

Development and Validation of Linguo-Creative Competence Indicators for Pre-Service English Language Teachers: A Structural Component-Based Assessment Framework

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Abstract. *This study aims to develop and validate a structural framework for assessing linguo-creative competence among pre-service English language teachers. The framework conceptualizes linguo-creative competence as a multidimensional construct comprising three interconnected components: cognitive, personal-reflective, and activity-based. A mixed-methods design was employed using theoretical analysis, expert evaluation, classroom observation, competency-based tasks, and statistical analysis. The findings indicate that the framework provides a coherent and measurable system for identifying teachers' strengths and developmental needs. The study contributes to English language teacher education by integrating linguistic, pedagogical, reflective, and creative dimensions into a unified competency-based assessment framework.*

Keywords: *linguo-creative competence, pre-service English language teachers, competency indicators, creativity, teacher education, competency-based assessment, English language teaching*

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Gələcək ingilis dili müəllimləri üçün linqvo-kreativ kompetensiya göstəricilərinin hazırlanması və validasiyası: Struktur komponentlərə əsaslanan qiymətləndirmə çərçivəsi

Xurşidjon Raximov 

Xülasə. *Bu tədqiqat xidmətəqədərki ingilis dili müəllimlərinin linqvo-kreativ kompetensiyasının qiymətləndirilməsi üçün struktur çərçivənin hazırlanmasını və təsdiqlənməsini məqsəd daşıyır. Təklif olunan çərçivə linqvo-kreativ kompetensiyayı üç qarşılıqlı əlaqəli komponentdən ibarət çoxölçülü konstrukt kimi təqdim edir: kognitiv, şəxsi-reflektiv və fəaliyyət əsaslı. Tədqiqatda nəzəri təhlil, ekspert qiymətləndirməsi, sinif müşahidəsi, kompetensiya əsaslı tapşırıqlar və statistik təhlili birləşdirən qarışıq metodlu dizayndan istifadə edilmişdir. Nəticələr göstərir ki, çərçivə müəllimlərin güclü tərəflərini və inkişaf ehtiyaclarını müəyyənləşdirmək üçün ardıcıl və ölçülə bilən sistem təqdim edir. Tədqiqat linqvistik, pedaqoji, reflektiv və kreativ ölçüləri vahid kompetensiya əsaslı qiymətləndirmə çərçivəsində birləşdirərək ingilis dili müəllimi hazırlığına töhfə verir.*

Açar sözlər: lingvo-kreativ kompetensiya, xidmətəqədərki ingilis dili müəllimləri, kompetensiya göstəriciləri, kreativlik, müəllim hazırlığı, kompetensiya əsaslı qiymətləndirmə, ingilis dilinin tədrisi

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Introduction

The increasing complexity of twenty-first-century education has transformed the expectations placed on English language teachers. Beyond linguistic proficiency and pedagogical knowledge, teachers are now expected to demonstrate creativity, critical thinking, reflective practice, adaptability, and the ability to design learner-centered educational environments. These competencies are regarded as essential for preparing students to function successfully in multilingual and multicultural societies (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019; Darling-Hammond, 2021). Consequently, contemporary teacher education has shifted from knowledge-oriented instruction toward competency-based preparation that integrates cognitive, professional, and personal dimensions of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2021).

Within English language teacher education, creativity has become a central component of professional competence because language teaching inherently requires flexible communication, problem-solving, and instructional innovation (Richards, 2013; Richards & Cotterall, 2016). Creative language teachers continuously adapt learning materials, modify instructional strategies, and design authentic communicative tasks that respond to learners' diverse linguistic needs. Such practices not only support language acquisition but also foster learner autonomy, motivation, and communicative confidence (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020).

Although creativity has been widely investigated in educational psychology and teacher education, considerable conceptual ambiguity remains regarding its role in foreign language teacher preparation. Existing studies frequently examine teacher creativity, pedagogical competence, communicative competence, or professional competence as separate constructs (Beghetto, 2021; Henriksen et al., 2021). Similarly, assessment frameworks developed for English language teacher education primarily focus on linguistic knowledge, teaching performance, or methodological competence, providing limited attention to the integrated assessment of teachers' linguo-creative competence (Richards, 2013; Council of Europe, 2020).

