

**SHALL THEY TEACH ENGLISH AS EFFICIENT AS ENGLISH TEACHERS? PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER CANDIDATES' PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE ABSENCE OF AN ENGLISH TEACHER**

**İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENİ KADAR ETKİLİ ÖĞRETEBİLECEKLER Mİ? SINIF ÖĞRETMENİ ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENİNİN OLMADIĞI DURUMLARDA İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİMİNE YÖNELİK ALGILARI**

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**ÖZ**

**ABSTRACT**

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**Anahtar Kelimeler**

Sınıf Öğretmeni  
Adayları,  
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Pre-service Primary  
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Devlet okulları ve özel okullar ayrımı olmaksızın günümüz eğitim sisteminde İngilizce'nin yabancı dil olarak öğretimi 2. Sınıfta başlamaktadır. Devlet okullarında İngilizce dersleri İngilizce öğretmenleri tarafından, İngilizce öğretmenin olmadığı okullarda ise sınıf öğretmenleri tarafından yürütülmektedir. Özel okullarda ise İngilizce dersleri İngilizce öğretmenleri tarafından yürütülmektedir. Bu bağlamda üniversitelerin eğitim fakülteleri bünyesinde bulunan sınıf öğretmenliği lisans programları 4. Sınıf derslerine sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının İngilizce öğretme bilgi ve becerilerini artırmak amacıyla 'İlkokulda yabancı dil öğretimi' isimli bir ders eklenmiştir. Mevcut çalışma Türkiye'de bir devlet üniversitesinin, sınıf öğretmenliği lisans programında okuyan sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının İngilizce öğretimine yönelik bakış açılarını incelemektedir. Çalışmada nitel veriler yazılı yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniğiyle toplanmıştır. Veriler sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının İngilizce'yi yabancı dil olarak öğretme konusunda kendilerini dil yeterliliği açısından yeterli bulmadıklarını, lisans programında aldıkları bir dersin kendilerinin İngilizce öğretme konusunda yeterli olmadığını, İngilizce dersinin İngilizce öğretmenleri tarafından yürütülmesi gerektiğini düşündüklerini göstermektedir. Çalışmada verilerden elde edilen sonuçlar doğrultusunda eğitimsel çıkarımlar ve önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

In today's education system, regardless of the distinction between public and private schools, teaching English as a foreign language begins in the 2nd grade. In public schools, English teachers conduct English classes; in schools where there are no English teachers, they are conducted by primary school teachers. In private schools, English classes are conducted by English teachers. In this context, a course titled "Teaching Foreign Languages in Primary Schools" has been included in the 4th-year classes of the primary school education programs within the faculties of education at universities to enhance the knowledge and skills of prospective primary school teachers in teaching English. The current study examines the perspectives of prospective classroom teachers studying in the primary education undergraduate program at a public university in Türkiye towards English language teaching. The study collected qualitative data using a written, structured interview technique. The data shows that prospective primary school teachers do not find themselves sufficient in language proficiency for teaching English as a foreign language, believe that a course they took in their undergraduate program was insufficient for teaching English, and think that English teachers should conduct the English course. In the study, educational implications and recommendations were made based on the results obtained from the data.

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## Introduction

Knowing at least one foreign language has become indispensable for adult individuals in today's information society. Due to English being the global language spoken worldwide, it is undeniable that individuals working in all fields, from science to economics, from art to sports, must know English. Today, English is an official language in sixty countries and is widely used in over twenty countries (Yıldırım & Tanrıseven, 2015). In Turkish schools, 98.4% of students learn English as a foreign language, while German and French are not preferred as a foreign language at a rate of 1.6% (Yıldırım & Tanrıseven, 2015). In previous years, foreign language education, which started in the 6th grade, began in the 4th grade after the 'eight-year compulsory education reform' was implemented in 1997 (Er, 2005). With the "Law on the Amendment of Primary Education and Education Law and Some Other Laws" enacted in 2012, compulsory education was extended from 8 to 12 years (Official Journal in Türkiye, 2012). With this law, the education system has become 4+4+4, with each number representing, respectively, the length of primary, secondary and high school education. With the decision of the Ministry of National Education's (MoNE) Board of Education and Discipline dated 25.06.2012 and numbered 69, titled "Weekly Course Schedules for Primary Education Institutions (Primary and Secondary Schools)," it has been decided that foreign language teaching, which starts in the 4th grade of primary education, will begin in the 2nd grade (MoNE, 2012).

