



## İngiliz Dili Edebiyatı Lisans programındaki Öğrencilerin Pedagojik Formasyon Öğretmen Sertifika Programını Değerlendirilmesi

*Evaluation of Teacher Certification Programme by Student Teachers at the Bachelor of Arts at the English Language Language and Literature Programme*

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**Abstract:** Teacher Certification Programme (TCP) enables students or graduates from faculties/colleges other than education faculties to acquire the basic knowledge and skills needed for the teaching profession. The aim of this study was to learn the views of students in an English language and literature department about the Teacher Certification Programme, and to reveal the positive and negative experiences that they had in this process. The participants were 37 final year students in the undergraduate English Language and Literature department of a Faculty of Science and Letters who were registered on the teacher certification programme. An interview form consisting of two parts was prepared as the data collection tool. The first part included variables such as the participants' genders, ages and education levels, while in the second part, three open-ended interview questions aimed at learning the students' views about the programme were included.: 1)What are your positive views regarding the Teacher Certification Programme?,2) What are your negative views regarding the Teacher Certification Programme? and 3) What are your recommendations for making the Teacher Certification Programme more effective?. The form was administered to the students at the end of the first academic term. Thematic analysis was used in the data analysis of written data. The findings of the study reveal that the students had both positive and negative perceptions about TCP. The students mostly expressed positive opinions regarding the course contents and learning outcomes included in the programme. They considered that the courses on the programme not only taught them new information, but also developed their general knowledge. On the other hand, the students generally held negative views related to both the education process of the programme and its structure and functioning. The students stressed the need for the number of subject area courses related to English teaching to be increased.

**Structured Abstract: Introduction:** The pedagogical Teacher Certification Programme (TCP) is implemented by the Higher Education Council (YÖK) and gives students or graduates from faculties/colleges other than education faculties and primarily from faculties of science and letters the opportunity to become teachers, by enabling them to acquire the basic knowledge and skills needed for the teaching profession. It is necessary to examine the TCP to determine the problems encountered. Although a number of studies related

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to the pedagogical training programme exist in the literature, there are very few studies aimed at evaluation of the programme). Most of the studies aimed at a general assessment of the programme were conducted with students studying in different departments. The pedagogical needs of students attending the same undergraduate programme, and their perceptions of the competencies that they believe they should possess, may differ from those attending a different undergraduate programme. The perceptions of students attending the undergraduate English Language and Literature programme and registered on the teacher certification programme may differ from those studying in other departments. The aim of this study is to learn the views of students in an English language and literature department about the TCP, and to reveal the positive and negative experiences that they had in this process

### **Methods**

The participants of the study were 37 final year students in the undergraduate English Language and Literature Department of the Faculty of Science and Letters who were registered on the teacher certification programme conducted by the Faculty of Education at a state university in Turkey. Five of the participants are male, and 32 are female. An interview form consisting of two parts was prepared as the data collection tool. The first section consists of demographic questions aimed at learning the students' genders, ages and education levels, while the second part is made up of open-ended interview questions aiming to learn the students' opinions related to the programme. These questions are also the research questions of the study: "What are your positive views regarding the Teacher Certification Programme?", "What are your negative views regarding the Teacher Certification Programme?" and "What are your recommendations for making the Teacher Certification Programme more effective?". Thematic analysis was used for the analysis of the data.

### **Findings**

The findings of the study reveal that the pre-service teachers there were areas in which students were both satisfied and experienced problems related to the education-training process and the structure and functioning dimensions,

The students mostly expressed positive opinions regarding the course contents and learning outcomes included in the program. They considered that the courses on the programme not only taught them new information, but also developed their general knowledge, and that they mostly thought positively about the course content of the programme, since this prepared them for the KPSS exam

The students generally held negative views related to both the education process of the programme and its structure and functioning. They mostly stated that there were problems related to course instructors' teaching of the courses such as monotonous delivery of lessons, lack of classroom practice regarding the subject taught, and lack of examples given regarding the subject.

The analysis results reveal that the students' recommendations were related to the subthemes of structure and functioning of the programme in the structure and functioning dimension, and to the subthemes of course instructors, courses and assessment in the education and training dimension. The students especially stressed the need for the number of subject area courses related to English teaching to be increased. Another suggestion made by the students was for the TCP to be removed and for its content to be disseminated into the undergraduate process by integrating it with the English language teaching curriculum. Moreover, the students made some suggestions related to the teaching practice course. They stated that education courses and subject area courses should be taken during the first semester rather than at the same time as the teaching practice during the second semester.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

This study aimed to reveal the positive and negative aspects of the teacher certification programme by focusing on evaluating it in the implementation process through the eyes of students. The findings of this study offer important information for determining the components of the TCP that fall short and for the necessary improvements to be made. The revisions that are made in the light of this information will increase the effectiveness and quality of education in the TCP.