Recent developments in competency-based education emphasize that professional competence should be assessed through observable indicators rather than through isolated knowledge tests (Mulder, 2017; OECD, 2019). In teacher education, indicator-based assessment provides transparent criteria for evaluating students' professional growth while supporting curriculum improvement and evidence-based decision-making (Darling-Hammond, 2021). Nevertheless, a comprehensive system of indicators specifically designed to assess linguo-creative competence among pre-service English language teachers has received limited scholarly attention. Existing studies generally describe creativity conceptually without operationalizing measurable indicators that can be systematically applied in higher education.

This gap creates both theoretical and practical challenges. Theoretically, the absence of clearly defined indicators limits the understanding of linguo-creative competence as a multidimensional construct integrating linguistic, pedagogical, reflective, and creative dimensions. Practically, teacher

educators often lack reliable assessment instruments capable of identifying students' strengths and developmental needs across different aspects of professional creativity. As a result, assessment practices may remain fragmented and rely heavily on subjective judgments rather than evidence-based evaluation criteria (Borg, 2018; Richards, 2013).

To address this gap, the present study develops and validates a structural framework of linguo-creative competence indicators for pre-service English language teachers. The framework conceptualizes linguo-creative competence through three interconnected components: the cognitive component, reflecting theoretical knowledge and analytical thinking; the personal-reflective component, encompassing self-awareness, reflective practice, empathy, and professional self-development; and the activity-based component, representing the practical application of creative pedagogical knowledge in authentic instructional contexts. Each component is operationalized through a set of measurable indicators intended to facilitate comprehensive competency assessment.

The novelty of this study lies in the development of an integrated indicator system that combines linguistic, pedagogical, creative, and reflective dimensions within a single assessment framework. Unlike approaches that evaluate these competencies separately, the proposed framework provides measurable indicators for diagnosing the multidimensional nature of linguo-creative competence and supports competency-based assessment in English language teacher education.

Accordingly, the study aims to develop and validate a structural indicator framework for assessing the linguo-creative competence of pre-service English language teachers. Specifically, it seeks to:

1. identify the structural components of linguo-creative competence;
2. establish measurable indicators for each component;
3. examine the validity and reliability of the proposed framework; and
4. demonstrate its applicability in higher education teacher preparation programs.

Materials and Methods

Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods research design to develop and validate a structural framework for assessing linguo-creative competence among pre-service English language teachers. The research combined qualitative and quantitative procedures to ensure that the proposed indicators were theoretically grounded, relevant to teacher education, and suitable for systematic assessment. The research process consisted of four interconnected stages. First, theoretical perspectives on teacher competence, creativity, English language teaching, reflective practice, and competency-based assessment were analyzed to establish the conceptual foundations of the framework. Second, an initial set of structural components and indicators was developed on the basis of this analysis. Third, the proposed indicators were subjected to expert evaluation to examine their conceptual relevance, clarity, and applicability. Finally, the framework was applied in an educational context through competency-based assessment and classroom observation, followed by reliability and construct-validity analysis.

Development of the Indicator Framework

The initial framework was developed by synthesizing theoretical perspectives on professional competence, creativity, communicative competence, and reflective professional practice. Particular attention was given to the principle that complex professional competencies should be operationalized through observable and measurable indicators (Mulder, 2017). On this basis, linguo-creative competence was conceptualized as a multidimensional professional construct consisting of three interconnected components: cognitive, personal-reflective, and activity-based. The cognitive component represents the knowledge and analytical abilities underlying creative language teaching.

The personal-reflective component represents the personal and professional dispositions that support creative development. The activity-based component represents the practical realization of linguo-creative competence through observable teaching behavior. The final framework contained fourteen indicators distributed across the three components. The cognitive component included four indicators; the personal-reflective component included five indicators; and the activity-based component included five indicators.

