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CURRICULUM & TEACHING STUDIES | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Evaluation of the latest English language teacher training programme in Turkey: Teacher trainees' perspective

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Abstract: The present study evaluated the latest English Language Teacher Training Programme in Turkey from the viewpoint of students who were enrolled on the programme for a period of four years. Participants were 90 last year students who were enrolled in the English Language Teaching department at Uludag University, Turkey. Data were collected by means of a questionnaire which contained the inventory of programme courses, each of which was rated by the students regarding three criteria: the contribution of the given course(s) to (1) the "personal" development of the students, the contribution of the given course(s) to (2) the "professional" development of the students, and (3) whether the students think that "the course(s) provided them with theoretical and practical knowledge applicable during their active teaching life". The participants were also asked to rate whether the course contents or course lecturers/instructors contributed more to their development. Additionally, student opinions about their education, the courses and the lecturers/instructors were gathered by means of an interview form. Results suggested that the latest English Language Teacher Training Programme (ELTTP) is not the exact source of knowledge and skills that will meet the needs and interests of the teacher trainees. The findings propose that programmes should be structured in such a way that they not only meet the needs of the students and society but also provide practical and beneficial contents to the individuals.

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

The present study points to the educational programs as a fundamental and important issue in higher education. The paper highlights that prior to discussing the eligibility of graduated professionals, initially it would be more accurate and beneficial to look at the processes and procedures that the learners go through. The study involved the learners in the evaluation of the educational program that they were enrolled in to reach conclusions related to the efficacy of the total process and procedures. Findings suggest that the current FL teacher training program falls far short of meeting teacher trainees' professional/academic expectations and satisfying their personal needs. It was also notable that some of the courses that were newly included in the program were regarded as very ineffective or useless, which indicates that the program has been prepared regardless of the opinions, needs and expectations of the stakeholders.

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Subjects: Assessment; Curriculum; Education Policy; Higher Education; Modern Foreign Languages; Pedagogy; Schools & Schooling

1. Introduction

1.1. Programme Evaluation

Although primarily intended for the management and business sector, programme evaluation has been a popular field of investigation within educational environments, within which Language Programme Evaluation (LPE) has occupied an important part. LPE has a key role in and continuous interaction with particularly applied linguistics research. Lynch (Lynch, 1996, p. 176) asserted that LPE benefits from some specific fields of applied linguistics such as "second language acquisition", "classroom-centred research" and "language testing" as well as from "social and political bases for language use" and "philosophy of science". The aim was to inform about the objectives, processes and outcomes of a given language programme, as a result of which the effectiveness and quality of the components of a programme might be determined, and/or compared with another one.

The focus, methodology and measures of LPE vary in parallel with the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the inquirer(s). That is to say, the position to adopt depends on whether the researcher(s) takes a positivistic or naturalistic approach—a qualitative or quantitative paradigm, in other words. Since each paradigm has its own distinctive designs, data and analyses, both the process and outcomes are to vary and be distinguished from one another. However, the combination of these two paradigms, which is known as *triangulation* in the literature, is possible, although it is not an easy task. Patton (2002, pp. 247–248) exemplified how they can be mixed, referring to this as *mixed methodological strategies*. According to his framework, some technical aspects are to be adopted in order to enable for instance, naturalistic interpretation that would be preceded by positivistic data collection or vice versa, which might be followed by additional kinds of data collection for further investigation of a given situation or condition.

Various types of evaluation models have been utilised as the need to carry out systematic analyses has emerged in education. Some major types of programme evaluation offered by McNamara (2006) are the *goals-based evaluation*, which aims at assessing to what extent the pre-determined goals or objectives are met by the programme; *process-based evaluation*, which aims at revealing how a programme works; and *outcomes-based evaluation*, which focuses on the ultimate results or product(s) that a programme is to cultivate. Although there are also other types of programme evaluation (see Owen, 2007, pp. 40–48 for further information) and the terminology differs greatly, it would be possible to articulate that evaluations are either *formative* (concentrating on the process) or *summative* (concentrating on the end product), or both.

Further and more technical information about the programme evaluation models, data collection types and analyses, occupied techniques, triangulation procedures, stakeholder issues, etc. will not be provided herein as the scope of the present study is limited to the educational effect of the language programmes. So, the review of literature will concentrate mostly on the studies which have evaluated different types of educational and/or language programmes.

1.2. Some Studies on Educational/Language Programme Evaluation

The earliest studies concentrated either on discussing some ideological, social and political issues, or on assisting potential language teachers in their quest for the best and most appropriate training programmes, or in developing new models, which adopted existing programme evaluation models and adapted them for the evaluation of educational and language programmes (e.g. Collins, 1992; Grosse & Benseler, 1991; Lynch, 1990). As the potential of evaluation and assessment has been discovered and validated within the educational environments, interest in this area has increased.