**Keywords:** Teacher certification programme, pre-service teachers, higher education

**Öz:** Pedagojik Formasyon Programı (PFP) eğitim fakültelerinin dışında başka fakülte öğrencilerinin veya mezunlarının öğretmenlik mesleği için gerekli temel bilgi ve becerileri edinmelerini sağlar. Bu çalışmanın amacı İngiliz dili edebiyatı bölümü öğrencilerinin pedagojik formasyon programıyla ilgili düşüncelerini öğrenmek, bu süreçte yaşadıkları olumlu ve olumsuzlukları belirlemektir. Katılımcılar pedagojik formasyon programına kayıtlı Fen Edebiyat fakültesi İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı lisans programında okuyan 37 son sınıf öğrencisidir. Veri toplama aracı olarak iki bölümden oluşan bir form hazırlanmıştır. Birinci bölüm, katılımcıların cinsiyet, yaş ve öğrenim seviyelerini gibi demografik bilgi sorgulayıcı sorular, ikinci bölüm ise öğrencilerin programla ilgili düşüncelerini öğrenmeye yönelik üç açık uçlu sorudan oluşmaktadır: 1) PFP ile ilgili olumlu düşünceleriniz nelerdir, 2)PFP ile ilgili olumsuz düşünceleriniz nelerdir? ve 3) PFP'ni daha etkili hale getirmek için önerileriniz nelerdir?. Form, öğrencilere birinci akademik dönemin sonunda dağıtılmıştır. Yazılı verinin analizinde tematik analiz kullanılmıştır. Sonuçlar öğrencilerin Pedagojik Formasyon Programıyla ilgili hem olumlu hem de olumsuz düşüncelere sahip olduğunu ortaya çıkarmıştır... Öğrenciler en çok programın eğitim ve öğrenim boyutlarına yönelik olumlu düşünceleri olduğunu göstermektedir. Programdaki derslerin yeni bilginin yanında genel kültürlerini geliştirmeye yönelik bilgi sunduğunu da belirtmişlerdir. Diğer taraftan, programın yapı ve işleyişi ile ilgili olumsuzlukları ifade etmişlerdir. Öğrenciler ayrıca İngilizce öğretimine yönelik alan ders sayılarının artırılmasına yönelik öneride bulunmuşlardır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** pedagojik formasyon, öğretmenlik eğitimi, yüksek öğretim

## Introduction

In Turkey, many different practices aimed at training qualified teachers have been implemented in the historical process. With the regulation made in 2011, the pedagogical Teacher Certification Programme( TCP) was implemented by the Higher Education Council (YÖK), which gave students or graduates from faculties/colleges other than education faculties and primarily from faculties of science and letters the opportunity to become teachers, by enabling them to acquire the basic knowledge and skills needed for the teaching profession.

The application requirements for the TCP were specified by YÖK. The programme, which comprises a condensed, intensive training lasting two semesters, consists of a total of 12 courses including elective courses. In the first semester, the courses are Introduction to the Teaching Profession, Teaching Principles and Methods, Assessment and Evaluation in Education, Education Psychology, Classroom Management, Elective I and Elective II; while in the second term, the courses are Special Teaching Methods, Education Technologies and Materials Design, and Teaching Practice consisting of 2 lesson hours of theory and 6 lesson hours of practice. The elective courses are Curriculum Development in Education, Developmental Psychology, Action Research in Education, Use of Technology in Education, and Counselling. Only two of the total of 12 courses, Special Teaching Methods, and Education Technologies and Materials Design, are subject area courses, that is, courses related to English teaching. The curriculum is implemented in different ways at different universities; some universities offer this programme via face-to-face education either during the week or at weekends, while others offer this programme via distance learning. In recent years, the number of universities incorporating this programme and the quotas allocated to it have increased (Gurol, Türkan & Som, 2018; Türkan, Uyar & Yolcu, 2017). The extent to which this programme, which provides pedagogical training to graduates from outside education faculties in a short time, achieves its goals and produces qualified teachers is constantly debated (Azar, 2011; Köse, 2017; Yüksel, 2004; Yılmaz, 2015). The attempt to deliver teacher training, which is normally acquired over a long period of four years in education faculties, in a short time constitutes an important obstacle to the training of qualified teachers and is accompanied by a number of problems (Gurol, Türkan & Som, 2018; Köse, 2017).

Curriculum implementations which are not based on scientific research and evaluation studies result in a reduction in the quality of teacher training. Before any changes are made to the existing curriculum, the pros and cons of the current programme need to be determined with

scientific research and the changes should be constructed on the basis of this information (Yıldırım,2018). Therefore, it is considered necessary to examine the teacher training certification programme, which is a part of the teacher education system, and to determine the problems encountered therein (Gurol, Türkan & Som, 2018). Although a number of studies related to the pedagogical training programme exist in the literature, there are very few studies aimed at evaluation of the programme (Gurol, Türkan & Som, 2018; Kaya, Hürüroğlu, Keser & Horoz, 2011; Köse, 2017). Some studies focus on assessment of specific courses in the programme rather than on a general evaluation of the programme. While Süral (2014) examined students' thoughts about the assessment and evaluation course, other studies focused on students' attitudes towards the teaching practice course that comprises the practical dimension of the programme (Kılınç, Kılcan & Çepni, 2018; Nayanı & Çınkır, 2014; Tepeli & Caner, 2014). Most of the studies aimed at a general assessment of the programme were conducted with students studying in different departments. The pedagogical needs of students attending the same undergraduate programme, and their perceptions of the competencies that they believe they should possess, may differ from those attending a different undergraduate programme. The perceptions of students attending the undergraduate English Language and Literature programme and registered on the teacher certification programme may differ from those studying in other departments. The aim of this study is to learn the views of students in an English language and literature department about the teacher certification programme, and to reveal the positive and negative experiences that they had in this process.

