



## Paradigm Shift in EFL Teacher Education: Pre-service Teachers' Awareness Level of Multimodality in Grammar-Based Microteaching Practices via Reflections on Lesson Plans

### EFL Öğretmen Eğitiminde Paradigma Değişimi: Ders Planlarına Dayalı Yansıtıcı Değerlendirmeler Yoluyla Öğretmen Adaylarının Dilbilgisi Temelli Mikro Öğretim Uygulamalarında Çoklu Anlatım Farkındalık Düzeyleri

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#### Abstract

In the evolving landscape of language education, integrating 21st-century pedagogical principles such as multimodality, digital literacy, and learner-centered instruction has become imperative. This study explores how pre-service English language teachers reflect these principles in grammar-based microteaching practices, focusing specifically on their lesson plans and instructor observation notes. The primary aim is to investigate the extent to which multimodal approaches and contemporary teaching strategies are embedded in the instructional design and delivery of future educators. Employing a mixed-method sequential research design, the study analyzes scale, reflection notes, and observation feedback from a cohort of 61 teacher candidates. Thematic coding and frequency analysis were used to identify patterns in instructional design, technology integration, group interaction, material development, and classroom management. The findings reveal a significant variance in the incorporation of multimodal tools and communicative strategies, with strong material use and lesson planning but limited production activities and interaction. The results underscore the importance of structured reflection and rubric-based feedback in enhancing pedagogical awareness. Overall, this research contributes to the field of teacher education by highlighting the potential of microteaching as a reflective and developmental tool for promoting innovative, multimodal, and contextually relevant language instruction.

**Keywords:** EFL, microteaching practices, multimodality, teacher education, 21<sup>st</sup>-century teaching principles.

#### Öz

Dil eğitiminin sürekli değişen yapısında, çoklu ortam (multimodalite), dijital okuryazarlık ve öğrenci merkezli öğretim gibi 21. yüzyıl pedagojik ilkelerinin entegrasyonu artık zorunlu hale gelmiştir. Bu çalışma, İngilizce öğretmeni adaylarının dilbilgisi temelli mikro öğretim uygulamalarında bu ilkeleri nasıl yansıttıklarını incelemek; özellikle ders planları ve öğretim elemanı gözlem notları üzerine odaklanmaktadır. Çalışmanın temel amacı, çoklu ortam yaklaşımları ve çağdaş öğretim stratejilerinin geleceğin eğitimcilerinin öğretim tasarımı ve uygulamalarına ne ölçüde entegre edildiğini araştırmaktır. Açıklayıcı sıralı karma yöntem araştırma deseni kullanılarak yürütülen çalışmada, 61 öğretmen adayından elde edilen ölçek verileri, yansıtma notları ve gözlem geri bildirimleri analiz edilmiştir. Tematik kodlama ve frekans analizleri yoluyla öğretim tasarımı, teknoloji entegrasyonu, grup etkileşimi, materyal geliştirme ve sınıf yönetimi gibi alanlardaki eğilimler belirlenmiştir. Bulgular, çoklu ortam araçları ve iletişimsel stratejilerin kullanımında belirgin farklılıklar olduğunu; materyal kullanımı ve ders planlamasında güçlü yönler gözlenirken, üretim etkinlikleri ve etkileşimin sınırlı kaldığını ortaya koymuştur. Sonuçlar, yapılandırılmış yansıtma ve rubrik tabanlı geri bildirimin pedagojik farkındalığı artırmadaki önemini vurgulamaktadır. Genel olarak bu araştırma, mikro öğretimin yenilikçi, çoklu ortam temelli ve bağlama duyarlı dil öğretimini teşvik eden yansıtıcı ve gelişimsel bir araç olarak potansiyelini vurgulayarak öğretmen eğitimi alanına katkı sunmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Çoklu anlatım biçimleri, EFL, Mikro öğretim uygulamaları, Öğretmen eğitimi, 21.yüzyıl öğretim ilkeleri

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Received Date: July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025. Acceptance Date: November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

## 1. Introduction

In today's rapidly digitalizing societies, where access to knowledge has become instantaneous, educational systems have evolved beyond the traditional role of transmitting information. They have transformed into dynamic institutions that aim to cultivate lifelong learning skills and 21st-century competencies such as digital literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity (Voogt et al., 2013). In this context, teachers are no longer expected to merely deliver lessons but to act as facilitators of learning who integrate technology effectively and display pedagogical flexibility and reflective professionalism. Therefore, it is imperative that teacher education programs be restructured in alignment with these transformations.

Among the fields most impacted by this educational paradigm shift is English Language Teacher Education. Traditionally, grammar-based instruction has relied on explicit teaching of language structures through teacher-centered, repetitive, and drill-based methodologies (Thornbury, 1999). However, modern language pedagogy increasingly emphasizes that effective teaching should aim not only to convey grammatical rules but also to promote communicative competence through approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Learning (Ellis, 2003; Richards, 2006). In parallel, the integration of technology into language instruction facilitates more interactive, collaborative, and meaningful learning environments (Chapelle, 2001).

Microteaching practices have emerged as valuable tools enabling pre-service teachers to engage with such contemporary pedagogical approaches. This method allows teacher candidates to simulate classroom settings, conduct short teaching segments, and receive structured feedback (Fernandez, 2010). Through this process, candidates enhance both their pedagogical skills and reflective thinking capacities, thereby developing stronger self-efficacy in their professional practice.

In addition to their in-class performances, the lesson plans developed by teacher candidates also serve as key indicators of pedagogical competence. A lesson plan organizes all components of instruction—learning objectives, strategies, materials, and assessment tools—into a coherent framework (Clark & Yinger, 1987). Well-crafted lesson plans not only guide teachers in delivering content purposefully and effectively but also promote student success. In the 21st-century context, lesson plans are expected to be technology-integrated, skill-based, learner-centered, and flexible (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

### *Purpose of the Study*

The principal aim of this study was to investigate, from a multidimensional perspective, the degree to which English teacher candidates reflect 21st-century instructional paradigms in their lesson plans and microteaching practices.

#### Research Questions:

- 1) What is the awareness level of pre-service EFL teachers' principles of 21st-century teaching?
  - a. Do pre-service EFL teachers' awareness levels of 21st-century teaching principles differ significantly based on gender and grade?
- 2) To what extent is multimodality present in grammar-based microteaching practices of pre-service EFL teachers?
- 3) To what extent do contemporary instructional strategies and digital tools appear in the lesson plans prepared by the pre-service EFL teachers?

### *Rationale of the Study*

This study holds significance in three interrelated dimensions: the evaluation of teacher education programs, the integration of 21st-century paradigms into teaching practices, and the functional role of microteaching in teacher development. First, it provides multilayered insight into how theoretical knowledge acquired in teacher education programs is translated into practice. The analysis of lesson plans and microteaching practices reveals the depth of pedagogical integration and practical competence among candidates (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Second, 21st-century skills—including problem-solving, critical thinking, digital literacy, collaboration, and creativity—are indispensable in modern classrooms. Yet, the extent to which these skills are embedded in curriculum and instruction remains underexamined. This study fills that gap by evaluating both awareness and enactment. Third, although microteaching is widely used to enhance instructional proficiency and reflective capacity, the nature of its implementation and the effectiveness of its assessment tools (such as rubrics) are often overlooked (Fernandez, 2010). By analyzing rubric-based feedback and its influence on practice, this study offers insights into more structured and impactful microteaching models.

## 2. Literature Review

This study was grounded in a multilayered theoretical framework encompassing 21st-century teaching principles, Microteaching Theory, and Multimodality in ELT.