A great abundance of research into various aspects of educational programme evaluation has been carried out both abroad (e.g. Angell, DuBravac, & Gonglewski, 2008; Dunworth, 2008; Fox & Diaz-Greenberg, 2006; Harris, 2009; Lee, Altschuld, & Hung, 2008; Llosa & Slayton, 2009; Lozano, Sung, Padilla, & Silva, 2002, 2004; Luke & Britten, 2007; Peacock, 2009; Rivera & Matsuzawa, 2007; Rolstad, Mahoney, & Glass, 2005; Romeo & Dyer, 2004; Sullivan, 2006) and in Turkey (e.g. Biyik, 2007; Coskun, 2009; Er, 2006; Erdem, 2009; Güven & Iscan, 2006; Oguz, 2009; Uslu, 2006; Yildiz, 2001; Yilmaz, 2005; Zehir Topkaya & Kücük, 2010) within the last decade. Nonetheless, none of the mentioned studies investigated the ELTTP from the viewpoint of the present study, that is to say, whether the programme meets and satisfies the needs of the teacher trainees, and to what degree helpful has been each course in the ELTTP with regard to the sufficiency and efficiency of the lecturers/instructors, the contents of the given courses, and their practicality. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill the gap in the literature by investigating these aspects from the view of the students.

Romeo and Dyer (2004) mentioned that designing a language programme is a difficult task since it is hard to achieve a balance between the "desired ideals" and the "limited realities", as it is impossible to keep under control all the factors related to time, creativity and expertise. Luke and Britten (2007) discussed the incremental impact of technological innovations on foreign language teacher education (FLTE) programmes. Biyik (2007) evaluated the distance English Language Teaching (ELT) programme in Turkey and revealed that it was insufficient in training English teachers. Uslu (2006) researched the effect of a 40-credit elective English course on the field education of teacher trainees in the German Language Teaching Department and concluded that the high number of English courses affects students' German proficiency level negatively. Er (2006) evaluated the 4th and 5th grade primary school English curricula and produced recommendations related to the objectives, contents, teaching-learning processes and evaluation of the programme. Likewise, Zehir Topkaya and Kücük (2010) investigated primary school English language teachers' opinions about the new 4th and 5th grade ELT programme and concluded that teachers have some serious concerns related to the specific parts of the programme, which they believed had to be restructured and improved.

Similarly, Erdem (2009) compared the Turkish language curriculum for primary schools to Ireland's equivalent curriculum and commented that the language curriculum in Ireland aimed to teach the language so that learners might practise it, which he stated as the main difference between the two curriculums. In the same way, Coskun (2009) compared the FLTE programmes of Turkey and Germany and recommended that both programmes needed to be updated, and that the German FLTE programme should be concerned more with intercultural dimensions. Again, Rivera and Matsuzawa (2007) investigated student perspectives on the first two years of the foreign language programme and found that the programme generally met the needs and interests of the students. However, there was need for a clearer determination of programme goals related to culture and a careful review of the instructional methods. Their findings also indicated critical differences in learning priorities and learning styles between students in commonly taught languages and those in less commonly taught languages, which also needed to be considered more seriously. In addition, Dunworth (2008) examined the management of transnational English language teaching programmes in the higher education sector in Indonesia and Mauritius, and identified those activities that both facilitate and inhibit good practice. She commented that issues of communication and culture, principles and values, and capacity and resources were the key management issues, which especially needed to be addressed consciously and transparently. Moreover, Fox and Diaz-Greenberg (2006) tried to reveal how pedagogical issues and multicultural education might help meet the challenges that language teachers around the world experience. They also drew attention to some of the complexities that exist in the integration of cultural standards in FLTE programmes and some of the challenges faced in their implementation.

Lozano et al. (2004) reported that professional development programmes prepared for language teachers increased opportunities to strengthen academic content knowledge and develop teacher leadership skills. They also observed that participants incorporated workshop materials in their classroom teaching. Similarly, Hardin et al. (2010) investigated the effect of a professional

development programme, the results of which indicated that the programme supported teachers in their efforts to be responsive to English-language learners. Results also indicated that teachers were in need of continued support, especially when working with linguistically and culturally diverse children and their families. Rolstad et al. (2005) presented a meta-analysis of programme effectiveness research on English-language learners, and concluded that bilingual education programmes are effective in promoting academic achievement, and that educational policy should allow and encourage the development and implementation of bilingual education programmes.

Angell et al. (2008) examined the process by which college-level FL programmes evaluate and select instructional materials for courses. They indicated that there is a need for greater transparency and a broader professional discussion of this matter in language learning and teaching as participation of more stakeholders tended to provide more informative results. Harris (2009) reported on LPEs in Ireland and proposed ways to maximise contributions to critical decisions on language policy and educational practice. Again, Llosa and Slayton (2009) discussed how programme evaluation could be carried out and disseminated, so that it would be meaningful to English-language learners, other stakeholders and policy-makers. Güven and Iscan (2006) traced the reflections of the new elementary education curriculum on media in Turkey, and observed that the changes were not carefully conceptualised, and thus, that dissemination was not effective.