In many European countries, teaching foreign languages starts very early. In Türkiye, the teaching of English as a foreign language, as mentioned above, starts in the 2nd grade with the recent changes. It is known that foreign language teaching that starts at an early age is effective in children due to developmental characteristics such as flexibility in listening and openness in comprehension (Anşın, 2006; Cameron, 2003; Cameron, 2005). In the process of learning a foreign language at an early age, children are very eager to learn, and their sense of curiosity is extreme. They have difficulty understanding abstract concepts. Thus, they will learn by doing and experiencing during the language learning process; they enjoy learning activities that involve their teacher and peers (Juhana, 2014). For these reasons, children learning a foreign language at an early age should be provided with environments similar to those for native language acquisition, and the language should be imparted as acquisition rather than instruction.

As is known, in some schools in Türkiye, the primary school teachers conduct the English lessons when there is no English teacher. Studies have been conducted on the knowledge and competencies of classroom teachers in teaching English. Classroom teachers do not possess as much subject knowledge as English teachers (Kubanç & Selvi, 2022). It has been observed that primary school teachers positively view the introduction of English as a foreign language starting from the 2nd grade (Gönül, 2020). Another study revealed that classroom teachers experience pronunciation problems in teaching listening and speaking skills (Çelik & Işık, 2019).

## Significance of the study

The current research investigates the perceptions and attitudes of prospective primary school teachers in the 4th year of the primary school teaching undergraduate program within the Faculty of Education at a public university in Türkiye regarding teaching English as a foreign language. Considering the fact that classroom teachers teach English lessons in the absence of English teachers, their language teaching competencies are important. This study aims to investigate the language teaching competencies of undergraduate classroom teachers who will be the classroom teachers of the future. The research participants are the first students to graduate after taking the 'Teaching Foreign Languages in Primary Schools' course, which was added as a mandatory course to the primary school teaching undergraduate program starting in the 2018-2019 academic year. Therefore, the study is important in investigating this course's impact on preservice primary school teachers. Since there is currently no study in this context, this study will address this research gap. The study was conducted considering the following research question:

1. What are the perspectives of prospective primary school teachers who take the compulsory undergraduate course 'Teaching Foreign Languages in Primary Schools' towards teaching English as a foreign language?

## Review of Literature

Today, English has become more than a native language and has become a tool that societies use to communicate with each other. In today's world, where the importance of knowing English is increasing daily, foreign language teaching in our country has started in the 2nd grade (6-7 years old) since the 2013-2014 academic year. As a result of today's scientific, social and international developments, the importance of learning a foreign language has increased once more time and foreign language teaching has been reduced to primary school in our country, and even foreign language teaching has started to be discussed from preschool period (Karcı, Akar-Vural, 2011). Foreign language learning in childhood has both differences and similarities with adult foreign language learning. Therefore, it is important for language teachers working with children to understand these similarities and differences (Gürel, 2018). Classroom teachers and English teachers play an important role in teaching English as a foreign language in primary school. However, both English teachers and classroom teachers have positive and negative aspects in teaching English as a foreign language. Şefik (2009) states that English language learners' content knowledge, pronunciation, and expertise in language teaching are effective in teaching language. Contrary to this view, Alkan and Arslan (2014) stated that English teachers do not know the program sufficiently. On the other hand, classroom teachers are not language teaching expert and this is a disadvantage for them (Sharpe, 2001). The biggest advantage of classroom teachers is that they spend a lot of time with primary school students, so they know the students and know how to teach them effectively (Sharpe, 2001). According to Kubanç and Selvi (2022), classroom teachers have negative views about teaching English as a foreign language at an early age. They stated that children who learn a foreign language at an early age have difficulty enjoying the lesson, and that the English lesson is not effective for children because the program uses a rote learning approach. In addition, it was revealed that very few of the classroom teachers participating in the study went to language courses to improve their knowledge of English (Kubanç & Selvi, 2022). It was observed that the classroom teachers participating in the study used traditional language teaching methods and techniques in English language teaching. Although there is a curriculum that aims to teach English using communicative methods, it is one of the reasons for the failure in language teaching due to the continuation of teaching with traditional methods (Kubanç & Selvi, 2022). In another study, the perceptions of classroom teachers' efficacy towards the implementation of the English curriculum in unified classrooms and the difficulties they encountered while implementing the curriculum were examined (Kara & Kara, 2023). As a result of the study, it was concluded that many classroom teachers had no knowledge about in-service training and that the course activities in this field were insufficient in the education region where they worked (Kara & Kara, 2023). As a result of the study, it was seen that classroom teachers could not understand the program because they did not learn enough English at the university. Kandemir (2016), similar to the results of this study, concluded that teachers did not have enough information about the elements of the curriculum. The effect of language teachers' attitudes and behaviours on their teaching is explained by teacher cognition theory. According to the teacher cognition theory, teachers' beliefs, knowledge, assumptions, theories and attitudes directly affect their teaching styles (Borg, 2003). Borg (1999) revealed the rationale and process of language teachers' decision-making and instructional behaviours based on grammar teaching. Language teachers adopt an eclectic approach and move away from traditional dichotomies. Language teacher cognition research creates a space to show how language teachers cognitively process a variety of information, inputs and contextual conditions to make pedagogical decisions, and this space allows language teacher educators to identify areas where we can help language teachers undergo specific cognitive changes (e.g. beliefs, knowledge, perspective and understanding) to bring about desired innovations in practice. Therefore, language teacher cognition remains one of the key research topics in language teacher education research.

