



# Evaluation of English language teaching undergraduate programs in terms of document analysis

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate English Language Teaching (hereafter, ELT) undergraduate programs in Turkey. In the scope of the evaluation study, the ELT undergraduate programs of six universities-three state, three private-in Istanbul are selected via convenient sampling method. The qualitative study is based on document analysis through which the data is collected, sorted out and analyzed in five main categories. All the available documents are analyzed in five main components of the program which are the students, the lecturers, the courses, the practicum, and the educational opportunities. All the available documents are collected from the open-access web-cites of the programs and the administrative offices and lecturers in the departments. The strengths and the weaknesses of each program are determined and comparatively analyzed in terms of state and private universities. According to the findings obtained from comparative document analysis, the perception levels of the students and the professional and constitutional experience of academicians are determined to be the strengths of state university ELT undergraduate programs whereas the number of students, enrolled in the programs, the contribution of the academicians to the field of educational research, the teaching practice courses, the practicum, and the seminars, conferences and events as educational opportunities are the strengths of private university ELT undergraduate programs. Evaluating the current state of the ELT undergraduate programs in terms of the strengths and weaknesses, the present study hopefully contributes to program development in the field of EFL teacher education.

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## 1. 1. Introduction

### 1.1. *English Language Teaching*

English is said to be a “world language” because it is used as the official language, accepted as the second language and given importance and priority to be taught compulsorily in education systems, in most of the countries in the world (Wallraf, 2000; Crystal, 2003). In today’s world of rising information and communication technologies, reaching higher standards in learning and teaching English as the second language (hereafter, ESL) is the common concern and policy of all national education systems of non-native English countries. English has gained a significant place among many other foreign languages and has been learned as a compulsory course by 90% of the students in European Union countries’ national education systems despite the differences in the language policies, onset age, the number of contact hours, national curriculums, and the implementations in the national education systems of the countries. (Trim, 1998). In parallel, English is a mandatory course and by far the most taught foreign language in nearly all countries at all educational levels. Besides, there is an increase in the percentage of students learning English at all educational levels, shown as 73% at primary school level in 2004-2005, higher than 90 % at lower secondary and general upper secondary school level, and 74.9 % in upper secondary pre-vocational and vocational education in 2009-2010 (EACEA/Eurydice, 2012: 11).

In most of the European countries’ national education systems, at least one or two foreign languages are taught as compulsory courses in the curricula. In accordance with a body of educational research (Krashen, Long & Scarcella, 1982; Nikolov & Curtain, 1999; Nikolov, 2007; Nunan, 2003; Singleton & Ryan, 2004; Muñoz, 2006) emphasizing the importance and advantage of the early ages to start learning a foreign language, age 6 is officially determined as the age of learning a foreign language in European Union education systems, by the Council of Europe in 2002. Many researchers put forward the fact that teaching and learning a foreign language in early ages is a significant issue, given emphasis not only in European Union countries but also in most of the Asian countries, as well, in recent years. (Stroupe & Kimura, 2011; Nikolov & Curtain, 1999; Nunan, 2003; Nikolova, 2008).

#### 1.1. 1.2. *ELT in Turkish national educational system*

Teaching and learning of English as a foreign language has been started in Turkey since the beginning of 19th century when Arabic language started to lose its efficiency and French was started to be taught as the first foreign language due to the close relations with France. Since 1960s, teaching and learning of English as the first foreign language has been given great importance in Turkish national education system due to Turkey’s constant and ever rising need and demand for improvement in the world of

economy and technology. In other words, teaching and learning of English has become a community act or a national campaign in Turkey, who have had very close relations with foreign countries in cultural, economic and technological fields and who has to lead these relations in English (Sezer, 1988).

In parallel to the other European countries, the principle of learning more than one foreign language from an early age was adopted by Turkish national education system within the Law No. 4306 in Eight-year Basic Education Reform in 1997. With this education reform (1997), teaching and learning of English as the first foreign language was decided to start in the 4th grade in primary school instead of the 6th grade in secondary school and second foreign language was added as a selective course to the secondary school curricula from the 6th grade. Moreover, a new foreign language education program, based on modern language teaching approaches was designed and accepted to be implemented by the Board of Education, Turkish Ministry of National Education (hereafter, MoNE) (MoNE, 2006). Today's foreign language teaching program in Turkish national education system puts the emphasis on students' active use of English in daily real-life situations rather than a mechanical analysis and teaching of grammatical structure of the language by the language teacher (MoNE, 2018).

In spite of all these reforms, changes, and efforts for the improvement and betterment of English Language Teaching, there is a considerable amount of research emphasizing the inadequate competency level of Turkish students in English language. In other words, although Turkish students are required to start learning English in early primary school and to go on learning it throughout all school levels, including higher education, foreign language teaching and learning is still considered to be a significant problem in Turkey. (Demirel, 2003; Aydemir, 2008; Işık, 2009). It is claimed to be mostly because of the discrepancy in between the theory, given to EFL/ESL student teachers via field didactics in ELT pre-service education programs and the actual educational needs and expectations, encountered in real teaching experience in Turkish context (Çopur, 2008; Doğan, 2009).

### *1.2. 1.3. The significance of ELT*

The greatest duty in achieving the desired goals in formal education has fallen to the teachers, and thus increasing the quality of formal education as well as teacher qualifications have an important place in educational policies of countries (Leigh, 2010). For this reason, it has been observed that the main field to be invested in order to increase the success and quality of education systems is teachers and teacher training programs. Regarding the quality of education systems, scientific studies and school reforms carried out since the 1990s have focused on the quality of teacher competencies and teacher education programs in general. The studies on program development and

evaluation of teacher education have gradually gained importance in the field of educational research. (Ustüner, 2004; Gordon, 2008; Ateş ve Burgaz, 2014).

One of the inevitable facts of the rapidly globalizing world in the 21st century is the growing need, interest and desire to learn foreign languages in all areas of science, including social and educational sciences. Indeed, the inevitable increase in English speakers globally and the need for acquiring a high proficiency in English in the world's rising economies trigger the demand for knowledgeable, competent and high qualified, English teachers (Bakshi, 2008: 27). The teaching competency levels expected from the teachers of English in state and private schools have been increased in parallel with the naturally increasing importance given to the teaching of English. English is taught as a compulsory course from the 4th grade to the last grade in high school in Turkish national education system, in accordance with the increasing requirements of the era and the needs of the society (Aydoğan and Çilsal, 2007: 179).

### *1.3. 1.4. ELT undergraduate programs*

Language teachers at tertiary level normally have a university or college degree in the departments of either education or foreign languages faculties which are generally in coordination with ministries of national education. In tertiary teacher education, generally including a 4 or 5 year-education, there is no distinction between primary, lower or upper secondary school teacher education in most countries. However, in many cases EFL/EL teachers have not received substantial training in general teaching or in language teaching (Kelly, 2002).

The European Union has emphasized the importance of improving language teaching and learning since 2000. Similarly, since the European Year of Languages, 2001, language learning and teaching have been promoted at European and national level. The European Council has proposed the idea that European citizens should be taught at least two foreign languages, besides their mother-tongue, from an early age since the Barcelona meeting of European Council in 2002. All these developments in foreign language teaching and learning have increased the significance of foreign language teachers, having a key role in arising learners' interest in languages and improving foreign language learning. In other words, language teachers play a significant role in achieving the European Union's objective that all EU citizens should have linguistic competence in their own mother tongue and two other languages (Kelly & Grenfell, 2004: 4).

