

CHAPTER 8: TEACHER EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE 2018 ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

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Abstract

English language teacher education is a priority in many countries due to the global importance of English as a means of communication. The quality of English language teacher education programs is essential to ensure that teachers are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to effectively teach English as an additional language. This study investigates the views of English language teacher educators in Türkiye regarding the 2018 English Language Teaching Education Program (ELTEP). The research involved 80 participants from various academic positions in English language teaching (ELT) departments across state universities in Türkiye. Data was collected through a questionnaire based on Peacock's evaluation model and follow-up semi-structured interviews conducted online in 2020. The findings suggest that the teacher educators are generally satisfied with the program's up-to-date teaching materials, testing and evaluation methods, and coverage of modern English issues. However, they expressed dissatisfaction with certain aspects, such as course hours, training opportunities, self-awareness promotion, classroom management skills, and balancing different language skills. The teacher educators were neutral on the issue of course connections and overlap between courses. The study highlights the need for a comprehensive needs analysis in program development.

Keywords: Pre-service teacher education, Program evaluation, Opinions of teacher educators

1. Introduction

Since English has become the dominant language for international communication and media, proficiency in English is crucial for socializing, entertainment, and employment, providing opportunities to work for multinational companies domestically or abroad. However, English language teaching as a field has been questioned in recent years (Karakaş, 2012). As Stern (1983) states, language teaching comprises activities intended to stimulate language learning. Specifically, the teacher's role is to design target activities and determine when and how to engage learners with the target language in the classroom setting. English now has more non-

native speakers than native speakers (e.g. Canagarajah, 2006; Kachru, 1992). Consequently, it is often the case that non-native English speakers are teaching other non-native speakers (Hall, 2018; Kachru & Nelson, 2006; Medgyes & Ryan, 1996; Pasternak & Bailey, 2004). To train highly qualified language teachers who understand their part in the language learning process, a comprehensive teacher education system of pre-service and in-service training is essential. Pre-service preparation is particularly vital, as later education and training builds on this foundation, representing the initial critical step towards professionalization. Structuring a well-balanced pre-service program for prospective English language teachers is of paramount importance for equipping student teachers to fulfill their educational duties, achieve their objectives, and enhance their future teaching performance.

In Türkiye, English language teacher education takes place in education faculties of universities, generally lasting four years, or five years if there is an additional required one-year intensive preparatory class. Students from related departments like English/American language and literature or English philology can also qualify as English teachers provided they obtain a pedagogical formation certificate. While departments follow a centralized compulsory curriculum published by the Higher Education Council (HEC), elective courses and materials can vary as departments have autonomy in administering them.

Studies conducted in Turkey on English language teacher education programs (ELTEP) predominantly reflect the perspectives of student teachers and teachers, rather than those implementing the programs, i.e. teacher educators. The number of teacher educator participants is insufficient to gain a full-bodied understanding. For example, Coşgun-Ögeyik's (2009) study had 53 third year student teachers, Coşkun and Daloğlu's (2010) study had 55 senior student teachers and three university instructors, Hişmanoglu's (2012) study had 72 second year student teachers, and Salihoğlu's (2012) study had 200 fourth year student teachers and 21 teacher educators. As evidenced by these examples, there is a lack of studies in the Turkish context where teacher educators' perspectives are centered. More research is thus needed that foregrounds the viewpoints of those delivering ELTEPs. Against this backdrop, the current study aims to expand the scope of ELTEP evaluation research in the Turkish context by providing a more professional viewpoint, which can inform agreements on improving future programs over the long term. In other words, this study aims to uncover the deficiencies of the latest ELTEP and identify which program components teacher educators in ELT departments find adequate or inadequate by consulting teacher educators' opinions in the field of language teacher education.

2. Key concepts and building blocks of language teacher education

2.1. Pre-service teacher education

Pre-service teacher education refers to the education and training provided to student teachers before they begin their teaching careers (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Pre-service teachers are candidate professionals in the process of training to become teachers (Kennedy, 2005). Pre-service education occurs in various institutional settings, including public or private teacher training colleges, universities, and private institutes (Darling-Hammond, 2006). It can also be delivered through different modalities, such as residential education, distance learning, and using various technologies like print, radio, television, internet, etc. (Kennedy, 2005). Pre-service teacher education involves guided and supervised teaching to equip student teachers with pedagogical knowledge and teaching skills (Grossman, 1990). Pedagogical knowledge encompasses the theoretical, sociological, and psychological elements that provide student teachers a foundation for executing teaching skills in the classroom (Grossman, 1990). Teaching skills refer to the procedures, strategies, methods, and approaches that can assist teachers in fulfilling their career and contributing to the advancement of the profession (Grossman, 1990). In most countries, teachers undergo some form of pre-service education, though the duration and format of this training can vary greatly (Schwille et al., 2007). In some cases, pre-service training has been shortened significantly to allow governments to meet teacher demand in communities experiencing rapid increases in enrollment (Schwille et al., 2007). Additionally, teachers may be required to obtain professional certification or pass government examinations in conjunction with their academic qualifications (Ingvarson et al., 2013).

Schwille and Dembele (2007) noted that pre-service teacher education has been criticized for its rigid, expensive, time-consuming structure and inability to keep pace with curriculum reform and new classroom/school demands. Institutions are often slow to implement curricular changes or additions. Class size is another constraint on institution-based pre-service training. There are ongoing debates about the quality of pre-service teacher education, as mass education is still relatively new in many contexts.