## Method

### Research Design

This study collected qualitative data to investigate the participants' perspectives on English language teaching in primary education in depth. Structured written interview forms consisting of five open-ended questions were used to investigate the views of preservice primary school teachers on foreign language teaching in primary school, whether they possess the necessary subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and cultural knowledge

to teach English as preservice primary school teachers, whether they would have difficulty teaching language skills, what problems they might encounter while teaching English in primary school, and what possible solutions they might have for the problems they could face while teaching English in primary school.

## Participants

The study's participants consist of 67 preservice primary school teachers studying in the fourth year of the primary school teaching undergraduate program within the Faculty of Education at a state university in Türkiye. The participants include 16 males and 51 females. Their ages range between 21 and 23. It has been observed that the participants have similar educational backgrounds.

## Data collection tool

The current study used a written, structured interview of five open-ended questions. Open-ended questions aim to "eliminate the imposition of predetermined answers on the participant" (Patton, 2018, p. 353). The purpose of using the written, structured interview is to conduct an in-depth analysis of the responses given by each prospective classroom teacher to the same questions. The interpretive perspective focuses on how individuals participating in the interview understand, construct meaning, and explain the world; the post-positivist approach believes that the multiple perspectives of participants can be reached through a systematic and "scientific study that includes logical consistency" (Creswell, 2018, p. 24). Two field experts were consulted while preparing the interview questions.

## Data analysis

Qualitative data collected were analyzed using the quantitative content analysis method. Content analysis is a technique within qualitative research methods that aims to analyze various materials such as documents, texts, and records according to specific rules (sampling, coding, categorization, etc.) to obtain measurable, objective, and verifiable information (Metin & Ünal, 2022). Quantitative content analysis, primarily used in analyzing written texts, determines the repetition frequency of words or concepts identified during the categorization process. "In quantitative content analysis, open coding is more commonly used because it involves coding the content on the visible surface of the written text" (Metin & Ünal, 2022, p. 277). In order to ensure coding reliability, the collected data were analyzed by two different coders.

## Findings

The data collected in the study were analyzed using the quantitative content analysis method, creating themes and codes for each question. The findings for each written interview question are presented below, along with excerpts from student responses. The first written interview question is: "What are your views on foreign language teaching in primary school?" The themes created and their repetition rates are presented below.

**Table 1.** Codes and Frequencies for the First Interview Question

Code	Frequencies
Teacher competence is important	35
Enhancing cognitive skills and learning capacity	25
Interest in and positive attitude towards foreign languages	18
Familiarity with different cultures	12
More likely to learn	10
It should be after mother tongue development	7

Preservice primary school teachers have positive views on teaching English as a foreign language at an early age because primary school students are in a period when they are open to learning. Preservice primary school teachers believe that learning a foreign language will enhance the cognitive skills of primary school students and increase their learning capacities. Additionally, they believe that students who experience good learning examples during this period will develop a positive attitude towards learning English. Another finding is that preservice primary school teachers believe that English language instruction should start after the mother tongue instruction. In this context, they believe the teacher teaching English should be qualified. Below are some student responses (SR):

*SR: "Starting the foreign language learning process at an early age will increase its effectiveness, so it is extremely important to carry out activities in this area in primary school. However, in every region of Türkiye, English teachers may not be able to teach foreign language classes at the primary school level. In this case, the main responsibility falls on the classroom teachers. Therefore, it is extremely important to train teachers who have gained competence in this field. It is much healthier to lay the foundations of a new language at the primary school level. Different methods and techniques should be included in the efforts aimed at this."*

