The International Research Foundation
for English Language Education

Title of Project:
The Impact of Rater Experience and Essay
Quality on Rater Behavior and Scoring

Researcher:
Ozgur Sahan
Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University
ozgur.sahan@btu.edu.tr

Research Supervisor:
Prof. Salim Razi
Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University

Ozgur Sahan

Project Summary:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of rater experience and essay quality on rater behavior and scoring. The research aims to explore whether professional experience, measured as the number of years a rater has spent teaching and rating EFL/ESL writing, impacts the variability of essay scores by examining experienced and novice raters. In particular, it attempts to observe the different behaviors and decision-making strategies that experienced and inexperienced raters exhibit while assessing essays of different qualities. A mixed-methods research design is used and both qualitative and quantitative data are collected from a total of 34 EFL instructors working at higher education institutions in Turkey. In order to investigate the impact of institutional assessment policies on the raters' consistency, 16 of the participants involved in this study are from the same university while the remaining raters come from various universities across Turkey. Using a 10-point analytic rubric, each participant assesses 50 essays of two distinct qualities—low and high quality—and think-aloud protocols are employed to determine the raters' decision making processes. The quantitative data are analyzed using Gtheory approach to investigate the scoring reliability. Additionally, the qualitative data collected through think-aloud protocols are transcribed and analyzed to identify the assessment strategies that the raters use and to explore how these strategies vary based on their rating experience and essay quality. The results of this research are expected to shed light on the problematic nature of writing performance assessment and unfair judgement arising from the aforementioned factors.