All or Nothing: English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Student Teachers' and Teacher Trainers' Reflections on a Pre-service English Teacher Education Program in Turkey

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ABSTRACT The present study explores the beliefs of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) student teachers and their trainers on the effectiveness of the current pre-service English teacher education program (ELTEP). Employing a mixed-method study design, a program evaluation questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were administered to student teachers and teacher trainers, respectively. The analysis of data yielded from the student teacher questionnaire indicated that the most problematic areas in the program are its inability to meet student teachers' needs, its irrelevance to their needs, and its failure to give adequate training in English. Besides, the analysis of semi-structured interviews with the teacher trainers revealed that the program is outdated and needs updating by increasing the number of basic skills courses and addressing the issues regarding the practice. In addition, teacher trainers reported other major concerns such as the ineffectiveness of the program in preparing student teachers to function in the EFL context and balancing teacher- and student-centered learning. Suggestions are made to improve the program and pre-service English language teacher education.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education is a multifactorial process having core elements within its body, available in every particular field of teacher training. These are, as Kildan et al. (2013) mention, the issues such as student teachers' preferences, pre-service training, practice period and monitoring and evaluation during this period, and in-service training, all functioning as the integral parts of teacher education. Of these components, pre-service teacher training deserves particular attention due to the fact that it is the first step towards professionalization, and evaluation is at the heart of pre-service training for further improvement of its quality. In this regard, the concept of evaluation covers not only measuring student teachers' academic knowledge and progress, but also the consideration of course materials, lecturers, and prescribed programs. Among these, the evaluation of programs, which is "the collection, analysis, and interpretation of information …for

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forming judgments about the value of a particular programme" (Robinson 2003: 199), serves to understand the extent to which it meets student teachers' needs and objectives in general and calls program designers' and teacher trainers' attention to necessary improvements to be made in the program. To be more specific for the purposes of the current study, evaluation of an EFL teacher education program functions as a tool for revealing how well the program prepares EFL teachers to function in the sociocultural context in which they will work (Bartolome 1994).

Following the delegation of authority to train teachers to universities in 1982, two basic reforms were made by the Higher Education Council (HEC) on teacher education programs of education faculties including ELTEPs in Turkey. The first restructuring of teacher education programs in 1998, financially supported by the World Bank, was a response to a greater teacher demand as a result of the legislation on eight-year compulsory education (YOK 1998). The first reform aimed to equip prospective teachers with basic teacher competencies in order to meet the qualified teacher demand of the country (Yildirim and Ok 2002). The motive behind the restructured teacher education program with regards to ELTEP was to put "more emphasis on teaching methodology and teaching practice" (Seferoglu 2006:369). The restructured program offered three compul-

sory practicum courses: 'School Experience I', 'School Experience II' and 'Teaching Practice', laying stress on student teachers as future practitioners.

The second ELTEP, which is still in operation, was initiated by the HEC in 2006-2007 academic year alongside the restructuring of other teacher training programs. The incentive behind this reform was:

- to refine the teacher education programs in the light of the findings of scientific research studies,
- to define the learning outcomes of undergraduate programs according to the criteria of the European Higher Education Area,
- to cover the tenets of the Constructivist Approach that was introduced with the second program change in Basic Education in 2003 (YOK 2007; as cited in Yavuz and Topkaya 2013: 66).

The 2006 ELTEP was predicated on European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) which provides a fundamental basis for language programmes and a comprehensive way to describe language teaching and learning processes (Council of Europe 2001). As Cosgun-Ögeyik (2009) mentions, CEFR expects student teachers to be autonomous learners and teachers who widen the scopes of both personal and professional development. She further states that the new ELTEP was designed in such a way to correspond to the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) which aims "to provide student teachers with a tool for reflection and self-assessment during their initial teacher education" (Cakir and Balcikanli 2012: 5). The 2006 ELTEP, which has been practised since 2006-2007 academic year, offers new courses in addition to the ones in the 1998 ELTEP. What's more, a few courses were removed and a few others were modified through changing the content, class hours and terms. To exemplify, 'Speaking Skills I-II' was reformulated as 'Oral Communication Skills I-II'; new courses were added such as 'Public Service' and 'Turkish Educational System and School Management'; literature courses were reinforced with a teaching dimension (See the detailed list of course changes in Yavuz and Topkaya 2013).

