılıçkaya, 2012). In a survey study with 486 instructors from 11 universities located in Turkey, Celik (2013) revealed that the Internet was used solely to "access", "gather" and "present" information while "interactive technologies" were not utilized at all by Turkish EFL teachers (p. 477). "Peer-supported" and "self-paced learning" opportunities of the Internet were not addressed by the teachers who had more focus on "the structural" elements of the language and receptive skills in their utilization of technology. This finding was corroborated by Solmaz and Bekleyen (2011), who also found out that the productive skills and the communicative aspect of language learning were neglected in Turkish EFL teachers' use of the Internet. The use of technology by Turkish EFL teachers was a common theme in other studies as well (e.g. Akcaoğlu, 2008; Karakaya, 2010). Karakaya (2010) scrutinized the ways 87 EFL teachers from different regions of Turkey integrated technology into their classes. Survey and interview data displayed limited and

inefficient use of the computer and the Internet by these teachers although they were “teacher coordinators/mentors” with the responsibility of training their colleagues on the use of ICT” (p. 13). As a recent finding, Ardiç and Çiftçi (2019) revealed that EFL instructors working at Turkish universities had low degrees of ICT competence and “medium and higher amount of ICT training needs” (p. 153). Considering these findings, it becomes important to look into the characteristics of the websites commonly used by Turkish EFL teachers to present a portrait of their Internet usage habits and to identify the areas where they need professional development.

Evaluation of language learning/teaching websites

Prior research has focused on the development of certain criteria for the evaluation of language learning and teaching websites (e.g. Fuentes & Martinez, 2018; Kartal & Uzun, 2010; Liu et al., 2011; Son, 2005; Yang & Chan, 2008). The rationale behind this body of literature has been twofold. First, the existence of such criteria is considered to increase teachers’ self-confidence and critical thinking in choosing websites that best meet their needs (Moncada Linares & Díaz Romero, 2016). With a set of criteria, language teachers can assess the quality and limitations of the websites and the teaching materials, lesson plans, games, and other instructional resources in these websites with a more critical eye (Murray & McPherson, 2004). As a concomitant of teachers’ increased abilities, students’ patterns of Internet use will be shaped positively due to the optimal use of the Internet by their language teachers (Wiebe & Kabata, 2010).

It is observed that the website evaluation criteria in the previous studies tended to draw on reviews of literature and data collection procedures, and was generally utilized by language teachers, students, or experts. Son (2005), for example, developed a 15-item checklist and had language teachers as participants. These teachers reviewed nine websites based on the criteria and found the websites accurate albeit with varying degrees of satisfaction. Yang and Chan (2008) established 46-item criteria and included 8 students and 6 language teachers in Taiwan for the evaluation of language learning websites. Liu et al. (2011) developed a multi-dimensional list of criteria for the evaluation of English learning websites with university students and professors. In Kartal and Uzun’s (2010) study, a checklist developed by the researchers was employed by 14 students in the department of French language teaching to evaluate 28 foreign language learning websites. The reviewers found the websites as “physically, contextually, and pedagogically” poor (Kartal & Uzun, 2010, p. 90). Moncada Linares and Díaz Romero (2016), on the other hand, suggested the use of a multidimensional checklist built on the framework of the Communicative Approach for the evaluation of websites. Fuentes and Martinez (2018) prepared their evaluation checklist based on a literature review. Their checklist included such criteria as “general site information, language skills, and components use, educational material, multimedia use, interactivity, communication, aid tools and linguistic resources, website ergonomics, and content quality” (p. 34). To summarize, the *availability of membership, registration, authorship, up-to-dateness, accuracy, presentation, and usefulness* arose as common evaluation criteria in former studies. Therefore, in this study, these criteria were included in the website evaluation carried out by the researchers.

Research questions

The purpose of the present study was to identify the descriptive features of the websites widely used by Turkish EFL teachers and to determine the common features of the websites that these teachers find useful for their teaching practices and professional development. Therefore, the research questions were the following:

- (1) What are the descriptive features of the websites commonly used by Turkish EFL teachers in terms of the selected criteria (i.e., the availability of membership, registration, authorship, up-to-dateness, accuracy, presentation and usefulness)?
- (2) What are the observed commonalities (e.g., functions) of these websites that Turkish EFL teachers find useful in their teaching practices and professional development?