Some of the key properties of a language teacher education program in 21st century, determined by the European Profile for Language Teacher Education, adopted by most European and other countries as a comprehensive guide for language teacher education, can be listed as follows:

- Training in language teaching methodologies, techniques, activities
  - Training in practical application of curricula and syllabuses, in information and communication technology (hereafter, ICT) for pedagogical use in the classroom
  - Training in the application of various assessment procedures and ways of recording learners’ progress
  - Training in the critical internal and external evaluation of program and curricula in terms of aims, objectives and outcomes
  - Training in the use of the European Language Portfolio for self, peer and learners’ evaluation, in teaching European citizenship, and in the importance of life-long teaching and learning about foreign languages and cultures
  - A curriculum that integrates academic study of pedagogical theory and the subject area and the practical experience of teaching in schools (stage/practicum)
  - Qualified mentors who offer valuable and constant guidance for trainees about all aspects of teaching and learning, all throughout their transition from trainee to a qualified language teacher
  - Experience of an intercultural and multicultural environment in order to participate in links, including visits, exchanges or ICT links with foreign partners abroad, especially where the foreign language is spoken as native
  - A European-level evaluation framework enabling accreditation and mobility
  - Ongoing education for teacher educators and training for school-based mentors in how to mentor

(Kelly & Grenfell, 2004: 5-44).

Table 1. ELLiE study teacher models

	General teacher	Semi-specialist teacher	Specialist teacher	Unqualified teacher
Croatia	x		x	
England	x		x	x
Italy		x		
Netherlands	x	x	x	
Poland	x		x	
Spain	x		x	
Sweden	x	x		x

Despite the fact that there is a great variety in course availability and content in many higher education institutions in Europe, the European higher education can be said to

share a common path in teacher education with regard to the Bologna Declaration (1999). Table 2 that shows the current situation of FL teacher education in seven ELLiE countries in terms of compulsory methods, courses, and teacher qualification course length offered by the programs. It also indicates that all countries except for Croatia offer a three- or four-year education period in FL teacher education with some differences in compulsory courses and teacher qualification course length (Enever, 2014: 235).

Table 2. Initial Primary FL teacher education requirements in ELLiE country contexts

Country	FL course compulsory?	FL methods compulsory?	Teacher qualification course length
Croatia	x	x	5 years (3+2 or 4+1)
England	-	-	4 years (3+1)
Italy	x	x	180 hours of English, exit level B1 (increased to B2 in 2010)
Netherlands	Not always	-	4 years
Poland	x	x	3 years
Spain	x	x	4 years (infant and primary school qualification)
Sweden	x	x	4 years

#### 1.4. 1.5. *The purpose of the study and research questions*

The central aim of this study is to evaluate ELT undergraduate programs in Turkey in terms of document analysis by conducting a comparative analysis among six selected programs in İstanbul. In other words, the study aims to seek answer to the main research question: “What are the strengths and weaknesses of ELT undergraduate programs in terms of document analysis?”

The present study focuses on the evaluation of ELT undergraduate programs in Turkey in the sample of Yildiz Technical University, Marmara University, İstanbul University-Cerrahpasa, Bahcesehir University, İstanbul Kultur University and İstanbul Aydın University in terms of the number of students, enrolled in the programs, the perception levels of students in terms of their university entrance scores, the number and academic qualifications of academicians working in the programs, the courses, offered by the program, the practicum, and the educational opportunities such as seminars and

conferences, held by the programs. Within this central focus, the answers to the following questions will also be sought via document analysis in the scope of the study:

- What are the similarities and differences in the number of students, enrolled in the programs?
- What are the similarities and differences in the perception levels of students in terms of their university entrance scores, in the programs?
- What are the similarities and differences in the number and academic qualifications of academicians working in the programs?
- What are the similarities and differences in the application of the teaching practice courses, offered by the programs?
- What are the similarities and differences in the practicum applications in the programs?
- What are the similarities and differences among the number of students, enrolled in the programs?
- What are the similarities and differences in educational opportunities such as seminars and conferences, held by the programs?

#### *1.5. 1.6. The significance of the study*

English language learning and teaching are of great importance due to the fact that English is the most spoken and learned language in the world. As a result of this, ELT programs in higher education, and ELT knowledge and competence can be said to have an ever-rising importance all over the world. In parallel, the importance given to teaching and learning English throughout primary, secondary, high school and university education in Turkey also puts the emphasis on the significance of English language teachers and ELT programs. For this reason, all the studies conducted on the evaluation of ELT undergraduate, M.A and PhD programs, and English language teachers' and teacher candidates' teaching competences (König, 1990; Galluzzo & Craig, 1990; Nam, 2005; Al-Darwish, 2006; Tezel, 2006; Eret, 2008; Tunç, 2010; Kırmızı, 2011; Gilbert, 2014; Küçüköğlü, 2015; Zorba, 2015) as well as the present study can be said to contribute significantly to the field of teacher education and the development of teacher education programs.

The document analysis conducted in the scope of the research also puts forward a critical evaluation of the current state of ELT undergraduate programs. In his definition of program evaluation, Patton emphasizes the significance of program evaluation as: "Program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming" (2002, p.10). In the light of the views of a number of researchers on the importance of

program evaluation (Worthen and Sanders, 1987: 5; Lynch, 1996; Posavac and Carey, 1997: 2; Wiles, 2005), the present study that puts forward a comparative program evaluation will provide the ELT undergraduate programs with the opportunity of

- collecting data for making judgments about the effectiveness of the program,
- comparing an alternative program,
- detecting the negative side effects of the program,
- gathering information to maintain and develop quality,
- improving educational program and materials,
- evaluating the effectiveness of the program, and
- assessing its quality against that of comparable program.

In parallel to what Kırmızı (2011) states about the benefits of program evaluation, this study will provide the ELT undergraduate programs with “a guide in identifying the extent to which the program goals have been attained” and helps them “figure out the areas of actual success and failure within the program” (p.19). Unveiling the strengths and weaknesses of the programs, the present study will also put forward possible suggestions for the betterment and improvement of both ELT undergraduate programs. Furthermore, since “program evaluation also provides scaffolding for the accreditation of teacher education programs worldwide” (Eurydice European Unit 2006, cited in Kırmızı, 2011), the present study is considered to have a positive contribution to the accreditation process of ELT systems in both countries.

### *1.7. Limitations of the study*

To conduct the research, the researcher prefers these universities, 3 of which are state and 3 of which are private, since the campuses are easy to reach, and the study is more applicable in terms of time, money and labor. It can be considered to be the mere limitation of the study that the research is limited to the data, obtained from the available documents on university websites, from the administrative offices and the lecturers in the departments. In addition, all the available data on the written documents are assumed to be correct and updated in the scope of the research.