2.2. In-service teacher education

In-service teacher education refers to the education teachers receive after they have started their professional teaching careers (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Its aims and objectives include reflecting on and developing one's own practice (Desimone, 2009), staying current in one's

academic discipline and other curricular areas (Buczynski & Hansen, 2010), researching and reflecting on learners and their education (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999), understanding evolving educational and social issues (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005), and preparing for other professional roles related to education and teaching (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). In-service teacher education consists of several types of programs which are offered by different institutes (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Conferences, workshops, refresher courses, orientation programs, and study groups are most common types of in-service teacher education programs (Desimone et al., 2002; Gulamhussein, 2013; Kennedy, 2014; Villegas-Reimers, 2003).

2.3. Teacher Education models

Teacher education involves two key policies: training and development (Freeman, 2001). Training aims to build skills and knowledge to improve classroom effectiveness but can have limitations, notably a fragmented view of teaching (Freeman, 1989). In contrast, development centers on self-awareness and reflection (Head & Taylor, 1997). While training is dispensed by others, development is self-driven (Wallace, 1991). However, training and development are interrelated in teacher education, providing opportunities to practice techniques while developing awareness of new approaches to enhance teaching (Freeman, 2001). Freeman (1989) proposed an influential model for teacher education comprised of four elements: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness. Knowledge refers to information about language teaching, while skills involve applying that knowledge with students. Attitudes represent teachers' stances towards themselves, teaching, and learners, playing a key role albeit hard to incorporate in teacher training (Freeman, 1989). Awareness means recognizing how to utilize the other components to address classroom challenges through knowledge, skills, and attitude changes. This model highlighted core aspects of teacher preparation.

Likewise, Wallace (1991) outlined several teacher education models including craft/apprenticeship, applied science, reflective/constructivist, and competency-based. The craft model involves experts transferring knowledge and skills to novices through guidance and training until novices gain mastery to become professionals, relying on observation, imitation and practice (Wallace, 1991). The applied science model utilizes empirical research to inform teaching, often entailing theoretical linguistics, language-learning, psychology courses (Ur, 1992; Wallace, 1991). Wallace (1991) critiqued this model for limiting expert-novice interactions and overemphasizing empirical knowledge versus other teaching skills. Key models highlight differing approaches to teacher preparation. Building on prior models,

Wallace (1991) advocated for reflective/constructivist teacher education integrating received and experiential knowledge. This reflective cycle engages student-teachers in practicing and reflecting on teaching components to build awareness in ways traditional knowledge transmission cannot (Wallace, 1991). Reflective models view teachers as active knowledge producers who can solve classroom problems, not just passive transmitters (Dewey, 1933; Schön, 1983). Key features include open-mindedness to new ideas, responsibility for unintended consequences, and willingness to aid students (Dewey, 1933). Schön (1983) highlighted classroom unpredictability by arguing that teachers should be reflective decision-makers learning through practice. Ultimately, differing models provide complementary insights into effective teacher preparation.

2.4. Program evaluation and its objectives

An educational program is an organized sequence of courses leading to a defined objective, degree, certificate, diploma, license, or transfer to another institution of higher education (ASCCC.org, 2018). Program evaluation is a common form of evaluation in education. As Worthen (1990) notes, it is “the determination of the worth of a thing consisting those activities undertaken to judge the worth or utility of a program (or alternative programs) in improving some specified aspect of an education system” (p. 42). Similarly, Lynch (2006, p. 2) defines program evaluation as “the systematic attempt to gather information in order to make judgements or decisions”. As can be inferred from the preceding descriptions, program evaluation refers to the collection, analysis, and interpretation of information to draw inferences about the value of a particular program (Robinson, 2002), and it serves to determine the extent to which the program meets student teachers’ needs and goals overall by means of signaling necessary improvements to program designers and teacher educators (Demir, 2015). As Erarslan (2016) summarizes, evaluation is a systematic and a planned process in which collecting and analyzing research data about organizations and programs are made to inform stakeholders about current situation of them. Furthermore, program evaluation is conducted to gain insight into the effectiveness of a program, so that improvements can be made. Ultimately, the outcomes of evaluation can help stakeholders determine if a program should be terminated, continued, or expanded. That is, evaluating an educational program is an effective tool for assessing whether it adequately prepares teacher trainees for the context in which they will operate. Especially, program evaluation has recently gained much prominence among researchers in English language education internationally, with similar trends locally observed

in Türkiye (e.g. Coşgun-Ögeyik, 2009; Coşkun & Daloğlu, 2010; Demir, 2015; Hismanoğlu, 2012; Karakaş, 2012; Karakaş & Yavuz, 2018; Kıldan et al., 2013; Salihoğlu, 2012; Yavuz & Topkaya, 2013).

3. Essential characteristics of language teachers

Scholars have identified various qualities of effective teachers, including subject mastery, motivation, organization, enthusiasm, and rapport with students (Calabria, 1960; Feldman, 1976). Some contend that language teaching requires unique skills like target language proficiency, stimulating student interest, clarity, cultural knowledge, flexibility, and assessment abilities (Borg, 2006; Brosh, 1996; Hammadou & Bernhar, 1987; Horwitz, 1988; Kalebic, 2005; Vadillio, 1999). Core competencies include solid command of the target language, organization/explanation skills, fairness, availability to assist students, and the ability to motivate and respond to diverse learner needs. Scholars have categorized effective language teacher attributes into English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, socio-affective skills, and personality characteristics (Dinçer et al., 2013; Park & Lee, 2006). Essential competencies include subject knowledge, professional skills, positive attitudes, and ability to incorporate technology. Key factors highlighted include strong student-teacher relationships, enthusiasm, pedagogical content knowledge, confidence, and interpersonal abilities (Arıkan, 2010; Dinçer et al., 2013). While perspectives differ, common themes emphasize target language mastery, pedagogical expertise, learner-centered rapport, and intrapersonal skills.