### 2.1. 21st Century Teaching Principles

Trilling and Fadel (2009) analyzed 21st-century learner skills, structured on the research of 21st-century skills undertaken inside the Partnership 21 (P21, 2019) framework, categorized into three primary areas, each containing various subtopics. The primary subjects were "learning and innovation skills," "digital literacy skills," and "career and life skills." Learning and innovation skills encompassed two subtopics: the knowledge and skill spectrum and the innovation in learning. The spectrum of knowledge and invention is more extensive than all other abilities referenced. This is mostly attributable to the inclusion of 21st-century learners' procedures for acquiring and structuring knowledge, which can elucidate both additional skill subjects and performance metrics. In summary, Trilling and Fadel (2009) categorized digital literacy skills to encompass information curiosity, media fluency, and technology-enhanced learning skills. Consequently, digital literacy abilities fundamentally encompass three types of literacy: information literacy, media literacy, and technology literacy.

Information literacy encompasses the capacity to efficiently and effectively obtain information, critically evaluate it from a comprehensive viewpoint, and utilize it appropriately and innovatively. Media literacy abilities exemplify the competencies of 21st-century learners in utilizing contemporary media and communication resources, including video, podcasts, web pages, and Web 2.0 applications, during the learning process. Information and communication technology literacy denotes the proficiency in integrating and utilizing digital resources, such as computers, tablets, and mobile devices, efficiently within learning processes.

The objective of 21st-century teacher competencies was to delineate national proficiencies and skills grounded in national capacities, as well as to elucidate the application of internationally recognized proficiencies and skills in the literature (Göksün & Kurt, 2017). The study was structured around general teacher competencies established by the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MEB), the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) standards for educators, 49 active instructional techniques proposed by Lemov (2010), and teacher evaluation criteria recommended by Melvin (2011). The Ministry of Education and Culture initiated research in 2001 to assess the competencies required of modern educators under the project titled "What Should a Contemporary Teacher Be?" In 2008, a book was produced that delineated overall teacher proficiencies and specific proficiencies necessary for various teaching disciplines. The book delineates general teacher proficiencies into six primary areas: "personal and professional values – career development," "understanding the student," "teaching and learning process," "monitoring and assessing learning and development," "relationships among school, family, and society," and "curriculum and content knowledge" (MEB, 2008).

### 2.2. Microteaching Theory

The National Education Standard Body (2007) mandated that the learning process must be systematically designed, implemented, assessed, and monitored to guarantee its efficacy and efficiency. Concerning the examination of teacher competency, Light, Cox, and Calkins (2009, p. 240) assert that the focal features of the evaluation encompass students, instructors, institutions, and staff. Consequently, the students of the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, as prospective educators, are subject to evaluation based on the aforementioned criteria to acquire the fundamental competencies necessary for their teaching prior to engaging in actual teaching practice. Laughlin and Moulton (1975) characterize microteaching as a performance training strategy aimed at isolating components of the teaching process, enabling the trainee to master instructional techniques across diverse educational settings. Furthermore, McAleese and Unwin (1971) characterize microteaching as a learning scenario conducted with a restricted number of pupils and time, specifically ranging from five to twenty minutes with three to ten participants. Loewenberg and Forzani (2009) assert that microteaching is a pedagogical practice in a condensed style designed to cultivate and enhance teaching skills.

Waskito (1977) defines microteaching as a performance-based learning method that isolates components of pedagogical processes, enabling teacher candidates to master each component individually within a simplified and micro-contextual learning environment. Microteaching is characterized by (1) its implementation within constrained parameters of space, time, materials, students, and objectives; (2) its comprehensive nature, as it is conducted

alongside supervisors and assessed and refined by participants and an evaluation team, allowing for direct observation of learning outcomes; and (3) the utilization of recording media for future reflection and self-improvement.

Microteaching serves as an evaluative platform for student teachers. All acquired pedagogical ideas are implemented and assessed in the micro-teaching laboratory, enabling the evaluation and subsequent revision of outcomes, including both strengths and flaws (Tarmedi, 2005). Microteaching is recognized as an effective strategy that enables pre-service language teachers to devise and execute innovative teaching tactics, thereby bridging the gap between theory and practice (Gorgen, 2003; Gurses et al., 2005; Saban & Coklar, 2013). A study conducted across six universities, including twelve trainee teachers in Ho Chi Minh City, indicated that the teaching practicum positively impacts pre-service EFL teaching skills (Nguyen, 2015).

In microteaching, teacher candidates are instructed to demonstrate their fundamental teaching competencies, including objectives, resources, pupils, and a somewhat constrained timeframe. Microteaching serves as a training method for pre-service teachers, enabling them to successfully engage with diverse student personalities, regulate their emotions and speaking cadence, and maintain a conducive classroom environment, among other skills. The practice of micro-teaching continues until student teachers acquire the requisite skills for placement in actual instructional environments at various schools.

According to Tumey's (1973) research findings, there are eight fundamental competencies in micro-teaching that are essential to pedagogical practices, including the following:

1. The fundamental skill of initiating and concluding the lesson (Set Induction and Closure)
2. Fundamental proficiency in elucidation (Explanatory Skills)
3. Fundamental proficiency in variation provision (Variation Skills)
4. Fundamental proficiency in administering reinforcement (Reinforcement Skills)
5. Fundamental proficiency in inquiry
6. Fundamental proficiency in classroom administration (classroom management abilities)
7. Fundamental proficiency in instructing people or small groups (skills in individual and small group instruction)
8. Fundamental proficiency in supervising small group discussions.

### 2.3. *Multimodality in ELT*

Recent advancements in digital technologies have revolutionized language and communication practices, enabling the production of digital texts via multimodal composing (MC), which integrates words, images, sound, and other modalities, characterized as "socially and culturally shaped resources for making meaning" (Bezemer & Kress, 2008, p. 117). In light of the pervasive presence of digital tools in 21st-century language classrooms and the rising prevalence of multimedia communication in the daily lives of English language learners, researchers are increasingly interested in the pedagogical application of various forms of multimedia communication (e.g., video production, audio podcasting) across diverse educational contexts. This includes urban public schools with linguistically diverse English language learners in the U.S. (Hull & Nelson, 2005; Smythe & Neufeld, 2010), a secondary school in Kenya (Kendrick, Early, & Chemjor, 2013), and mainstream university ESL/EFL courses in Hong Kong (Hafner, 2014) and Taiwan (Lee, 2014; Yang, 2012). The results of these research indicate that MC can be "validly and productively utilized as an English language learning activity," and among several advantages, incorporating MC projects (e.g., digital video) into the language curriculum can be "highly motivational" (Hafner, 2015, pp. 487–488). Although ample literature suggests that several language learners are inspired to utilize MC for their studies, there is a paucity of study elucidating the factors that render English learning with MC particularly motivating and engaging. To assist educators in improving their pedagogical use of MC for fostering motivated learning behavior, a comprehensive understanding of the sources of MC's motivating capacity is essential. Furthermore, as multimodal composition (MC) is progressively utilized in language education to connect students' extracurricular literacy practices with formal learning, investigating the origins of its motivational potential can enhance understanding of the motivational dimensions of youth engagement with multimodal text creation in educational contexts.

Transformations in higher education, particularly regarding digital technology use, have fundamentally altered conventional academic practices, leading to a growing acknowledgment of the necessity for students and educators to cultivate multimodal competencies across many communicative platforms. To achieve this goal, it is essential to enhance awareness of multimodality's function in communication by adopting innovative approaches for teaching and learning in university English language courses. current may entail the efficient utilization of multimodal and multimedia resources during teacher-student interactions in the classroom, together with explicit education regarding the function of various semiotic modes and their interplay in meaning production (see, for instance, Coccetta, current

issue). Furthermore, language educators, especially those in online settings, face the additional issue of developing evaluation methods and practices for language proficiency that account for multimodal communication systems.