Not only compulsory courses, but also newly included elective courses are available in the 2006 ELTEP. Overall, while the courses in the first two years of pre-service education are oriented to acquiring language content and skills, and the theory of teaching (for example, Contextual Grammar I – II, Listening and Pronunciation I – II, Approaches in ELT I – II etc.), the courses offered in the last two years are pedagogic content-driven and practice-oriented (for example,Teaching Foreign Language to Young Learners I – II, Teaching Language Skills I – II, Teaching Practice etc.). It is important to note here that the 1998 ELTEP offered three practice-oriented courses (School Experience-I in the 2nd term, School Experience II in the 7th term and Teaching Practice in the last (8th) term), whereas the current ELTEP only offers 'School Experience' in the 7th term and 'Teaching Practice' in the last term. Coskun and Daloglu (2010) inform us that in the current ELTEP, courses related to student teachers' pedagogic competence amount to 68% of the program while linguistic competence courses make up 32% of the whole program. This distribution is supposed to be more or less the same for all the ELT programs at different universities of Turkey, given the fact that "only three elective courses are at the institutions' own disposals" (Karakas 2012:5) and the variety of elective courses is limited (Sanli 2009). In closing, a substantial change is observed in the 2006 ELTEP when compared to the previous ELTEP in terms of newly added and removed courses, resequencing and class hour allocations, and modification of course contents.

Purpose of the Study

The present study intends to broaden the scope of ELTEP evaluation studies in order that a more localized understanding should be provided for the Turkish context, which might eventually result in a wide consensus on the improvements of future programs. In a narrower sense, this study attempts to reveal the shortcomings of the current ELTEP and determine the program components that are found to be (un)satisfactory by EFL student teachers and teacher trainers at an English language teaching program. To serve these purposes, the following research question was developed:

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the ELTEP in use from the perspectives of EFL student teachers and their lecturers?

Previous Research on the 2006-2007 ELTEP

There are a few research studies on the evaluation of the recent ELTEP in Turkey from the viewpoints of different stakeholders, as chronologically sequenced below. Cosgun-Ogeyik (2009) conducted a survey on 53 third year EFL student teachers to determine the effectiveness of the program with regards to the content in general, evaluation of course contents, characteristics and the sufficiency of courses considering teaching profession. It was reported that the program is adequate and consistent with student teachers' expectations regarding teaching profession, social objectives and benefits. In addition, lack of culture specific courses was highlighted as the shortcoming of the program. Coskun and Daloglu's (2010) study was aimed to reveal the lacking dimensions of the program from both student teachers' and teacher trainers' perspectives. While the student teachers were of the belief that pedagogic side of the program is weak and needs improvement in such a way that allow for more opportunity to practise teaching, teacher trainers considered the program insufficient in terms of promoting student teachers' linguistic competence. In his mixed-methods study, Salihoglu (2012) collected data from 200 fourth graders and 21 teacher trainers through Peacock's (2009) evaluation framework to explore their beliefs on the current ELTEP. The findings made clear that student teachers found the program satisfactory; however, the practice, needs and language proficiency components were reported to be problematic. Moreover, teacher trainers were unable to give in-depth information about the program philosophy and a clear account of the objectives of the program due to the limited information on the centralized program definitions. Hismanoglu (2012) drew on Demirel's (2011) program evaluation instrument with the purpose of eliciting 72 EFL student teachers' opinions regarding the current ELTEP. The results indicated that the program is clear, student-centered and compatible with their development levels as well as meeting their needs and interests to a great extent, and enabling permanent learning. Additionally, it was reported that the program does not develop higher level thinking skills such as creative thinking, critical thinking and problem-solving skills at a desired level. A qualitative study by Yavuz and Topkaya (2013) focused on teacher