Methodology

Research Context and Participants

This study was part of a large-scale Marie S. Curie Career Integration Grant awarded by the European Commission to revitalize EFL teachers' professional development through innovative programs in Europe. The project had earlier phases of research that focused on the development and implementation of a questionnaire aimed to investigate the individual and institutional professional development activities of EFL teachers in Turkey. This research used an exploratory sequential mixed method design in which qualitative data were collected first, and quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire based on qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). First, 28 Turkish EFL teachers from different regions of Turkey recruited through convenience sampling were interviewed. The interview questions were prepared by the authors in light of the professional development models suggested by Sparks and Loucks-Horsley (2007), and the interview form was finalized by making the necessary corrections after a pilot session was held with an English teacher doing a master's study in the field. As given in Table 1 below the majority of the interviewees were public school teachers (N=18) even though there were also teachers representing private schools (N=4) and universities (N=6).

Table 1

Demographics of interview participants

Institution	Total
Public School	18
Private School	4
University	6
Total	28

The scale was initially drafted based on the data obtained from 28 interviews with language teachers. The first draft was reviewed by field experts and piloted with seven language teachers, and in each round, some revisions were done. Test-retest reliability was also carried out with 31 teachers, and the correlation coefficient was found to be .86.

819 participants consisting of 668 female and 151 male EFL teachers responded to the questionnaire in the second phase of the study as shown in Table 2. Out of 819 teachers, two of the female teachers did not identify their institution type, because of which the total number of respondents seems to be 817 instead of 819. In addition, teachers working in various settings such as public universities (N=62), private schools (N=45), and universities (N=8) also took part in the study even though most of the participants were public school teachers (N=702) due to the collaboration with the Ministry of National Education in Turkey. Six hundred teachers filled out the paper version of the questionnaire while 219 filled out the online version on LimeSurvey. Data on the paper-based questionnaires were then transferred to the LimeSurvey platform with the help of one research assistant.

Table 2

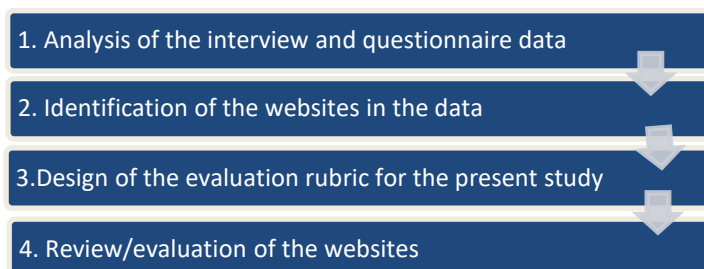
Demographics of participants in the questionnaire

Institution	Female	Male	Total
Public School	573	129	702
Private School	41	4	45
Public University	44	18	62
Private University	8	0	8
Total	666	151	817

The current study focused solely on the analysis of an open-ended question that was answered both by the interview and the questionnaire participants. This question sought information from the teachers to report verbally in the interviews or write down the names of (or links to) any websites which they found helpful in their teaching and for their professional development in the questionnaires. Therefore, this study had a total of 847 participants and dealt with the analysis of the 70 most commonly reported websites about language learning and teaching.

Data gathering procedures

The data gathering procedure of the present study consisted of four phases which can be seen in Figure 1. Following the collection and analysis of interview and survey data, the researchers identified 283 websites altogether. Out of these websites, some were reported by a significant number of teachers whereas some were mentioned by only one teacher. Therefore, the frequency of each website was the main criterion to narrow down the number of reported websites for a more concentrated review process.