1.3. An Approach to FLTE evaluation

Peacock (2009) introduced a new methodology for FLTE programmes, claiming that the literature contained very few descriptions related to overall FLTE programme evaluation. Kiely and Rea-Dickins (2005, pp. 161–162) mentioned that there is a tradition, specifically in the USA, of using student satisfaction questionnaires at the end of courses, and added that student evaluation of teaching in higher education has been used as a management tool in American universities for several decades.

The present study adopted a similar approach. Individual course satisfaction questionnaires were not applied, but students were asked to evaluate all courses together rather than separately. In this way, they were also able to think critically and compare the benefit they derived from each course of the programme. This study aimed at revealing to what extent the latest English Language Teacher Training Programme (ELTTP) in Turkey has satisfied the needs of the students, and to find out to what degree the teacher trainees benefited from the education they have received in becoming effective professionals. Research questions were as follows:

(1) Which courses in the ELTTP are regarded as more or less beneficial by the students?

(2) To what degree did the programme (courses in the ELTTP) help students develop personally and professionally?

(3) Are the course contents or course lecturers/instructors regarded as more effective in contributing to student development?

2. Method

The present study adopted both the positivistic and naturalistic [note that the naturalistic view should not be confused with naturalism, which is a philosophy that is closer to positivism (Uzun, 2015, p. 17)] philosophical approaches in data collection and analyses. Triangulation was achieved through combining quantitative as well as qualitative research methodologies.

2.1. Participants

The participants were 90 fourth (last) year students in the English Language Teaching (ELT) Department at Uludag University, who were randomly selected and represented 36% of the total population of the last year students in the department. Their age ranged between 21 and 25 (the mean age was 23). The GPA mean of females was 2,80, whilst that of males was 2,52 out of a possible 4,00. The L1 of all participants was Turkish and they have all learnt English as a foreign

language (L2). Furthermore, 37 of the participants reported that they also knew beginner level German, French or Russian. The demographic background of the students portrayed similar socio-economic and linguistic levels.

2.2. Instruments

The data were conducted by means of a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) and an interview form (see Appendix 2) that were prepared by the researcher. The interview form contained open-ended questions about the impact of their education, related to the contribution of the courses to their personal and professional improvement, and about the contribution of the lecturers/instructors to their development in contrast to the contribution of the ELTTP.

The questionnaire contained the courses of the latest ELTTP, which comprised 11 first grade, 12 second grade, 10 third grade and 11 fourth grade courses. The courses that were given in two or three semesters (e.g. Bilgisayar I-II / *Computing I and II*, İleri Okuma Yazma I-II / *Advanced Reading and Writing I and II*, etc.) were presented on the same line. The participants received the course names as in their course registration forms. In other words, all instructions and course names were given in Turkish to avoid any contradiction related to the course names. Students were asked to rate the courses regarding three criteria: (1) the contribution of the given course(s) to the "personal" development of the student; (2) the contribution of the given course(s) to the "professional" development of the student and (3) whether the student thinks of "applying or using the things he has learnt in the course(s) during his/her active teaching life". The participants were asked to give a point between 1 (less) and 5 (more) to each line of course(s) considering the total contribution of the course to each of the mentioned three aspects.

In the interview form, the participants were asked to provide information about their GPAs and gender. Their opinions related to the contribution of the content of the courses and the lecturers/instructors of the courses were elicited by the help of the interview, which was organised around four items/questions. By the help of the interview form, student opinions related to whether the content or the lecturers/instructors of the courses have been more effective in contributing to their personal and professional development were collected as well as a crosscheck ensured with regard to the most and least beneficial courses; while also their general opinions about the ELTTP and the total education provided to them were evaluated.

2.3. Procedure

The study was implemented in two stages. First, the questionnaire was applied to the ninety volunteer students who were from four different fourth grade classes. This procedure formed the positivistic-quantitative side of the study; and second, the interview sessions were done with the students, and this step constituted the naturalistic-qualitative side of the study.

2.3.1. Data Collection

The study was conducted during the last two weeks at the end of the spring semester. The researcher was an outsider (for the participants) in this study. He had not given any lectures to any of the participants, nor was he in a position to rate them in the following period of time. So, the students were comfortable in expressing their true opinion about the contribution of the courses and comparing the effect of course contents and lecturers.

The questionnaire was handed to the volunteer students ($n = 90$) in two day and two evening classes. They were informed that their responses would be used in a research that aims at evaluating the effect of the ELTTP, and relatedly, the education that was offered to them by the authorities. Each student was allowed as much time as needed for careful completion of the questionnaire. The participants were not allowed to talk to one another during the application of the questionnaire, in order to eliminate the possibility of affecting one another's opinions. The procedure took approximately 7–15 min for each student. In addition, the participants were handed an interview sheet by which their opinions about the effectiveness of their education were elicited in relation to the

courses they took in the programme that they were enrolled in, and about the contribution of the lecturers/instructors to their development as well. The interview session took approximately 5–7 min for each student.