*SR: "Foreign language teaching in primary school should be more focused on the child's affective, cognitive, and psychomotor development. There should be a learning process here where the student is active, and the teacher tries to activate the student's knowledge. In addition to having a variety of activities for students, English should be spoken in class to help students learn the vocabulary. Different methods and techniques should be used in the lessons."*

*SR: "It is important for children to learn about the existence of languages other than their own and to explore the differences between people who speak different languages and live in different cultures. When students learn a new language, their horizons expand. They need to learn different skills at an early age."*

*SR: "English teaching can be started in the 1st grade. Even before school, simple everyday words should be taught. Teaching should focus more on developing speaking skills rather than grammar, with the teacher's aim being communication oriented. Since children at that age are in the concrete operational stage, concepts should be made concrete and supported with visual, auditory, and kinesthetic materials."*

The second written, structured interview question is, "As a prospective classroom teacher, do you think you possess the necessary English subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and cultural knowledge to teach English to your students?" Explain.

**Table 2.** Codes and Frequencies for the Second Interview Question

Code	Frequencies (Agree/Disagree)
Subject Matter Knowledge	18 agree - 49 disagree
Pedagogical Knowledge	61 agree - 6 disagree
Cultural Knowledge	42 agree - 15 disagree

The study participants mostly believe that they do not have sufficient knowledge of the subject matter in English language education. The minority who believes they have sufficient subject knowledge think that the English education they received throughout their studies will be adequate for students at the primary school level. Another finding is that most participants believe they possess sufficient pedagogical knowledge for English language education. Sixty-one of the participants believe that the pedagogy courses they took at the undergraduate level can be applied to language teaching. Another important finding from the second interview is whether the preservice primary school teachers have sufficient cultural knowledge to teach English. According to the data, most prospective classroom teachers believe they possess sufficient cultural knowledge. Preservice

primary school teachers who do not possess sufficient cultural knowledge think their cultural knowledge can be developed through various tools related to foreign cultures, especially English cultures, such as series, films, and books. Below are some student responses (SR):

SR: *"Cultural knowledge: Although I have basic cultural knowledge, I have some gaps. I am trying to keep up with the latest information on this topic. I try to research the topics I am curious about."*

SR: *"Field Knowledge: I don't think I have sufficient field knowledge. For this, in my third year of university, I took an English course to improve myself and obtained an A2 certificate."*

SR: *"Pedagogical Knowledge: I believe I possess pedagogical knowledge more than field knowledge. Taking many courses that included child psychology during my undergraduate education allowed me to become knowledgeable about this subject."*

The third written structured interview question is, "Which language skill do you think you will have the most difficulty teaching? Please explain why."

**Table 3.** Codes and Frequencies Rates for the Third Interview Question

Code	Frequencies
Speaking skill	58
Reading skill	12
Listening skill	8
Writing skill	5
Grammar teaching	2

The responses given by the participants to the interview question indicate that the preservice primary school teachers believe they will have the most difficulty teaching speaking skills. When all the responses were examined, the statement that they would struggle with speaking skills was repeated 58 times, and this rate is significantly higher than the repetition frequency of other skills. Participants base their thoughts on the difficulties they will face in teaching speaking skills on the fact that English words are not pronounced as they are written, the difference in the structure of the Turkish language compared to English, the limited opportunities for primary school students to practice English, the lack of self-confidence and motivation among students, the grammar-heavy approach in English lessons, the insufficient support from teachers in developing students' speaking skills, the teachers' weak speaking skills, and the high level of speaking anxiety among students. Another important finding is that preservice primary school teachers believe they will struggle to impart and develop reading skills in their future students. The preservice primary school teachers believe that the deficiencies in students' vocabulary knowledge and the fact that English words are not pronounced as they are written in Turkish are the reasons for this. The thought that they would struggle with reading skills was the second most mentioned skill they would struggle with, repeating 12 times among all the responses. Another important finding is that pre-service primary school teachers believe they will struggle to teach and develop their students' writing skills in the future. Some preservice primary school teachers believe writing skills are sidelined and unimportant in lessons. The repetition rate of the responses given by the participants regarding writing skills is 9. It has been observed that listening, another language skill, is perceived as a difficult skill for pre-service primary school teachers to teach. The preservice primary school teachers have attributed the reasons for considering listening skills as challenging to teach to students' lack of sufficient vocabulary and pronunciation differences. Finally, some preservice primary school teachers have stated that they will struggle to teach grammar due to the abstract nature of the content. Some of the responses (SR) given by preservice primary school teachers are presented below.