The research questions of the study are:

1)What are the positive views of the students in the Teacher Certification Programme regarding the programme?

2)What are the negative views of the students in the Teacher Certification Programme regarding the Programme?

3)What are the recommendations of the students in the Teacher Certification Programme for making the programme more effective

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The participants of the study were 37 final year students in the undergraduate English Language and Literature Department of the Faculty of Science and Letters who were registered on the teacher certification programme conducted by the Faculty of Education at a state university in Turkey. Five of the participants are male, and 32 are female. Their ages range between 20 and 28. The study was carried out immediately before the final exam at the end of the autumn term of the 2019-2020 academic year, which was the final term of the Teacher Certification Programme (TCP). During this term, the students had experience in teaching practice lasting one term in addition to their theory lessons. The terms "students" and "pre-service teachers" will be used interchangeably throughout this article.

### **Data Collection Tools**

An interview form consisting of two parts was prepared as the data collection tool. The first section consists of demographic questions aimed at learning the students' genders, ages and education levels, while the second part is made up of open-ended interview questions aiming to learn the students' opinions related to the programme. These questions are also the research questions of the study: "What are your positive views regarding the Teacher Certification Programme?", "What are your negative views regarding the Teacher Certification Programme?" and "What are your recommendations for making the Teacher Certification Programme more effective?"

### **Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis was used for the analysis of the data. The analysis performed is explained in the following steps:

- 1.The students' answer papers were coded, beginning with 1 (S1, S2, S3,.....S37).
- 2.While the students' answers to the first question were being read, every piece of information considered meaningful was underlined, concept words/phrases representing this information block were transferred to a separate page, and the first list of codes for the first question was created. This procedure was repeated for every question and a separate list of codes was created for each question.
- 3.In the list of codes created, codes having the same meaning were grouped together, while the others were removed from the list of codes. For example, instead of "condensed programme" and "intensive programme" found in the first list of codes, an item renamed "programme intensity" was transferred to the second list of codes.
- 4.The codes in the second list of codes were examined again, and firstly, the subthemes containing the codes, and then the main themes containing the subthemes, were formed.

### **Findings**

#### **What are the Positive Views of the Students in the Teacher Certification Programme Regarding the Programme?**

The findings of the study reveal that the pre-service teachers had positive views regarding the education and training dimension of the TCP. The students mostly expressed positive opinions regarding the course contents and learning outcomes included in the programme for achieving goals aimed at acquisition of knowledge competencies related to teaching (Table 1). Relevant views of students are presented below:

*Most students studying in the faculty of science and letters intend to be teachers and this programme gives them this opportunity.....We learn the answer to how we can become teachers thanks to this programme. (S9)*

*This programme informs us about what and how we should teach our students, how we should behave towards them, and what kind of relationships we should have with them when we become teachers. (S19)*

*We learn about what a teacher will have to deal with in the future, how he should treat everyone equally and democratically, and how he should not behave. (S3)*

Moreover, the students stated that in the programme, they learned information not only about teaching, but also information that they could use in their social lives and information that improved their general knowledge:

*I believe that this programme contributes significantly not only to our academic knowledge, but also to our social lives. (S3)*

One student expressed the relationship between the effectiveness of the programme and professional development with a constructivist rather than a critical approach:

*It provides information about teaching method and technical subjects, but I think that the actual task belongs to the teacher himself. For a person who cannot develop himself, the probability of becoming a good teacher is low, even if he receives pedagogical training. (S11)*

Some students also stated that by equipping them with the knowledge and other faculties needed by a teacher, the programme helped them to develop their teacher identities:

*In my opinion, the certification programme not only offers theory lessons, it also provides a person with a new perspective about teaching. Besides the fluency of narration of those lecturers who are experts in their fields, listening to their experiences is also very important (S1)*

Furthermore, the students stated that the most effective and positive item in the programme was the teaching practice:

*The internship helped me to develop. Giving lessons to the students and taking responsibility were a good experience. Other than the practicum, I have a negative view of the pedagogical training programme (S12).*

With regard to the structure and functioning of the programme, the fact that attendance in the lessons was compulsory and that the programme was implemented during the academic year were each expressed from a positive perspective by only one student:

*The fact that the teacher training programme is delivered during the academic year is an advantage for us in terms of supporting our preparation for the KPSS exam. (S4)*