Figure 1*Data collection procedures*

In the second step, of all the 283 websites, 70 websites reported at least three or more times were chosen for the review (see Appendix A for the list). Subsequently, an evaluation rubric was developed through a review of the literature (e.g. Liu et al., 2011; Son, 2005; Yang & Chan, 2008). The criteria of website evaluation included availability of membership/subscription, registration, authorship, up-to-datedness, accuracy, presentation, usefulness along with the description of the website and its content. For the website description section of the rubric, the first two researchers of this paper scrutinized the websites to provide short descriptions of them including such information as to their purpose, the target language skills, the materials and activities used, the target proficiency level, age, etc. In the usefulness section, the researchers gave information about how these websites can be useful for EFL/ESL teachers in-class and out-of-class. Besides, they categorized the websites in terms of their functions by scrutinizing the content provided on these websites. Finally, the rubric had an overall rating section in which the researchers rated the usefulness of the websites out of 5. A sample evaluation of a website can be seen in Appendix B.

Data analysis

The website evaluation was carried out in two phases. Initially, the afore-mentioned criteria were used to analyze the descriptive features of the selected 70 websites. The first author of the article worked on 35 websites, while the second author analyzed the remaining 35 websites. These researchers visited the websites and marked them as either 1 or 0 depending on whether they met the selected criteria. For instance, when there was information about the authors on the website, this website was marked as “1” for the authorship criterion. When the websites were not updated regularly, the score of “0” was given for that website for the up-to-dateness criterion.

Secondly, content analysis (Mayring, 2000) was carried out on the site description and usefulness sections of the websites. The researchers coded the whole data set and grouped the recurrent codes into main categories (Wilkinson, 2004). Before the actual analysis, seven websites (10% of the overall data) were coded by two researchers for inter-coder reliability and during the whole analysis process, the researchers had debriefing sessions so that any observed discrepancies between two coders could be continuously reconciled. For the analyses related to website usefulness, the websites were rated out of “5” depending on the quality of the website content and the extent to which they had the potential to meet the language learning/teaching needs of EFL/ESL learners

and teachers. Thus, score 1 referred to very poor quality and represented those websites that were not recommended by the researchers (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Evaluation of websites based on quality



For instance, when a website had no or low relevance to teaching/learning of languages, Score 1 was given for this website. Score 2 meant poor quality and the websites that were given “2” were considered inappropriate for EFL/ESL learners and teachers’ use. Score 3 was given to the websites which were adequate in terms of content but required teachers to make some adaptations to the materials/content provided on the website to use them as teaching and/or learning sources. Score 4 was for those websites which were good in terms of usefulness and they were appropriate and practical for language teachers’ and learners’ immediate use. Finally, the researchers chose score 5 for those websites which were excellent in terms of being useful and beneficial for language learning and teaching.

Results

Descriptive features of the websites widely used by Turkish EFL teachers

The functions of the websites

The findings showed that the websites widely used by Turkish EFL teachers varied in the functions they served for language learning/teaching. The categories and frequencies of these websites are shown in Table 3.

Table 3*The frequency of website categories used by Turkish EFL teachers*

Website Categories	Frequency
Language learning/teaching materials (e.g., Eslprintables, English-4kids)	373
Dictionary (e.g., Oxford dictionaries, Tureng)	125
Teacher community (e.g., IATEFL, Etwinning)	101
Autonomous language learning (e.g., Busuu, Duolingo)	39
Newspaper (e.g., The Times, CNN)	32
Video provider (e.g., YouTube, TED talks)	32
Learning management systems (e.g., Edmodo, ClassDojo)	28
Publishing houses or online language courses (e.g., Planetelt, Elsyayin)	17
Local announcements and information about education (e.g., Egitimhane)	16
Wiki (e.g. Wikipedia)	4
Translation (e.g., Google translate)	3

As given in Table 3, a great many teachers (N=373) used websites that offered language learning/teaching materials while the second most commonly used ones were dictionary websites (N=125). It was found that the websites that provided language teachers with teacher communities were also commonly reported to be used by the teachers (N=101). The use of wikis (N=4), translation websites (N=3) and the websites of publishing houses or online language courses (N=17) as well as local websites about education (N=16) were less common among teachers while newspaper (N=32) and video websites (N=32) were utilized by more teachers. Additionally, it was seen that teachers preferred websites that offered platforms for autonomous language learning (N=39) and hybrid learning (N=28). Additionally, out of the 70 websites selected for review, only 16 of them were geared towards Turkish EFL teachers, and of these 16 websites, 5 of them do not have active links anymore, indicating that only 16% of the websites scrutinized in this paper were in Turkish (most of them with materials and resources in English).