SR: *"I think I will have difficulty teaching speaking skills because I also know and understand English, but struggle with pronunciation. That is why I struggle to teach speaking skills."*

SR: *"I think I will have difficulty teaching speech skills; even a tiny pronunciation mistake by the child can lead to criticism from peers, and it will be hard to fix the loss of self-confidence in the child. The child's perspective on the lesson might even change."*

SR: *"In reading and listening skills, children perceive existing information, but in speaking and writing skills, they will try to take an active role themselves, so I think I will have more difficulty in teaching these two skills. Especially, speaking requires more effort than writing. It is especially difficult for a person to say what exists in their mind, as pronunciation comes into play, and trying to teach this requires more time and effort'."*

SR: *"It might be more challenging to develop speaking skills because children can be hesitant to pronounce words aloud due to their fear of making mistakes and being mocked by peers, and they might struggle since the sounds in the English alphabet are not the same as those in Turkish."*

SR: *"I think I will struggle with writing and speaking skills. Because Turkish is written as it is spoken, students will think of English in the same way, but when they start learning, they will realize the difference. Since it will be different when speaking and when writing, I think I will have difficulty with this. Since they will need to pronounce words differently when speaking, I think students will have difficulty with this because they probably won't read them as they are written, even in the simplest words."*

The fourth written, structured interview question is, "What problems might classroom teachers encounter when teaching English to primary school students?"

**Table 4.** Codes and Frequencies for the Fourth Interview Question

Code	Frequencies
Teacher inadequacy & subject difference	22
Student attitude	11
Issues in skill acquisition and pronunciation problems	6
Students' active participation in the activity design	5
Difficulty in the learning process	5
Class overcrowding and difficulties in classroom management	4
Material deficiency	2

Based on the responses of the preservice primary school teachers to question four, seven themes have been created. These themes are 'teacher inadequacy and subject differences', 'students' developmental period characteristics and the preparation of lesson content suitable for these characteristics', 'student attitude', 'overcrowded classrooms and classroom management problems', 'material inadequacy', 'challenges in the foreign language learning process', and 'problems in acquiring language skills'. When the responses given by the participants were examined, it was concluded that many of the preservice primary school teachers believed that classroom teachers did not have sufficient subject knowledge in English language teaching. The study participants, preservice primary school teachers, stated that they would not be able to teach English as a foreign language because classroom teachers do not have as much subject knowledge as English teachers. The theme of 'teacher inadequacy and field discrepancy' appears 22 times across all responses, making it the most frequently

mentioned. Additionally, the preservice primary school teachers believe students will have negative attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language. Participants base their opinions on the fact that the students are learning Turkish, their native language, for the first time. They believe that students who do not have full command of their language skills may have a negative attitude towards acquiring language skills in a foreign language. The theme of 'student attitude' has the second highest frequency of occurrence with 11 repetitions. Additionally, the participants believe that primary school students will have difficulties acquiring language skills and experience pronunciation problems. The theme of 'problems in acquiring language skills' has six repetitions. Additionally, preservice primary school teachers believe that learning English as a foreign language is complex for primary school students, that there are insufficient materials, and that teaching a language in crowded classrooms is challenging for class teachers. Some responses from preservice primary school teachers are provided below.

SR: *"Problems may arise due to not being trained as much as an English teacher. Since we do not know English as well as an English teacher, we might leave the children's questions unanswered."*

SR: *"English language instruction starts in the second grade, and students in the second grade are not proficient enough in reading and writing. It is not correct to teach English to students who will struggle even while reading Turkish texts from the second grade. At least, English instruction can start from the third grade."*

SR: *"It can create an inefficient situation for students if teachers do not have sufficient subject knowledge or find English classes unnecessary. Even making students aware of a different linguistic phenomenon is a challenging task. Students can be shy when speaking."*

SR: *"Class teachers may not be able to instill the necessary skills and attitudes in children due to their insufficient subject knowledge. Because the likelihood that an English teacher, who is an expert in this field, and a classroom teacher have the same level of subject knowledge is very high."*

SR: *"To learn English, one must first have a good command of Turkish. This could be a problem for some students. Students get bored quickly, and trying to teach grammar to them in primary school accelerates their boredom. The teacher cannot capture interest in the lesson, and class teachers struggle to teach because they do not have sufficient subject knowledge"*

The fifth written, structured interview question is, "What are your proposed solutions for situations where you might face difficulties while teaching English?"