The data collection tools were validated by applying them to two professionals and two students (in the ELT department at Uludag University). After partial correction and modification, the final versions of the tools were prepared and used. Concerns related to the reliability of the tools might be tested and assured by utilising them in other studies.

2.3.2. Data Analyses

The responses of each student regarding the three statements [(a) the following course(s) contributed to my personal development; (b) the following course(s) contributed to my professional development and (c) I think/believe that I will use the knowledge I received from the following course during my active teaching life] indicated for each course or pair of courses were entered into a data processing programme and total points as well as the mean scores were calculated. The total numbers revealed to what degree each course or set of courses that were included in the new ELTTP contributed to the mentioned three aspects.

The criteria of evaluation of the results were determined on a scale of 1 to 5 similarly to the Likert scale as in the questionnaire as follows: (1) Inefficient, (2) Poor, (3) Moderate, (4) Efficient, (5) Very efficient

Therefore, prior to analysing the results, it was determined that any record below 4 would be evaluated as an indicator of insufficient efficiency, while 4 and over would count as adequate and efficient.

In addition, the interview data were examined and subjected to content analysis. The course ratings with regard to questions 1 and 2 were counted and calculated as well as grouped considering the GPAs and genders of the participants. The responses given with regard to question 3 were added in the analyses in order to gain a holistic idea related to each student and his/her opinions. Similarly, responses given with regard to question 4 were read and the basic opinions as well as the most commonly shared thoughts were interpreted by the researcher and grouped under specific headlines.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Quantitative Results (Questionnaire Data)

The results obtained from the questionnaire of the present study are presented in Table 1. The mean scores of the courses regarding the three conditions (contribution to personal development—*CtoPerD*, contribution to professional development—*CtoProD*, and belief that the course knowledge will be used in the active teaching life—*KtoUse*) are provided with the total mean (*Total M*) scores of each course.

It was notable that, on the one hand, six courses, namely Approaches to ELT, Teaching English to Young Learners, Testing and Evaluation, Language Teaching Materials Adaptation and Development, School Experience, and Teaching Practice were given the highest marks by the students, the means of all of which were over 4 out of a possible 5. It was also remarkable that the School Experience and Teaching Practice courses were on the top of all courses regarding all three conditions that were measured. These results clearly indicate that the courses which provide students with the opportunity to "practise" or to create and develop some kind of workable products or materials that could be utilised in real classroom conditions were seen as the most contributory. Therefore, it is important to take this finding seriously while preparing or developing language programmes. On the other hand, another group of nine courses (Turkish I: Writing—Turkish II: Speaking, English Literature I-II, Language Acquisition, The History of Turkish Education, Poetry Analysis, Elective I—Pragmatics, Discourse Analysis, Comparative Education, and Turkish Educational System and School Management) were the lowest scored ones, the ratings of all of which were below 3 out of 5.
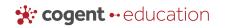
Table 1. The mean scores of the courses regarding the three conditions				
course names	**Mean scores**			
	CtoPerD	**CtoProD**	**KtoUse**	**Total M**
Atatürk ilkeleri ve Devrim Tarihi I-II				
Atatürk's Principles and the History of Turkish Revolution I-II	3.56	3.08	3.16	3.26
Bilgisayar I-II				
Computing I-II	3.6	3.72	3.68	3.66
Eğitim Bilimine Giriş				
Introduction to Educational Sciences	3.04	3.40	3.16	3.2
Bağlamsal Dilbilgisi I-II				
Contextual Grammar I-II	2.88	3.24	3.60	3.24
İleri Okuma ve Yazma I-II				
Advanced Reading and Writing I-II	2.86	3.17	3.26	3.09
Dinleme ve Sesletim I-II				
Listening and Pronunciation I-II	3.08	3.92	3.88	3.62
Sözlü İletişim Becerileri				
Oral Communication Skills I-II	3.60	3.56	3.76	3.64
Etkili İletişim Becerileri				
Effective Communication Skills	2.92	3.00	3.52	3.14
Türkçe I: Yazılı Anlatım - Türkçe II: Sözlü Anlatım				
Turkish I: Writing - Turkish II: Speaking	2.48	2.64	2.64	2.58*
Eğitim Psikolojisi				
Psychology of Education	3.36	3.56	3.52	3.48
Sözcük Bilgisi				
Vocabulary Acquisition	2.91	3.04	3.12	3.02
İngiliz Edebiyatı I-II				
English Literature I-II	3.2	2.84	2.76	2.93*****
Dilbilim I-II				
Linguistics I-II	3.44	3.68	3.16	3.42
İngilizce Öğretiminde Yaklaşımlar I-II				
Approaches to ELT I-II	**4.32**	**4.52**	**4.64**	**4.49**
İngilizce-Türkçe Çeviri				
English-Turkish Translation	3.16	3.24	3.28	3.22
Anlatım Becerileri				
Oral Expression and Public Speaking	3.28	3.48	3.88	3.54
Türk Eğitim Tarihi				
The History of Turkish Education	2.24	2.16	2.12	2.17*****
Öğretim İlke ve Yöntemleri				
Principles and Methods in Teaching	3.48	3.6	3.84	3.64
Nutuk				
Atatürk's Principles and the History of Turkish Revolution III	3.40	3.08	3.28	3.25
Dil Edinimi				
Language Acquisition	2.52	2.64	2.64	2.51*
Bilimsel Araştırma Yöntemleri				
Research Methodology	3.16	3.28	3.04	3.16