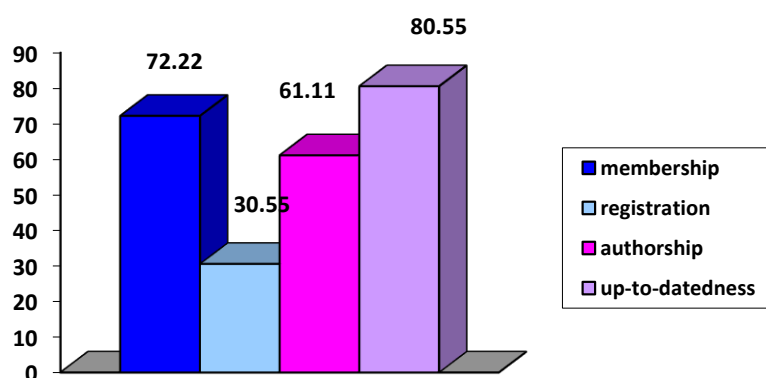
Evaluation of the websites

The evaluation of the websites according to the chosen criteria indicated that almost three-quarters of these websites asked for membership. Slightly more than a quarter of the websites required registration to reach the common sources. It was also found that the websites were of good quality in terms of up-to-datedness, presentation, and accuracy criteria. More than half of the websites indicated details about the authorship of the websites. Eighty percent of the websites were updated and had current links. Nearly all of the websites used accurate information and language and generally provided a bibliography. The websites were also in good shape in terms of organization, navigation,

and user-friendliness by meeting the presentation criterion. Descriptive features of websites

The results also showed that the mean score for overall ratings of the websites was 4.11, which indicated that many of the websites preferred by EFL teachers in Turkey were of good quality and were appropriate for language teachers'/learners' use.

Figure 3
Descriptive features of websites



Common features of the websites that EFL teachers find useful

The content analysis done on the site description and the usefulness section of the reviews revealed common features of the websites that EFL teachers find useful. These were “providing teacher/teaching sources”, “providing learner/learning sources”, and “providing professional development activities”.

Table 4
Theme 1- Providing teacher/teaching sources

Codes	Frequency
Providing audio and visual materials (providing instructional videos, TV channels, movies, cartoons, audio-visuals, audios, songs, radio, and listening materials)	33
Providing teaching sources/materials	25
Providing free worksheets	21
Providing lesson plans/ teachers' meeting reports/ annual plans	14
Providing printable and projectable materials	12
Providing exam questions and sample tests unit tests	12
Providing free flashcards vocabulary lists and slangs & idioms	10
Providing classroom activities	8

Providing games	8
Providing news, forum, articles, blogs as reading sources or other authentic materials	8
Providing explanation regarding grammar topics (together with pictures)	7
Providing stories, e-books, books	7
Providing a chance to create teaching sources like quizzes puzzles	3
Providing online teaching sources (giving assignments and polls, providing writing activities, online learner groups via Edmodo, providing communication platforms to encourage students, and get parents engaged)	2

As shown in Table 4, having teaching sources was one of the common features of the websites preferred by language learners. These teaching sources varied from audio- visual, printable, and projectable materials to tasks and activities that teachers can use in their teaching. Apart from the materials and the tasks, teachers can reach certain documents such as annual plans, lesson plans, and meeting reports on these websites.

Table 5

Theme 2- Providing learner/learning sources

Codes	Frequency
Tasks and activities	40
Dictionary	25
Audio clips & videos	23
Worksheet & documents	22
Online learning sources	21
Tests	18
Guidance-sources	5

Table 5 also illustrated a common theme discovered in the evaluation of the websites. The websites chosen by EFL teachers did not only include teaching sources but also learning sources that teachers can guide their learners to take the responsibility for language learning. For instance, tasks and activities involved both practices for language content such as grammar and vocabulary and tasks for language skills like listening and writing. The websites also provided many different types of activities such as translation tasks, spelling challenges, games, and dictation activities.