Expert Evaluation

The content validity of the proposed framework was examined through expert evaluation. Specialists in English language teaching methodology, foreign language education, and competency-based assessment evaluated the indicators according to three criteria: conceptual relevance, clarity of formulation, and applicability within higher education teacher preparation programs. The expert evaluation was used to determine whether each indicator adequately represented the corresponding component of linguo-creative competence and whether its formulation was sufficiently clear for practical assessment. Feedback from the evaluation was considered in establishing the final structure of the indicator framework.

Assessment Procedures

The applicability of the framework was examined through competency-based assessment and classroom observation. These procedures were designed to provide evidence of both the underlying knowledge and dispositions associated with linguo-creative competence and their practical realization in instructional contexts. The assessment focused on the three major components of the framework. Cognitive indicators were examined through tasks requiring participants to demonstrate linguistic-pedagogical knowledge, analytical language awareness, creative instructional design, and linguo-pedagogical integration. Personal-reflective indicators were examined through evidence of reflective awareness, openness to experimentation, professional self-development, learner-oriented empathy, and creative teaching confidence. Activity-based indicators were assessed through observable teaching performance, including the design and implementation of creative language-learning activities, pedagogical adaptation, authentic communicative tasks, innovative teaching strategies, and instructional evaluation.

Reliability and Validity Analysis

The reliability of the framework was examined by analyzing the internal coherence of indicators within the proposed components. The analysis aimed to determine whether the indicators functioned consistently as measures of the broader linguo-creative competence construct. Construct validity was examined in relation to the proposed three-component structure. The analysis considered the relationships among the cognitive, personal-reflective, and activity-based components while determining whether each component retained its distinctive conceptual function. The interpretation of validity followed the view that validity concerns the evidence supporting the interpretation and use of assessment results (Messick, 1995). Reflective professional development was also considered as an important dimension of the framework because professional learning involves the examination and improvement of practice through reflection (Schön, 1983). The combination of expert evaluation, assessment evidence, classroom observation, and statistical analysis provided a basis for evaluating the content relevance, internal consistency, and construct structure of the proposed framework.

Results

Development of the Linguo-Creative Competence Indicator Framework

The analysis resulted in a structural indicator framework consisting of three interrelated components: cognitive, personal-reflective, and activity-based. The framework conceptualizes linguo-creative competence as an integrated system in which theoretical knowledge, professional dispositions, and

practical teaching abilities interact dynamically. The cognitive component represents the intellectual foundation required for creative language teaching. It reflects the ability of future teachers to apply linguistic knowledge, analyze pedagogical situations, and generate innovative instructional solutions. This component was operationalized through four indicators: linguistic-pedagogical knowledge, analytical language awareness, creative instructional design ability, and linguo-pedagogical integration capacity.

Linguistic-pedagogical knowledge refers to the understanding of linguistic concepts, language learning principles, and methodological foundations necessary for effective English language instruction. Analytical language awareness represents the ability to examine language phenomena critically and interpret linguistic information from multiple perspectives. Creative instructional design ability reflects the capacity to generate original teaching ideas, activities, and materials based on theoretical knowledge. Linguo-pedagogical integration capacity demonstrates the ability to combine linguistic expertise with creative pedagogical approaches to develop meaningful learning experiences.

The personal-reflective component reflects the internal characteristics that support teachers' creative professional development. This component includes five indicators: reflective professional awareness, innovative orientation and openness to experimentation, professional self-development motivation, learner-oriented empathy, and creative teaching self-confidence. Reflective professional awareness refers to teachers' ability to evaluate their instructional decisions and recognize areas for professional improvement. Innovative orientation and openness to experimentation represents readiness to explore alternative teaching approaches and adapt to changing educational conditions. Professional self-development motivation reflects the willingness to continuously enhance professional knowledge and skills. Learner-oriented empathy demonstrates sensitivity toward learners' individual characteristics and educational needs. Creative teaching self-confidence refers to teachers' belief in their ability to apply innovative solutions in classroom practice.