(Continued)

Table 1. (*Continued*)				
course names	**Mean scores**			
	CtoPerD	**CtoProD**	**KtoUse**	**Total M**
Özel Öğretim Yöntemleri I-II				
ELT Methodology I-II	3.20	3.44	3.40	3.34
Öğretim Teknolojileri ve Materyal Tasarımı				
Educational Technologies and Materials Design	3.52	3.76	4.00	3.76
Çocuklara Yabancı Dil Öğretimi I-II				
Teaching English to Young Learners I-II	**4.40**	**4.60**	**4.60**	**4.53**
Dil Becerilerinin Öğretimi I-II				
Teaching Language Skills I-II	3.08	3.44	3.32	3.28
Kısa Öykü İnceleme ve Dil Öğretimi				
Short Story Analysis and Teaching	3.48	3.32	3.40	3.40
İkinci Yabancı Dil I-II-III				
Second Foreign Language I-II-III	3.76	3.48	2.84	3.36
Şiir İnceleme				
Poetry Analysis	3.24	2.72	2.36	2.77*
Sınıf Yönetimi				
Classroom Management	3.56	3.88	3.80	3.74
Türkçe - İngilizce Çeviri				
Turkish-English Translation	3.36	3.28	3.04	3.22
Roman İnceleme ve Dil Öğretimi				
Novel Analysis and Teaching	3.68	3.52	3.16	3.45
Topluma Hizmet Uygulamaları				
Social Services	3.40	2.80	2.80	3.00
Ölçme ve Değerlendirme				
Testing and Evaluation	**3.88**	**4.16**	**4.24**	**4.09**
Yabancı Dil Öğretimi ve Materyal İnceleme ve Geliştirme				
Language Teaching Materials Adaptation and Development	**3.60**	**4.47**	**4.64**	**4.24**
Edimbilim				
Elective I (Pragmatics)	2.30	2.47	2.17	2.31*
Okul Deneyimi				
School Experience	**4.65**	**5.00**	**5.00**	**4.88**
Rehberlik				
Guidance	3.47	3.56	3.73	3.58
Özel Eğitim				
Special Education	2.95	3.14	3.09	3.06
Yabancı Dil Öğretiminde Ölçme ve Değerlendirme				
Foreign Language Testing	3.50	3.88	4.02	3.80
Bilgisayar Destekli Dil Öğretimi				
Computer Assisted Language Learning	3.64	3.60	3.75	3.66
Söylem Çözümlemesi				
Discourse Analysis	2.30	2.42	2.10	2.27
Karşılaştırmalı Eğitim				
Comparative Education	2.01	2.12	2.24	2.12
Türk Eğitim Sistemi ve Okul Yönetimi				

(*Continued*)

course names	Mean scores			
	CtoPerD	CtoProD	KtoUse	Total M
Turkish Educational System and School Management	2.22	2.25	2.44	2.3
Öğretmenlik Uygulaması				
Teaching Practice	**4.80**	**5.00**	**5.00**	**4.93**
Total mean of the three conditions	**3.28**	**3.39**	**3.38**	**3.00**

Table 1. (*Continued*)

*See YÖK Website for the definitions of the course contents.

Among all, the course with the highest contribution and benefit rating was Teaching Practice, which shared its standing with the School Experience course, and the least useful one was reported to be The History of Turkish Education (4.93, 4.88 and 2.17 out of 5 respectively). Indeed, the course with the lowest rating was one of the new courses that were included in the latest ELTTP. The other new courses were "Special Education" and "Social Services" the ratings of which were just on the borderline of three or slightly above (3 and 3.06 out of 5, respectively). Therefore, it seems possible to speculate that the latest ELTTP requires undergoing a strong programme evaluation process, in order to include the views of all stakeholders and their needs, and to consider the concerns of every party that is interested in the outcome(s) of the programme. Discussion centred on the other lowly rated courses (Turkish I: Writing—Turkish II: Speaking, English Literature I-II, Language Acquisition, Poetry Analysis, and Elective I—Pragmatics, Discourse Analysis, Comparative Education, and Turkish Educational System and School Management) are provided in the "interview results" section of the present study.