## **2. Method**

The study is carried out in qualitative method, in which qualitative data collection and analysis procedures and instruments are employed. For the qualitative research, basically document analysis is applied on the documents, obtained from universities' ELT undergraduate programs to determine weaknesses and strengths of the ELT undergraduate programs.



### 2.1. Document analysis

Document analysis is a type of qualitative research analysis that includes analysis of written materials containing information about the targeted facts or facts (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). Since it is aimed to examine the similarities and differences between the programs to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the programs, all the relevant written documents, provided by the departments are examined.

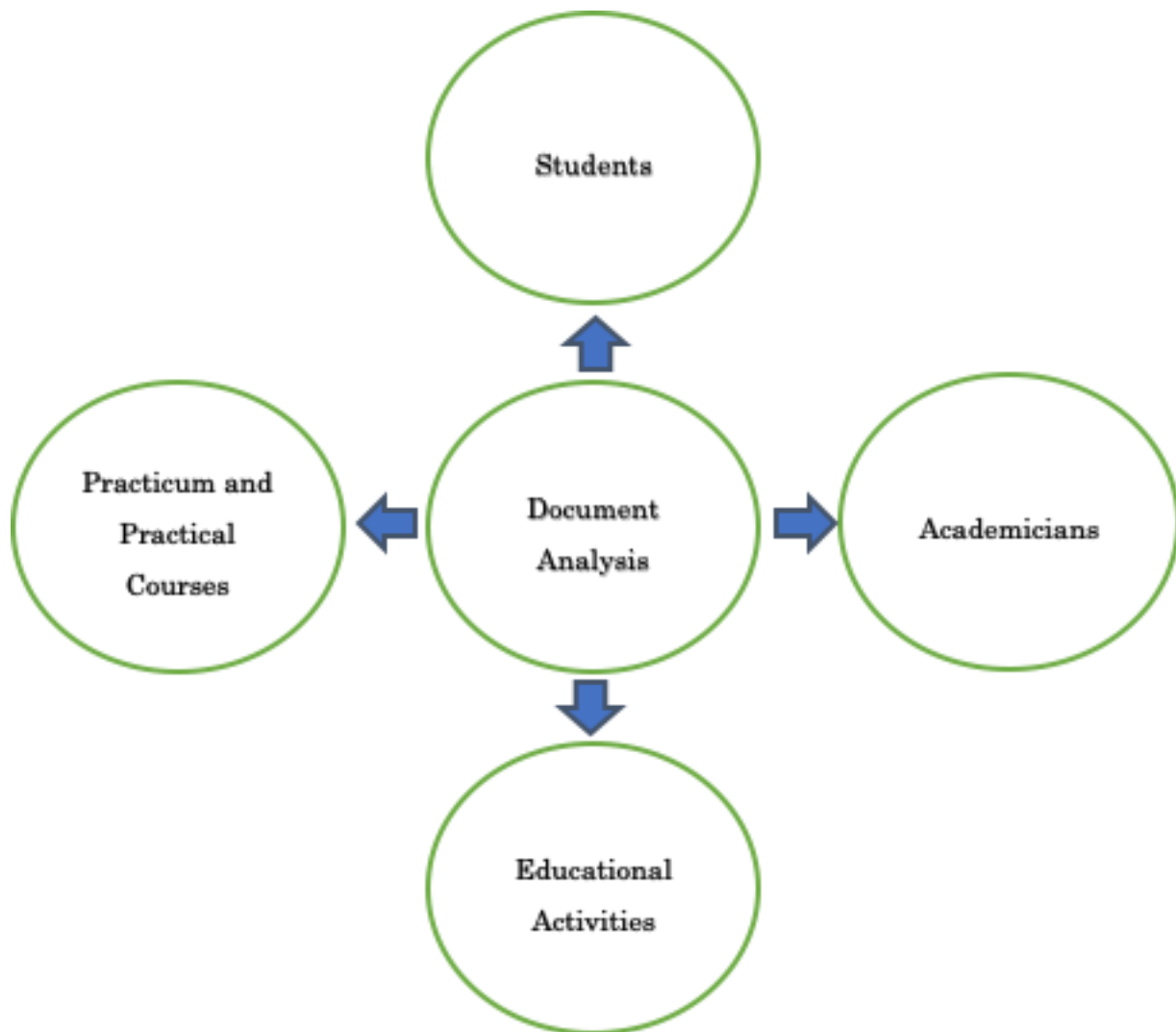


Figure 1. Document Analysis

## 2.2. Categories of document analysis

Within the scope of the present study focusing on the evaluation of ELT undergraduate programs, the document analysis is carried on four basic categories which are;

- Students: the number of students, enrolled in the programs, and their perception levels terms of university entrance scores,
- Academicians: the number and academic qualifications of academicians working in the programs,
- Practicum: teaching practices carried out in the last grade at practicum schools and the practical courses, offered by the program.
- Educational opportunities: seminars and conferences, held by the programs.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

In this section, the results are presented and discussed under the five categories of document analysis which are students, academicians, courses, practicum and educational opportunities.

### 3.1. Students

The first category in which the document analysis is carried out is the students, attending the programs. Under this category, the data on the number of 3rd and 4th grade students are obtained from the relevant secretariats of the departments. In addition to this, the perception levels of students based on their success in university entrance exam in terms of their scores are revealed. Students' university entrance scores are compiled from the website "YÖK Atlas".

#### 3.1.1. Number of students enrolled in programs

The number of 3rd and 4th grade students, studying in ELT undergraduate programs in 2018-2019 academic year is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. The Number of Students

The Universities In The Scope Of The Research						
Grades	State Universities			Private Universities		
		Marmara U.	Istanbul U. Cerrahpasa	Yildiz Teknik U.	Istanbul Kultur U.	Istanbul Aydin U.

3rd Grade	103	77	62	70	50	33
4th Grade	123	77	62	56	50	49
TOTAL	54	100	73	41	75	40
	227			156		

When the number of 3rd and 4th graders, studying in ELT undergraduate programs in 2018-2019 academic year is examined, it is seen that there are many more students in state universities compared to private universities. In addition, among the state universities, Marmara University has the highest number of students whereas Yildiz Technical University has the least number of students. It is also seen that İstanbul Kultur University is the university with the highest number of students whereas Bahcesehir University is the university with the lowest number of students among the private universities.

There is a body of evidence on the positive effect of non-crowded classrooms on academic success (Celik, 2002; Aydin, 2002; Bakioglu, & Polat, 2002; Balki, 2003; Hattie, 2005; Blatchford, Bassett, & Brown, 2005; O’Sullivan, 2006; Korkmaz, 2006; Gezer, 2007; Topbas, & Toy, 2007). In parallel, it is stated that “crowded classroom is a factor that inhibiting teachers from adopting a student-centered teaching approach” (Jabbour, 2013: 91). Besides, the positive effects of non-crowded classes on the quality of education is listed as “utilization of course program; completing the basic education activities more quickly; sparing more time on different activities, focusing on students longer; sparing less time for classroom management and student control; having more time and place in the class; improved teacher-student relations; and classroom atmosphere” (Blatchford and Mortimore (1994), cited in Yaman, 2006: 351). Moreover, Monks and Schmidt (2010: 2-16) investigate the impact of class size and student load, which is the total number of students in all courses, on student outcomes in higher education and conclude that both class size and student load affect student evaluation of courses and instructors in a negative way. They also argue that “large classes and heavy student loads appear to prompt faculty to alter their courses in ways deleterious to students” (2010). In the lights of the educational research, the smaller class size has a positive influence over the efficiency of the academic education and can be said to be the one of the strengths of private university programs over state universities in the scope of the present research. In more specific terms, Bahcesehir University is the most, Marmara University is the least advantageous ELT program in terms of the class sizes.