Table 6*Theme 3- Providing professional development activities*

Codes	Frequency
Having forums/blogs/platforms to reach other teachers, exchange best practices, share their ideas, and rate each other's material.	18
Providing teaching tips regarding classroom practice and the use of software	7
Having teacher communities	5
Providing explanations regarding professional development activities and conferences	4
Providing free webinars/ online seminars	3
Providing short TEFL articles.	2
Providing announcements related to job vacancies	2

As can be observed in Table 6, the websites preferred by EFL teachers had another common feature which was providing professional development opportunities such as supplying teachers with a platform where they can reach other colleagues, share their ideas and materials regarding language teaching, and being updated because of the announcement shared on these websites. These websites also included free webinars, short articles, and tips regarding teaching practices.

To summarize, the descriptive analysis of the websites revealed that overall ratings of the websites were high which indicates the quality of the websites preferred by EFL teachers in Turkey. The content analysis also revealed that teachers primarily used websites in ways that met their immediate teaching needs. Teachers mainly preferred websites as teaching/teacher sources and learning/learner sources. Audios and videos were highly preferred by teachers in this respect. It was observed that teachers used the websites for professional development less frequently than the websites which provide sources for language learning and teaching.

Discussion

The findings of the study demonstrated that Turkish EFL teachers used language learning and teaching websites for various purposes. Yet, there were some commonalities in the function of these websites, namely that they served as a venue where teachers can find numerous teaching materials to use in their classes. To this end, those websites offering readily available teaching sources at no cost such as listening materials, audio-visuals, worksheets, so on and so forth were highly preferred by the teachers. Moreover, it seemed that the teachers did not opt for the websites that enable them to create their teaching materials such as quizzes and worksheets. Rather, the materials preferred by the teachers tended to be ready-made and did not require any preparation on the teachers' part; therefore, was ready for immediate use in the language classroom. Earlier research also corroborated this finding showing that practicality is an important issue when it comes to language teachers' use of technology (Bozdoğan & Özen, 2014). Along the same lines, previous studies suggested that language teachers are inclined to resort to online sources for immediate classroom use rather than reflecting on the potential offerings of these

sources (e.g. Bates et al., 2016).

When the learner/learning tools commonly preferred by Turkish EFL teachers were examined, it was seen that these tools served only a limited purpose and failed to incorporate the multimodality and communication features available in many quality websites (Moncada Linares & Díaz Romero, 2016). The learner/learning tools were mostly utilized for accessing language learning sources such as audios, videos, worksheets, and online dictionaries. Furthermore, the tasks and activities in the most commonly used websites were dominantly composed of drills, translation, and other closed-end types of exercises that focused on the mastery of linguistic features rather than the communicative and collaborative aspects of language learning. Thus, many of the Internet-based technologies in Liu and Chen's (2007) taxonomy such as those integrating computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools (e.g. discussion boards, emails, conferencing) and those integrating learning management systems) were absent in the websites Turkish EFL teachers preferred. That is to say, the websites tended to embrace self-controlled learning while being off-target for "peer-supported learning" and the use of two-way CMC among language learners. Yet, in addition to laying out many advantages of adopting a variety of Internet technologies, earlier research also indicated that using the Internet for effective technology-mediated language learning tasks designed with sound pedagogy is a great difficulty for language teachers due to the lack of technological knowledge and readiness for technology integration (Chong & Reinders, 2020). It requires language teachers to possess and/or develop a lot of pedagogical skills to design and carry out well-functioning virtual tasks and activities for their learners (Kurek & Müller- Hartmann, 2019). However, it is often the case that many language teachers lack these skills and competencies (Merç, 2015). Celik (2013), for example, found that Turkish EFL teachers at universities used the Internet to access, gather and present the information while interactive Internet technologies were rather underutilized. Likewise, Celik (2013) and Solmaz and Bekleyen (2011) stated that the most preferred websites for the teachers focused more on receptive language skills whereas productive skills were addressed less. This might be due to these teachers' conception that technology holds a greater potential for receptive skills than it does for productive skills as revealed in Canals and Al-Rawashdeh's (2018) study. As another finding, that online teaching tools were not preferred by language teachers for blended or hybrid learning was also a common theme in Karakaya's (2010) study. Similar to the participants of this study, Karakaya (2010) demonstrated that only very few teachers used wikis, blogs, course management software, and other such online technologies in their language classes. As reported in a more recent study, which looked into Turkish EFL teachers' views on blended learning, the low degree of utilizing blended learning by these teachers might stem from their opinions about the value of blended learning for language teaching (Kırmızı & Yapıcı, 2019).