**Table 1:** Main Themes and Subthemes Created from Analysis of Participants' Positive Views about TCP

Main Theme 1 Education and Training (f= 36)		Main Theme: 2 Structure and Functioning (f=2)		f
<b>Subtheme 1: Knowledge &amp; Skills (f=31)</b>	f	<b>Subtheme2:Course Instructors (f=5)</b>	f	
Acquiring new knowledge about teaching profession	1	Course instructors are experts in their fields	3	The programme is delivered during the academic year
Learning information that improves general knowledge	7	Course instructors are experienced	2	Attendance in classes is compulsory
Acquiring information related to KPSS exam	6			
Teaching practice	5			
Fostering a new perspective on teaching profession	1			

### What are the Negative Views of the Students in the Teacher Certification Programme Regarding the Programme?

The students generally held negative views related to both the education process of the programme and its structure and functioning. They mostly stated that there were problems related to course instructors' teaching of the courses such as monotonous delivery of lessons, lack of classroom practice regarding the subject taught, and lack of examples given regarding the subject:

*The fact that some of the lecturers just teach by reading out of the book in their hand is not productive for the students, in my opinion. (S12)*

*They read from a book in their hand. But when we are listening, we cannot see what they are narrating from the book. (S3)*

*The lecturers should be more active; they should not teach by depending on slides or books. (S10)*

**Table 2:** Main Themes and Subthemes Created from Analysis of Participants' Negative Views about TCP

<b>Main Theme 1</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Main Theme 2</b>	<b>f</b>
<b>Education and Training (f=16)</b>		<b>Structure and Functioning (f= 15)</b>	
<b>Subtheme 1: Course Instructors (f=9)</b>		Courses take place at weekends	3
Monotonous lesson delivery	3	Attendance in classes is compulsory	2
Lack of practice after teaching of subject	2	Programme is intensive and condensed	5
No examples given when teaching subject	1	Low number of major area courses (related to English teaching)	2
Teaching of too many subjects in a short time	2	Inadequacy of elective courses	1
Courses are exam-oriented	1	Lack of opportunity to gain experience with teaching different age groups during practicum	1
<b>Subtheme 2: Courses (f= 5)</b>		Courses are taken at same as internship course	1
Courses do not provide useful information	2		
Teaching techniques and methods taught in programme are inconsistent with those observed during internship	1		
Needlessness of elective courses	1		
Intensiveness of course subject content	1		
<b>Subtheme 3: Assessment ( f=2)</b>			
Intensiveness of exams	2		

One student drew attention to the inadequate giving of information in classes, related to teaching students at different levels and ages:

*The lessons could be delivered more productively. Since all preservice teachers will teach students at different levels and ages in future, giving an example related to the subject by considering only one level cannot be right. (S4)*

Similarly, the students stated that the lessons remained theoretical, that they did not learn how the theory that was taught could be put into practice, that this also led students to focus on passing exams rather than learning the subject, and that therefore, they adopted a rote-learning approach to study:

*Most of the courses are unproductive. We cannot learn how we will use the things we learn in our professional life. (S15)*

*The curriculum is very condensed and intensive; it is superficial. Details about how we will use this knowledge in our teaching life, or how to apply it in the practicum, are not given in the course. This situation directs us towards learning parrot fashion. (S35)*

Another student who criticised rote learning-based education stressed the importance of in-class activities:

*The student should be given the necessary information in the right way. The aim is to educate teachers, not parrots. Instead of continually giving us things to learn by heart, practice-based knowledge that we will be able to actually use in classroom teaching should be provided. (S17)*

Some students stated that the contents of the courses were very intensive:

*An attempt is made to teach a lot of things in a very short time. We get very bored. Since we are so overloaded, we only think about the lesson content in terms of focusing on exams; we do not consider how useful it is for us. (S30)*

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*Since it is a very condensed programme, some lessons are delivered superficially and are conducted very quickly. (S27)*

*Since the content of the subject area courses is very comprehensive, the lessons are very intensive. (S27)*

Some students reported that some compulsory and elective courses, which are a part of “education and training”, made no contribution at all. Some students’ thoughts related to this subject are presented in the quotes below:

*Perhaps I will be able to use some of the knowledge I have learnt here in my teaching career, but generally, this information is not practice-oriented; since it is theoretical, I have doubts as to whether much of the information will be useful in my teaching career. (S35)*

*The programme does not make much of a contribution. If I studied myself (on my own at home), I could learn a lot more. I believe that most of the courses are a waste of time. (S16)*

*Apart from the teaching practice, not one course prepares me for becoming a teacher. Apart from the internship lessons, the courses neither prepare us for the KPSS exam nor provide us with enough training for us to become teachers. (S17)*

Moreover, the students regarded the fact that the teaching practice course, which plays an essential role in converting theoretical knowledge into practice, is taken together with the subject area courses in the same term, as one of the negative aspects of the programme:

*The practicum should not be taken in the same period as the pedagogical training courses. We start giving lessons in the practicum without yet learning how English is to be taught. (S5)*