trainers' evaluation of the current program in comparison to the 1998 ELTEP. Results demonstrated that although teacher educators considered some of the changes appropriate such as the inclusion of some new courses, they stated far more serious concerns in relation to the sequence, content, structure, procedure and removal of courses. Lastly, with the purpose of evaluating the process of teacher training in Turkey, Kildan et al. (2013) carried out a descriptive study with 58 newly-appointed teachers from different branches, five of whom were English teachers. The novice teachers stated that they have lack of content knowledge resulting from the program and that 'Teaching practice' and 'School experience' courses did not adequately contribute to their profession.

METHODOLOGY

Since the aim of this mixed methods case study is to evaluate the current ELTEP based on the reflections of the end-users of the program, data were collected from 8 teacher trainers and 57 EFL student teachers at an English Language Teaching Program at a state university in Turkey. All the teacher trainers in the department were experienced enough, practising both the 1998 and 2006 ELTEPs. Other subjects of the study were 57 EFL student teachers expriencing the last term (8th) in their preservice education. The reason for picking them as the research participants was that they experienced unxceptionally all the courses offered in the ELTEP in question.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection instruments utilized in this study were a product of Peacock's (2009) evaluation model design procedure. He tested his evaluative procedures by evaluating the effectiveness of one TEFL programme with the program stakeholders, that is, students and teachers on the BA in TEFL, those responsible for education in Hong Kong, the Government, and the University. Peacock's (2009) evaluation model emerged as a result of the fact that there are "very few detailed descriptions of how to conduct overall evaluations of FLT education programs, …including a mechanism for obtaining and using feedback on whole programmes, not individual courses, from students, teachers

and others" (2009:261-262). To achieve the purposes of the present study, the student teachers were delivered a 22-item questionnaire that was previously piloted by Peacock (2009) before use at a three-year full-time pre-service EFL teacher-training program in Hong Kong. Peacock's (2009) evaluation instruments already made a tremendous impression on the related field and were also used in two other studies conducted in the Turkish context (Coskun and Daloglu 2010; Salihoglu 2012). In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teacher trainers to address the ELTEP from different dimensions. Peacock (2009) commented that the interview is a practical one in that it comprises a comprehensive set of 15 questions that arose from relevant literature, and collects a lot of valuable information from various program stakeholders.

The questions directed are as follows:

Does the program…

1) … have a clearly stated philosophy?
2) … reflect program philosophy?
3) … promote trainee flexibility in using different teaching approaches for different situations?
4) … promote the ability to use, and to adapt, foreign-language-teaching materials?
5) … balance received versus experiential knowledge?
6) …incorporate and encourage trainee reflection on the experiences and values they have when they enter the program? In particular, does it encourage trainee reflection on their 'apprenticeship of observation'?
7) … promote the skill of reflection and self-evaluation as a teacher?
8) … promote future reflective practice?
9) … promote the 'long-term, developmental nature of learning to teach' – does it promote post-qualification teacher growth and development?
10) … have good linkage among courses, avoiding overlaps?
11) … balance teacher- and student-centered learning?
12) … prepare EFL teachers to function in the sociocultural context in which they will work?
13) … incorporate and balance linguistic, pedagogic, and managerial competence to an appropriate degree? Linguistic competence here means L2 proficiency. Pedagogic competence refers to teaching skills

plus knowledge of language and second language acquisition.
14) Is the program up-to-date?
15) Do students believe the program meets their needs, is relevant to their needs, and adequately prepares them for classroom teaching?

The data elicited from student teacher questionnaires were input into SPSS 16. Cronbach's alpha coefficient value was found 0.813 for the whole instrument. Mean values and standard deviations of each item are reflected inTable 1, providing a descriptive projection of the overall situation.