The problem of establishing and advancing practices to enhance multimodal language competence lies in the necessity for a multifaceted skills approach in multimodal environments. In multimodal task design, the educator must recognize the significance of many interaction modes and assess if a certain task primarily requires an individual ability or if additional skills become relevant for its completion. This also entails considering the number of modes present in the event and their significance in that specific context.

Therefore, in the design of multimodal activities, it is essential to consider modal density, a concept that integrates the ideas of modal intensity and modal complexity, as articulated by Norris (2004). The former denotes the "weight" that a mode may possess, while the latter signifies the level of intricacy or complicated interconnections established among modes. Consequently, modal density does not inherently indicate complexity, but when it does, the educator must identify that complexity to either simplify the input or devise an appropriate and equitable response option or evaluation approach. Consequently, the complexity of input and output modalities must be incorporated into the multimodal framework. Consequently, multimodal task complexity encompasses (1) the interaction of modes in task design and mode selection as a task variable, (2) assessment methodologies pertinent to the task (diagnostic, formative, summative) that consider the interplay between input and output modes, and (3) the cognitive requirements of the task in accessing, processing, and comprehending information from various verbal and nonverbal sources. In summary, for the teacher, multimodal task complexity necessitates an awareness of the intricacies of multimodal architecture.

Considering the continuous advancement of technologies applicable to education, it is essential to expand our understanding of the multimodal aspects of classroom resources, utilizing new analytical methods and tools for multimodal discourse analysis, such as software for multimodal text annotation. These tools can illuminate intersemiotic complementarity, namely how various modes enhance one another in their meaning projection (Royce, 2007a). This knowledge can be utilized to create contemporary multimodal strategies for English language instruction in higher education that leverage new opportunities presented by various modes of communication and diverse media kinds.

Multimodal literacy has gained significant importance in language instruction due to the growing recognition that a multimodal approach enables students to utilize semiotic modes beyond verbal language (e.g., visual, gestural, spatial) to comprehend and generate texts in the target language more efficiently (O'Halloran, Tan, & Smith, 2016). This may enhance their understanding of the target culture, especially with varying nonverbal communication techniques between countries (Busă, 2010, 2016). In the realm of language acquisition, it is particularly noteworthy how nonverbal components enhance and/or augment the significance of verbal communication, hence aiding comprehension, as well as how multimodal strategies can inspire learners (Shih, 2014). Numerous studies over the years have indicated the benefits of employing techniques and resources that emphasize non-verbal modalities, such as images, gestures, and facial expressions, in language instruction (Guichon & McLornan, 2008; Sueyoshi & Hardison, 2005), thereby underscoring the significant role of diverse semiotic resources in meaning construction.

#### *2.4. Digital Literacy*

Digital literacy has become a basic part of modern EFL instruction, especially as classrooms are using more technology-based exercises, multimodal texts, and online communication tools. In EFL settings, digital literacy transcends mere technical proficiency in device operation; it includes the ability to assess online material, interact with multimodal content, engage in digital communication, and create writings that are linguistically and visually cohesive. In the last 10 years, studies have repeatedly proven that students who are more digitally literate are more engaged, independent, and able to communicate in technology-rich language learning settings. As digital platforms, such as learning management systems and collaborative tools like Padlet, Google Classroom, and Flip, become integral to instructional processes, EFL teachers must create learning experiences that enhance language proficiency and foster students' capacity to critically and effectively navigate digital environments.

Digital literacy is just as important in microteaching as it is when teacher candidates practice and improve their teaching skills in small groups or virtual classrooms. Using digital tools in microteaching not only reflects the realities of EFL classrooms in the 21st century but also gives pre-service teachers a chance to try out multimodal instruction, online assessment, and technology-enhanced interaction patterns. Teacher candidates with excellent digital literacy abilities are better equipped to design interactive materials, conduct collaborative digital tasks, and confidently manage classroom devices. These are all skills that will directly affect how well they teach in the future. Furthermore, including digital literacy into microteaching enables pre-service instructors to contemplate aspects such as student engagement, accessibility, and online safety, so cultivating a more comprehensive grasp of pedagogy in digitally mediated EFL environments.

## 2.5. Lesson Plans

Lesson plans are important tools for EFL teachers because they help them organize their teaching goals, classroom activities, tests, and materials in a logical and useful order. Lesson plans guarantee that language lessons in EFL settings are in line with communicative goals, curriculum standards, and the language requirements of the students. A good plan makes it clear what students are supposed to learn (learning outcomes), how they will practice the skills they need to master (procedures and techniques), and how they will be tested and given feedback (assessment and feedback). In addition to organizing the flow of teaching, lesson plans assist teachers in building vocabulary, grammar, and abilities while using interaction patterns that are appropriate for communicative language teaching. They also help with differentiation by letting teachers guess what learning problems might come up and get the right supports ready, especially in classrooms with students from many varied language backgrounds. In microteaching, lesson plans are even more important since they show how pre-service teachers think about teaching.

Microteaching necessitates that teacher candidates exhibit their capacity to devise succinct, clear, and objective-driven courses within a limited timeframe. A good lesson plan helps candidates make clear decisions about how to teach, order learning tasks in a way that makes sense, and plan for how to handle classroom management issues during practice teaching. The lesson plan also becomes an important thing to think about: after the microteaching session, teacher candidates and their colleagues look at the plan to see how well the goals, activities, resources, and outcomes fit together. This method helps teachers make better professional decisions, encourages them to think critically about their own work, and helps them develop the planning skills they need to teach EFL successfully in real classrooms.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

A research design serves as a structured framework that allows the researcher to tackle the research questions in a valid, objective, precise, and economical way (Kumar, 2011). In empirical studies, the study design serves as the comprehensive framework for participant selection, identification of data collection instruments, organization of the research environment, and implementation of suitable data analysis methodologies. Kerlinger (1986) stresses that the design step must make sure that the study is valid, objective, and internally consistent. These three things together protect the scientific rigor of the investigation. At this point, the notion of variance control becomes very important. This means making purposeful methodological decisions that reduce bias, increase accuracy, and make sure that the relationships seen in the data show the real dynamics being studied and not outside factors.

In accordance with these methodological standards, the current study was formulated as a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. This structure guarantees that numerical trends identified in the quantitative phase are later examined, contextualized, and understood via qualitative insights (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The approach takes advantage of methodological triangulation, which makes the results more credible by combining two different types of evidence: statistical patterns and explanatory narratives.

The quantitative aspect of the research design includes three related survey models: (1) a single survey, (2) a correlational survey, and (3) a causal-comparative research model. The single survey model yields descriptive statistics that elucidate broad trends among participants, presenting a comprehensive overview of the constructs examined. The correlational model was specifically designed to address the first research question, which investigated the link between the sub-dimensions of 21st-century student skills and the dimensions of 21st-century teaching skills. Correlational survey research is suitable for quantifying the strength and direction of correlations among many variables or for predicting outcomes based on those associations (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). The present literature theoretically substantiates these relationships, hence rendering a correlational approach methodologically justified.

In addition to correlational analyses, the study employs a causal-comparative (ex post facto) methodology to investigate whether variations in important variables may be ascribed to pre-existing traits such as gender or grade level. Causal-comparative designs are appropriate for educational settings when the researcher cannot control independent factors but aims to investigate whether naturally occurring groups exhibit differences in specific outcomes (Sönmez & Alacapınar, 2016). This paradigm facilitates the discovery of probable causal links without the need for artificial intervention in the environment or modification of participant behavior (Büyüköztürk et al., 2015). In this study, causal-comparative analyses assist in ascertaining whether demographic variables influence major disparities in students' competence perceptions or teachers' pedagogical practices.

