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# **Expectations and Views of International and Native Master's Students Regarding English Language Teaching Master's Program**

Uluslararası ve Yerli Yüksek Lisans Öğrencilerinin İngilizce Dili Eğitimi Yüksek Lisans Programına İlişkin Beklenti ve Görüşleri

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## EXPECTATIONS AND VIEWS OF INTERNATIONAL AND NATIVE MASTER'S STUDENTS REGARDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING MASTER'S PROGRAM

### ABSTRACT:

It is an undeniable fact that education does not take a backseat; to the contrary, it goes beyond the borders and makes educational needs no longer limited to undergraduate programs. The number of students leaving their own countries to access master's degree opportunities is increasing day by day. This is regarded as an indication of internationalization in education. In order to facilitate internationalization in graduate education, analyzing students' educational expectations and views is necessary. Therefore, the aim of this study is to find out the views and expectations of these international and native master's students about the master program of the English Language Teaching Department in Ondokuz Mayıs University. It is because of their significant place in the continuity of higher education, improving the quality of the program is important to this end. Due to this fact, there should be continuous improvements in all fields of the program itself according to program's objectives designed by considering students' expectations. With this overall aim in mind, we conducted this research to analyze the views and expectations of international and native master's students. Certain major suggestions were presented to improve the master's programs of ELT in Turkey.

**Keywords:** *international students, native students, master's degree, graduate studies, ELT.*



## ULUSLARARASI VE YERLİ YÜKSEK LİSANS ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN İNGİLİZCE DİLİ EĞİTİMİ YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMINA İLİŞKİN BEKLENTİ VE GÖRÜŞLERİ

### ÖZ:

Eğitimin geri planda kalmadığı, tam tersine sınırları aşarak eğitim ihtiyaçlarını lisans programlarıyla sınırlı olmaktan çıktığı yadsınamaz bir gerçektir. Yüksek lisans fırsatlarına erişmek için kendi ülkelerinden ayrılan öğrencilerin sayısı her geçen gün artmaktadır. Bu durum eğitimde uluslararasılaşmanın bir göstergesi olarak kabul edilmektedir. Lisansüstü eğitimde uluslararasılaşmayı kolaylaştırmak için öğrencilerin eğitimle ilgili beklenti ve görüşlerinin analiz edilmesi gerekmektedir. Bu nedenle bu çalışmanın amacı, bu uluslararası ve yerli yüksek lisans öğrencilerinin Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi İngiliz Dili Eğitimi yüksek lisans programına ilişkin görüş ve beklentilerini ortaya çıkarmaktır. Yükseköğretimin devamlılığında önemli bir yeri olduğundan dolayı, programın kalitesinin artırılması bu amaçla

önemlidir. Dolayısıyla, öğrencilerin beklentileri göz önünde bulundurularak tasarlanan programın hedeflerine göre programın tüm alanlarında sürekli iyileştirmeler yapılmalıdır. Bu genel amacı göz önünde bulundurarak, uluslararası ve yerli yüksek lisans öğrencilerinin görüş ve beklentilerini analiz etmek için bu araştırma gerçekleştirildi. Türkiye'de İngiliz Dili Eğitimi yüksek lisans programlarını geliştirmek için bazı önemli öneriler sunuldu.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** uluslararası öğrenciler, ulusal öğrenciler, yüksek lisans, lisansüstü çalışmalar.



## INTRODUCTION

In today's world, it can be clearly seen that education does not take a backseat; on the contrary, it goes beyond borders and makes educational needs no longer limited to the undergraduate program. Therefore, there is a Master of Arts (MA) program just after the undergraduate program. MA program is the basic graduate-level degree granted to graduate students in fields in the humanities, social sciences, or fine arts and offers opportunities for students to further explore the fields they are interested in. This post-graduate education enables one to obtain master's and doctorate degrees and specialize in specific disciplines after four-year undergraduate programs. While some obtain an MA degree in education to achieve social status or specialize in any subject they prefer in today's ever-increasing competitive teaching conditions, others obtain an MA degree to get highly-paid positions. According to Ünal and İlter (2010), the first aim of graduate education is to educate academics and researchers on the futurity of higher education institutes and establish academic infrastructure; the second objective is to solve the problems related to the technological, economic, and cultural developments of countries.