Following the transcription of data, content analysis was performed in the analysis of the semi-structured interviews with the teacher trainers. Content analysis "involves coding data in a systematic way in order to discover patterns and develop well-grounded interpretations" (Mackey and Gass 2012: 191). The interviews with the teacher trainers generated two main categories: weaknesses of the program and dichotomous elements. Accordingly, relevant interpretations were made with regards to the sub-theme: strengths.

FINDINGS

Student Teacher Questionnaire

As can be seen in Table 1, majority of the responses are dispersed somewhere around the mean score (2), which is an indication that student teachers did not actually reflect a particular level of satisfaction regarding the current program. The items in bold are favored by student teachers clearly more/less than the average. Student teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the program components in the issues of being relevant to their needs ($\overline{X}$=1.81), meeting their needs ($\overline{X}$=1.65) and giving necessary training in English ($\overline{X}$=1.56). On the other hand, student teachers favored that the program is up-to-date ($\overline{X}$=2.14), taught them classroom management skills ($\overline{X}$=2.18), and balances teacher-centered and student-centered learning on its courses ($\overline{X}$=2.14), as well as encouraging them to reflect on their past experiences as language learners ($\overline{X}$=2.19).

Interviews with Teacher Trainers

Weaknesses and dichotomous elements of the program revealed through the interviews are

Table 1: Student teacher questionnaire results

The current program...	$\overline{X}$	Sd
1 ..has good linkage between different courses.	1.95	.639
2 ..avoids overlapping information between different courses.	1.93	.704
3 .. gave me adequate training in English.	**1.56**	**.708**
4 .. gave me adequate training in teaching skills.	1.88	.734
5 .. gave me adequate training for the needs of the local context (Turkey).	1.96	.823
6 .. is up-to-date.	**2.14**	**.693**
7 .. encouraged me to reflect on my past experiences as a language learner.	**2.19**	**.667**
8 .. encouraged me to be a reflective teacher (when I start teaching).	2.07	.753
9 .. promotes flexibility in using different teaching practices for different situations.	2.05	.742
10 .. balances teacher-centred and student-centred learning on its courses.	**2.14**	**.766**
11 .. taught me how to teach English.	2.12	.683
12 .. taught me how to evaluate myself as a teacher.	2.07	.753
13 .. taught me classroom management skills.	**2.18**	**.735**
14 .. taught me how to use foreign language teaching materials.	2.12	.734
15 .. taught me how to adapt foreign language teaching materials.	1.88	.709
16 .. increased my powers of self-evaluation.	2.02	.719
17 .. taught me foreign language testing and evaluation skills.	1.98	.767
18 .. is relevant to my needs.	**1.81**	**.667**
19 .. has a good balance between the teaching of: English, teaching skills, and classroom management skills.	1.82	.658
20 .. prepared me to teach English in the classroom.	2.02	.612
21 .. met my needs.	**1.65**	**.694**
22 ..By the end of the programme, I will be ready to teach English.	1.86	.667
Overall mean	1.97	

The responses are elicited through three-point Likert scale. (1: disagree, 2: uncertain, 3: agree)

given under separate titles below. However, the analyses offered no agreed strengths. For this reason, the strengths of the program, though not touched upon quite much, are mentioned amongst the comments made under these titles. Teacher trainers were coded with numbers to ensure anonymity.

Weaknesses

The first shortcoming of the program is its being obsolete, on which one of the biggest consensuses was reached (n.7). Teacher trainers commented that the current program needs updating (T1, T5, T7, T8), it should be restructured with the objective of promoting language skills at least as much as the previous program (T4, T6), more technological components should be included by reexamining the program (T2).

The second weakness of the program is its inability to create a balance between received and experiential knowledge, as stated clearly by a great majority of teacher trainers (n.6). T(1) stated that there is a big gap between received and experiential knowledge in the program, not providing enough practice opportunities. T(4) added that though the number of pedagogic

courses are sufficient, they do not focus directly on English teacher education to provide experiential knowledge. Besides, T(6) pointed out that students grab the theory during pre-service teacher education and that if they are provided more opportunities to practise teaching, theoretical deficiencies might be sorted out, if any.