Another important finding was that Turkish EFL teachers utilized websites for professional development purposes less than they used them as teacher/ teaching and learner/learning sources. Although teachers reported using forums, blogs, and other social media, scrutiny of these platforms revealed that they were more centered on the sharing of teaching sources than the exchange of ideas among language teachers about classroom practices. The number of websites that provided language teachers with ideas of classroom activities was also quite low among all the websites chosen by the teachers. It seemed that teacher communities as an optimal means of teacher professional

development (Lave & Wenger, 1991) were underrated by the teachers who also did not use many websites for PD activities such as online conferences and free webinars. In his study, Solmaz and Bekleyen (2011) had the same finding in that Turkish EFL teachers' use of the Internet for PD was rather limited. Thus, it arose from these findings that the teachers did not have sufficient knowledge and skills to exploit the affordances of websites for their professional development.

Earlier research showed that teachers' effective use of the Internet for PD purposes was not always within the reach of teachers due to many confounding factors (Booth, 2012; Bostancıoğlu, 2016). Of all these factors, teacher support and training were displayed as one of the most essential factors that determined teachers' Internet use for PD (Demir, 2010; Pujari et al., 2020) both internationally and in the Turkish context (e.g. Alhabahba & Mahfoodh, 2016; Borthwick & Gallagher-Brett, 2014; Solmaz & Bekleyen, 2011; Taghizadeh & Yourdshahi, 2020; Zou, 2013). This was also reiterated by Karakaya (2010) who argued that nearly half of the Turkish EFL teacher participants in his survey study were devoid of taking part in any professional development programs during their entire professional life, let alone any training on ICT use. Topkaraoğlu (2018) had similar findings showing that the Turkish EFL teachers had few opportunities to participate in professional development programs and often sought for instructional support rather than using individual efforts to sustain their development. Although some recent studies carried out in Turkish context witnessed the professional development of some EFL teachers through their participation in online communities of practice (e.g., Webheads in action, eTwinning) (Akdemir, 2017; Bostancıoğlu, 2018), it was seen that participation in such communities by the majority of EFL teachers in Turkey was quite low (Topkaraoğlu, 2018).

Considering that the Internet offers a plethora of resources and tools that help to improve the teaching and learning of foreign languages (e.g., wikis, blogs, social media, virtual worlds, augmented reality, online games, etc.) (Chong & Reinders, 2020) and provides easy access to online communities of practice (Bostancıoğlu, 2018), there is a great need for language teachers to harness its great potential for their professional needs. However, the findings of the current study demonstrate that Turkish EFL teachers do not benefit from the affordances of the Internet at a sufficient level. As Alhabahba and Mahfoodh (2016) note, EFL teachers' effective use of online teaching sources and tools for their professional needs is an important determinant of the quality of their classroom practices. Therefore, there is a great need for EFL teachers to increase both their technical and pedagogical knowledge and skills for optimal integration of the Internet into the language classroom (Hsu, 2017).

Conclusion

This study sought explanations for the descriptive features and commonalities of the 70 websites that were reported by 847 EFL teachers in Turkey. The findings indicated that the majority of the websites were rated as good in terms of quality; however, they mainly included educational content that would meet teachers' immediate needs to deliver their lessons rather than providing interactive environments that would enable both themselves and their students connect with others in the world as global citizens. To this end, what, then, can be concluded about the content and functions of the websites the

EFL teachers widely acclaimed using in this study? Bearing in mind the fact that the websites in the current study serve as suppliers of ready-made materials, perhaps it is time to create new ways for teachers so that they can get the most out of Internet-based technologies.