Another observation was that when generally evaluated, the latest ELTTP seemed to be more successful in improving the professional development of the students, with regard to *Research Question 2,* rather than improving their personal development. The discontent of the students was observed saliently in the personal development mean scores ($m = 3.28$), which cannot be stated as high considering the total possible 5.00. It was consolidated by the data obtained from the questionnaire which showed that the personal satisfaction and development of the students was lower compared to their professional development ($m = 3.39$), both of which however were below the satisfactory threshold. Besides, one might comment that the programme is not very effective altogether as the mean score of the three conditions ($m = 3.00$) is below the threshold of 4.00. An ideal and sufficient as well as influential programme should provide results that would be in the range of 4.00 and 5.00 out of 5.00.

Additionally, it was determined that the majority of the students were satisfied more with the lecturers/instructors rather than the course contents, regardless of their GPAs and/or genders. Table 2 presents the related numerical findings as follows.

Depending on the data presented in Table 2, it would be possible to make an interpretation that the course contents were regarded as insufficient since a significant majority of the participants ($n = 61$) pointed out that compared to the course contents, the course lecturers/instructors contributed more to their personal and professional development, which constituted 81% of the total group of participants. Only 19% of the students ($n = 14$) reported that course contents were more effective. These findings suggest that the courses as well as the course contents should be revised and restructured, so that students can enjoy the greatest benefit that is provided by the ELTTP. In that way, not only students' appreciation but also the effect of the courses might be assured.

Table 2. Genders and GPAs of the participants in relation to the effectiveness of course contents and lecturers/instructors.							
Gender	GPA	Number of students	Percentage	Course content	Percentage	Course lecturers / instructors	Percentage
Male	Below 1.99	2	8	1	50	1	50
	1.99–2.49	9	36	1	11	8	89
	2.50–3.00	11	44	2	18	9	82
	Above 3.00	3	12	0	0	3	100
Female	Below 1.99	2	4	1	50	1	50
	1.99–2.49	15	30	4	27	11	73
	2.50–3.00	22	44	4	18	18	82
	Above 3.00	11	22	1	9	10	91
	Total	75	100	14	19	61	81

Considering the gender and GPA factors, it was observed that there were no significant differences between the opinions of the students who were academically more successful and those who had lower grades, except the male and female participants who were in the range of 1.99 and 2.49 GPA levels. While in all other GPA levels both male and female groups revealed similar inclinations and percentages towards the advantage of course lecturers/instructors, approximately 16% difference was observed in the 1.99 and 2.49 GPA levels between male and female groups. The opinions of male participants (89%) were in favour of the course lecturers/instructors with relation to *Research Question 3*, which was in accordance with the opinions of the female participants (73%), although not stated that strongly. The explanation of the 16% difference might be the number of the female participants (*n* = 15) which was almost two times more than that of the males (*n* = 9), thus producing a numerically obtrusive picture. Note that the number of female students that created this percentage was just 4 out of a total of 15. The same number for the males group was 1 out of 9.

3.2. Qualitative Results (Interview Data)

The interview data provided parallel results with the questionnaire findings. All responses of the participants concerning the four interview questions were synthesised and are presented in the following. Interview questions 1 and 2 are specifically concerned with *Research Question 1*. The courses that were named by 10 students or more were examined further and discussed as follows:

Interview question 1. *Please write down the names of the courses that you have benefited from most during your education together with the reasons if possible.*

Teaching English to Young Learners (*f* = 14)

Approaches to ELT (*f* = 12)

School Experience (*f* = 15)

Language Teaching Materials Adaptation and Development (*f* = 13)

Testing and Evaluation (*f* = 10)

Oral Communication Skills (*f* = 11)

Oral Expression and Public Speaking (*f* = 11)

Second Foreign Language (French/German) (*f* = 10)

Teaching Practice (*f* = 15)

Among the 15 students who were interviewed, all responded that School Experience and Teaching Practice were the most effective and beneficial courses they have had. They also added that it was

not because of the lecturers or instructors but mostly because of the content of the course. They had lots of opportunities for practice and real-life observation that were good for establishing connections with their theoretical knowledge. They indicated that thanks to the mentioned courses, they felt like real teachers during their education which improved their confidence and desire to move further. Additionally, they stated that these two courses were the least boring ones for them.

Teaching English to Young Learners was the next most frequently indicated course. Students expressed that the lecturer of the course who was also the lecturer of the Approaches to ELT course was an extremely strict one, but contributed a lot nevertheless. Most of the students also stated that the Language Teaching Materials Adaptation and Development course provided them with the opportunity to discover and use their creativity, a comment which they also stated for the Teaching English to Young Learners course. They also added that it was a pleasant experience to exhibit the materials that they have developed, which was an annually repeated activity in the department. However, a few participants also pointed out that most of the materials were not very convenient or practical or that they had serious concerns about the applicability of the materials they had developed, and that it was quite a demanding task in terms of time and money.