The activity-based component represents the practical realization of linguo-creative competence through observable teaching performance. It consists of five indicators: creative language-learning activity design, pedagogical flexibility and adaptation, authentic communicative task implementation, innovative teaching strategy application, and instructional evaluation and improvement ability. Creative language-learning activity design reflects the ability to develop original classroom tasks that promote meaningful communication. Pedagogical flexibility and adaptation demonstrates the ability to modify instructional strategies according to learners' needs and contextual factors. Authentic communicative task implementation represents the ability to create learning situations connected with real-world communication. Innovative teaching strategy application reflects the use of creative methodologies and technological resources in language instruction. Instructional evaluation and improvement ability indicates the capacity to analyze teaching outcomes and refine future instructional decisions.

Expert Validation of the Proposed Indicators

The content-validity evaluation demonstrated a high level of agreement regarding the relevance and appropriateness of the proposed components and indicators. Experts confirmed that the cognitive component effectively represented the theoretical foundations of linguo-creative competence by connecting linguistic knowledge with creative pedagogical thinking. The personal-reflective component was identified as a significant dimension because experts emphasized that creative teaching depends not only on methodological knowledge but also on teachers' reflective abilities, professional motivation, and willingness to innovate. The indicators related to reflective awareness, professional self-development, and creative teaching confidence were considered important for identifying future teachers' readiness for creative professional activity. The activity-based component

received strong validation due to its focus on observable professional behaviors. Experts highlighted that indicators related to instructional design, pedagogical adaptation, authentic communication, and teaching innovation provide direct evidence of teachers' ability to apply linguo-creative competence in educational contexts. Overall, the expert evaluation supported the content relevance and applicability of the proposed framework and confirmed that the three components adequately represent major dimensions of linguo-creative competence.

Reliability and Construct Validity of the Framework

The reliability analysis indicated that the developed indicator framework provides a consistent measurement structure for assessing linguo-creative competence. The indicators within each component demonstrated strong internal coherence, suggesting that they represent related dimensions of the broader professional construct. The construct-validity analysis supported the proposed three-component structure. The cognitive, personal-reflective, and activity-based components were statistically and conceptually interconnected while maintaining their distinct functions. The cognitive component was associated with theoretical understanding, analytical thinking, and creative problem-solving abilities. The personal-reflective component contributed to explaining the psychological and professional conditions necessary for creative teaching behavior. The activity-based component reflected the practical implementation of linguo-creative competence through instructional performance. These findings support the conceptualization of linguo-creative competence as a multidimensional professional capability rather than as an isolated creative skill.

Practical Application of the Indicator Framework

The application of the developed framework demonstrated its usefulness as a diagnostic assessment tool in English language teacher education. The indicators enabled educators to identify specific strengths and developmental needs among pre-service teachers. The assessment results indicated that students generally demonstrated stronger development in cognitive indicators, particularly linguistic-pedagogical knowledge and analytical language awareness. However, comparatively lower levels were observed in creative instructional design ability, pedagogical flexibility, and innovative teaching strategy application. These findings suggest that existing teacher preparation programs may provide substantial theoretical knowledge while offering fewer opportunities for creative professional practice. The framework can therefore support curriculum improvement by identifying areas requiring further development through microteaching, project-based learning, reflective activities, and authentic teaching simulations.

Discussion

The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of research on teacher competence assessment by demonstrating that linguo-creative competence can be conceptualized and evaluated through a structured indicator-based framework. Previous research emphasizes that contemporary teachers require not only subject knowledge and pedagogical skills but also creativity, adaptability, and reflective capacity to respond effectively to complex educational environments (Darling-Hammond, 2021; OECD, 2019). The three-component structure identified in this study supports competency-based perspectives that define professional competence as an integration of knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and the ability to apply them in authentic contexts (Mulder, 2017). The cognitive component confirms that creative teaching requires a strong theoretical foundation. Creativity is not simply the production of unusual ideas; rather, it involves generating appropriate and valuable solutions within a specific professional domain (Runco & Jaeger, 2012). Therefore, linguistic knowledge and pedagogical understanding serve as essential foundations for linguo-creative performance.