One of the students emphasised the importance of choosing cooperating teachers relevant to the teaching practice course:

*The methods and techniques we learn in our programme are different from those of our cooperating teachers at the school; theirs are more traditional. (S2)*

Although few in number, some students stated disadvantages related to the exams that are part of the education and training process, such as the fact that the exams are squeezed into a very short period of time, and that there are very short intervals between exams:

*As there are no intervals between exam times, we do not have time to rest. Each one of us has basic needs and an interval of at least 40 minutes between exams would help us to meet these needs. But as it is, the situation is one of rushing and panic, and this is a factor that decreases our performance. (S1)*

The most frequently expressed disadvantage regarding the general structure and functioning of the programme was that it was very intensive due to being very condensed, and that this intensiveness made the programme unproductive for the students:

*Since we are final year students, we have not only the KPSS exam, but also the courses in our own department, the practicum and the courses on the programme, which makes our lives very busy. I cannot keep up with everything. (S29)*

*The programme is very intensive. At the weekend, lessons take place from early in the morning to the evening. Besides the courses in the teacher certification programme, there are the courses in the department, the internship, and, to cap it all, when training school for preparation for the KPSS exam is added, I no longer have any strength left to revise the lessons when I get back to the dormitory. (S28).*

*The fact that the courses are crammed into one year is a disadvantage. It is like an accelerated course. (S5)*



*Since the programme is squeezed into a very short period, it has made no contribution to me. (S8)*

*The most negative aspect of the programme is the high number of classes, and in terms of content, courses that are comprehensive are condensed into a short period. Students are expected to perform well, but believe me, it is very difficult to understand and digest everything on the course. One cannot expect high performance in such a short time. We do what we can as students, but we get very tired. (S25)*

Moreover, some students regarded the fact that the programme took place at the weekend as a disadvantage:

*Our registering for the teacher certification programme does not mean that we want to spend all our weekends at school. Since we cannot spare time for ourselves, focusing on classes for long periods wears us out, and we cannot be efficient. (S24)*

*Our lessons in the department and the courses that we take on the teacher certification programme require us to come to school seven days a week. (S5)*

*Heaping all the courses into the weekend makes them very unproductive. Suitable times could be allocated during the week. Our afternoon classes finish late, and since they are at the weekend, we have problems with transport. (S25)*

*The fact that the classes are at the weekend is very bad for us, as we have no time to relax or to study. (S9).*

Another disadvantage related to the structure of the programme expressed by students was the scarcity of subject area courses and the insufficient variety of elective courses:

*The low number of courses related to the specialised field is the biggest disadvantage. Several more courses on the subject of English teaching need to be opened. For example, I would like to have lessons in linguistics and phonetics. (S37)*

### **What are the Recommendations of the Students in the Teacher Certification Programme for Making the Programme More Effective?**

Finally, the students were asked for their suggestions regarding what could be done to make the programme more effective.

The analysis results reveal that the students' recommendations were related to the subthemes of structure and functioning of the programme in the structure and functioning dimension, and to the subthemes of course instructors, courses and assessment in the education and training dimension (Table3).

The participants stated that the course instructors' lesson teaching techniques and methods should be student-centred rather than traditional:

*The lessons are taught with slides and a method based on rote learning. The lecturers only read out to us what is written and require us to learn what they have read out by heart. It should not be forgotten that just as the lecturers expect things from us, we expect things from them. Just because the lesson is conducted, this does not necessarily mean that the recipients, that is we, as students, have completely understood and learnt it. The attitudes towards us and the teaching techniques need to be changed or developed. (S13)*

**Table 3:** Main themes and subthemes created from analysis of participants' recommendations for TCP

Main Theme 1	f	Main Theme 2	f
<b>Education and Training (f= 14)</b>		<b>Structure and Functioning (f=31)</b>	
<b>Subtheme 1: Course Instructors (f=10)</b>		<b>Subtheme 1: Structure (f=25)</b>	
		The number of subject area courses should be increased	6
		The subject area courses should be taken in the first term	3
More effective and up-to-date materials should be used	2	The teaching practice should not be carried out at the same time as the courses	1
Importance should not be given to use of slides	2	The period of the internship should be extended	5
For better understanding of the subject, relevant practice should be made	3	The teacher certification programme should be removed and the courses integrated with the undergraduate programme	5
		The programme should be extended over a longer period	1
The instructor should deliver the lessons more effectively and actively	3	A KPSS preparation course should be added	4
		<b>Subtheme 2: Functioning (f=6)</b>	
<b>Subtheme2: Courses (f=2)</b>		The programme should be free of charge	2
Attention should be given to selection of suitable cooperating teachers at the practice school	2	The courses should be conducted during the week	2
<b>Subtheme 3: Assessment (f=2)</b>		Compulsory attendance should be abolished	1
There should be intervals between exams	1	The courses should be offered via distance learning	1
Exams should be spread over a period, not just days	1		

The students made some suggestions related to the implementation of the practicum, regarding selection of cooperating teachers:

*Choice of school for the practicum is very important, as in a sense, we imitate our cooperating teacher at the practicum school, which will have a big effect on our future teaching careers. (S26)*

The number of suggestions made by the students regarding the structure and functioning of the TCP was much greater than the recommendations they made in the education and training dimension (Table3). The most frequently expressed suggestions regarding the structure and functioning of the TCP were related to the necessity to reduce the intensiveness of the programme by extending it over a longer period, rather than condensing it intensively into two terms:

*The programme can be spread over a longer period. For example, by taking it over a total of four terms in the second and third years, a more beneficial and healthy training can be provided. In this way, students can study for the KPSS exam in the fourth grade. (S 22)*

*Offering the teacher training programme in the fourth grade is a disadvantage. We start teaching in the practicum without knowing how to deliver a lesson. The programme can begin in the first term of the second year or third year. (S5)*

One of the most important findings of the study was the students' suggestion that the education courses like classroom management and assessment and evaluation, and the special teaching methods course, which is one of the subject area courses that includes methods for teaching reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in English and the subjects of special in-class techniques and approaches used in language teaching, should not be taken together with the internship in the second term, but during the previous term.

*The terms during which the special teaching methods course and the assessment and evaluation course should be changed, because we take the practicum together with these courses. We enter the internship and start giving lessons before we learn how teaching is carried out. (S15)*

*I believe that courses like classroom management and special teaching methods should be given during the term prior to doing the internship, instead of during the second term of the programme. Learning classroom management and how English is to be taught before the practicum will be beneficial for us. (S24)*

Some students recommended that the period of the teaching practice lasting one semester should be increased:

*The teaching practice should be extended to two terms. The first term should focus on observation, the second on teaching. In this way, the programme would not be so intensive and we would not have to squeeze everything in. We would not lose our enthusiasm. (S37)*

Students also suggested that the programme, offered in face-to-face format, should be provided via distance learning:

*It would be better if the courses were delivered via distance learning. If this cannot be done, compulsory attendance should be abolished. (S12)*

*This programme can be delivered by distance learning. We are very busy, and because we are busy, we cannot achieve the desired efficiency. If we could receive the programme via distance learning, we would have the chance to learn the lessons whenever and wherever we wished. (S29)*

Finally, one student made a recommendation related to the size of the classes:

*The classes should not be crowded. Either fewer students should be accepted on the programme, or the classes should be divided. (S5)*

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study, which aims to evaluate the Teacher Certification Programme (TCP), reveal the positive and negative opinions of students studying on the programme, and their recommendations in line with these views.

### **What are the Positive Views of the Students About the TCP?**

The students made 38 positive statements and 25 negative statements about the programme. This finding reveals that there were areas in which students were both satisfied and experienced problems related to the education-training process and the structure and functioning dimensions, which were the two dimensions of the programme. However, it can be said that the students had more positive attitudes towards the programme. These findings are supported by similar results in the literature. Gurol, Türkan and Som (2018) determined that students' views related to the pedagogical teacher certification programme were positive. In the same vein, in her study examining the attitudes of 329 students in the teacher certification programme about the programme, Kurnazoğlu Atmaca (2019) stated that the pre-service teachers had moderately positive thoughts about the efficiency of the programme.

Another important finding related to this question was that the pre-service teachers considered that the courses on the programme not only taught them new information, but also developed their general knowledge, and that they mostly thought positively about the course content of the programme, since this prepared them for the KPSS exam. Similarly, half of the pre-service teachers in Taneri's (2016) study stated that the courses in the programme were beneficial. According to the 43rd Clause of the Basic National Education Law, preparation for the teaching profession is enabled with general knowledge, specialised subject training and pedagogical teacher training courses. The fact that the pre-service teachers had positive opinions about the courses on the programme shows that the course contents were in direct proportion to the programme goals.

The research results reveal that as well as the teaching profession courses, the participants also had positive views about the teaching practice course, which enabled them to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours related to the teaching profession in a real teaching environment. Since this course makes it possible for pre-service teachers to prepare better for the teaching profession, acquire professional experience, make observations related to the teaching profession and to put the theoretical knowledge they have acquired on the courses into practice, it plays a very important role in teacher education (Goldhaber, Krieg&Theobald, 2017; Koerner & Rust, 2002; Tabachnick&Zeichner, 1984). This finding of the study can be interpreted as that the students, within the scope of their practical course, made positive gains related to the teaching profession by making observations and giving lessons at the practicum school throughout the term, and that these gains led them to adopt a positive attitude towards this course. Some studies in the literature obtained different results. In Koç's (2019) study, in which she examined the effect of pedagogical teacher training of science teachers on their in-class practices, the teachers stated that they were unable to apply the knowledge taught on the courses in which they had received teacher training, and that the TCP made a partial contribution. Gurol, Türkan and Som (2018) determined that pre-service teachers held more negative views about the education process than positive ones.