4. English language teacher education process in Türkiye

In Türkiye, English language teachers are educated through English language teaching or foreign language education university programs. Students must meet exam requirements for admission. Nearly 100 such programs exist, and graduates must pass a national exam (KPSS) and interview to qualify for placement as a state school teacher. Those with related degrees, such as English language and literature or linguistics, can teach with a pedagogical formation certificate from a teacher certification program (Aydoğan & Çilsal, 2007; Tercanlıoğlu, 2004). Multiple pathways exist to become an English teacher in the Turkish education system. In Türkiye, the Higher Education Council provides overall standards for English teacher education programs, while individual university departments administer materials, exams, courses, and electives (Karakaş, 2012). Programs usually last four years, with some requiring additional English preparatory semesters. They offer compulsory professional and pedagogical courses

plus electives. Public universities are tuition-free and private ones offer scholarships. Teacher educators hold at least master's degrees. English teachers comprise the largest foreign language teaching workforce in Turkish state schools.

5. Exploring the 2018 English language teacher education program

In this section, the focus will be placed on the structure of the 2018 program. While doing so, each academic term will be inspected in terms of the courses offered and their credits in a comparative fashion with reference to the previous program. In doing so, it will be easier to see the changes between the previous program and the 2018 one.

5.1. Program structure

In 2018, Turkey's HEC implemented new English teacher education programs based on constructivist principles, with teachers as learning guides rather than sole knowledge sources. Changes included revised course names, sequences, and credits. Total credits decreased to 148 and class hours to 155, while the number of courses increased. Courses fall under three main categories, similar to the 2006 program. The 2018 update reflects contemporary constructivist and learner-centered perspectives.

The 2018 program made significant first term changes versus its predecessor. Advanced Reading/Writing split into separate Reading Skills 1 and Writing Skills 1 courses. Foreign Language 1 and Ataturk's History/Principles moved to this term. Effective Communication and Contextual Grammar were removed, while Educational Sociology was added. Despite increased courses from 8 to 10, credits decreased to 22. Reading Skills 1 targeted comprehending diverse materials and higher-level skills like identifying main ideas. Writing Skills 1 covered paragraph types/structure, features, and various writing genres. Courses emphasized contemporary reading, writing, listening, and oral communication competencies.

Table 1. 2018 ELTEP First Term Course Plan

Code	Course Name	T	P	C	ECTS
PK	Introduction to Education	2	0	2	3
PK	Educational Sociology	2	0	2	3
GC	Ataturk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution 1	2	0	2	3
GC	Foreign Language 1	2	0	2	3
GC	Turkish Language 1	3	0	3	5
GC	Information Technologies	3	0	3	5
FE	Reading Skills 1	2	0	2	2
FE	Writing Skills 1	2	0	2	2
FE	Listening and Pronunciation 1	2	0	2	2
FE	Oral Communication Skills 1	2	0	2	2

TOTAL	22	0	22	30
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PK: Professional Knowledge, GC: General Culture, FE: Field Education

The second term built on the first, with Word Knowledge removed and Structure of English added, seemingly replacing Contextual Grammar. Reading Skills 2 focused on top-down/bottom-up strategies and inferring direct/indirect meanings. Writing Skills 2 covered composition processes and genres. Listening/Pronunciation 2 targeted note taking, gathering details, identifying key points, using authentic materials. Oral Communication Skills 2 further developed higher-level speaking and listening abilities. Structure of English examined word and sentence structures and contextual usage. Changes maintained an emphasis on well-rounded English proficiency development.

Table 2. 2018 ELTEP Second Term Course Plan

Code	Course Name	T	P	C	ECTS
PK	Educational Psychology	2	0	2	3
PK	Educational Philosophy	2	0	2	3
GC	Ataturk's Principles and History of Turkish Revolution 2	2	0	2	3
GC	Foreign Language 2	2	0	2	3
GC	Turkish Language 2	3	0	3	5
FE	Reading Skills 2	2	0	2	2
FE	Writing Skills 2	2	0	2	3
FE	Listening and Pronunciation 2	2	0	2	3
FE	Oral Communication Skills 2	2	0	2	3
FE	Structure of English	2	0	2	2
	TOTAL	21	0	21	30

The third term increased total courses to 9 from 7, though decreased credits by 2. Notable changes included removing Turkish-English Translation and Oral Expression/Public Speaking. Turkish Education History moved to the next term. Educational Technology and Critical Reading/Writing were added. Learning/Teaching Approaches in English covered English teaching history, methods, classroom strategies, and cultural perspectives. English Literature 1 examined British/American literary backgrounds, genres, analysis, and interpretation. Linguistics 1 introduced basic linguistic analysis, language structures/systems, and variations. Critical Reading/Writing aimed to develop summarization, reporting, and synthesis abilities with scholarly texts. Changes reflected more critical thinking and technology integration goals

Table 3. 2018 ELTEP Third Term Course Plan

Code	Course Name	T	P	C	ECTS
PK	Educational Technologies	2	0	2	3
PK	Principles and Methods in Teaching	2	0	2	3
PK	Optional 1	2	0	2	4
GC	Optional 1	2	0	2	3
FE	Optional 1	2	0	2	4
FE	Approaches in English Language Learning and Teaching	2	0	2	3
FE	English Literature 1	2	0	2	4
FE	Linguistics 1	2	0	2	3

FE	Critical Reading and Writing	2	0	2	3
	TOTAL	18	0	18	30

The fourth term increased courses by 2 but decreased credits by 2. Notable updates include renaming Scientific Research Methods to Educational Research Methods and restructuring/renaming ELT Methodology I to Teaching Programs in English. Linguistics, Language Acquisition, and English Literature remained but had reduced credits. Teaching Programs in English covered concepts, history, content, outcomes, materials, assessment, and more regarding English teaching programs. Literature, Linguistics, and Acquisition courses continued prior goals. Changes maintained research and teaching programming foundations.