### 3.1.2. Perception level of students in terms of university entrance success

The success ranking of 4th graders in 2015-2016 and of 3rd graders in 2016-2017 university entrance exam (YGS-LYS), based on their scores are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. The Success Ranking in University Entrance

The Ranking in the Universities in the Research	The Ranking in all Universities	ELT Education Undergraduate Programs in Universities	2015-2016 (4th Graders)			2016-2017 (3rd Graders)		
			Lowest Score	Highest Score	Success Ranking	Lowest Score	Highest Score	Success Ranking
1	3	Bahçesehir U.	469	476	1.460	472	482	2.510

		(Full Scholarship)						
2	10	Istanbul U. (4)	447	482	2.950	456	525	3.960
3	13	Marmara U. (5)	436	476	3.980	449	504	4.810
4	14	Yildiz Technical U. (6)	433	489	4.340	446	480	5.170
5	17	Istanbul Kultur U. (Full Scholarship)	426	455	5.090	437	443	6.230
6	19	Istanbul Aydın U. (Full Scholarship)	424	427	5.240	436	451	6.350
7	27	Istanbul Kultur U. (%75 Scholarship)	408	422	7.090	424	436	7.960
8	70	Bahçeşehir U. (%50 Scholarship)	335	423	18.000	367	441	16.400
9	73	Istanbul Kultur U. (%50 Scholarship)	327	407	19.700	311	417	27.000
10	80	Istanbul Aydın U. (%50 Scholarship)	310	407	23.100	300	406	29.600
11	90	Istanbul Aydın U. (%25 Scholarship)	270	301	33.100	297	374	30.400
12	99	Istanbul Aydın	244	288	41.500	246	295	45.600

U. (Paid)								
13	102	Bahçesehir U. (Paid)	241	317	42.400	241	317	42.400
14	106	Istanbul Kultur U. (Paid)	231	231	47.100	231	231	47.100

Bahcesehir University's full scholarship ELT program ranks first in the success ranking of 4th grade students in 2015-2016 university entrance exam. It is followed by the state universities in the scope of the research which are Istanbul University-Cerrahpasa, Marmara and Yildiz Technical Universities. The fifth and sixth in the success ranking are full-scholarship ELT undergraduate programs of other private universities, which are Istanbul Kultur and Istanbul Aydin Universities. The paid ELT undergraduate programs in private universities are ranked at the end as Istanbul Aydin University, Bahcesehir University and İstanbul Kultur University. The 3rd graders in 2016-2017 university entrance exam do not differ but show a similar ranking with 4th graders. To sum up, it can be said that all the state university students have a rather high level of perception according to success ranking in university entrance exam in comparison to the private universities except for Bahcesehir University full scholarship program. As most of the academicians in ELT undergraduate programs agree that there is a strong correlation in between the success ranking of students in university entrance and their academic success in the programs. Besides, the quality of higher education is determined in terms of four dimensions which are “quality of students, faculty credentials, academic features, and administrative supports” (Ashraf et al., 2009). Furthermore, according to Akareem and Hossain (2012), students’ background and qualifications have a great influence over the quality of higher education. For this reason, the higher-level perception of students can be said to be one of the strengths of state university programs over private university programs in the scope of the present study.

### 3.2. Academicians

The second category of document analysis is the academicians, working in the programs. Under this category, the data on the number of academicians is obtained from the relevant websites of the programs. In addition to this, the professional and academic qualifications of the academicians based on their educational background and contribution to the field of educational research are obtained from the CVs of academicians, available on the universities’ websites.

### 3.2.1. The number and qualifications of academicians

In the scope of document analysis, the related documents about the academicians working in ELT programs are analyzed under the categories which are the number, academic education, abroad academic and professional education, work experience, scientific studies, projects and guided thesis of academicians. The available data is shown below in Table 5.

Table 5. Qualifications of the Academicians

The Numbers and Qualifications of ELT Education Teaching Staff in 2018-2019 Academic Year		The Universities In The Scope Of The Research					
		Istanbul U. Cerrahpasa	Marmara U.	Yildiz Teknik U.	Bahcesehir U.	Istanbul Kultur U.	Istanbul Aydin U.
Number Of Teaching Staff	Prof. Dr.	-	-	-	1	1	1
	Assoc. Prof.	-	-	2	2	-	-
	Assist. Prof.	8	5	2	2	5	5
	Lecturer Dr.	-	2	-	-	-	-
	Lecturer	-	1	3	2	-	-
	Resarch Assist. Dr.	-	-	2	-	-	-
	Resarch Assist.	2	1	-	2	3	1
	Specialist	-	2	-	-	-	1
	TOTAL	10	11	9	9	9	8
	Academic Education	PhD Education	8	9	6	7	6
MA Education		2	2	3	2	3	1
Academic and Professional Education Abroad	MA	1	1	-	2	-	3
	PhD	-	3	-	1	2	-
	Post Doctoral	-	-	2	-	-	1
	ERASMUS	1	1	5	-	-	-
	Professional Education, Certificates	15	-	8	3	-	8

Experience in the Program (working years)		24	22	13	6	6	6
Scientific Studies	SSCI-AHCI Articles	7	2	11	15	7	-
	Other Articles	42	29	67	60	12	31
	Book - Book Chapter	18	13	8	31	15	8
	TOTAL	67	44	86	106	34	39
Projects	TUBITAK-Higher Edu. C.	34	15	9	2	1	1
	EU	10	-	3	2	-	-
	TOTAL	44	15	11	4	1	1
Thesis Guided	MA	23	36	9	46	16	78
	PhD.	6	1	-	-	5	12
	Total	29	37	9	46	21	90

Longanecker and Blanco (2003) emphasize the importance of instruction and instructors in education quality as “by who and how students are taught rather than by what students learn”. In other words, the qualification of academic staff is the most influential factor on the quality of higher education (2003). In parallel to this, according to students’ perception of teacher, personal qualities such as “kindness, leadership, and attitude toward profession and professional knowledge such as “knowledge of the subject matter and didactic knowledge” are the most significant factors that make a teacher an “ideal teacher” (Arnon & Reichel, 2007). Moreover, Ingvarson, Beavis & Kleinhenz (2007) claim that “opportunity to learn during the pre-service course, ability to assess student learning, ability to plan curriculum unit, and ability to receive feedback” are the basic requirements to enhance the quality of an teacher education program. As a result of the researches carried out in the national and international context on the factors that are influential on student success and the quality of education, it is determined that the teachers in education systems play the most important role in student success (Semerci, 2003). For this reason, it has been observed that the main field to be invested in order to increase the success and quality of education systems is teachers and teacher training programs.