The study offers new perspectives to teachers, language teacher educators, grant-writers, and decision-makers regarding the professional development of EFL teachers. First of all, EFL teachers as reflective practitioners must realize that only when they develop a positive attitude towards using the Internet for more self-directed professional development and peer-supported learning could we see accelerated progress in more effective utilization of the websites. Indeed, teachers' attitude was found to be the most important predictor of teachers' use of the Internet for professional development (Demir, 2010).

Secondly, language teacher educators can give more attention to improving pre-service EFL teachers' pedagogical and technological knowledge to skillfully use websites and applications in courses such as "information technologies," "instructional technologies," "instructional design in English language teaching," etc. to equip them with compatible skills to teach digital natives. Among these skills that EFL teachers should acquire are critical evaluations of the Internet sources, mainly websites because students will eventually model their teachers' patterns in website evaluation (Wiebe & Kabata, 2010). It is considered that the skill of evaluating language websites will enhance the teachers' practical skills and help them to get the most out of Internet-integrated teaching (Chen, 2008; Moncada Linares & Díaz Romero, 2016). Regarding the readiness of teacher educators in teaching cutting-edge technological skills to prospective teachers, a rarely addressed issue also arises: the professional development of language teacher educators. Steps need to be taken as well to ensure the technological compatibility of teacher educators with today's digital native pre-service teachers.

A third group that would benefit from the findings of this study are grant-writers and decision-makers regarding the professional development of teachers. As it was found that websites reported in this study (and in many others such as Shin & Son, 2007; Taghizadeh & Yourdshahi, 2020) were underutilized, professional development programs in the future should be designed to embrace the multimodality and collaborative nature of the Internet-based technologies for greater pedagogical effectiveness. Teachers who are scattered across the spectrum of technology integration should be presented with both off-the-beaten paths of online professional development opportunities and more advanced level in-service training, for instance, in creating interactive websites for language learners. Grant-writers should find ways to bring together stakeholders from both the national and international venues (e.g., 3D virtual game designers, website designers, and teachers) for innovative professional development programs. When doing this, both grant-writers and decision-makers should strive to involve EFL teachers "in a meaningful and effective discussion in the use of the Internet" during needs analysis to "identify what practices might work effectively for classroom teaching" (Alhabahba & Mahfoodh, 2016, p. 13).

It must be acknowledged that the findings of the study must be read with certain methodological limitations in mind. For instance, the data come from Turkish EFL teachers only. Replications of this study could be carried out to allow for cross-cultural comparisons. Also, the study does not present any details on the ways the teachers were using these websites. All the assumptions were based on the content analyses of the

reported websites. Further research can look into the ways the websites are utilized by teachers. Also, a more in-depth study can be conducted with teachers to reveal which features of the websites they particularly find more useful. Another limitation that deserves mentioning is that 600 out of 847 participants answered the questionnaires on paper, which might have affected the types of websites they reported since they may not have recalled all of the websites bookmarked on their computers when filling out the questionnaires. This limitation might partly explain why, for instance, some of the websites such as dictionaries were reported more frequently than others because it is easier to remember their names/addresses. The websites that are frequently used by the “learners” of English and the ways they use them in various countries could be another venue for future research. Finally, the study had been conducted before the COVID-19 outbreak. Since the needs of teachers drastically changed during the online education wave in the world, it would be worth investigating whether the websites commonly used by EFL teachers changed during this period as well.