**Table 5.** Codes and Frequencies for the Fifth Interview Question

Code	Frequencies
Preparing rich lesson content and supporting it with materials (drama, film, animation)	32
The teacher's self-improvement and lesson preparation	14
Using different methods and techniques	12
Getting support from the subject teacher	12
Identifying and trying to solve the problem	8



Five themes have been created to analyse the responses of the participating preservice primary school teachers to the 5th written interview question. These themes have been identified as 'Preparing rich lesson content and supporting it with materials', 'Using different methods and techniques', 'Getting support from subject teachers', 'Teacher's self-improvement and lesson preparation', and 'Identifying and trying to solve the problem'. As a solution to the potential problems they might encounter while teaching English, preservice primary school teachers have the idea of supporting their lessons with rich content and materials. The theme 'Preparing rich lesson content and supporting it with materials' was repeated 32 times in all participant responses. Preservice primary school teachers believe rich materials will attract students' interest, increase motivation, and improve their learning processes. Additionally, the preservice primary school teachers have stated that they will seek support from English teachers and use different methods and techniques if they encounter difficulties teaching English. The current research shows that the knowledge and skills of pre-service primary school teachers have improved after taking the course on 'Teaching Foreign Languages in Primary Education'.

### **Discussion**

The qualitative data obtained indicate that the 'Teaching Foreign Languages in Primary Education' course positively impacts prospective classroom teachers. Another important study finding is that this course does not provide sufficient subject knowledge for prospective classroom teachers. According to the results of Şad's (2010) research, it was found that 88 preservice primary school teachers in their final year of the classroom teaching undergraduate program at a state university in southeastern Türkiye do not consider themselves sufficient to teach English as a foreign language. In the study, participants have a positive attitude towards teaching English as a foreign language and are willing to improve themselves. The current study's findings contain similarities and contrasts with the findings of Şad (2010). Like the findings of Şad (2010), the preservice primary school teachers participating in the current study are open to renewal and improvement. Unlike Şad's (2010) study, preservice primary school teachers in the current study consider themselves sufficient in terms of pedagogy and culture to teach English as a foreign language. At this point, a noteworthy finding is that they believe they do not have sufficient subject knowledge. The results are compatible with Karci and Akar-Vural's (2011) study, which found that most classroom teachers, with a few exceptions, do not have an advanced level of English content knowledge at an expert level. In the study by Çelik and Işık (2019), classroom teachers reported experiencing pronunciation problems while teaching listening and speaking skills. In the current study's findings, similar to the results of Çelik and Işık (2019), the participants stated that they would have the most difficulty with pronunciation. Aksoy and Bozdoğan (2019) mentioned that the teacher should correct mistakes later when mispronunciations are noticed. Consequently, a teacher without confidence and proficiency in pronouncing the language taught may struggle to conduct accurate language teaching and assessment (Kara & Kara, 2023). When the obtained data were examined, it was concluded that the preservice primary school teachers participating in the study were interested and eager to teach English as a foreign language, and they believed that teaching English as a foreign language at an early age would develop primary school students' positive attitudes and perceptions towards learning a foreign language. Additionally, it was concluded that the participants believed they could teach English as a foreign language because they thought they possessed pedagogical and cultural knowledge in the field. The study participants believe they might have the most difficulty teaching speaking and reading skills to their students. The crowded nature of classrooms at the primary education level and the differences between students' native and target languages are among the problems they may encounter in the classroom. However, the participants in the study have suggestions for solutions to potential problems they might encounter.

### **Conclusion**

Preparing rich lesson content for potential problems, consulting an expert in the field, and updating one's knowledge to come to class prepared are some of these solution suggestions. Unlike similar studies, the current study has investigated the impact of the 'Teaching Foreign Languages in Primary Education' course, which was added as a mandatory course to the primary school teaching undergraduate program starting in 2020, on prospective primary school teachers. The qualitative data obtained indicate that this course positively impacts prospective classroom teachers. Another important study finding is that this course does not provide sufficient

subject knowledge for prospective classroom teachers. Although preservice primary school teachers believe they can teach English as a foreign language in the absence of an English teacher, they think that English teachers should conduct English classes. Another important conclusion that can be drawn from the current study's findings is the evaluation of the English teaching competencies of classroom teachers within the Ministry of National Education and the need for efforts to enhance these competencies if necessary. Because class teachers who graduated from the primary school teaching undergraduate program before 2020 graduated without taking the course 'Teaching Foreign Languages in Primary Education'. Providing these teachers with in-service training is necessary to equip them with the required knowledge and skills.

### **Limitations of the study**

Thus, the field knowledge students need to acquire in English language teaching can be provided. The study collected qualitative data from a limited number of 67 prospective classroom teachers. Although this is enough for qualitative studies, conducting quantitative and qualitative research with more participants and prospective classroom teachers studying at different universities will provide more detailed information.