Table 4. 2018 ELTEP Fourth Term Course Plan

Code	Course Name	T	P	C	ECTS
FK	Turkish Education History	2	0	2	3
FK	Educational Research Methods	2	0	2	3
FK	Optional 2	2	0	2	4
GC	Optional 2	2	0	2	3
FE	Optional 2	2	0	2	4
FE	Teaching Programs in English Teaching	2	0	2	3
FE	English Literature 2	2	0	2	4
FE	Linguistics 2	2	0	2	3
FE	Language Acquisition	2	0	2	3
	TOTAL	18	0	18	30

A notable change was the addition of Morals and Ethics in Education under the teacher education category. Some field knowledge course names changed, but content remained similar to the 2006 program. The inclusion of ethics signifies an increased focus on teacher professionalism and values.

Table 5. 2018 ELTEP Fifth Term Course Plan

Code	Course Name	T	P	C	ECTS
FK	Classroom Management	2	0	2	3
FK	Moral and Ethics in Education	2	0	2	3
FK	Optional 3	2	0	2	4
GC	Optional 3	2	0	2	3
FE	Optional 3	2	0	2	4
FE	Teaching English to Young Learners 1	2	0	2	5
FE	Teaching English Language Skills 1	2	0	2	5
FE	Teaching Language and Literature 1	2	0	2	5
	TOTAL	2	0	2	3

The sixth term increased courses to 8 but decreased total credits to 18 versus the 2006 program. A major change was moving Turkish Education System and School Management from the eighth term in 2006 to this term. The sixth term largely continued the fifth term's focus, with

similar major field course content as the 2006 program. The earlier placement of the Turkish education course points to increased attention on understanding the local school context.

Table 6. 2018 ELTEP Sixth Term Course Plan

Code	Course Name	T	P	C	ECTS
FK	Testing and Evaluation in Education	2	0	2	3
FK	Turkish Education System and School Management	2	0	2	3
FK	Optional 4	2	0	2	4
GC	Optional 4	2	0	2	3
FE	Optional 4	2	0	2	4
FE	Teaching English to Young Learners 2	2	0	2	5
FE	Teaching English Language Skills 2	2	0	2	5
FE	Teaching Language and Literature 2	2	0	2	3
	TOTAL	18	0	18	30

The seventh term had 7 courses like 2006, but increased credits by 2. Second Foreign Language III was removed. School Experience was renamed Teaching Practice 1 with increased hours from 4 to 6. Material Development renamed Developing Course Content in English Teaching but maintained similar goals. A new Translation course combined prior Turkish-English and English-Turkish Translation. Changes reveal more emphasis on practical teaching experience and comparing Turkish/English structures.

Table 7. 2018 ELTEP Seventh Term Course Plan

Code	Course Name	T	P	C	ECTS
PK	Teaching Practice 1	2	6	5	10
PK	Education of Special Needed and Inclusion Teaching	2	0	2	3
PK	Optional 5	2	0	2	4
GC	Serving Society	1	2	2	3
FE	Optional 5	2	0	2	4
FE	Developing Course Content in English Teaching	3	0	3	3
FE	Translation	3	0	3	3
	TOTAL	15	8	19	30

With 5 courses, the eighth term had the fewest of any term, decreased by 2 from 2006. Updating Testing/Evaluation in Foreign Language Teaching to Preparing Exams in English Language Teaching was a main change. This course covered assessment types, principles, question formats, test construction, criteria, and analysis for various skills and ages. Reduced courses and the assessment focus signify consolidation of core teaching knowledge and skills.

Table 8. 2018 ELTEP Eighth Term Course Plan

Code	Course Name	T	P	C	ECTS
FK	Teaching Practice 2	2	6	5	15
FK	Guidance in Schools	2	0	2	3

FK	Optional 6	2	0	2	4
FE	Optional 6	2	0	2	4
FE	Preparing Exams in English Language Teaching	3	0	3	4
TOTAL		11	6	14	30

5.2. ELTEP 2018 Program evaluation

The study employed concurrent triangulation mixed method research design to explore Turkish teacher educators' reflections on ELTEP 2018. In concurrent designs, both qualitative and quantitative data are collected independently but simultaneously. The merging of these methods can occur at any research stage. Yin (2006) suggests purposeful and logical blending to avoid separate outcomes. Here, qualitative and quantitative data are sequentially collected but treated as parallel. After individual analysis, results are combined in the interpretation phase. This research aims to strengthen findings using both data types (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2012). Quantitative (Peacock's model-based questionnaire) and qualitative (semi-structured interview) data were sequentially collected and integrated in findings. This study aimed to address these research questions:

What are teacher educators' views on the new ELT teacher education program?

- Positive aspects identified?
- Negative aspects identified?

The study was conducted during the fall semester of the 2020-2021 Academic Year. To gather data from all state universities in Turkey, online surveys and interviews were carried out using Google Form and various instant messaging apps for the convenience of participants. A total of 437 academic individuals, including Professor Doctors, Associate Professors, Assistant Professors, Lecturers, and Research Assistants from English language teaching departments in state universities across Turkey, were invited to participate via email. Eventually, 80 academicians agreed to partake in the study. Detailed participant information is provided below.