Majority of the teacher trainers (n.6) maintain the idea that the program does not prepare student teachers to function in the sociocultural context in which they will work, that is, in the Turkish EFL context. T(1) asserts that student teachers suffer from culture shock when they are appointed to a school in rural areas especially if they were brought up in metropolitan cities. To avoid this situation, T(1) suggests that some new courses should be added to the program in an attempt to introduce the history, family patterns, cultural elements and traditions of all the regions because they have no idea what to do regarding the local circumstances (T2). At this point, T(4) highlights the importance of 'Public Service' course.

Another big consensus was reached about the point that the program is unable to meet students' needs, is irrelevant to their needs, and

does not adequately prepare them for classroom teaching (n.7). T(3) and T(8) remarked that students complain about not having enough vocabulary knowledge, speaking, writing and listening skills.

Regarding whether the program balances teacher- and student-centered learning, most of the teachers (n.6) stated that the program is unbalanced. T(1) and T(6) commented that the reason for the program not to be able to balance teacher- and student-centered learning is that class sizes are unmanageable, which precludes involving student teachers in more active roles during the courses.

T(2) added a new dimension to the issue and made the following utterance:

"The teacher lectures, the student listens. Possibly due to the way they are brought up, students often expect their teachers to act as the primary sources of knowledge and they tend to adopt a passive role in the learning process. The monotony still exists. We should make students more active."

Dichotomous Elements

The first dichotomy regarding the program was that the current ELTEP does not have a clearly stated philosophy. T(6) insisted that the HEC did not take lecturers' opinions into consideration in the process of designing the program. T(1) commented that the program is not appropriate for non-native EFL teacher candidates and was designed in such a philosophy that only the student teachers living in English-speaking countries could be prepared to be qualified English teachers through this program. In addition, T(2) stated that the program was built upon how to teach philosophy, including a large number of method-based courses.

Another dichotomy among teacher trainers was set up in whether the program promotes trainee flexibility in using different teaching approaches for different situations. In place of providing an exact yes or no, they raised differing opinions. T(3) and T(4) stated that flexibility is provided to some extent (T5) with various method classes and TEYL courses. T(2) did not agree upon the idea of the program providing flexibility and commented:

"We are not used to this. Some things are imposed on our students and we ask them to implement these. Students must see the differ-

ences in teaching practices in different practice schools to have flexibility. There are not many ideal teachers at schools. Students cannot see the right application of methods. Teachers must be good practitioners."

Further, T(6) made a parallel remark, stating that in practice schools, student teachers experience classroom implications that are free from pedagogic base, which is contradictory to the learnings in the department.

While T(1), T(2), T(7) and T(8) think that the program does not promote / partly promotes the ability to use, and to adapt, foreign language teaching materials, T(3), T(4) and T(5) clearly express that the program makes this possible. T(5) further adds that 'Material Analysis and Adaptation' course gives necessary information as to how to use and adapt materials. What's more, T(6) thinks that today's students make a more effective use of technology, which may enable them to easily adapt materials.

Concerning whether the program promotes the skill of reflection and self-evaluation as a teacher, teacher trainers made varying comments. T(2) remarked that these are higher level skills. Students should initially be able to teach effectively, then this can be followed by the acquisition of reflection skills etc. In a similar vein, T(4) stated that linguistic proficiency comes before the acquisition of higher level skills. Further, T(5) added that improving such skills depends on the supervisor of the 'School Experience' and 'Teaching Practice' courses. T(3) and T(6) stated that the program gives student teachers the opportunity to promote such skills, though not wholly.

In their responses to the question *"does the program promote the 'long-term, developmental nature of learning to teach' – does it promote post-qualification teacher growth and development?"*, teacher trainers fell into dispute. T(6) responded as follows:

"The program provides the necessary theory for our students. If they want to improve themselves in their future teaching careers, the program creates opportunities for professional development."