### **Pedagogical implications**

The findings summarised above show the necessity of practices aimed at increasing the content knowledge, instructional competencies, and skill levels of prospective primary school teachers, who are the classroom teachers of the future, in teaching English as a foreign language. The course hours 'Teaching Foreign Languages in Primary Education' in the primary school teaching undergraduate program can be increased in the curriculum as 'Teaching Foreign Languages in Primary Education I' and 'Teaching Foreign Languages in Primary Education II'. In addition, the 'Teaching English to young learners I' and 'Teaching English to young learners II' courses, currently included in English language teaching programs, can be adapted in terms of content and included in the undergraduate program of classroom teaching.

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### **Statements of Publication Ethics**

We hereby declare that the study has not unethical issues and that research and publication ethics have been observed carefully.

### **Researchers' Contribution Rate**

The study was conducted and reported with equal collaboration among the researchers.

### **Ethics Committee Approval Information**

For this study, ethics committee approval was obtained from Aksaray University, Human Research Ethics Committee with the decision dated 23/10/2023 and numbered 2023/06-15.

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## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Günümüzde yabancı dil bilmenin önemi eğitim dahil olmak üzere mühendislik, tıp spor gibi pek çok alanlarda günden güne artmaktadır. Yabancı dil bilmek insanlarla küresel bağlamda iletişimi sağlayan bir zorunluluk haline gelmiştir. İngilizcenin dünyada ortak dil olması sebebiyle İngilizenin yabancı dil olarak öğretimi ülkemiz için oldukça önemlidir. Türkiye'de bulunan mevcut eğitim sisteminde hem devlet hemde özel okullarda İngilizcenin yabancı dil olarak öğretimi 2. Sınıfta başlamaktadır. Devlet okullarında İngilizce derslerini İngilizce öğretmenleri verirken, İngilizce öğretmeni olmayan okullarda bu dersler sınıf öğretmenleri tarafından verilmektedir. Özel okullarda ise İngilizce dersleri İngilizce öğretmenleri tarafından verilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, üniversitelerin eğitim fakültelerindeki ilkökul öğretmenliği programlarının 4. sınıf derslerine "İlkokullarda Yabancı Dil Öğretimi" başlıklı bir ders eklenmiştir. Bu dersin amacı, ilkökul öğretmeni adaylarının İngilizce öğretimindeki bilgi ve becerilerini arttırmaktır. Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinde ilköğretim lisans programında okuyan sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının İngilizce öğretimine yönelik bakış açılarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada, yazılı, yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniği kullanılarak sınıf öğretmeni adaylarından nitel veriler toplanmıştır. Veriler, sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretiminde dil yeterlilikleri açısından kendilerini kısmen yeterli bulduklarını, lisans programlarında aldıkları bir dersin İngilizce öğretimi için kendilerini geliştirdiğini fakat uygulama olarak yetersiz olduklarını düşündüklerini ve İngilizce dersini İngilizce öğretmenlerinin vermesi gerektiğini düşündüklerini göstermektedir. Çalışmada, toplanan nitel verilerden elde edilen sonuçlara dayanarak eğitimsel çıkarımlar ve önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Bu araştırmanın amacı, Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinin Eğitim Fakültesi Sınıf Öğretmenliği lisans programının 4. sınıfında öğrenim gören sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretimine ilişkin algı ve tutumlarını incelemektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda katılımcılara yazılı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu uygulanmıştır. Bu çalışmada, katılımcıların ilköğretimde İngilizce öğretimine ilişkin bakış açılarını derinlemesine incelemek amacıyla nitel veriler toplanmıştır. Beş açık uçlu sorudan oluşan yapılandırılmış yazılı görüşme formları ile sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının ilkökulda yabancı dil öğretimine ilişkin görüşleri, sınıf öğretmeni adayı olarak İngilizce öğretmek için gerekli alan bilgisi, pedagojik bilgi ve kültürel bilgiye sahip olup olmadıkları, dil becerilerini öğretirken zorluk yaşayıp yaşamayacakları hakkında ne düşündükleri, ilkökulda İngilizce öğretirken ne gibi sorunlarla ve zorluklarla karşılaşabilecekleri ve ilkökulda İngilizce öğretirken karşılaşabilecekleri sorunlara yönelik olası çözüm önerilerinin neler olduğu araştırılmıştır.