Table 9. *Characteristics of the Participants*

According to Academic Title	Number (n/N)	Percentage (%)
Professor Doctor	10	12,5
Associate Professor	11	13,8
Assistant Professor	38	47,5
Lecturer	11	13,7
Research Assistant	10	12,5
According to Years in Profession		
1-5	4	5
5-10	26	32,5
10-15	13	16,2
15-20	5	6,3

20 and more	32	40
According to Age		
24-32	18	22,5
32-40	23	28,7
40-48	17	21,3
48-56	13	16,2
56 and more	9	11,3
According to Gender		
Female	49	61,3
Male	30	37,5
Prefer not to say	1	1,2

Among the 80 participants, 20 voluntarily provided additional comments in response to an open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire. Additionally, 6 out of the 80 participants agreed to be interviewed at a later time for their convenience. These semi-structured interviews were conducted with 2 professor doctors, 1 associate professor, and 3 assistant professors. The interviews took place online using participants' preferred communication applications. Initially, participants were informed about the study's purpose and ethical considerations. Subsequently, each participant responded to predetermined interview questions, with follow-up questions used to delve deeper into their responses. Interview durations ranged from 20 to 30 minutes, conducted in either Turkish or English. To ensure a comfortable environment for participants, all interviews were audio recorded, eliminating the need for note-taking. Following the interviews, the researcher transcribed and translated the content.

Peacock's survey was developed with the primary objective of identifying aspects of teacher education programs in need of enhancement or retention, as perceived by teacher educators within English language teacher education departments. Given the relatively limited popularity of teacher education, the need for consistent internal assessment within such programs is essential. Peacock (2009) created this survey based on the concept of program evaluation – the collection, analysis, and interpretation of information.

To evaluate programs based on desired outcomes, Peacock (2009) established a method by extracting relevant questions from literature. The procedure (Peacock, 2009) involves the following steps:

- Literature review to generate questions
- Identification of suitable data sources
- Design of data collection methods and tools
- Collection and analysis of each data set according to the questions
- Construction of a comprehensive account by connecting interpretations

To verify these evaluation steps, Peacock tested their effectiveness by assessing a TEFL program with program participants – students and teachers from the BA in TEFL in Hong Kong.

The questions applied to evaluate the TEFL program include:

- Does the program have a clearly stated philosophy?
- Does it reflect the program's philosophy?
- Does it encourage flexibility in using diverse teaching approaches?
- Does it foster the ability to use and adapt foreign language teaching materials?
- Does it balance received and experiential knowledge?
- Does it incorporate and encourage reflection on experiences and values, including the 'apprenticeship of observation'?
- Does it promote the skill of self-evaluation and reflection as a teacher?
- Does it encourage future reflective practice?
- Does it emphasize long-term, developmental learning to teach, promoting post-qualification growth?
- Does it ensure coherence among courses and prevent overlaps?
- Does it balance teacher- and student-centered learning?
- Does it prepare EFL teachers for their sociocultural working context?
- Does it strike a balance between linguistic, pedagogic, and managerial competence, with linguistic competence encompassing L2 proficiency and pedagogic competence referring to teaching skills and language knowledge?
- Is the program up-to-date?
- Do students believe the program addresses their needs and prepares them for classroom teaching?

Peacock's (2009) assessment tools had a significant impact and were employed in three other studies within the Turkish context (Coşkun & Daloğlu 2010; Demir, 2015; Salihoğlu, 2012). The questionnaire used in the current study was adapted from Coşkun and Daloğlu's (2010) study. Quantitative data underwent descriptive analysis, a process involving data simplification (Loeb et al., 2017). The data collected via questionnaires were analyzed using Google Office Suite applications to determine frequencies and percentages. The presentation focused solely on frequencies and percentages associated with questionnaire items, aligning with the practice of using responses from the majority for generalization purposes in descriptive data presentation. Each Likert-type item from the questionnaire was individually presented. For robust descriptive analysis, utilizing low-inference and low-assumption methods that require minimal statistical adjustments is crucial (Romero & Ventura, 2013). As a result, the dataset is free from any missing or excluded values.

Content analysis was employed to analyze the data gathered from interviews. Content analysis is the method of systematically and objectively identifying special attributes of messages for the purpose of making inferences. Content analysis serves as a research tool used to categorize particular phrases, arguments, or perspectives within specific qualitative data. Through content analysis, researchers can quantify and examine the meanings and relationships conveyed by specific words, themes, or concepts. This method can be applied to various sources of data, such as interviews, open-ended questions, field research notes, conversations, or any form of communicative language (Neuendorf, 2016).

5.2.1. Positive perspectives about the program

Table 10 shows the items that received more positive feedback than negative or neutral. To clearly demonstrate the results, strongly disagree and disagree responses were combined into a Negative category, while strongly agree and agree were combined into a Positive category.

Table 10. The items that gathered more positive responses

Items	Given statement in the questionnaire	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Item 6	The program is up-to-date.	32,6%	26,3%	41,3%
Item 14	The program teaches student teachers how to use foreign language teaching materials.	22,6%	28,7%	48,8%
Item 15	The program teaches student teachers how to adapt foreign language teaching materials.	28,8%	28,7%	42,5%
Item 17	The program teaches student teachers foreign language testing and evaluation skills.	25,1%	32,5%	42,6%
Item 23	The program has courses on contemporary issues in English (e.g ELF, Global English).	26,3%	26,3%	47,5%

It is evident from the table that despite a majority of respondents disagreeing that the program is up-to-date (32.6%), more still agreed that it is (41.3%). Nearly half responded positively that the program teaches how to use (48.8%) and adapt (42.5%) foreign language materials. Similarly, 42.6% agreed the program covers foreign language testing/evaluation skills. Finally, 47.5% felt the program includes courses on contemporary English issues like ELF and Global English. Although opinion was mixed, more teacher educators expressed positive views on the program teaching key competencies like materials use, adaptation, assessment, and addressing contemporary topics.

These issues were further discussed in the interviews. For instance, one teacher educator was very positive about the reduction of course hours in the 2018 ELTEP. His argument drew on the idea that the new generation cannot sustain their span of attention for a long time.