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Appendix A. Websites evaluated

- 1) learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org
- 2) ingilizcecin.com
- 3) supersimple.com
- 4) eltplanet.net
- 5) busyteacher.org

- 6) morpakampus.com
- 7) britishcouncil.org
- 8) youtube.com
- 9) global.oup.com/academic/?cc=tr&lang=en& (Oxford University Press)
- 10) ingilizceogretmenleri.net
- 11) oxforddictionaries.com
- 12) ldoceonline.com (Longman)
- 13) etwinning.net
- 14) myingilizce.net (Link not active at the time of publication)
- 15) englishclub.com
- 16) englishworksheets.com
- 17) eslprintables.com
- 18) esl-lab.com (Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab)
- 19) tplusturkey.org (Link not active at the time of publication)
- 20) elsyayin.com.tr
- 21) tureng.com
- 22) bbc.com
- 23) youringilizce.com (Link not active at the time of publication)
- 24) egitimhane.com
- 25) ingilizkultur.com
- 26) eslcafe.com
- 27) onestopenglish.com
- 28) kahoot.com
- 29) zargan.com
- 30) duolingo.com
- 31) voscreen.com
- 32) en.islcollective.com
- 33) dreamenglish.com
- 34) learnenglish.britishcouncil.org
- 35) classdojo.com
- 36) bbc.co.uk/learningenglish
- 37) anglomaniacy.pl (English for Kids)
- 38) 5minuteenglish.com/the-fun-of-learning-english
- 39) bbc.co.uk/learning
- 40) busuu.com/tr
- 41) dictionary.cambridge.org
- 42) edition.cnn.com
- 43) dersimizingilizce.com
- 44) eba.gov.tr
- 45) new.edmodo.com
- 46) english-4kids.com
- 47) tr.englishcentral.com
- 48) englishexercises.org
- 49) englishforeveryone.org
- 50) englishtips.org
- 51) esl.com
- 52) funeasyenglish.com

- 53) translate.google.com
- 54) iatefl.org
- 55) ilkokulingilizce.net
- 56) ingilizdili.net (Domain name expired in July 2020)
- 57) ingilizcehocam.gen.tr (Link not active at the time of publication)
- 58) mes-english.com
- 59) newsinlevels.com
- 60) oxfordowl.co.uk
- 61) planetelt.com
- 62) seslisozluk.net
- 63) sorubak.com
- 64) sparknotes.com
- 65) teacherspayteachers.com
- 66) ted.com
- 67) ted.com/talks
- 68) thetimes.co.uk
- 69) wikipedia.org
- 70) ydsonline.net

Appendix B. Sample evaluation of a website

KAHOOT

Title: Kahoot

Url: <https://getkahoot.com/>

1) Availability of Membership/Subscription (Phone, email, social media)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/getkahoot>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/getkahoot>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/getkahoot/>

Google+: <https://plus.google.com/explore/Kahoot>

Linkedin: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/kahoot>

Pinterest: <https://uk.pinterest.com/getkahoot/>

Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi8xTp2n_C6beNP5pkvbFBA

2) Whether registration is required for the access to the materials, worksheets etc.

Registration is required if you are a teacher and if you want to create your own quiz. However, it is free and easy to do. Learners should just sign in with the Kahoot code provided by the teacher.

3) Authorship (Contact information about the author/institution/website owner)

4) Site description and content (Short description of the website, purpose, language skills, materials and activities, learners' proficiency level, and age)

The website provides teachers with a chance to create their own quizzes. Plays can be played in class. The questions appear on the board when you project it. The choices are shown on students' phones. So, students see the question on the board and they click on the right answer on their phones. The teacher can also identify the time given for each question and change the place of each question. There are also ready-made quizzes. The level of the learners could be considered while preparing the quiz. Target vocabulary or structures might be asked in the quiz.

5) Up-to-datedness (Updated time and current links)

It is an updated website.

6) Accuracy (Accurate information)

The language of the website is accurate. The language of the quizzes is up to the person who prepared that specific quiz.

7) Presentation (Organization/navigation, user-friendliness, technical aspects, graphics, and advertisement)

Presentation of the website is simple and it is easy to navigate.

8) Usefulness (For teachers/students – in class or out-of-class activity)

It's very useful for both students and teachers. Students generally like the website and the application as they have fun while learning. Since they use their mobile phone in class, they also feel privileged. All class members can participate in the game; therefore, teachers know that all the students are engaged in the lesson.

9) Overall rating

1 Very Poor (Not recommended)

2 Poor (Not appropriate)

3 Adequate (Acceptable with adaptation)

4 Good (Appropriate for use)

5 Excellent (Highly recommended)

1 2 3 4 **5**