The study approach guarantees both breadth and depth by including these complementary models within a sequential explanatory mixed-methods framework. The quantitative phase establishes strong statistical underpinnings, but the

qualitative phase delivers interpretive depth that elucidates the emergence of specific patterns. The resulting design is consistent, follows strict methods, and meets modern standards for mixed-methods educational research.

### 3.2. Participants

The study population comprised teacher candidates enrolled in the English Language Teaching (ELT) program of a medium-sized public university in Türkiye. The sample consisted of 61 third- and fourth-year students, selected through criterion-based purposive sampling. The criterion was that participants had completed theoretical or applied coursework related to lesson planning, classroom implementation, and microteaching so that microteaching performance and lesson plan evaluations would be meaningful for not only the research study but also for the participant pre-service teachers.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Information of the participants*

| Gender | Grade     |           |
|--------|-----------|-----------|
|        | 3rd Grade | 4th Grade |
| Female | 20        | 16        |
| Male   | 15        | 10        |

Among 61 participants, there were 36 (59.02%) female pre-service teachers and 25 (40.98%) male pre-service teachers. The table unequivocally demonstrates that female participants surpassed their male counterparts in number. The gender disparity has been noted in prior studies by Al-Khresheh and Orak (2025), Orak (2025), Taşçı (2019), Şekerci (2011), and Ülkümen (2013), all of whom focused on EFL research. This trend in Türkiye can be ascribed to gendered preferences in career selection, with women primarily opting for English Language Teaching (ELT) as a profession (Şekerci, 2011). Conversely, males in Türkiye exhibit a greater propensity to engage in occupations within sectors such as business or engineering, as opposed to education-related professions (Taşçı, 2019).

### 3.3. Data Collection Instruments

In alignment with the sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design, multiple data collection instruments were systematically employed to ensure methodological triangulation and enhance the validity, reliability, and interpretive richness of the findings. As emphasized by Creswell et al. (2018), the use of multiple instruments allows researchers to approach a research problem from different analytical angles, thereby reducing the likelihood of measurement bias and strengthening the convergence of evidence. In this study, the integration of quantitative scales, analytic rubrics, and qualitative field reflections made it possible to capture both the measurable dimensions of teacher candidates' pedagogical skills and the interpretive processes through which these skills were enacted and internalized.

*21st Century Skills Perception Scale (Anagün et al., 2016):* The quantitative aspect of the study was based on the 21st Century Skills Perception Scale, a meticulously validated 5-point Likert scale intended to assess teacher candidates' self-perceptions of essential competencies, including creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, communication, problem-solving, and digital literacy. The scale has significant reliability (Cronbach's  $\alpha=.889$ ) and is especially appropriate for higher education settings where pre-service instructors are anticipated to include multimodal and technology-enhanced instructional resources into their forthcoming professional practice. The instrument encompasses elements pertaining to the utilization of digital technologies, wikis, collaborative tools, and multimodal teaching materials—constructs that are directly aligned with current EFL pedagogy and the practical microteaching activities conducted in this study. The scale not only measures how participants think they are doing in terms of 21st-century skills, but it also connects self-reported skills to the teaching behaviors that will be looked at later.

*Microteaching Evaluation Rubric (Povey, 2023):* The microteaching evaluation rubric was one of the main methods used in the study to measure performance. The rubric has 11 precise evaluation criteria that are used to systematically judge how well teacher candidates teach during microteaching sessions. The areas are: how clear and measurable the learning outcomes are, how well the teaching methods work, how engaged the students are, how clear the explanations are, how well the digital technologies are used, how well the multimodal resources are used, how well the evaluation techniques are used, how fast the lessons run, and how well the classroom is managed. By making these teaching

qualities observable, the rubric lets the researchers objectively and consistently evaluate microteaching sessions across all participants. The rubric also served as a reflection tool, prompting pre-service teachers to evaluate their teaching choices, strengths, and areas needing improvement. In the context of EFL microteaching, where communication tactics, multimodality, and learner-centered instruction are vital, the rubric was very important for capturing the subtleties of teaching performance.

*Lesson Plan Evaluation Rubric:* Experts reviewed the rubric to make sure that each criterion appropriately reflected the instructional demands of high-quality EFL lesson planning. This was done to make sure that the content was valid and the analysis was clear. The rubric looks at a lot of various teaching aspects, such as how well the goals and activities fit together, how well the teaching methods work, how well the materials from different modes and technologies work together, how well the lessons are structured, how well the assessments are varied, how well the lessons are tailored to each student, and how well the lessons are focused on the student. The criteria enabled the researchers to evaluate whether participants' written lesson plans demonstrated the qualities of task-based learning, digital integration, and skills-based instruction, which are emphasized in contemporary EFL teaching, prior to the microteaching phase. In addition, the rubric served as a formative assessment tool, directing participants towards lesson design that was more cohesive, purposeful, and based on sound educational principles.

*Field notes:* The utilization of reflective field notes recorded by both participants and researchers during the instructional and microteaching process helped to provide a qualitative dimension. Reflection notes are widely acknowledged in teacher education research as an effective instrument for examining how learners assimilate pedagogical experiences, navigate professional identity, and address instructional obstacles over time. These notes reveal the cognitive and emotional aspects of learning that standardized tools frequently neglect. In this study, participants' reflections recorded their developing comprehension of pedagogical strategies, their responses to criticism, and their changing views on digital and multimodal education. Researcher field notes documented contextual observations about participant behaviors, microteaching dynamics, and instructional decision-making.

These qualitative data sources collectively enhanced methodological triangulation by providing interpretive depth that elucidated the numerical patterns identified in the quantitative findings. All data collection tools were administered in English, as the target population demonstrated advanced proficiency in the language. In accordance with Dörnyei's (2007) recommendations, priority was given to the clarity and accessibility of the language employed in all instruments. Enquiries were expressed with clarity and precision. Negative constructions (e.g., "no" or "not") and syntactically complex or confusing concerns were deliberately omitted to reduce cognitive load and ensure interpretation accuracy among respondents. This strategy was employed to enhance answer validity and to guarantee participants' accurate understanding and engagement with the study instruments.

### 3.4. Data Collection Procedure

Before administering the questionnaire, participants were informed about the purpose of the research study, and their consent was consulted via consent forms. Following the acknowledgement stage, pre-service teachers were asked to complete the 21st Century Skills Perception Scale in the online version at the very beginning of the term. Later on, pre-service teachers were assigned to grammar topics to teach via microteaching practice by including multimodality. The grammar topics were selected from the English course books for primary school grades and middle school grades of the Ministry of National Education (MEB) in Türkiye. Therefore, the weekly microteaching grammar topics were already framed according to the CEFR priorities, and this selection strategy brought the feature of level-appropriateness of the materials. Pre-service teachers also gained a vision of the level check of the materials while designing their lesson plans. Subsequently, their lesson plans were collected and scored using the designated rubric. Finally, each participant conducted a microteaching practice based on an agreed topic, observed and evaluated by the researchers. All data were collected in accordance with ethical guidelines, with confidentiality and voluntary participation ensured.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

The study is a sequential mixed-method study; therefore, both quantitative and qualitative (respectively) data analysis sessions were employed. The quantitative data, which were reached from the scale, were analyzed via SPSS 25. Descriptive statistics, independent-samples t-tests (for gender-based differences), and Pearson correlation were employed. Qualitative data were subjected to content analysis using NVivo. Codes were grouped into categories and themes to identify patterns in pedagogical choices, technological integration, and 21st-century skills usage.

### 3.5.1. Reliability and Validity of Qualitative Data

The research study has sought credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability to ensure the reliability and validity of the qualitative data.