The Testing and Evaluation course was seen as important because they thought that preparing exams and applying those was unavoidable in education, and thus, they benefited from this course. They strongly believed that they would need the knowledge gained from this course in their professional lives. The Oral Communication Skills and Oral Expression and Public Speaking courses were regarded as very beneficial since they did not have much opportunity to practise the language (English) that they were to teach, and these courses provided them with the opportunity to give short presentations and speak the language.

The Second Foreign Language course was either French or German for the students of the ELT department. The participants declared that they had specific interest in languages, and as they were free of worry about being tested it was fun to study languages other than English. However, they also emphasised that the availability of more languages would be appreciated. Most of the students were keen on speaking and understanding a great variety of languages such as Russian, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, etc.

Interview question 2. *Please write down the names of the courses that you have benefited from least during your education together with the reasons if possible.*

English Literature ($f = 10$)

Language Acquisition ($f = 14$)

Poetry Analysis ($f = 12$)

Computing ($f = 10$)

The History of Turkish Education ($f = 15$)

Social Services ($f = 14$)

Discourse Analysis ($f = 13$)

Comparative Education ($f = 12$)

The participants reported that the History of Turkish Education course led them towards memorisation, and that they would prefer a more practical course which would allow them to create and practise. They also suggested that this course might be integrated within the content of other history courses. Likewise, they stated that the Computing course should be very beneficial but that the procedure and the content obstructed them. They reported that as language teachers they would not need the technical knowledge of computing (such as hardware and software utilities) at all. So, they proposed that the course be given in a different way from the way it is taught in the Computing Department. The participants also added that the exams were very hard.

When reasons were provided for the ineffectiveness of the English Literature and Poetry Analysis courses, it was determined that the course lecturers/instructors were very pleasant but that the content of the course did not offer much. They professed that they would not use the things they have learnt when they become teachers. Some students suggested that rather than teaching pure literature, it would be more contributory to teach how literature can be used in education.

According to the participants, the Social Services course had a great potential in both contributing to teacher trainees' characters and serving the society. However, they reported that due to economic, political and management problems, practising of the course became very difficult. Similarly, they reported that the Language Acquisition course was interesting but that they could not benefit much because of the lecturer/instructor who was not very clear and precise related to the delivery of the content both during the classes and the exams.

Interview question 3. *Who/which do you think contributed more to your personal and professional development, the content of the courses or the lecturers/instructors of the courses?*

From the total of fifteen interviewed students, eight (53%) stated that course lecturers/instructors contributed more to their development, while the other seven (46%) commented that both course contents (in certain conditions and for some particular courses) and course lecturers/instructors contributed equally.

Interview question 4. *How would you assess your 4-year education generally in the ELT department?*

The final evaluation of the participants related to their education was notable. They remarked that although not perfectly competent, one way or another they would become English-language teachers. They declared that they would become better teachers as they practised the profession but also underlined the fact that the programme failed to support them with the necessary opportunities for practice.

What is more, it was maintained that both the programme and the conditions of the department as well as those of the university and the city failed in assuring complete student satisfaction. They remarked that it would be better if more activities and organisations were planned within the department. They speculated that most of the students are passive individuals who just study for the lessons and do not participate in any activities. So, obviously there is need to meet the needs of the teacher trainees to socialise, and also to provide them with conditions which will allow both personal and professional development.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study performed an evaluation of the latest ELTTP that was launched by YÖK (The Council of Higher Education) in the 2006 and 2007 educational year, and has been followed by the majority of the foreign language teaching departments in the universities in Turkey. The graduates of the ELTTP indicated their opinions and perceptions. Results suggested that the latest ELTTP falls far short of meeting teacher trainees' professional/academic expectations and satisfying their personal needs. It was also notable that some of the courses that were newly included in the programme were regarded as very ineffective or useless, which indicates that the programme has been prepared regardless of the opinions, needs and expectations of the stakeholders.

In accordance with the findings of the present study it seems that there is need for more courses which will allow creativity, practice and socialisation. It would also be beneficial if the content and procedure of the courses were revised and restructured in such a way that they would produce less memorisation and more permanent, internalised and digested knowledge and experiences, possibly through extensive practice.

5. Limitations and Suggestion for Further Research

The present study was carried out with the participants from a single university. So, it might reveal more reliable results when applied in several ELT Departments at various universities throughout Turkey, and including a higher number of participants. In the same way, as this research claims to have adopted not only a qualitative but also a quantitative approach, more statistical analyses might have been carried out to provide readers with more detailed numbers about the obtained data. Further studies might ask the next generation graduates to evaluate the ELTTP, and results might be compared both to the results obtained from the present study, or to the findings attained in other universities.