Meng, Zhu and Cao (2017) emphasized the fact that master's programs have been giving great opportunities to students recently and also suggested that graduate education provides the individual with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes in relation to the research and development process in accordance with the academic criteria as well as economic, cultural and psychosocial benefits. In this way, the social environment and cultural structure in the specific values, attitudes, behaviors, and learning and social control are provided. By spreading these opportunities as much as possible, growing international student recruitment has become the objective of large percentages of universities in recent years. As Cevher (2016) stated that higher education is not limited to only countries; quite the opposite, it has been an intercontinental movement through which higher education systems of various countries around the world have become consistent.

Along with some developments in graduate programs, the internationalization process in higher education is anticipated to continue swiftly around the world. Thus, internationalization is a necessary step for today and the future of higher education in Turkey (Çetinsaya, 2014; Kireççi, 2016). Turpin (2002) also stated that together with the internationalization of their students in the institutes, curriculum and courses should be internationalized by the higher education institutions; however, the effects of this process are obscure. It can be understood that there should be continuous improvements in all fields of the program itself according to the objectives of the program. The objectives of internationalization in higher education for all intents and purposes contain the following: to globalize the students' experience; to increase job offers for students by means of intercontinental experience; to facilitate the international extent of the curriculum and enhance internationally competitive alliances, networks, and cooperations.

As the position requires an international source of education as a university, the demands of international students should not be ignored (Sheppard & Bellis, 2008). Having an international student in a class can be really demanding for not only instructors but also students themselves. The differences between the academic conventions of the students' origin country and those of Turkey also cause stress on international students at the beginning of their sojourns. Sümer, Poyrazlı and Grahame (2008) pointed out that a host university and social environment is a significant factor in the mental state of international students. Universities whose mere objectives are about the academic needs of international students neglect significant components of their potential achievement or failure in the current pedagogical setting. There is no question that other than students' academic needs, their expectations and suggestions should also be taken into consideration to this end. Along with international students, native students' demands also should be regarded as one of the primary sources to improve graduate programs in Turkey because they are contributing to MA programs in a good part. Therefore, both international and native students are required to be consulted in order to make necessary changes to meet the demands. According to Rowley (2003), the basic aims of interviewing with the students are: providing a venue that students could express their opinions and their level of satisfaction with learning experience; encouraging students to reflect on their learning, and generating indicators of quality that universities can use for attracting potential students. Consulting the students who are continuing their own MA classes at the university in question can be a light for walking through the paths of improving the current system in the MA program.

If we scrutinize MA programs in ELT context, considering the professional development facet of master's programs, pedagogical education for teachers is regarded as one of the most crucial achievements by the EFL (English as a Foreign

Language) community, who are prone to improve professionally and reflect on their teaching practices. Holding an MA degree in ELT has been recognized as one of the major professional development resources (Stapleton & Shao, 2018; Hasrati & Tavakoli, 2014). Furthermore, Ur (2002) states that graduate education has become a component of the EFL culture for the reason that nowadays, teachers are more knowledgeable about the significance of being planned to the unplanned to respond well to the requirements of their professional life. Research by Truscott de Mejía (2016), who examined and discussed teacher education for EFL teachers, also supported the benefits of MA programs for teachers' professional lives by stating that graduate programs develop empowering attitudes such as "commitment, enthusiasm, reflection and respect for students and colleagues" (p. 27) among teachers. Although this issue is of great importance for professional development and as a source of improvement for students, there still exists limited research for enlightening the dimly lit side of English Language Teaching MA programs for which students are eager to attend.