T(1), on the contrary, remarked that this cannot be made possible with low English proficiency. Similarly, T(3) stated that there are some courses targeted at professional growth, but they are insufficient in terms of the number of class hours, by adding that more courses should

be included in the program in an effort to promote linguistic command of student teachers. T(2) further stated that if they end up with effective teaching environments, professional development can be provided.

DISCUSSION

One major finding of the present study is that the practice component of the program does not provide student teachers with appropriate conditions for making observations of effective teachers at different schools, which often results in experiencing unfruitful teaching applications at practice schools. In his research prior to the the introduction of the 1998 ELTEP on practicum courses in ELT, Enginarlar (1996) reported that very limited hours of observation and teaching, and student teachers' exposure to one single teacher, language learners at only one proficiency level at simply one school setting cause a number of problems in preparing student teachers for their professional careers. Similarly, in her study on the evaluation of the 1998 ELTEP, Seferoglu (2006) reported student teachers' concerns regarding the ineffectiveness of the program in providing enough opportunities for micro-teaching and practice teaching as well as their desire to observe many different teachers, students with various proficiency levels in varying school settings. Though three different programs were experienced within two decades, it is apparent that the same dissatisfaction still exists, as reported in a few studies (Coskun and Daloglu 2010; Salihoglu 2012; Kildan et al. 2013).

De-Lima (2001) suggested that the main emphasis in English language teaching is on methodology and the language level of student teachers. Language competence, he claims, has, indeed, been rated the most essential characteristic of an effective teacher. Needless to say, the efficacy of pre-service English teacher education in promoting student teachers' linguistic skills is vitally important in order for them to equip future language learners with basic language skills. In the present study the need for more courses on improving English proficiency was revealed. While *the program gave me adequate training in English* ($\bar{X}=1.56$) was the worst rated item in the questionnaire by student teachers, their trainers frequently raised complaints regarding the inadequacy of the program to improve student teachers' linguistic skills. The teacher trainers interviewed agreed that the 1998

ELTEP was more intensive and more targeted at improving language skills than the current ELTEP. More specifically, Yavuz and Topkaya (2013) reported teacher trainers' negative perceptions towards some changes in the current program (in comparison to the 1998 ELTEP) regarding proficiency-based courses such as the convergence of 'Reading skills' and 'Writing skills' courses under 'Advanced Reading and Writing' in the 1st year, and the allocation of only 3 credits for the 'Listening and Pronunciation' course instead of 4 credits (2 Theory + 2 Practice) in the 2006 program. The reason for teacher trainers' dissatisfaction with such changes lies behind their belief that basic skills courses require more time and space in ELT. On the othr hand, Coskun and Daloglu (2010) stated that "The addition of some courses in the new program (for example, teaching four skills, literature and language teaching) and the separation of the listening course from the speaking course in the new program are regarded as positive changes by the instructors" (p. 38), whereas Salihoglu's (2012) study reinforced the idea that lack of basic skills courses in the current program blunts student teachers' proficiency levels.

The items in the student teacher questionnaire *the program met my needs* ($\bar{X}=1.65$) and *the program is relevant to my needs* ($\bar{X}=1.81$) were the second and third worst rated ones. These responses were also substantiated by teacher trainers (n.7), with an agreed opinion that students find the program unsatisfactory, especially in terms of improving their language skills. However, Cosgun-Ogeyik (2009) concluded that the program is adequate and consistent with student teachers' expectations in respect to teaching profession, social objectives and benefits. Such contrasts, along with the others, reveal the need for cumulative descriptive program evaluation studies to be participated by a large number of stakeholders (including both student teachers and teacher trainers) from the ELT programs of different universities in different regions in order to have full view of the overall picture and determine the components to be improved. At this point, it is timely to do justice to Yavuz and Topkaya (2013) for including teacher trainers from five different universities in their study. However, their study focused mainly on the differences between the 1998 and the 2006 ELTEP, not directly on the 2006 ELTEP evaluation and therefore included only teacher trainers.