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Appendix 1

(1=az → 5=çok)	Aşağıdaki dersin kişisel gelişimimde fark yarattığını düşünüyorum					Aşağıdaki dersin mesleki gelişimimde fark yarattığını düşünüyorum					Aşağıdaki derste öğrendiklerimi aktif öğretmenlik hayatımda kullanacağımı/ uygulayacağımı düşünüyorum				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Atatürk İlk. ve Dev. Tarihi I-II															
Bilgisayar I-II															
Eğitim Bilimine Giriş															
Bağlamsal Dilbilgisi I-II															
İleri Okuma ve Yazma I-II															
Dinleme ve Sesletim I-II															
Sözlü İletişim Becerileri															
Etkili İletişim Becerileri															
Türkçe I: Yazılı Anlatım															
Türkçe II: Sözlü Anlatım															
Eğitim Psikolojisi															
Sözcük Bilgisi															

Genel Akademik Not Ortalamanız (GANO) kaç? **1.99'ın altında** ☐ **1.99-2.49** ☐ **2.50-3.00** ☐ **3.00 üzeri** ☐

	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
İngiliz Edebiyatı I-II															
Dilbilim I-II															
İngilizce Öğrt. Yaklaşımlar I-II															
İngilizce-Türkçe Çeviri															
Anlatım Becerileri															
Türk Eğitim Tarihi															
Öğretim İlke ve Yöntemleri															
Nutuk															

(Continued)

	Aşağıdaki dersin kişisel gelişimimde fark yarattığını düşünüyorum					Aşağıdaki dersin mesleki gelişimimde fark yarattığını düşünüyorum					Aşağıdaki derste öğrendiklerimi aktif öğretmenlik hayatımda kullanacağımı/ uygulayacağımı düşünüyorum				
Dil Edinimi															
Bilimsel Araştırma Yöntemleri															
Özel Öğretim Yöntemleri I-II															
Öğretim Tekn. ve Materyal Tas.															

Lütfen cinsiyetinizi işaretleyiniz **E** ☐ **K** ☐

(1=az → 5=çok)	Aşağıdaki dersin kişisel gelişimimde fark yarattığını düşünüyorum					Aşağıdaki dersin mesleki gelişimimde fark yarattığını düşünüyorum					Aşağıdaki derste öğrendiklerimi aktif öğretmenlik hayatımda kullanacağımı/ uygulayacağımı düşünüyorum				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Çoc. Yabancı Dil Öğretimi I-II															
Dil Becerilerinin Öğretimi I-II															
Kısa Öykü İnc. ve Dil Öğretimi															
İkinci Yabancı Dil I-II-III															
Şiir İnceleme															
Sınıf Yönetimi															
Türkçe - İngilizce Çeviri															
Roman İnceleme ve Dil Öğretimi															
Topluma Hizmet Uygulamaları															
Ölçme ve Değerlendirme															

Ders içerikleri mi yoksa öğretim elemanları mı daha etkili? [Course contents] **Ders içerikleri** ☐ [Lecturers/instructors] **Öğretim elemanları** ☐

	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Yab. Dil Öğret. Mat. İnc. ve Geliş.															
Edimbilim															
Okul Deneyimi															
Rehberlik															
Özel Eğitim															
Yab. Dil Öğret. Ölçme ve Değer.															
Bilgisayar Destekli Dil Öğretimi															
Söylem Çözümlemesi															
Karşılaştırmalı Eğitim															

(Continued)

	Aşağıdaki dersin kişisel gelişimimde fark yarattığını düşünüyorum				Aşağıdaki dersin mesleki gelişimimde fark yarattığını düşünüyorum				Aşağıdaki derste öğrendiklerimi aktif öğretmenlik hayatımda kullanacağımı/ uygulayacağımı düşünüyorum			
Türk Eğitim Sistemi ve Okul Yön.												
Öğretmenlik Uygulaması												

Teşekkürler!... □ Thank you!...

Appendix 2

Genel Akademik Not Ortalamanız (GANO) kaç? [Your GPA?]

[below]**1.99'ın altında** □ **1.99-2.49** □ **2.50-3.00** □ [above]**3.00 üzeri** □

Lütfen cinsiyetinizi işaretleyiniz? [Your gender?] **E** □ **K** □

(1) Lütfen dört yıllık öğrenim hayatınız boyunca en çok faydalandığınız dersleri aşağıya var ise sebebi ile birlikte yazınız. [*Please write down the names of the courses that you have benefited from most during your education together with the reasons if possible.*]

(2) Lütfen dört yıllık öğrenim hayatınız boyunca en az faydalandığınız dersleri aşağıya var ise sebebi ile birlikte yazınız. [*Please write down the names of the courses that you have benefited from least during your education together with the reasons if possible.*]

(3) Sizce kişisel ve mesleki gelişiminize daha fazla katkıyı sağlayan derslerin içerikleri mi yoksa öğretim elemanları mı sağladı? [*Who/which do you think contributed more to your personal and professional development, the content of the courses or the lecturers/instructors of the courses?*]

(4) Genel olarak aldığınız eğitimi nasıl değerlendirirsiniz? [*How would you assess your 4-year education generally in the ELT department?*]