TE1: ...decreasing course time is something good since it is hard to have long time courses with new generation students...

A few teacher educators expressed their objection to separating the ELT programs for age groups, supporting the unified structure of the 2018 ELTEP.

TE5: I don't think we need a separation in English language teaching. It does not matter which grade they will teach because we always return to the beginning. We always teach at elementary or intermediate levels. No-one can reach to advance level. In terms of different age groups, we can handle this difference in micro-teachings in methodology courses.

When it comes to issues, such as learner autonomy and reflective thinking, some teacher educators noted that the development of such skills is the responsibility of student teachers rather than the program itself.

TE1: Students should say "I want to be a good teacher. This is my responsibility. I should be able to do this." by themselves. It is not just depending on the program.

TE6: Students are not autonomous... not everything is up to program

Some teacher educators seemed to be content with the *high number of elective courses*, especially on contemporary issues, such as World Englishes and Culture and Pragmatics, in the program. However, they warned that it is only favorable if the department has adequate number of teaching staff willing to offer these elective courses.

TE1: Having so many elective courses in the program can be something good for departments which have a plenty number of academicians but otherwise lecturers might experience rough times while trying to catch up more than one course.

5.2.2. Negative perspectives about the program

Table 11 below displays items that received more negative responses than positive or neutral. To clearly present the results, strongly disagree and disagree responses were combined into a Negative category, while strongly agree and agree were combined into a Positive category. Further analysis of each item is provided below.

Table 11. The items that gathered more negative responses

Items	Given statement in the questionnaire	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Item 3	The program gives students adequate training in English	%53,8	%25	%21,2
Item 4	The program gives students adequate training in teaching skills	%42,6	%26,3	%31,1
Item 5	The program gives students adequate training for the needs of the local context (Turkey)	%50	%33,8	%16,2
Item 7	The program encourages students to reflect on their past experiences as a language learner	%41,2	%36,3	%22,5
Item 8	The program encourages students to be reflective teacher (when they start teaching)	%45	%30	%25
Item 9	The program promotes flexibility in using different teaching practices for different situations	%38,8	%27,5	%33,8

Item 12	The program teaches students how to evaluate themselves as a teacher	%46,3	%40	%13,8
Item 13	The program teaches students classroom management skills	%38,8	%31,3	%30,1
Item 16	The program increases students' power of self-evaluation	%50	%37,5	%12,5
Item 18	The program is relevant to students' needs	%43,8	%26,2	%30
Item 19	The program has a good balance between the teaching of English, teaching skills, and classroom management skills	%43,8	%28,7	%27,6
Item 21	The program meets students' needs	%45,1	%33,8	%21,3
Item 22	The program prepares students to teach English at different levels of education. (Primary, secondary, and high school)	%47,6	%25	%27,4
Item 24	The practicum component of the program is sufficient for training students to teach English in schools	%48,8	%23,8	%27,6
Item 25	By the end of this program, students will be ready to teach English	%41,3	%35	%23,8

Table 11 shows several items received more negative than positive or neutral responses. Over half of the respondents disagreed that the program provides adequate English training (53.8%). Many also disagreed that it adequately covers teaching skills (42.6%), local context needs (50%), reflection as a language learner (41.2%), reflection as a teacher (45%), flexibility (38.8%), self-evaluation (46.3%), classroom management (38.8%), self-evaluation abilities (50%), relevance (43.8%), balance (43.8%), meeting student needs (45.1%), teaching at different levels (47.6%), sufficient practicum (48.8%), and readiness to teach (41.3%). The predominant disagreement across these items indicates that many teacher educators felt the program does not sufficiently develop key competencies like reflection, flexibility, classroom skills, localized training, and practicum experience.

The analysis of the interviews indicates that nearly all teacher educators expressed negative views towards ELTEP 2018. The majority of the teacher educators complained that the program is not relevant to their own needs nor student teachers' needs, due to *the lack of a needs analysis phase* at the outset.

TE2: ... I was invited the first leg of the seminars but we didn't report such things we didn't demand such things. Outcome is not in the way we desired...

TE4: ...We don't know who puts the courses in the curriculum... have they performed a need analysis? Does it make sense to change a curriculum depending on two people's thoughts? ...

Reduced course hours in the program were the most common complaint about the new program, with nearly all interviewed teacher educators commenting negatively except one. The main issue raised was not having adequate time to cover course content in sufficient detail.

TE5: ...we need more class hours but this program does the opposite. All courses are two hours now. it is like coming to class and saying hello then good bye. No time for warm-up or activities...

TE19: The class hours allocated for the courses offered are too limited to cover the course content.

Slightly over half of the interviewed teacher educators who provided additional details agreed that the content of some courses includes *unnecessary knowledge* that does not benefit student teachers.

TE1: ... it is such a waste of time in our department to have literature classes for the sake of literature. I mean starting from old English period and talking about sagas is something not useful. Maybe it can be like using texts for international communication...

TE4: ...Students are being filled with plenty of unnecessary information. Everything is theoretical. In the current program in contextual grammar (structure of English) course students learn terminologies such as ellipsis or parallelism, actually memorise, but they don't know how to create a if-clause sentence...

Student teachers in English language teaching departments can be appointed as teachers in primary, secondary or high schools in Turkey by passing an exam administered by the HEC. When asked about this *unified structure of the program*, the majority of teacher educators stated there should be separate training programs.

TE3: The program is not capable of preparing students for teaching at different age groups. For example, there is a course under the name of teaching English to young learners but there is not a course for adult teaching, disadvantaged group teaching and multicultural-multilingual classes teaching.