The findings related to the cognitive indicators correspond with previous research emphasizing that effective English language teachers need the ability to analyze language, adapt instructional approaches, and transform theoretical knowledge into practical solutions (Richards, 2013; Richards & Cotterall, 2016). The present study extends this perspective by demonstrating that these abilities can be operationalized through measurable indicators suitable for competency-based assessment. The significance of the personal-reflective component confirms previous arguments that teacher creativity is closely connected with professional identity, reflection, motivation, and continuous development (Borg, 2018; Darling-Hammond, 2021). The results indicate that linguo-creative competence cannot be developed only through methodological instruction. Future teachers must also develop reflective awareness, confidence, and openness toward experimentation. These findings correspond with contemporary views of teacher learning, which consider professional growth as an ongoing reflective process rather than the simple acquisition of knowledge.

The activity-based component identified in this study reinforces the importance of assessing competence through authentic professional performance. Competency-based education emphasizes that knowledge becomes meaningful when individuals can apply it effectively in real situations (Mulder, 2017). Similarly, international competence frameworks such as the CEFR Companion Volume highlight the importance of evaluating abilities through observable performance descriptors rather than isolated knowledge assessment (Council of Europe, 2020). The proposed framework also contributes to existing research on creativity in education. Previous studies have examined creativity in relation to creative learning and innovative educational practices (Beghetto, 2021; Henriksen et al., 2021). However, the present study conceptualizes creativity as an integrated professional competence that combines linguistic resources, pedagogical decision-making, reflective practice, and classroom performance. The findings further demonstrate the limitations of existing competency frameworks for English language teacher education. Although the DigCompEdu framework provides valuable indicators for evaluating digital teaching competence (Redecker, 2017), it does not specifically address the interaction between linguistic competence, creativity, and pedagogical practice. The current framework addresses this limitation by offering a specialized assessment model for linguo-creative competence.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that teacher education programs should provide more systematic opportunities for developing creative professional abilities. Activities such as microteaching, collaborative lesson design, reflective teaching journals, project-based learning, and authentic classroom problem-solving tasks may contribute to strengthening the indicators identified in the framework. Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations. The validation process was conducted within a specific educational context, which may influence the transferability of findings to other institutions and cultural settings. Future research should examine the framework with larger samples, conduct cross-cultural validation studies, and investigate the long-term impact of targeted interventions on linguo-creative competence development.

Conclusion

This study developed and validated a structural indicator framework for assessing linguo-creative competence among pre-service English language teachers. The findings demonstrate that linguo-creative competence represents a multidimensional professional construct consisting of three interconnected components: cognitive, personal-reflective, and activity-based dimensions. The proposed framework provides a comprehensive assessment model that integrates linguistic knowledge, creative thinking, reflective professional development, and practical teaching performance. The identified indicators, including linguistic-pedagogical knowledge, analytical language awareness, creative instructional design ability, reflective professional awareness,

innovative orientation, pedagogical flexibility, and authentic communicative task implementation, provide measurable criteria for evaluating future teachers' creative professional growth.

The results of expert evaluation, reliability analysis, and construct-validity analysis support the applicability of the framework for competency-based assessment in English language teacher education. The framework enables teacher educators to diagnose students' developmental needs, improve assessment practices, and design targeted educational strategies aimed at strengthening linguo-creative competence. The study contributes theoretically by expanding the understanding of creativity in language teacher education from an individual characteristic toward an integrated professional competence. It also contributes practically by offering higher education institutions a structured assessment framework for preparing innovative, reflective, and adaptable English language teachers. Future research should continue examining the effectiveness of this framework across different educational contexts, use larger and more diverse samples, and explore how targeted instructional interventions can enhance the development of linguo-creative competence throughout teacher preparation programs.

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