Sınıf öğretmeni adayları zengin öğretim materyallerin öğrencilerin ilgisini çekeceğine, motivasyonlarını artıracığına ve öğrenme süreçlerini geliştireceğine inanmaktadır. Ayrıca, sınıf öğretmeni adayları İngilizce öğretiminde zorluklarla karşılaştıklarında İngilizce öğretmenlerinden destek alacaklarını ve farklı yöntem ve teknikler kullanacaklarını belirtmişlerdir. Mevcut araştırma, sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının 'İlköğretimde Yabancı Dil Öğretimi' dersini aldıktan sonra bilgi ve becerilerinin geliştiğini göstermektedir. Ayrıca, katılımcıların İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğretebileceklerine inandıkları, çünkü bu alanda pedagojik ve kültürel bilgiye sahip olduklarını düşündükleri sonucuna varılmıştır. Çalışmaya katılan sınıf öğretmeni adayları, öğrencilerine en çok konuşma ve okuma becerilerini öğretmekte zorlanabileceklerine inanmaktadır. İlköğretim düzeyinde sınıfların kalabalık olması ve öğrencilerin ana dilleri ile hedef dilleri arasındaki farklılıklar sınıfta karşılaşabilecekleri sorunlar arasındadır. Bununla birlikte, araştırmaya katılanların karşılaşabilecekleri olası sorunlara yönelik çözüm önerileri de bulunmaktadır.

Olası sorunlara yönelik zengin ders içerikleri hazırlamak, alanında uzman bir kişiye danışmak ve bilgilerini güncelleyerek derse hazırlıklı gelmek bu çözüm önerilerinden bazılarıdır. Benzer çalışmalardan farklı olarak bu çalışmada, 2020 yılından itibaren sınıf öğretmenliği lisans programına zorunlu ders olarak eklenen 'İlköğretimde Yabancı Dil Öğretimi' dersinin sınıf öğretmeni adayları üzerindeki etkisi araştırılmıştır. Elde edilen nitel veriler, bu dersin sınıf öğretmeni adaylarını olumlu yönde etkilediğini göstermektedir. Araştırmanın bir diğer önemli bulgusu ise bu dersin sınıf öğretmeni adaylarına yeterli alan bilgisi sağlamadığıdır. Sınıf öğretmenliği lisans programında yer alan 'İlköğretimde Yabancı Dil Öğretimi' ders saati 'İlköğretimde Yabancı Dil Öğretimi I' ve 'İlköğretimde Yabancı Dil Öğretimi II' olarak müfredatta artırılabilir. Sınıf öğretmeni adayları, İngilizce öğretmenin yokluğunda İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğretebileceklerine inansalar da, İngilizce derslerini İngilizce öğretmenlerinin yürütmesi gerektiğini düşünmektedirler. Çalışmadan elde edilen sonuçlar doğrultusunda yapılabilecek bir diğer öneri ise İngilizce öğretmenliği lisans programında bulunan 'Çocuklara Yabancı Dil Öğretimi I' ve 'Çocuklara Yabancı Dil Öğretimi II' derslerinin sınıf öğretmenliği lisans programına

uyarlanarak müfredatına eklenmesidir. Çünkü sınıf öğretmenlerinin hedef öğrenci kitlelerini çocuklar oluşturmaktadır. Bu dersler ile çocuklara yabancı dil öğretimi konusunda yeterli bilgi, beceri ve donanımına sahip olabileceklerine inanılmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın bulgularından çıkarılabilecek bir diğer önemli sonuç ise, sınıf öğretmenlerinin İngilizce öğretme yeterliliklerinin Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı bünyesinde değerlendirilmesi ve gerekirse bu yeterliliklerin artırılmasına yönelik çalışmalar yapılması gerekliliğidir. Çünkü 2020 yılından önce sınıf öğretmenliği lisans programından mezun olan sınıf öğretmenleri 'İlköğretimde Yabancı Dil Öğretimi' dersini almadan mezun olmuşlardır. Bu öğretmenlere gerekli bilgi ve becerilerin kazandırılması için hizmet içi eğitim verilmesi gerekmektedir.

Mevcut çalışmanın bazı sınırlılıkları bulunmaktadır. Çalışmada 67 sınıf öğretmeni adayından nitel veri toplanmıştır. Nitel çalışmalar için bu sayı yeterli olmakla birlikte, daha fazla katılımcı ve farklı üniversitelerde öğrenim gören sınıf öğretmeni adayları ile nicel ve nitel araştırmalar yapılması daha detaylı bilgi sağlayacaktır. Ayrıca 'İlköğretimde Yabancı Dil Öğretimi' dersini yürüten öğretim elemanlarının görüşleri nitel veriler toplanarak konu daha detaylı bir şekilde incelenebilir.