We can attribute one of the reasons why findings of studies differ in the related literature examining views of preservice teachers about the TCP to the results of Gurol, Türkan and Som's (2018) study. Gurol et al. (2018) reported that among the students, those with teaching experience made more negative assessments of the teaching-learning process of the programme than those without experience. Participants in Koç's study had completed the teacher training programme and were people who practised teaching and who possessed a lot more teaching experience than the students in this study. The different teaching experience between the participants in the two studies may be one of the factors that can explain this difference.

### **What are the Negative Views of the Students About the TCP?**

The students stated that they had negative opinions about the "education and training" and "structure and functioning" dimensions of the TCP. In support of this finding, in the literature, students in Kurnazoğlu Atmaca's (2019) study related to the adequacy of the TCP stated that they found the TCP programme to be moderately adequate, and Taneri (2016) reported that half of the pre-service teachers in her study regarded the courses in the programme as partially beneficial.

In the education and training dimension, students mostly stated their dissatisfaction with lecturers' monotonous delivery of the lesson, lack of in-class practice related to the subject taught, and teacher-centred lesson process. Taneri (2016) also reported that almost half of pre-service teachers did not have positive thoughts about the qualities of the course instructors, while most of the pre-service teachers in Demirtaş and Kırbaç's (2010) study also expressed their dissatisfaction towards lecturers' unproductive delivery of courses. Gurol, Türkan and Som (2018), too, drew attention to the very theoretical procedure of the courses and reported that the course contents were very detailed and that what was learnt theoretically was not reflected in practice. In education faculties, the knowledge and skills required for the teaching profession are instilled in pre-service teachers during a four-year process via courses related to the profession and general knowledge in a

number of subjects. However, in the teacher certification programme, due to the limited number of courses for professional knowledge and subject knowledge, the fact that the course instructors, with the idea of “instilling a lot of knowledge in a short time”, allot time that they should set aside for practice to teaching theoretical knowledge in the courses, may prevent the knowledge from being taught deeply and practically in the courses. This argument is supported by the findings of Köse’s (2017) study. In Köse’s (2017) study, it was revealed that academicians were of the opinion that because the teacher certification programme was very short, too much information was loaded onto the students in this period and that therefore, qualities and competences needed for the teaching profession could not be adequately fostered in pre-service teachers.

### **What are the Students’ Recommendations Regarding the TCP?**

The pre-service teachers made more recommendations regarding the structure and functioning of the TCP than they made about its education and training dimension. The students especially stressed the need for the number of *subject area courses* related to English teaching to be increased. Only two of the ten courses given within the scope of the TCP (special teaching methods, and teaching technologies and materials design) are concerned with the subject of teaching the English language. In the English Language Teaching curricula in the education faculties, knowledge and skills related to English teaching are fostered in students via method courses such as Teaching Foreign Language to Children I, Teaching Foreign Language to Children II, Language Teaching Skills I, Language Teaching Skills II, and Approaches to English Learning and Teaching, as well as with courses focusing on linguistics. Therefore, in the TCP, the subject area courses, limited to two in number, are very inadequate for students to acquire the theory and skills required for becoming English teachers. Subject knowledge constitutes a large part of general teacher competencies (Altun,2015). Koç (2019) went a step further, and stated that of the courses that needed to be included in a teacher training curriculum, 50-60% should consist of courses for specialised subject training, 25-30% should be pedagogical training courses, and 15-20% should comprise general knowledge courses (p.13). However, in the existing TCP, the percentage of subject area courses is limited to 16-17%, so that the students not only mentioned the insufficiency of subject area courses and elective courses, but also stated that the number of subject area courses needed to be increased and that among the elective courses, there should also be courses related to the English language. Köse (2017) also recommended that the variety of the elective courses should be increased. Teachers should possess adequate subject knowledge experience and pedagogic knowledge along with classroom management skills for quality teaching. (Guerriero,2017) By increasing compulsory subject area courses in the TCP, method courses such as Teaching Foreign Language to Children and Teaching Language Skills need to be added to the programme, as do linguistics courses like Phonetics as elective or compulsory courses.

Another suggestion made by the students regarding the structure and functioning of the programme was for the TCP to be removed and for its content to be disseminated into the undergraduate process by integrating it with the English language teaching curriculum. This proposal has been mentioned in a number of studies by both preservice teachers and teaching staff (Gurol, Türkan & Som, 2018; Köse, 2017; Sağlam, 2015; Yapıcı & Yapıcı, 2013; Yılmaz, 2015).

One of the problems most frequently expressed by the preservice teachers with regard to the TCP was inefficient delivery of the lessons by course instructors. In parallel with this, regarding the education and training dimension of the TCP, the students recommended that the course instructors should be more active and that they should use more varied and effective course materials. Similarly, in their study, Gurol et al. (2018) recommended that active participation of students should be increased, and that teaching methods suited to the students’ characteristics should be selected.