In the lights of educational research underlining the significance of the qualifications of academic staff as an influential determiner of the quality in higher education, the academicians' professional and academic qualities are investigated and put forward in the scope of document analysis in the present study. The numbers of academicians working in the ELT programs of all universities in the scope of the research are equivalent to each other at an average of 9,3, except for Istanbul University-Cerrahpasa ELT program with 10 academicians and Marmara University ELT program with 11 academicians. However, considering that the student loads in 3rd and 4th grades at these two programs are quite heavy compared to ELT undergraduate programs at other universities, it can be evaluated that the number of academicians in these programs does not provide any advantage. In addition, there are no academicians working in professor doctor position in state university ELT programs whereas there are 2 faculty members working in associated professor position only in Yildiz Technical and Bahcesehir Universities ELT programs. Furthermore, all the academicians hold doctoral degree except for 2 research assistants in the Istanbul University-Cerrahpasa ELT programs. Besides, according to the educational background of academicians, the programs that have the highest number of academic staff who have completed their doctorate education are Istanbul University-Cerrahpasa with 8 lecturers and Marmara University ELT programs with 9 lecturers. Even though there are no professor and associate professor academicians yet, the number of academic staff who have completed their doctorate education can be considered as one of the strengths of Istanbul University-Cerrahpasa and Marmara University ELT programs, compared to other programs.

When the longest tenure of the academic staff working in ELT programs within the scope of the research is examined, it is seen that the tenure of the academic staff who work in ELT programs of state universities is much longer than the tenure of the academic staff working in private universities. While the ELT program with the highest working experience of the academic staff in the program is Istanbul University-Cerrahpasa ELT program with 24 years of tenure, it is followed by Marmara University with 22 years of tenure, Yildiz Technical University with 13 years of tenure and the private universities with 6 years of tenure. Since the academicians' having a long-term working period in the program is very important in terms of continuity of the institutional memory and increase in the institutional experience, it can be said to be one of the strengths of state universities ELT programs. In the contrary, it is a major disadvantage for the private universities that the longest tenure of the academic staff in the program does not exceed 6 year-tenure.

When the total number of all scientific studies consisting of the articles published in the journals scanned in the SSCI-AHCI indexes, the articles published in other refereed journals, the books and book chapters, written by the academicians working in the ELT programs are evaluated, the programs with the highest contribution to the field of educational research are Bahcesehir University with 106 studies, Yildiz Technical

University with 86 studies, Istanbul University-Cerrahpasa with 67 studies, Marmara University with 44 studies, Istanbul Aydin University with 39 studies and Istanbul Kultur University with 34 studies are ELT programs. According to this sequence, the scientific productivity of the academic staff in Bahcesehir University ELT program comes first in the number of articles published in journals scanned in high-prestigious indexes such as SSCI and AHCIN, as well as in the number of published books and book chapters, and the total number of studies carried out and published. It can also be said to be one of the strengths of the program. In contrast, Istanbul Kultur University ELT program can be said to be the least advantageous one, having the lowest number of published studies that can be considered as one of the weaknesses of the program as well.

### *1.6. 3.3. Practicum*

As the core phase of teacher education programs, the practicum is claimed to have a great impact over student teachers' attitudes towards teaching profession and their future career plans (Yan & He, 2010; Merc, 2015). The practicum period is also said to be "the longest and most intensive exposure to the teaching profession" for student teachers (Cohen, Hoz, & Kaplan, 2013: 345). Having a significant importance in ELT undergraduate programs, the document analysis conducted in the scope of the present study focuses on the practicum, as well. The document analysis on practicum is mostly carried out on the documentations such as the Directive of Ministry of Turkish National Education (MoNE, 2018) regarding ELT practicum, the Cooperation Protocol on ELT practicum between the Ministry of Education and the Council of Higher Education (hereafter, CHE) (CHE, 2016), observation forms, candidate teacher evaluation forms and similar documents obtained from the Candidate Teacher Guide and Practicum File compiled in ELT undergraduate programs.

The practicum program is carried out within the scope of two courses which are Teaching Experience-1, offered in the 7th term and Teaching Practice-1, offered in the 8th term of ELT undergraduate program. Teaching Experience course is given within 6 lesson hours per week in the 1st semester of 4th grade. It is based on 2 hour-theory, given in the faculty; 4 hour-teaching observation and practice, carried in the practicum school. The main purpose of the course is to make observations on classroom management, classroom organization and group work in real classroom settings. Teaching Practice course is given within 8 hours per week in the 2nd semester of 4th grade. It includes 2 hours of theory, given in the faculty and 6 hours of teaching practice carried out in the practicum school. The main objective of the course is to enable students to gain experience by participating in educational activities in the schools, to acquire teaching knowledge, and to improve teaching skills. Practicum courses and lesson hours are shown in Table 6:

Table 6. Practicum Courses and Lesson Hours

Practicum Courses	Academic Terms	Lesson Hours (Theory + Practice)	Weekly Lesson Hours		
			Observation	Micro Teaching	Macro Teaching
School Experience	7th	(1+4)	4 hrs.	X	X
Teaching Practices	8th	(2+6)	X	1 hr. (5-10 min.)	5 hrs. (1 Lesson)

Teaching practices at the Education Faculties within all universities are carried out in accordance with the principles identified in the Ministry of National Education Teaching Practice Directive. However, there are some factors affecting the efficiency of practicum and teaching practices which are listed and explained as follows:

- The high number of teacher candidate students per practicum supervisors in state universities
- Additional teaching practices provided by private universities in collaboration with some private schools, in addition to the official practicum program
- Some supervisors' carrying out different teaching practices in faculty lessons with their own initiative and personal efforts

**The high number of student teachers per practicum supervisor in state universities:** The heavy student loads in 4th grades of state universities make it almost impossible to comply with the principle that “a practicum supervisor should be responsible for maximum 6 student teachers”, determined by the MoNE's directive for teaching practicum. The high number of student teachers greatly increases the workload of the practicum supervisor who is responsible for evaluating the observation forms, lesson plans and all such practicum documents, delivered by students during practicum period, supervising all the micro and macro-teaching activities, their continuity, teaching performance and competencies of student teachers, and giving feedback on the process and the result. Furthermore, this heavy workload negatively affects the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching practices in the scope of practicum carried out in state universities ELT undergraduate programs. In his study on the current state of teacher education programs in Turkey, Celik (2011) similarly puts forward a contrast between the number of students and teachers available in practicum schools which, he claims, is an obstacle against the improvement of teacher training system.

**Additional teaching practices provided by private universities in collaboration with some private schools, in addition to the official practicum program:** The

private universities can provide their student teachers with varied teaching practice opportunities in addition to the official practicum period. While the teaching practices in state universities are only carried out in state schools located around the campus, determined in accordance with the protocol between MoNE and CHE, the private universities aim to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of practicum by giving the student teachers additional opportunities to observe and practice teaching in the private schools such as Uğur Schools, Bahcesehir College, Kultur College and Doga College with which they work in collaboration. In this way, the private universities can enrich and reinforce the official practicum program with additional teaching practices in these private schools. In addition to these teaching practices carried out in collaboration with private schools; Bahcesehir University with “University at School Model”, İstanbul Kultur University in its “Preparatory School”, İstanbul Aydın University in “On-site Application Program” and İstanbul University-Cerrahpasa with “Language Club” activities support their student teachers with additional teaching opportunities and practices.