*Credibility:* it refers to the assessment of qualitative outcomes from the lesson plan evaluations and rubric evaluations determining whether the results accurately represent their perspectives or are influenced by subjectivity (Donnelly & Trochim, 2007). This study includes implementation of triangulation to assure trustworthiness.

Triangulation is an additional element that influences the credibility of a study. The final aspect to establish the trustworthiness of the current research study is the direct quotations from the researchers. Shenton (2004) asserts that using authentic instances from the actual study field enhances the credibility of the research findings for the readers. This research study utilized methodological triangulation through a scale, researcher field notes, a lesson plan evaluation rubric, and a microteaching evaluation assessment rubric.

*Transferability:* This concept pertains to the generalizability of outcomes to analogous contexts and settings. Applying for qualitative studies poses challenges due to the complexities of aligning research dynamics; however, if researchers have clearly delineated steps, achieving comparable results in analogous contexts becomes feasible (Donnelly & Trochim, 2007). The findings of the study in question represent Türkiye; transferability can only be assured if analogous procedures are adhered to in similar contexts (Donnelly & Trochim, 2007).

*Dependability:* This concept parallels the dependability assessment in quantitative methods, which investigates whether identical research procedures yield consistent results (Donnelly & Trochim, 2007). It is feasible to document each phase of the investigation for the second application to achieve comparable findings. This research study can be regarded as reliable due to its provision of several criteria essential for credibility and its comprehensive reporting of all steps in the relevant process.

*Confirmability:* This relies on the validation of results by other participants and researchers. Confirmation is likely to be attainable if you adhere to the same methodology for comparing and validating the outcomes. To eliminate subjectivity in the rubric evaluations, the researcher requested two academics from the Education Faculty to review the rubrics and validate the frequencies.

## 4. Findings

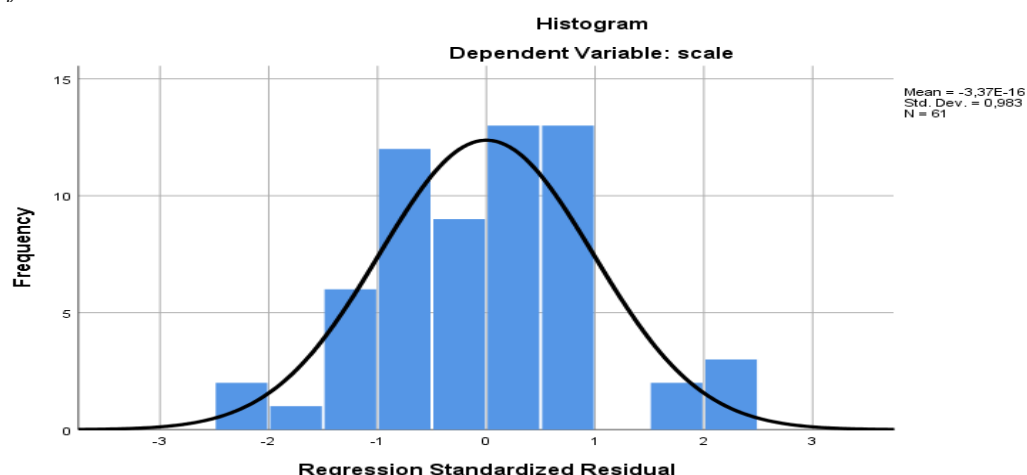
The findings of the research are going to be presented according to research questions. Since the total number of participants is lower than 200, a normality check, including outlier analysis and Residual statistics were conducted.

**Table 2**

*Normality check of the data distribution*

|                                   | Minimum | Maximum | Mean   | Std. Deviation | N  |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|--------|----------------|----|
| Predicted Value                   | 2,84    | 29,15   | 28,442 | 7,89           | 61 |
| Std. Predicted Value              | -,963   | 1,35    | ,00    | 1,00           | 61 |
| Standard Error of Predicted Value | 4,07    | 6,27    | 4,90   | ,88            | 61 |
| Adjusted Predicted Value          | 2,22    | 29,94   | 28,36  | 8,01           | 61 |
| Residual                          | -4,84   | 53,41   | ,00    | 22,08          | 61 |
| Std. Residual                     | -2,17   | 2,37    | ,00    | ,98            | 61 |
| Stud. Residual                    | -2,21   | 2,47    | ,00    | 1,01           | 61 |
| Deleted Residual                  | -50,50  | 57,67   | ,07    | 23,39          | 61 |
| Stud. Deleted Residual            | -2,29   | 2,59    | ,00    | 1,03           | 61 |
| Mahal. Distance                   | ,99     | 3,69    | 1,96   | 1,07           | 61 |
| Cook's Distance                   | ,00     | ,16     | ,02    | ,03            | 61 |
| Centred Leverage Value            | ,01     | ,06     | ,03    | ,01            | 61 |

In this table, two lines were investigated: Std. Residual line and Cook's Distance. In the Std. Residual line Min. and Max. referenced values should be between -3.29 and +3.29 (Fost, 2019). The related line in Table 2 showed that there is no outlier value in the data. Cook's Distance line in the table supported the Std. The residual line shows that there is no outlier in the data since the Cook's Distance Max. value is between + 1 (Cook's Distance Max. > + 1). The histogram in Figure 1 also supports the findings of Table 2. Since all the bars are under the curve, the distribution of normality is ensured.

**Figure 1***Histogram of Data Distribution*

#### 4.1. R.Q.1 Pre-service EFL teachers' awareness level of 21st-century teaching principles.

The first research question focuses on pre-service teachers' awareness level of 21st-century teaching principles. Therefore, the researcher embarks on the 21st-century perception scale, which not only emphasizes the teaching skills but also effective utilization of multimodality. Table 3 explains briefly the descriptives of the 21st-century teaching perceptions of the pre-service EFL teachers.

**Table 3***Descriptives of the EFL pre-service teachers' perception*

|                       | N  | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|-----------------------|----|------|----------------|
| Perception            | 61 | 3.4  | 23,45          |
| Grade                 |    |      |                |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade | 35 | 2.7  | 23.91          |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade | 26 | 3.8  | 23.45          |
| Gender                |    |      |                |
| Female                | 36 | 2.2  | 19.9           |
| Male                  | 25 | 3.2  | 25.5           |
| Valid N (listwise)    | 61 |      |                |

According to Table 3, participant pre-service teachers have an average level of awareness regarding teaching principles of the 21st century ( $N = 61$ ,  $M = 3.4$ ), which implies that pre-service teachers are short on theoretical knowledge on 21st-century teaching principles and multimodality. In terms of gender-wide inspection, female pre-service teachers' perception rate ( $N = 36$ ,  $M = 2.2$ ) is lower than male pre-service teachers ( $N = 25$ ,  $M = 3.2$ ). Regarding the grade situation of perception rate, 4th graders have a high level of awareness of 21st-century teaching principles ( $N = 26$ ,  $M = 3.8$ ).

##### 4.1.1. R.Q. 1.a. Do pre-service teachers awareness level of 21st century teacher skills teachers differentiate based on gender and grade?

Depending on the descriptives of the study, the link between the pre-service teachers' perception and the basic individual differences (gender and grade) was examined via Pearson Correlation Analysis, and the differentiation of perception in accordance with the gender and grade was examined via independent samples t-test analysis.

**Table 4**

*Pearson correlation analysis on the link between perception, grade and gender*

|            |                     | Perception | gender | grade  |
|------------|---------------------|------------|--------|--------|
| Perception | Pearson Correlation | 1          | ,318*  | ,236   |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     |            | ,012   | ,067   |
|            | N                   | 61         | 61     | 61     |
| Gender     | Pearson Correlation | ,318*      | 1      | ,428** |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,012       |        | ,001   |
|            | N                   | 61         | 61     | 61     |
| Grade      | Pearson Correlation | ,236       | ,428** | 1      |
|            | Sig. (2-tailed)     | ,067       | ,001   |        |
|            | N                   | 61         | 61     | 61     |

According to Pearson Correlation analysis, it was found that there is a statistically significant relationship between pre-service teachers' gender and perceptions; correlation was found significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) ( $p = .012$ ), and between perception and their grade; the correlation was found significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) ( $p = .001$ ).