TE9: It can be better if it is separated. Adult teaching is really different compared to young learns. There is an inclination towards young learner teaching but adults and adolescences are totally neglected.

In Türkiye, student teachers must pass an exam assessing grammar, vocabulary, and reading to enroll in a university department. Because listening, writing, and speaking skills are not tested, students often do not prioritize developing these skills when preparing for the exam. All interviewed teacher educators complained about *how these skills are addressed* in the program.

TE6: ...how can students practice English if they do not have a chance to do so...

TE11: The proportion of field-specific courses are largely reduced in the overall programme which eventually has a negative impact on student teachers' both language and professional competency-building processes

TE17: The ELT program imposed on 2018-2019 academic year did not offer adequate time (class hours) to teach four language skills, thus, students will not have a chance to improve their language skills.

TE21: The program assumes that teacher trainees have got a good command of English... But we cannot blame it for those trainees whose English is not up to par.

Given its crucial role within the educational setting, *instructional materials* have garnered significant significance in the realm of education. Below are the viewpoints of teacher educators regarding the approach to material development within the program.

TE5: There is no detailed explanation and commands for this course... it is so rounded and dependent on educators.

TE7: Reduced course hours created a disadvantage by making content simpler and superficial. We can't demand creative things from students. I also bring simpler materials in my other courses because proficiency of my students is not enough to comprehend complex materials.

TE11: The program is too loose on covering that area. If educator is talented, there can be so many good outcomes otherwise it would be a disaster.

While *reflective teaching* is a sought-after concept in educational institutions, there exists a lack of consensus among teacher educators regarding its inclusion in the pre-service teacher education stage. A portion of teacher educators argue against its incorporation as a standalone course, advocating instead for its gradual integration across multiple courses. Conversely, a notable group of teacher educators asserts that reflective teaching should be formally integrated into the curriculum as a dedicated course, aiming to cultivate awareness and understanding among prospective educators.

TE1: Students should say "I want to be a good teacher. This is my responsibility. I should be able to do this." by themselves. It is not just depending on the program.

TE2: It is up to teacher educators in a way because not everything is related to program.

TE3: How much are our teacher educators in universities or teachers in schools ready for this kind of teaching? They go to classroom and say "it is like that, that is like this" ... today's students do not need knowledge. Knowledge is everywhere. What is important is to make them use the knowledge and field-specific courses should let this happen.

TE6: Students are not autonomous... not everything is up to program

TE8: New trends such as teacher autonomy, technology use, etc. should be included in the program.

ELTEP 2018 provides a range of *elective courses* within a selection pool, allowing students to choose based on their preferences following the first year. However, two primary concerns regarding the presentation of these elective courses have been raised, posing significant challenges according to statements from teacher educators. The initial major grievance pertains to the scarcity of academic personnel within departments, leading to difficulties in conducting impactful elective courses. The second concern revolves around the preparedness of student

teachers, as certain courses offered in the second year are considered too advanced for their current level of readiness.

TE4: Actually, elective courses are really important but we don't know who teaches these courses and what they do. There are fancy names here and there like "reading media content" but no-one knows what is going in classrooms

TE5: We couldn't offer most of the elective courses in our department because of lacking number of staff members. Ours were like "compulsory elective courses" but if we had enough academicians, it would be good.

TE11: Many core subjects are currently offered as electives, which means they can be taken at a stage of their training. This also makes it hard to build links between courses and also to achieve a staged and balanced progression of theory and practice

A number of teacher educators expressed the view that an ELTEP should include a dedicated course addressing Professional Development matters. They highlighted that within the student body, there are individuals whose enrollment in the department is influenced by external pressures from family members. This lack of intrinsic understanding about the gravity of the teaching profession has been observed to yield detrimental outcomes within the realm of education. To avert such challenges, these educators emphasized the necessity of acquainting student teachers with a comprehensive understanding of their professional identity, thereby mitigating potential issues and fostering a more informed approach to their teaching careers.

TE4: I totally would like to see a course about Professional Development in English language teaching education program

TE5: There is a need for a course about Professional Development. Our students seek for opportunities for personal development or professional development after their graduation

Türkiye, with its expansive geographical expanse, stands as a substantial nation in global comparison. Despite its efforts to implement a centralized education system uniformly across all regions, certain deficiencies persist in various parts of the country. When teacher educators were queried about strategies to address these challenges within the pre-service education phase, their responses coalesced into two main approaches. The first approach involves the incorporation of dedicated courses specifically addressing the unique issues faced in distinct locales. The second approach suggests the integration of discussions on these regional challenges within existing courses, albeit indirectly.

TE1: Education is very idealized in our classrooms. Everyone is motivated and happy. But for instance, classes in south-eastern part of Turkey are very crowded so student teachers should take an education considering these facts...

TE2: ... As you know there is no local concerns in the program. It is mostly projecting conceptual knowledge from U.S. ... we should deal with regional differences... now we have refugees in our classrooms...Here we send them to the schools that have ideal environment. I mean, not crowded, at the city center, everything is easy peasy...

TE4: Specifically, when they are appointed to schools during practicum stage, we shouldn't appoint them to qualified schools all the time. They can even go to a village school, if there is a chance...

Establishing *strong interconnections among program courses* emerged as a highly endorsed aspect among teacher educators. When queried about this matter, their responses clustered into two primary categories. The first category pertains to courses lacking proper linkage, leading to a disjointed learning experience. The second category involves the repetition of knowledge across different courses, which could potentially impede the depth of understanding and progression.

TE4: We offer courses separated from each other in one, two or three terms. There is no connection between them but there must be.

TE11: It is like repeating same things again and again... Turkish and English courses have same content most of the time...but it is related to field itself because it is relatively new compared to others field like philosophy.