It is a fact that there are plenty of students leaving their country to access all of these opportunities (educational, economic, cultural, etc.), which the program provided, with some question marks in their mind: What kind of education do they want to receive in their master's degree? Is it worth leaving their hometowns to take MA classes in another country or city? Are the given MA classes enough to meet their educational and social needs and make them specialized in the field? In this study, it was primarily aimed to find out the views and expectations of the international and native (Turkish) master's students about the MA program of the English Language Teaching department in Ondokuz Mayıs University. With this aim in mind, the second aim was to improve the quality of the program considering the results of the study because the quality of graduate education is affecting the quality of the university, and the quality of the university is increasingly affecting the quality of society (Karaman & Bakırcı 2010). It is evident that international applications for post-graduate education in Turkey are increasing, and this made it clear that to meet these students' demands, universities should do their full share of work. Consequently, this drove us as a researcher to conduct research to analyze the views and expectations of MA students and to present certain major suggestions to improve the master's programs of ELT in Turkey regarding this study.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### International students

Researchers rarely turn their faces to international students' expectations, but there is still a wide choice of studies including international students, available in the literature because expectations and views of students have a great role in pro-

moting programs in universities. It is required to consider not only native but also international students to enhance the internalization of the university. There are plenty of factors that emphasize the importance of eliciting student's views about the programs that students attend. Related literature mostly focuses on international students' expectations in the general context rather than especially in the MA context; however, they give some hints about the expectations of the international students.

Each international student has a different intention to go on their graduate education. Some of these students leave their countries just for the sake of finding a better job while improving themselves in MA classrooms, whereas others do the same thing just to get a better education. The former group has some problems while working at workplaces as an employee. It is because they are not familiar with the working and salary systems in the host country, they are seen as cheap workforce, especially when they are in need, by the employers, and that should not be ignored through the process of the MA program because ignoring this situation also puts a lot of stress on those students who come to Turkey for MA degree (Gündüz & Alakbarov, 2019). To this end, everybody around them, instructors, classmates, are expected to take this burden to help them feel relieved to some extent. The classroom is the best place to handle this situation. It is to be somewhere to turn everyone into a single body which yearns to learn something new, but Armağan (2015) states in his report on the international student's problems that foreign students are not seen as a 'person' but seen as a 'guest' in the programs they attend in Turkey. On the contrary, Kiroğlu, Kesten and Elma (2010) conducted a study to determine the problems of undergraduate international students in an education faculty of a state university in Turkey and revealed that international students do not face any prejudice or exclusion during the process of their education. However, Özoğlu (2012) provided a detailed document on international students' problems and stated that the reason behind their failures in the courses is stemming from the lack of having a good command of the language of the given courses; this language problem also causes ineffective communication between students and academic staff, classmates, along with all these, it also causes lack of self-confidence to ask questions and to attend in the classroom rather than external factors.

It is a well-known fact that language is one of the fundamental factors in the teaching and learning process. Lack of a good knowledge of the language used in the classroom, along with difficulty in being familiar with the curriculum, also makes the learning process double-difficult. Koçyiğit and Erdem (2015) examine the problems, expectations, and solutions of international students and find out the language and the curriculum are the two of the main factors that international students are having a problem with during their education and suggest adapting the curriculum regarding the expectations of students. Language factor is also affe-

cted by some other factors. Brown (2008) examine post-graduate students' anxiety and language relationship and suggests that a considerable degree of anxiety is seen among a large number of international students in the early stage of the academic sojourn in language ability respect, with difficulties caused by not being able to communicate in daily situations, to follow lectures and to participate in class. In this sense, academics are expected to build bridges for these students to access all the facilities of the MA program.

Academics also have a significant effect on the program itself (Borg, 2006; Pajares, 1992; Pettit, 2012; Ryan, 2011; Villegas & Lucas, 2007). Singh (2018), who emphasizes the relationship between the attitudes of academics and the experiences of international students, suggests referring to the interviews he conducted with post-graduate international students in Malaysia. Two post-graduate students indicated that the problems stem from lecturers' severe attitudes towards the students by stressing upon their frustrations about their success in a course. However, Harman and Hayden (2013) found out that, considering teaching and learning setting challenges, the less qualified academic staff and the poor academic preparation of academics for their teaching was one of the notable struggles encountered in higher education in Vietnam. To this end, it can be understood that academic staffs' effect on international students is quite visible, as Guilfoyle and Halse (2004) stated by attracting attention to the support expected from academics.