**Table 5***Independent samples t-test for differentiation among perception, gender, and grade*

|            |                         | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances |      |       |    | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Diff. | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |       |
|------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------|-------|----|-----------------|------------|-------------------------------------------|-------|
|            |                         | F                                       | Sig. | t     | df |                 |            | Lower                                     | Upper |
| Perception | Equal variances assumed | 4,56                                    | ,052 | -2,57 | 59 | ,012            | -15,04     | -26,72                                    | -3,36 |
|            | Unequal variances       |                                         |      |       |    |                 |            |                                           |       |

Table 5 on the independent samples t-test showed that participant pre-service teachers' perception of 21<sup>st</sup>-century teaching skills differed statistically significantly ( $p = 0.012$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) in terms of their gender and grade.

#### 4.2. R.Q.2. To what extent is multimodality present in grammar-based microteaching practices of pre-service EFL teachers?

Pre-service teachers were allocated grammatical subjects for their 45-minute microteaching presentations at the commencement of the term. They were instructed to prepare their lesson plan and resources for the designated week of their performance. Their microteaching performances were assessed using a criteria developed by Povey (2023). The rubric was designed in accordance with multimodality standards and encompassed topics from 'classroom management' to 'teachers' attitude.' The researcher assessed the rubrics based on the frequency rate of each category. The categories were assessed during the microteaching performances of candidate instructors.

**Table 6***Multimodality in microteaching practices*

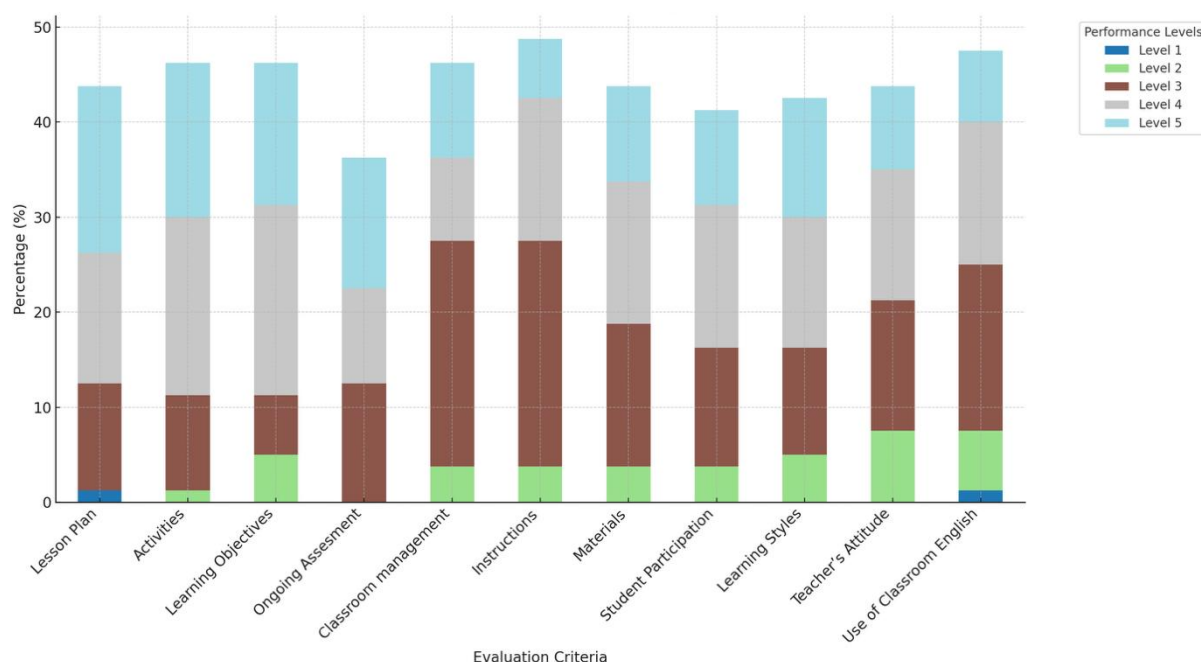
|                          | Level 1 (%) | Level 2 (%) | Level 3 (%) | Level 4 (%) | Level 5 (%) |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Lesson Plan              | 1.25        | 0.0         | 11.25       | 13.75       | 17.5        |
| Activities               | 0.0         | 1.25        | 10.0        | 18.75       | 16.25       |
| Learning Objectives      | 0.0         | 5.0         | 6.25        | 20.0        | 15.0        |
| Ongoing Assessment       | 0.0         | 0.0         | 12.5        | 10.0        | 13.75       |
| Classroom management     | 0.0         | 3.75        | 23.75       | 8.75        | 10.0        |
| Instructions             | 0.0         | 3.75        | 23.75       | 15.0        | 6.25        |
| Materials                | 0.0         | 3.75        | 15.0        | 15.0        | 10.0        |
| Student Participation    | 0.0         | 3.75        | 12.5        | 15.0        | 10.0        |
| Learning Styles          | 0.0         | 5.0         | 11.25       | 13.75       | 12.5        |
| Teacher's Attitude       | 0.0         | 7.5         | 13.75       | 13.75       | 8.75        |
| Use of Classroom English | 1.25        | 6.25        | 17.5        | 15.0        | 7.5         |

The table above displays a percentage analysis of rubric scores obtained from observations of microteaching sessions in the realm of foreign language learning for youngsters. The aggregate number of participating students was 80. Each criterion is assessed across five performance tiers (Level 1 to Level 5), and the analysis of student performance yields the following insights:

The highest performance (Level 5) was most commonly noted in the domains of *'Lesson Planning'* (17.5%), *'Activities'* (16.25%), and *'Learning Objectives'* (15%). This indicates that the pre-service teachers exhibited proficiency in crafting organized lesson plans, choosing pertinent and stimulating classroom activities, and establishing suitable learning outcomes. The lowest performance level (Level 1) was scarcely seen in *'Use of Classroom English'* (1.25%) and *'Lesson Planning'* (1.25%), while it was completely absent in all other categories, suggesting that practically all student performances surpassed the minimum evaluation criterion.

**Figure 2**

*Distribution of Performance Levels by Microteaching Evaluation Criteria*



A significant percentage of students achieved an intermediate level (Level 3) in *'Instructions'* (23.75%) and *'Classroom Management'* (23.75%). These findings indicate that further pedagogical support is necessary to improve the clarity of instructional delivery and the consistency of classroom management practices. Furthermore, *'Teacher's Attitude'* and *'Use of Classroom English'* produced comparatively lower percentages in the top performance tier (8.75% and 7.5%, respectively). These findings highlight the imperative of cultivating more assured and passionate teaching identities while promoting the regular and adept utilization of English in instruction. This study functions as an essential diagnostic instrument for educators and curriculum developers by emphasizing areas of instructional proficiency and pinpointing domains necessitating focused professional development.

The evaluation model of teaching practice through microteaching classes at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training has not been well performed and yet achieved the expected learning outcomes. The microteaching classes at the faculty do not have valid and reliable instruments and guidelines for evaluation (Syamsudarni & Sahraeni, 2018).

#### 4.3. R.Q.3. To what extent do contemporary instructional strategies and digital tools appear in the lesson plans prepared by the candidates?