Seferoglu (2006) finds out that the micro-teaching practices are insufficient and teaching observation is not varied enough in terms of student levels, school settings and the number of teachers in the views of student teachers. Likewise, Coskun and Daloglu (2010) puts the emphasis on the weaknesses of ELT undergraduate programs based on the limited timing of practicum and insufficient amount of teaching observation and practices. In parallel to the findings of these researches, the private universities’ attempt and affords to compensate the deficiencies of practicum due to inadequate chances of teaching observation and practices via additional teaching practices in collaboration with private schools can be said to provide a significant contribution to the betterment of teacher education programs.

**Some supervisors’ carrying out different teaching practices in faculty lessons with their own initiative and personal efforts:** While the practicum programs in all universities within the scope of the research were carried out in accordance with the principles defined by the practicum directive (MoNE, 2018), it was observed that there were some differences in practice with the personal efforts and initiative of the practicum supervisor within the scope of the practicum program carried out within the Marmara University ELT program. The differences observed in the practicum applications of the Marmara University ELT program can be summarized as follows:

- Students take video recordings of each micro- and macro-teaching they perform.
- After the students watch the video recordings of the teaching sessions, they keep the reflective “Self-Evaluation Check-List”, with which they evaluate their own teaching performance.
- Students record videos on their friends' micro- and macro-teaching.

- After watching the video recordings of their friends' teaching practices, the students keep the reflective “Peer-evaluation Check-List”, with which they evaluate their friend's teaching performance.
- Watching the teaching performance, self-evaluation and peer-evaluation videos, the supervisor evaluates and gives feedback on all teaching performances and evaluations.
- The application lecturer shows the teaching practice videos, self-evaluation videos and peer-evaluation videos to other students as samples in the lesson.
- The students watch their own self-evaluation and peer evaluation videos with the feedback of the supervisor in the theoretical course at the faculty. In this way, stimulated recall sessions are conducted.
- At the end of the practicum, a practicum file is compiled with the diaries, checklists, video recordings and instructor feedback and evaluations of each student. In this way, a “personal memory creation package” is created.
- Students’ practicum experiences form the basis of their graduation thesis: the practicum files supply the data for their educational research and function as the backbone of their graduation thesis.

1.7. Strengths of the university supervisors are very much related to their involvement and guidance in practicum period (Celen & Akcan, :268). In addition, positive and constructive relation and strong cooperation in between university supervisors and student teachers are said to be one of the means of improving ELT undergraduate programs (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011). Furthermore, according to the views of student teachers the feedback and guidance of university supervisors provide significant opportunities for them to describe, question and reflect on their own teaching (Akcan &Tatar, 2010: 158). In parallel with this body of literature, some supervisors’ own initiative and personal efforts in carrying out different teaching practices and reflecting on student teachers’ teaching performances by giving direct, constructive, and meaningful feedback have a significant impact over the improvement of ELT program.

#### *1.8. 3.4. Educational opportunities*

In order to foster the quality in higher education “engaging in national, regional and international networks to share best practices in quality teaching and hold national or regional events (conferences) giving exposure to institutional achievements on quality teaching” is indicated as a pointer to promote quality teaching within and outside the university (Hénard & Roseveare 2012: 14). Moreover, “a range of various programs such as conferences with experts, workshops on practical applications.....discussions with students and the academic community on teaching and studying practices” are defined as the key point in creating an educational environment that constantly reinforces the educational capacity and strength of the academic staff and students in higher education (2012: 15). Starting from this point, document analysis, conducted in the scope of the

present research also focuses on educational opportunities such as seminars and conferences, provided by the universities, education faculties, or ELT departments, besides the qualifications of the students and academicians as the basic stakeholders and the practical courses in practicum as the core phase of teaching training.

Findings obtained from the document analysis related to conferences, seminars, workshops or other social and recreational activities, providing professional, academic and personal development for students in ELT undergraduate programs were handled separately for each university. In the universities where the period research is conducted, since not enough documents are available for the educational activities carried out in 2018-2019 academic year, this section is also included in the document analysis on the educational activities carried out in 2019-2020 academic year. The documents are compiled from the events, news or announcements pages of the ELT undergraduate programs on the websites of the universities. The accuracy of the information obtained is also confirmed by coordinating with the lecturers in the programs.

*In Istanbul Kultur University ELT program*, 9 activities were held within the ELT Undergraduate Program during the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years. Organized events can be listed according to the time order as follows:

- “How to Become a Professional Teacher?” Seminar (November 2018)
- “Approaches in English Language Teaching” Workshop (March 2019)
- “21st Century Skills & Foreign Language Learning” Seminar (April 2019)
- “Storytelling Method” Meeting (April 2019)
- “Being A Creative Teacher” Seminar (December 2019)
- “Teacher Candidates Meet Teachers” (December 2019)
- “ELT Young Learners Day” Seminar (March 2020)
- “Our Students Meet Graduates” e-talk (May 2020)
- “ELT Classroom Practices: Teachers Perspectives” Speech (May 2020)

*In Bahcesehir University ELT program*, 4 events were organized in the academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020:

- “Teachers Research” Conference (June 2018)
- Certificate in ELT to Adults (CELTA) Program Informative Meeting (March 2019)
- “Language Diversity Project” Poster Presentation (May 2019)
- “The Ontological Status of Languaging” Presentation (March 2020)

*In Istanbul Aydin University ELT program*, following events were organized in the academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020:

- Teacher Training Conference (September 2019)
- Erasmus Classroom Management Lecture (September 2019)

- “Improving Pronunciation” Workshop (November 2019)
- TPRS (Teaching Proficiency Through Reading and Story Telling) Presentation (November 2019)
- Erasmus “Reflective Learning” Lecture (November 2019)
- Teacher on the Road Seminar (March 2019)
- Young Learners Seminars (April 2019)

*In Bahcesehir University ELT program*, the following educational events were organized in the academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020:

- Erasmus+ Informative Seminar (November 2018)
- “International MELT Conference (September 2019)
- “Teacher on the Road” Seminar (December 2019)
- “ELT Undergraduate Students Conference” (2018)
- “U.S Embassy-Kathleen Malu Presentation” (2018)

*In Yildiz Technical University ELT program*, 3 events were organized in the academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020:

- “Abroad Education and Career Day” Activity (September 2018)
- “Meaningful Use of Technology for Classrooms” Presentation (December 2019)
- “Plat Time” Activity (April 2019)

*In Istanbul University-Cerrahpasa ELT program*, two events were organized in the academic years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020:

- “European Digital Online-Game for Intercultural Learning and Translanguaging/EU-DO-IT” (September 2018)
- Erasmus+ Informative Meeting (February 2020)

When the educational activities such as seminars and conferences held in the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 academic years by ELT departments of the universities within the scope of the study are examined, the private universities can be said to organize more educational activities than the state universities. Therefore, private universities seem to provide more educational opportunities for personal enrichment and professional and academic improvement of both academicians and students in and outside the program courses. It can also be said that Istanbul Kultur University and Bahcesehir University ELT undergraduate programs are more active and engaged in terms of the number of educational events and the frequency of their organization compared to other programs in the scope of the research. In addition, it is seen that Marmara University ELT program, among the other state universities in the scope of the research, gives more place to international activities in which program students are encouraged to study ELT in international settings with higher foreign participation.