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Consequently, on the one hand, there is a clear agreement between student teachers and their trainers in that the program fails to equip student teachers with the ability to effectively use the target language and is inadequate in meeting student teachers' needs. Moreover, to a certain degree, it was considered by the both parties that the program is able to teach student teachers how to use language teaching materials ($\overline{X}$=2.12 for students' responses to the related item and n.5 for teacher trainers who partly or fully favored this component of the program). On the other hand, there is a disagreement between student teachers and teacher trainers on the (1) up-to-dateness of the program and (2)its potential to balance teacher-centred and student-centred learning. While the items *the program is up-to-date* and *the program balances teacher-centred and student-centred learning on its courses* were the third best rated ones by student teachers ($\overline{X}$=2.14 for both items), teacher trainers reached a consensus on the outdatedness of the program (n.7) and on its inability to balance teacher-centred and student-centred learning (n.6).

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this paper was to investigate the strengths and weaknesses of the current English language teacher education program through the perspectives of EFL teacher candidates and teacher educators at a state university in Turkey. It was figured out that the program is not effective enough to satisfy the professional needs of teacher trainees and trainers. Given that the current ELTEP lacks some important components with regards to different dimensions of the program as have already been revealed throughout this paper alongside a few others, it is inevitable to restructure the program in accordance with end users' stated needs and demands.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of this study and related research, the following suggestions are made to improve the current program and pre-service English teacher training on the way to preparing future ELTEPS in Turkey.

a. Collaboration between the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and universities should be strengthened to increase the efficacy of classroom observations and teaching practice courses. This collaboration should bring forth an increase in the number of practice-based courses and allocated terms. As in the 1998 ELTEP, 'School Experience' course should be introduced in the early years of pre-service education. Moreover, the students should be provided opportunities to observe more than one single teacher, and teach learners at different proficiency levels at different school settings to enrich their teaching repertoire, experience different teaching practices, and adapt themselves to different teaching situations. Since, there is no gradation in pre-service English teacher training (is training EFL student teachers for a particular age group), and students have no idea what age group to teach. What's more, teachers who are to be observed at practice schools should be elaborately chosen. They should be effective practitioners offering methodologically and pedagogically appropriate practices.

b. The current program needs updating in an effort to keep pace with new global trends and perspectives in language teacher education and more specifically, to meet pedagogical needs in the local English language teacher education context. In this sense, the number of courses addressing basic language skills should be increased. In addition, it is almost a decade since the current program was initiated. Rapidly changing technologies and the need to integrate them into teacher education entail the restructuring of the current program. There is also a need for a needs analysis before restructuring the program.

c. Inasmuch as it is agreed that the courses in the program are inadequate in promoting student teachers' linguistic competence, one-year English preparatory education should be made compulsory at ELT programs. So that student teachers can better cope with the courses in pre-service education.

d. The use of EPOSTL, which allows for process evaluation in pre-service teacher education, should be popularized at ELT programs. Its usefulness in promoting reflection, self-evaluation and awareness has already been proved at a Turkish setting through research.

e. The opinions of teacher trainers should be taken into consideration in decision-making

process at each step of the program update. The majority of teacher trainers already stated that their opinions were not included in the program as research has shown. The philosophy of top-down program design should be abandoned.

f. A workshop called *'What should be the trends in foreign language education in Turkey?'* has been organized for the past few years. Teacher trainers from all over Turkey are the main participants of the workshop and they lecture and make contributions on a range of topics including material evaluation process, measurement and evaluation, supervision, technology and language education as well as program evaluation. A final declaration is released as a result of these constructive workshops and then submitted to the MoNE. At this point, the MoNE and the HEC should seriously consider the conclusions and recommendations made with the cooperation of teacher trainers.

g. Finally, 4th grader EFL student teachers have recently been required to take a knowledge based teaching-field proficiency test in order to be appointed as teachers. Thus, knowledge-based courses should not overshadow the importance of practice containing courses. Micro-teaching and peer observation elements of the courses should still be maintained.

NOTE

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