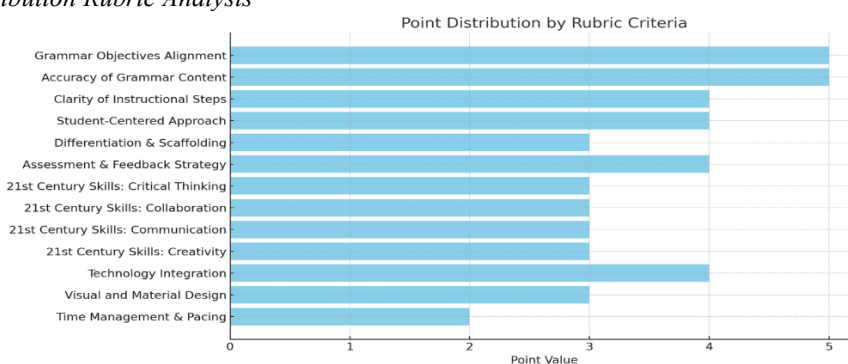
The primary objective of the third research question was to examine the degree to which pre-service EFL teachers integrate 21st-century teaching principles with language instruction in a multimodal manner throughout their microteaching performances. While grammar instruction is inherently static, engagement and enjoyment can be enhanced through the incorporation of diverse literacies alongside activities. It is essential to integrate 21st-century pedagogical principles in EFL classes through multimodal approaches, as Generations Z and X seek engaging and

enjoyable learning experiences. This can be achieved by capturing the attention of diverse student audiences through the use of wikis, artificial intelligence, worksheets, puppets, and physical activities. The lesson plans are analogous to microteaching in their capacity to provide insights about pre-service actual practices. This research study analyzed 61 lesson plans using a rubric (Figure 3) and the researcher's reflection notes during the Spring semester of 2024-2025 in the course *Teaching English to Young Learners*.

**Table 8***Lesson plan evaluation rubric*

| Criteria                               | Description                                                                                                                        | Points |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| Grammar Objectives Alignment           | Objectives are clear, measurable, and aligned with the selected grammar topic (e.g., present perfect, modals).                     | 5      |
| Accuracy of Grammar Content            | Correct use and explanation of grammar rules; examples and practice activities demonstrate accurate language use.                  | 5      |
| Clarity of Instructional Steps         | Lesson steps are logically sequenced and clearly guide instruction (e.g., presentation → practice → production).                   | 4      |
| Student-Centered Approach              | Activities promote learner engagement and active use of grammar in context.                                                        | 4      |
| Differentiation & Scaffolding          | Lesson provides support for mixed-level learners (e.g., visual aids, guided practice, sentence frames).                            | 3      |
| Assessment & Feedback Strategy         | Includes formative or summative assessment tools (e.g., quizzes, peer feedback) and clearly explains how grammar will be assessed. | 4      |
| 21st Century Skills: Critical Thinking | Learners are encouraged to analyze, apply, or creatively manipulate grammar structures.                                            | 3      |
| 21st Century Skills: Collaboration     | Activities encourage meaningful group or pair work related to grammar use.                                                         | 3      |
| 21st Century Skills: Communication     | Opportunities provided for spoken/written grammar use in realistic communicative contexts.                                         | 3      |
| 21st Century Skills: Creativity        | Grammar activities encourage creative language use (e.g., storytelling, role play, and project work).                              | 3      |
| Technology Integration                 | Thoughtful use of digital tools (e.g., Kahoot, Padlet, Google Docs, grammar apps) to enhance grammar instruction.                  | 4      |
| Visual and Material Design             | Instructional materials (e.g., slides, handouts, digital content) are clear, visually engaging, and support grammar learning.      | 3      |
| Time Management & Pacing               | Lesson plan realistically fits within a class period with appropriate pacing of grammar tasks.                                     | 2      |
| Total                                  |                                                                                                                                    | 50     |

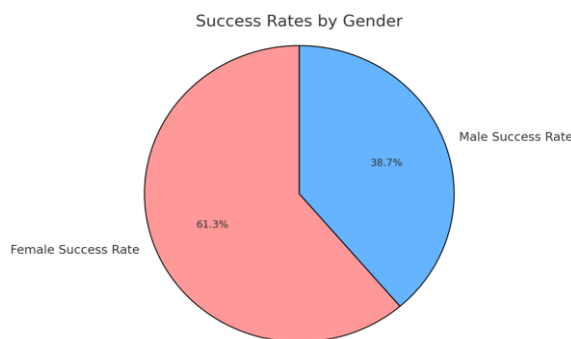
According to the rubric findings for lesson plan evaluation, a frequency figure was developed.

**Figure 3***Lesson Plan Distribution Rubric Analysis*

The results of the rubric assessment of the lesson plan were anticipated within the framework of Türkiye's English language instruction. The figure indicates that pre-service teachers prioritize explicit grammar instruction above the utilization of multimodal methods for implicit grammar education. It was observed that the proportion of female pre-service students utilizing various 21st-century teaching tools and wikis (61.3%) surpassed that of male pre-service teachers (38.7%).

**Figure 4**

*Lesson plan analysis results of gender-wise*



In addition to quantitative data on rubric evaluation frequencies, the researcher utilized reflective notes for each lesson plan to enhance data diversity and ensure objectivity. The qualitative data were evaluated using Nvivo. A total of 2,750 words were coded and categorized. Fifty-seven significant codes were examined and subsequently categorized under five primary themes.

#### *4.3.1. Instructional Design & Delivery*

This category covers the feasibility of the lesson plan, clarity of instructions, variety of activities, and the inclusion of closure tasks. While many participants demonstrated strong planning skills, they often failed to implement the practice stage, and the instructions were sometimes unclear. High-level directives not aligned with students' proficiency levels were also noted. Additionally, issues such as overly long reading texts and a lack of feedback were observed.

#### *4.3.2. Material & Technology Use*

Some microteaching sessions effectively utilized technology (e.g., Wordwall, Plotagon) and included authentic and creative materials. However, others suffered from limited or no use of materials, such as very small flashcards or a complete absence of digital tools. These discrepancies indicate inconsistency in material use across sessions.

*"He bought a puppet and tried to teach his topic via integrating the fun factor, the class was very interactive.." (Week 1)*

*"He employed platogon and storywizard applications to teach, and put the emphasis on sub-conscious learnin via utilizing multimodal tools. He also focused on reasoning and devloping new ideas, which is closely related to critical thinking and creativity." (Week 3)*

#### *4.3.3. Pedagogical Strategy*

Many candidates adopted grammar-focused approaches; however, these often leaned heavily on explicit instruction and translation-based methods, with little emphasis on meaning or communicative goals. Lessons tended to be teacher-centered and lacked sufficient production phases.

*"She tried to teach the subject of 'Can-Cannot' in Turkish and gave the rules explicitly; she did not used any wikis although it exists in the lesson plan." (Week5)*

#### 4.3.4. Interaction & Group Work

Although some lessons successfully integrated group and pair work, many lacked opportunities for student interaction. Lessons were frequently lecture-based and did not engage learners through collaborative tasks.

*"Although the candidate placed the group games and pair work activities, she did not practice them." (Week 9)*  
*"Since he used group work very limited, the class was not interactive enough." (Week 12)*

#### 4.3.5. Others

This category includes classroom management, use of body language, audio quality, and use of the board. While some candidates displayed positive non-verbal communication, excessive use of L1, low-quality audio, and lack of classroom interaction were commonly reported.

*"The candidate teacher has used Turkish a lot" (Week 2)*  
*"Although her content was weak, the materials were limited, her body language was very positive, which encouraged students to attain the activities." (Week 6)*

#### Summary:

While the microteaching evaluation rubric does not explicitly label '21st-century skills,' several rubric criteria inherently reflect these competencies. Items such as technology integration, use of varied and multimodal materials, student engagement, activity design, and learner-centred methodology represent operational indicators of creativity, collaboration, communication, digital literacy, and multimodal pedagogical competence, which are core dimensions of 21st-century teaching. The comparison between scale scores and rubric results is based on a perception-to-performance correspondence: the perception scale reflects teacher candidates' reported understanding of 21st-century competencies, while the microteaching rubric captures how these competencies are enacted through observable teaching behaviours such as digital tool integration, multimodal material use, student engagement, and interactive task design.