## **2. 4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

Quantitative and qualitative findings reached as a result of the document analysis conducted within the scope of the research are handled in four basic categories stated below:

- Class sizes, student loads, and student perception levels in terms of university entrance success
- Number of faculty members and their academic and professional qualifications
- Practicum and practical courses offered by the program
- Educational opportunities such as seminars and conferences held by ELT departments
- 
- Strengths and weaknesses of ELT undergraduate programs are determined in accordance with the document analysis categories and are shown in Table 7.



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Table 7. Swot Analysis

	Strengths	Weaknesses
MARMARA U.	· High student perception levels based on university entrance exam	· Large number of students
	· The high academic experience of the academic staff as of their working time in the program	· Insufficient number of academic staff according to the number of students
	· International conferences and seminars with foreign participation and collaboration	· The academic staff's insufficient contribution to the field of educational research in terms of the number of scientific studies
	· The mentor's conducting different practices with her personal efforts during the practicum	· Teaching practices' being limited to the lessons in the faculty. · Practicum's being limited to the last grade.
YILDIZ TECHNICAL U.	· High student perception levels based on university entrance exam	· Large number of students
	· The high academic experience of the academic staff as of their working time in the program	· Insufficient number of academic staff according to the number of students
	· The academic staff's high contribution to the field of educational research in terms of the number of scientific studies	· Insufficient number of educational activities such as seminars and conferences
		· Teaching practices' being limited to the lessons in the faculty. · Practicum's being limited to the last grade.
ISTANBUL U.- CERRAHPASA	· High student perception levels based on university entrance exam	· Large number of students
	· High academic experience of the academic staff as of their working time in the program	· Insufficient number of academic staff according to the number of students

	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The academic staff's high contribution to the field of educational research in terms of the number of scientific studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insufficient number of educational activities such as seminars and conferences</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional teaching practices in the scope of "Language Club" before the practicum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching practices' being limited to the lessons in the faculty.</li> </ul>
BAHCESEHIR U.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low number of students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low student perception levels based on university entrance exam in full scholarship program</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High student perception levels based on university entrance exam in full scholarship program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low academic experience of the academic staff as of their working time in the program</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sufficient number of academic staff according to the number of students</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The academic staff's high contribution to the field of educational research in terms of the number of scientific studies</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International conferences and seminars with foreign participation and collaboration</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional teaching practices in the scope of "University at School" Model</li> </ul>	
ISTANBUL KULTUR U.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low number of students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low student perception levels based on university entrance exam in full scholarship program</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sufficient number of academic staff according to the number of students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low academic experience of the academic staff as of their working time in the program</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High number of educational activities such as seminars and conferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The academic staff's insufficient contribution to the field of educational research in terms of the number of scientific studies</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional teaching practices at the schools in collaboration</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching opportunities in preparatory classes before the practicum</li> </ul>	
BUL AYDIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low number of students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low student perception levels based on university entrance exam in full scholarship</li> </ul>

program

· Sufficient number of academic staff according to the number of students	· Low academic experience of the academic staff as of their working time in the program
· Additional teaching practices at the schools in collaboration	· The academic staff's insufficient contribution to the field of educational research in terms of the number of scientific studies
· Additional teaching practices in preparatory classes within the scope of "YUM" before the practicum	· Insufficient number of educational activities such as seminars and conferences
· International conferences and seminars with foreign participation and collaboration	

The fact that the number of students in state universities is higher than private universities can be considered as the weakness of state universities, but the strength of private universities.

The success rankings of universities in terms of university entrance exam points can be described as the strength of full scholarship ELT undergraduate program in Bahcesehir University and ELT undergraduate programs in state universities, but the weakness of ELT undergraduate programs in private universities.

Considering that the number of academic staff working in all ELT programs are equivalent to each other, it can be said that the number of academicians is the weakness of state universities, but the strength of private universities due to heavier student loads in state universities.

The high workplace experience of academic staff in state universities, due to long tenures over 15 years is the strength of state universities whereas the low workplace experience of academic staff in private universities, due to short tenures less than 6 years is the weakness of private universities.

The number of scientific researches and studies conducted by academicians can be described as the strength of Bahcesehir, Yildiz Technical University and Istanbul-Cerrahpasa universities, but the weakness of Marmara, Istanbul Kultur and Istanbul Aydin universities.

Educational opportunities such as seminars and conferences organized by ELT undergraduate programs in terms of their frequency and international participation can be considered as the strength of Istanbul Kultur, Marmara and Bahcesehir universities, but the weakness of Istanbul-Cerrahpasa, Yildiz Technical and Istanbul Aydin universities.

While it is a weak aspect for all state universities that the practical courses are limited to the teaching practices performed only in faculty lessons, it can be considered as one of the strengths of the private universities that the practical hours of these courses are carried out as teaching observation and teaching practice in some private schools in collaboration with private universities.

While the inadequately short practicum, limited to the 4th grade is a weakness for all universities, the chances for additional teaching practices in private universities and Istanbul University-Cerrahpasa compensate this insufficiency and turn the practicum to be a strong aspect of these ELT undergraduate programs. It can also be said that the supervisor's personal efforts in practicum, especially in evaluating and reflecting on the teaching practices convert practicum to a strength of Marmara University ELT program.

In the lights of these conclusions, the recommendations stated below can help to foster the quality of ELT and to contribute to the betterment and improvement of ELT undergraduate programs:

- Student loads in the program should be reduced to facilitate hands-on teaching practices.
- The number of academicians working in the programs should be increased.
- In order to increase the teaching knowledge and competence of teaching staff; in assigning academic staff in the programs, professional experience in the field of English Language Teaching along with academic competence and background should be preferred.
- Professional and workplace experience of academicians in private universities should be increased.
- Programs should employ experts in varied academic fields, so that programs should have sufficient number of field experts who can efficiently teach each program component course in English language.
- Social and educational opportunities provided by universities and ELT undergraduate programs should be increased especially in state universities.
- The practicum which is limited to 4th grade teaching practices, should be developed in terms of duration and content.
- The practicum should start with teaching observation in the 2nd grade, and the daily and weekly lesson hours spent in practicum school and the intensity of the program in terms of teaching observation and practice should be increased gradually.
- In order to provide the necessary theoretical background and academic competence that students will need in teaching observation in the 2nd grade, the 1st grade program should be organized in a way to offer courses in the field of Educational Sciences and basic methodologies and approaches to English Language Teaching.

- Within the practicum program, micro and macro-teaching practices should be carried out with a gradually increasing frequency and intensity towards the end of the program in the 3rd and 4th classes. In order to increase teaching practice opportunities; CHE and MoNE regulations should be rearranged, faculty and practicum schools, practicum supervisor and practicum teacher (mentor) should work in more coordinated and even close contact.
- Educational opportunities such as seminars and conferences and international internship and scholarship programs provided by the programs should be increased, especially in state schools.