Another issue raised by the students was that the courses remained very theoretical and that they did not include enough practice. The importance of creating environments that will enable

theory to be put into practice is one of the important issues particularly emphasised in the literature (Dalgıç, Doyran & Vatanartıran, 2012; Gurol, Türkan & Som, 2018; Karamustafaoglu & Özmen (2004); Sever, Aktaş, Şahin & Tunca, 2015; Yılmaz, 2015).

Moreover, the students made some suggestions related to the teaching practice course, which is an important part of the curriculum. They stated that education courses and subject area courses should be taken during the first semester rather than at the same time as the teaching practice during the second semester. The teaching practice is a course in which pre-service teachers are required to observe lessons and teach lessons in the practice school for six hours a week under the supervision of the cooperating teacher, as well as to take theory lessons for two hours a week at the university with the course lecturer, and its aim is to assist the student in effectively acquiring teaching skills by giving them the opportunity to put the theoretical knowledge they have gained about English teaching into practice. The aim of the teaching practice course cannot be achieved if students in the TCP deliver their lessons without yet possessing knowledge about subjects like teaching vocabulary, teaching grammar or teaching reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Though few in number, some students stated the importance of selecting cooperating teachers suited to the teaching practice course. This indicates that some students may have experienced or be experiencing problems with their cooperating teachers. Some studies in the literature support this argument. For example, Yapıcı and Yapıcı (2004) stated that pre-service teachers did not receive adequate or good-quality guidance from cooperating teachers during the teaching practice process. In the same vein, Tepeli and Caner (2014), who examined the views of graduates from the undergraduate Turkish language and literature programme about the teaching practice in the teacher certification programme conducted in the Education Faculty, stated that though few in number, students held negative views about the teaching practice.

In the study, most of the students who had both positive and negative opinions of the TCP stated that the best aspect of the TCP was the practicum. Studies in the literature also support this finding (Turhan-Türkkan, Uyar & Yolcu, 2017; Tepeli & Caner, 2014). Although it appears to be positive, this finding leads us to ask a question that is overlooked in the literature, but which is a key point for the effectiveness of the teaching practice process, regarding the quality of the guidance given by cooperating teachers to pre-service teachers and the extent to which they are good role models. Bullough (2012) pointed out that cooperating teachers did not have sufficient training for effective guidance. Similarly, Canh (2014) drew attention to the question of the degree to which cooperating teachers could be a good role model for prospective teachers, and stated that during their internship, preservice teachers took as a model the way the cooperating teacher delivered the lesson while giving their lessons in class, rather than the theories they had learned at university. Similarly, it is stated in the literature that cooperating teachers and university supervisors give different feedback (Farrel, 2008; Tillema, 2009; Valencia, Martin, Place & Grossman, 2009). Therefore, there is a need for descriptive studies that examine feedback given by cooperating teachers in order to reveal whether students in the TCP really receive good-quality and constructive feedback within the framework of the theories taught at university.

### **Conclusion**

Curriculum evaluation makes it possible to determine the strong and weak aspects of the curriculum prior to, during and following implementation (Tyler, 1949). This study aimed to reveal the positive and negative aspects of the teacher certification programme by focusing on evaluating it in the implementation process through the eyes of students. The results reveal that the pre-service teachers expressed both positive and negative views about various components of the programme. Although this study aims only to learn the positive and negative opinions of pre-service teachers regarding the programme, studies in the literature show that course instructors express more negative views about the programme than teacher candidates. This indicates that there are problems related to the programme, and this is supported by a number of studies in the literature. The road to

obtaining the desired results in education is built by continually developing education programmes. For education programmes to be successfully implemented, evaluation should be made by means of scientific studies that examine the extent to which the aims of the programmes have been achieved (Yıldırım, 2018); Varış, 1996). Curriculum evaluation consists of the following steps: “*Analysis*”, in which existing education problems, expectations, current skills and competencies, the learning environment, and the goals and aims of education are determined; “*Design*”, in which learning goals, assessment tools, educational content and activities, materials to be used in education, and tools for measuring the outcomes achieved are designed; “*Development*”, in which the content and subjects, activities, exercises, materials and measurement and evaluation tools created at the design stage are reviewed and the necessary improvements and revisions are made; “*Implementation*”, in which the planned education is begun to be applied in a real classroom environment; and finally “*Evaluation*”, in which the productiveness and effectiveness of the education design are measured, and the extent to which learners’ needs are met is investigated (Gagne & Briggs,1974). For the development of the teacher certification programme that is currently applied, firstly, the needs of the teacher candidates wishing to participate in the programme should be identified, after which, curriculum content suited to these needs should be designed, and then the other stages should be carried out in order. If the pros and cons of the implementations made for increasing the quality of teaching are not determined and a general assessment of the programmes is not made at frequent intervals with scientific studies, this causes problems to increase incrementally and eventually gives rise to the need for another new change in the programme within a short space of time (Yıldırım, 2018). In this context, this study reveals the need for studies to be made with the aim of increasing the quality of the TCP. The findings of this study offer important information for determining the components of the TCP that fall short and for the necessary improvements to be made. The revisions that are made in the light of this information will increase the effectiveness and quality of education in the TCP.

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