### 5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the pedagogical performance of pre-service English language teachers during microteaching sessions in a course on Teaching Foreign Languages to Young Learners, with a specific focus on frequency and thematic analysis of instructor observation notes. The analysis yielded five overarching themes: instructional design, material and technology use, pedagogical strategy, classroom interaction, and classroom management. These themes were examined in light of multimodal pedagogies and 21st-century teaching frameworks, which emphasize learner autonomy, technology integration, critical thinking, and collaborative learning (Voogt & Roblin, 2012; OECD, 2018). While the candidates demonstrated solid planning and material preparation skills, a number of deficiencies were identified in the areas of interactivity, creativity, implicit language instruction, and strategic classroom communication. Even though the 21st-Century Skills Perception Scale includes things like critical thinking, cooperation, creativity, and communication, multimodality was the main focus of the results because it was present in all three data sources: (1) the perception scale (items related to technology use and multimodal tools), (2) the microteaching evaluation rubric (criteria assessing materials, activities, and technology integration), and (3) the lesson plan evaluation rubric (criteria requiring multimodal resource design). Consequently, multimodality was the sole talent that could be evaluated both as a perceived competency and as an observable educational performance.

In contrast to prior studies (Alsup, 2022; Çetin & Ünlü, 2022; Dervişoğlu & Yaman, 2021) that primarily utilised self-report measures to assess 21st-century skills, the current research amalgamates perceptual data with performance-based information obtained from lesson plans and microteaching evaluations. This dual-level approach provides a more thorough understanding of how teacher candidates conceptualise and implement 21st-century teaching techniques. The study is also unique in that it shows multimodality as the sole concept that shows up in all the measures. This makes it a measurable link between what teachers think and what they do in the classroom. Similar findings have been reported in prior studies examining teacher candidates' 21st-century skills and microteaching performance (Dogan, 2020; Rahayu & Putri, 2022).

Instructional design was one of the strongest areas for the teacher candidates, as most of them provided clear learning objectives and organized their lessons according to recognizable instructional phases (e.g., presentation → practice → production). However, the implementation phase often lacked cohesion, with several participants failing to execute the productive stage or to give feedback to learners. These shortcomings suggest a superficial understanding of lesson planning that does not translate into dynamic classroom practice. Such gaps are not uncommon among novice teachers and have been linked to limited experience with multimodal lesson design, where instructional delivery combines linguistic, visual, gestural, spatial, and digital modes to maximize engagement and meaning-making (Jewitt, 2008; Serafini, 2014). While candidates followed the written structure of lesson plans, they frequently neglected to adapt their instructions and pacing in response to learners' needs, an essential skill in a 21st-century classroom where flexibility and responsiveness are key components of effective pedagogy (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

The theme of material and technology use reflected the candidates' growing awareness of digital pedagogy yet revealed varying degrees of competence in meaningful technology integration. Candidates who used platforms like Wordwall, Kahoot, and Plotagon illustrated the potential of multimodal engagement in grammar instruction. These tools not only offered visual and interactive affordances but also created opportunities for learners to participate actively and meaningfully. However, other participants either underutilized or misused technology—e.g., playing low-quality audio or using flashcards that were too small—which diluted the potential impact of multimodal learning environments. This discrepancy highlights the need for technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK), wherein digital tools are not simply layered onto instruction but thoughtfully embedded to enhance comprehension and engagement (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). According to Beetham and Sharpe (2013), effective digital literacy in teaching goes beyond tool use and involves designing tasks that support collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity—dimensions often underdeveloped in the sessions analyzed.

Another critical dimension identified was pedagogical strategy, particularly the tension between teacher-centered and learner-centered practices. Many microteaching sessions leaned toward explicit grammar teaching, often relying on translation and rule explanation rather than discovery-based, contextualized instruction. Such practices reflect a disconnect from constructivist and sociocultural paradigms that underpin both multimodal and 21st-century teaching approaches (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). For instance, grammar activities often lacked contextual grounding or communicative relevance, and productive stages were either absent or inadequately scaffolded. In contrast, 21st-century instruction requires that learners be positioned as active agents who explore, negotiate, and apply knowledge in meaningful ways (Voogt et al., 2015). Multimodal techniques such as role-plays, storytelling with visuals, digital comics, or collaborative writing using shared documents could have provided avenues for more creative and contextualized grammar engagement (Walsh et al., 2013).

Interaction and group work, another prominent theme, was notably limited across several microteaching sessions. While some candidates attempted pair or group work, most relied on individual activities or whole-class teacher monologues. This is especially concerning given that both young learner pedagogy and 21st-century learning emphasize social interaction as central to language development (Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2017). Collaboration is one of the four core Cs in 21st-century learning (the others being communication, critical thinking, and creativity), and multimodal environments are ideal platforms for fostering it. For example, multimodal tasks—like co-creating digital storybooks, producing video blogs, or engaging in project-based grammar games—naturally lend themselves to social construction of knowledge (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). The absence of such collaborative, student-centered practices in the majority of lessons suggests a pedagogical orientation that remains rooted in traditional models of instruction.

Despite these gaps, the analysis also highlighted positive developments, particularly in classroom management and affective engagement. Candidates frequently exhibited positive body language, maintained appropriate pacing, and demonstrated a caring presence. These affective elements are often overlooked but are integral to multimodal instruction, where gesture, voice, facial expression, and spatial arrangement all contribute to meaning-making (Flewitt et al., 2009). The use of dolls, toys, and colorful visuals, although at times not fully integrated pedagogically, indicates a growing awareness of multisensory and child-friendly instruction. Additionally, some candidates provided multimodal forms of assessment—such as using peer feedback or visual prompts—though these were not consistently linked to formative learning goals. Given that assessment is a core component of 21st-century pedagogy (Brookhart, 2017), further development in designing authentic, multimodal, and formative assessment tools is recommended.

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of integrating multimodality and 21st-century teaching principles into English language teacher education. These findings are consistent with prior research demonstrating alignment between teacher candidates' perceived 21st-century competencies and their observable pedagogical performance (Alsup, 2022; Çetin & Ünlü, 2022; Dervişoğlu & Yaman, 2021; Dogan, 2020; Mishra & Koehler, 2020; Rahayu & Putri, 2022; Yeh & Lai, 2022). While the teacher candidates demonstrated promising skills in lesson planning and material development, there is a clear need for targeted training in the design and delivery of interactive,

student-centred, and digitally enriched lessons. As noted by Kalantzis & Cope (2012), multimodal literacy is not an “add-on” but a foundational literacy of our time, especially in the context of linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms. Embedding principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiated instruction, and digital competence can further support the development of adaptive expertise in pre-service teachers (CAST, 2018; Tomlinson, 2014). Teacher education programs should prioritize reflective practice, collaborative lesson design, and experiential learning environments where candidates can practice, observe, and evaluate multimodal and communicative pedagogies in action. Only then can they bridge the gap between theory and practice and cultivate the skills necessary to thrive as educators in a rapidly evolving educational landscape.

## 6. Contribution Declaration

The researcher declares that the immediate research study is completed as a single-author study.

## 7. Conflict of Interest

The researcher declares that there is no conflict of interest with any secondary bodies or stakeholders.

## 8. Ethical Considerations

The participant pre-service teachers' consent was taken to carry out the research study. The research study was conducted upon the Ethical Committee approval letter.

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