Among the notable criticisms directed towards the published ELTEP in 2018, the *elimination of practical courses* stands as one of the two prominent concerns, the other being *the reduction in course hours*. Teacher educators further advocate for an augmentation of school-based practicum experiences, reflecting their belief that hands-on teaching practice within actual educational settings should be enhanced.

TE3: School experience course should be also added inside third grades both terms. Along with fourth year's first term in total 3 terms they can observe different age groups; primary school education, secondary school and high school.

TE5: Abolishment of practice hours is the most significant negative side of this program. Every course is theoretical. There is no application until fourth grade.

TE9: The new program seems to fail giving practice opportunities in many courses.

TE14: The hours for practical courses (i.e., Teaching English Language Skills) are less compared to the previous program.

Several teacher educators noted that certain prestigious universities in Turkey are able to deliver all their courses in English. However, they recognize that replicating this approach within their own departments is not feasible. For smaller-scale departments, it is crucial to offer a greater

number of courses in English, particularly those related to ELT. This emphasis on English-medium courses is paramount as it represents the primary opportunity for student teachers to be consistently immersed in the language.

TE14: The program needs to focus more on ELT-related courses. More courses are available in Turkish language. The areas need to be revised in favor of English Language Teaching related course offerings

TE8: New program is full of Turkish educational courses rather than English ones. More time should be devoted to English language teaching. Most of our students complained about little time for the intensive content of ELT.

5.2.3. Neutral views

Table 12 displays items that received more neutral responses than positive or negative. To clearly show the results, strongly disagree and disagree responses were combined as Negative, while strongly agree and agree were combined as Positive.

Table 12. The items that gathered more neutral responses

Items	Given statement in the questionnaire	Negative	Neutral	Positive
Item 1	The program has good linkage between different courses	%26,3	%41,3	%32,4
Item 2	The program avoids overlapping information between different courses	%28,7	%38,8	%32,5
Item 10	The program balances teacher-centred and student-centred learning on its courses	%35,1	%40	%24,9
Item 11	The program teaches students how to teach English	%23,7	%38,8	%37,4
Item 20	The program prepares students to teach English in the classroom	%35	%30	%35

It is evident from the table that over 40% were neutral on whether the program has good course linkage (41.3%) and avoids overlapping information (38.8%). Respondents were also largely split on if the program balances teacher- vs student-centered learning (40% neutral) and prepares for classroom teaching (30% neutral). The high neutral ratings indicate uncertainty among teacher educators regarding how well the program aligns and sequences courses, provides coherent information, incorporates varied teaching approaches, and prepares students for classrooms.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to reveal teacher educators' perspectives on the 2018 ELTEP mandated by the HEC. The quantitative results showed that educators were largely dissatisfied, indicating

implementers are unhappy with the mandated program. The high percentage of neutral questionnaire responses also suggests divided opinions and gaps in the new program.

Regarding positives, around half viewed the program as up-to-date, likely due to new elective courses on contemporary issues like World Englishes. This aligns with calls to incorporate sociolinguistics in teacher training (e.g. Bayyurt & Akcan, 2016; Karakaş & Boonsuk, 2020). Many also agreed that the program teaches materials use, adaptation, and assessment skills. This echoes past student teacher feedback (e.g. Coşkun & Daloğlu, 2010; Demir, 2015; Yavuz & Topkaya, 2013) and highlights the need for modern evaluation methods (Kırkgöz, 2016; Akcan, 2005).

However, there were few positive open-ended or interview comments. One stated the program assumes adequate English proficiency, while another felt reduced hours suit shorter student attention spans, supporting learner-centeredness. Unlike this study, previous research often regarded reduced hours negatively, especially for language skills, thinking, research, and teaching practice (e.g. Coşgun-Ögeyik, 2009; Hişmanoğlu, 2012; Yavuz & Topkaya, 2013).

Participants held largely negative perspectives, disagreeing with 15 of 25 questionnaire items. Most critically, 58.3% felt the program does not sufficiently develop student teachers' skills, explaining why many do not believe that students will be fully ready to teach by completion (41.3%). This reflects reduced language course hours, negatively impacting development (42.6%) as prior research also found (Karakaş, 2012; Karakaş & Yavuz, 2018; Yavuz & Topkaya, 2013). Many (47.6%) agreed the program does not prepare teaching across levels, as courses are imbalanced with decreased language/field credits but increased pedagogical/cultural credits. Consequently, many saw the program as irrelevant to student (43.8%) and local (50%) needs, since English courses comprise less than 50% of total courses, reducing exposure versus previously. This lack of balance was felt to hinder using varied teaching practices (38.8%). The teaching practice component was deemed weakest, limited to one final year, likely because practical application is lacking (Seferoğlu, 2006) and the program adheres to an applied science model (Ur, 1992; Wallace, 1991). Reflective skills development was also viewed inadequately, not preparing reflective teachers (45%), building self-evaluation (46.3%), or reflecting on past learning (41.2%). As in Hişmanoğlu (2012), higher thinking skills are not strongly cultivated. In summary, teacher educators criticized reduced practical components, course balance and sequencing, hours, and reflective skills training, desiring improvements in these areas.

The findings of the study on teacher educators' perspectives on the ELTEP also offers several implications. They can be listed as follows:

- Teacher trainers should help develop programs, providing practical knowledge.
- Skills course credits/hours should increase in year one, as student English levels vary.
- More practical courses and expanded teaching practice are needed, versus just the final year.
- Courses should prepare teachers for all education levels.
- Higher thinking and reflection should be integrated throughout the program.
- More practical and reflective models should replace the theoretical, knowledge-first model.

In summary, teacher trainers advocate for more practical training, skills development, teaching practice, critical thinking cultivation, and reflective models in redesigning the teacher preparation program.

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