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Home > Vol 12, No 2 (2020)

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[More...](#)

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## Vol 12, No 2 (2020): International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction

### Table of Contents

#### Articles

<a href="#">Teacher perceptions of factors influencing the quality of assessment on English communication courses in Japanese universities</a> Paul Anthony Marshall	PDF 1-11
<a href="#">Promoting historical thinking for pre-service social studies teachers: A case study from Thailand</a> Kittisak Laksana	PDF 12-24
<a href="#">The predictiveness of attitude and motivation on achievement in ESP: The mediating role of anxiety</a> Selda Özer	PDF 25-41
<a href="#">Strategies to solve communication barriers between parents and teachers of visually impaired learners in Pakistan</a> Shazia Malik	PDF 42-62
<a href="#">Pre-service teachers' understanding of problem behavior</a> Jonathan Chitiyo, Argñue Chitiyo, Donna Dombek	PDF 63-74
<a href="#">How to be productive in PhD Level: A needs assessment study for doctoral students' research productivity</a> Özge Maviş Sevim, Esmâ Emmioğlu Sarıkaya	PDF 75-94
<a href="#">Investigation of gifted students' environmental awareness</a> Nagihan Tanık Önal	PDF 95-107
<a href="#">Superimposing R.E.A.L. principles on the project writing pyramid: A paradigm shift in teaching professional writing</a> Sarhani Sen Vengadasalam	PDF 108-126
<a href="#">An action research on developing English speaking skills through asynchronous online learning</a> Hale Alkan, Nilay T. Bümen	PDF 127-148
<a href="#">Government special education's principals' perceptions about total quality management (TQM in education): A qualitative research</a> Muneeba Tahira, Rabia Slaeem, Ghulam Haider	PDF 149-163
<a href="#">Analysis of the female student profiles who consider choosing STEM careers</a> Esra Kizilay, Havva Yamak, Nusret Kavak	PDF 164-175
<a href="#">An intervention in brain-based learning: Leading to shifts in language learning beliefs</a> Gülten Koşar, Hasan Bedir	PDF 176-190
<a href="#">Forms of knowledge and knowing in mathematics education: Informed by concept study based on complexity theory</a> Emmanuel Deogratias	PDF 191-208
<a href="#">The interplay between academic motivation and academic achievement of teacher trainees</a>	PDF

Ceyhun Karabiyik	209-225
<a href="#">An analysis of Turkish EFL coursebooks in terms of intercultural communicative elements</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 226-244
Ozkan Kirmizi, Arif Sariçoban	
<a href="#">Examination of prospective science teachers' achievement on basic geography topics and effectiveness of poster-based teaching for learning these topics</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 245-262
Alev Dogan, Mustafa Sarıkaya, Emine Kahraman	
<a href="#">Arithmetic and algebraic problem-solving approaches of prospective teachers and teachers in service</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 263-278
Mertkan Simsek, Yasin Soylu	
<a href="#">Action research as a developmental tool for health and physical education teachers</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 279-295
Thomas G Ryan	
<a href="#">Stakeholders' assessment on the availability of reformation programmes for prisoners in North-west Nigeria</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 296-314
Suleiman Ismaila	
<a href="#">Sample issue for the teaching of socio-scientific issues: The endangered Northern bald ibis</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 315-335
Nurcan Uzel	
<a href="#">Parental mediation scale for digital games: A study on validity and reliability</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 336-358
Ali Ibrahim Can Gözüm, Adalet Kandir	
<a href="#">An investigation of prospective language teachers' knowledge and attitudes towards inclusive education in Turkey</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 359-373
Bengü Aksu Ataç, Samet Taşçı	
<a href="#">The relationship between revenge behavior and life satisfaction of students at a state university in Turkey</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 374-387
Levent Yaycı	
<a href="#">Examining the success motivation of the wrestlers in the Turkish national team</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 388-399
Hulusi Alp	
<a href="#">Development of the innovative credit-based degree program "Bachelor IT business management" and derivation of findings for the stabilization of organizational learning processes of universities</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 400-420
André von Zobelitz, Michael Städler, Eva Veldboer, Knut Linke	
<a href="#">Identifying, measuring and addressing language learners' needs</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 421-435
Murat Polat	
<a href="#">Cognitive and metacognitive strategies of 6th-grade students to answer multiple-choice questions on "human body systems"</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 436-456
Emine Hatun Diken	
<a href="#">Developing a "values teaching responsibility perception scale" for prospective teachers</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 457-473
Filiz Çetin, A. Selcen Bingöl, Şaban Çetin	
<a href="#">World Englishes instruction in an ELT department in Turkey: Student teachers' reflections</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 474-493
Osman Solmaz	
<a href="#">Assessment of students' creative thinking ability in mathematical tasks at senior secondary school level</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 494-506
Onyemauche Christopher Inweregbuh, Ifeoma Julie Osakwe, Chika Charity Ugwuanyi, Oluchi Janehilda Agugoesi	
<a href="#">Determination of learning outcomes of curriculum development in education according to questions in KPSS (public personnel selection examination) educational sciences test</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 507-532
Mustafa Bayraktı, Ömer Cem Karacaoğlu	
<a href="#">The use of short stories in English language teaching and its benefits on grammar learning</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 533-559
Ayhan Kahraman, Seval Şentürk	
<a href="#">A comparative evaluation on silent and read-aloud revisions of written drafts</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 560-572
Gökhan Çetinkaya	
<a href="#">Metaphorical perceptions of science high school students in Turkey about the concept of "English"</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 573-599
Harun Şahin, Güngör Kil	
<a href="#">Comparison of inquiry-based instruction in real and virtual laboratory environments: Prospective science teachers' attitudes</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 600-617
Ayfer Mutlu, Burçin Acar Şeşen	
<a href="#">Pre-service teachers' reflections of their concerns about social, environmental and global problems via drawing cartoons</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 618-638
Şule Eğüz	
<a href="#">Teacher qualification, experience, capability beliefs and professional development: Do they predict teacher adoption of 21st century pedagogies?</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 639-670
Elijah Omare, Rosemary Khitiei Imonjeb, Grace Nyagah	
<a href="#">Evaluation of English language teaching undergraduate programs in terms of document analysis</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 671-703
Şule Yüksel Ertuğrul Seçer, Yavuz Erişen	
<a href="#">Effective variables that predict 5th grade Turkish students' success in listening comprehension of Turkish Language</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 704-719
Aslıhan Erman Aslanoğlu	
<a href="#">A bibliometric analysis of the articles about values education</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 720-735
Yavuz Sökmen, Ahmet Nalçacı	
<a href="#">A pre-service teacher-child interactive learning approach for "mathematics education in early childhood": An example model with play and movement-based activities</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 736-771
Pınar Aksoy	
<a href="#">Evaluation of project-based learning process of gifted children via reflective journals</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 772-796
Derya Girgin	
<a href="#">The adaptation of teacher enthusiasm scale into Turkish language: Validity and reliability study</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 797-814
Gamze Kasalak, Miray Dağyar	
<a href="#">An evaluation of the mistakes made by native Arabic speakers in their writing assignments of academic Turkish course</a>	<a href="#">PDF</a> 815-832
Aliye Uslu Üstten, Hacı Yılmaz	



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