### Native students

Limited studies exist especially concerning the native MA students in Turkey because it seems that MA programs are still tried to be put on the right track to be successful in the way of building a bridge between studentship to scholarship in the field; however, native students' interests in doing MA are significantly increasing day by day in Turkey. With this increase, universities, which offer an MA program, started to seek all the possible ways to provide the most beneficial program content to succeed in the field for their students. Students still have some different expectations other than the MA programs offered for them. Ötтеkin-Demirbolat (2005) conducted a study in which semi-structured interview forms were used to get students' suggestions for the curriculum and to what extent the level of their expectations was met by the lecturers conducted on native masters students. In the results section of the study, it was revealed that students' first three expectations from the program are about the number of elective courses which should be increased; courses which should include application and practice, and lastly, about the students who should be informed about the content of the courses before they are enrolled. As for their expectations from their lecturers about the process of instruction, the findings were that lecturers should guide, direct students for research, abandon the classical methods of instruction, consider student involvement

first when assignments are given, and create a democratic class atmosphere based on respect. Especially the last expectation shows that native students are fond of creating an embracing atmosphere for everyone, including international students as well. Çömek, Arı and Pehlivanlar (2005) also conducted a study on master's students to investigate the students' expectations and ideas of the graduate students before the master's programs. It is revealed that there are three main reasons for attending the master's program; the first one is to improve themselves in their fields of study; the second one is to make money, and career planning is following them. Most of the participants emphasize that they are not sure whether the given courses are useful for them or not. However, most of the students (73%) found academics' teaching methodology appropriate and useful. As it can be clearly understood that there is no primary expectation about the language used, probably because the native language is the medium of instruction in the classroom and the privileged attitudes of the academics towards students compared to the international students.

Although there are some studies about national and international students' expectations and views, depending on the researchers' review on the related literature, there could not be found any on comparing and contrasting the expectations and views of these students in any MA context, including the English Language Teaching Master's Program, so there is a need for a study dealing with this, for the purpose of contributing to fill this literature gap in the field, this study is really essential. To this end, this qualitative study aims to find out what are the expectations of national and international MA students of the English Language Teaching Department of Ondokuz Mayıs University for the current education programs, course processing regarding gender, age, and nationality factors.

### Research Questions

1. What are the similarities/differences between international and native students' reasons to attend the master's program?
2. What are the similarities/differences between international and native students' expectations from the academics, syllabus, teaching methods, and materials?
3. What are the similarities/differences between international and native students' reasons behind being an MA student satisfaction considering studentship and courses?
4. What are the similarities/differences between international and native students' suggestions for the MA program they (have) attended?



## METHODOLOGY

### Research design

This research involved a qualitative study based on a semi-structured interview which intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2014). The semi-structured interview forms were preferred rather than face-to-face interviews as a data-gathering tool for its face-saving feature. In the data collection process, sensitive issues were taken into consideration according to Hughes's (2004) statements which indicate that researchers should be aware of the intercultural and communicational variations while carrying out research with an international community. He also highlights ways of conducting research with the international community instead of in-person interviews due to the fact that in-person interviews with international students may disturb students. Respondents may not be familiar with the style of interaction, and this situation may affect the reliability of the research, as cited in Sherry, Thomas, and Chui (2009). Therefore, in the process of the study, participants' willingness wasn't ignored, and suitable places (cubicles-little offices) where they could feel more comfortable were provided for each participant while gathering the data.

This study is a case study that aims to figure out social phenomena within a small number of unaffectedly occurring environments (Atar, Erdem & Koçyiğit, 2017). Direct quotations are often included in this analysis. The aim is to present and interpret the obtained data to the reader in an understandable way. In this study, the data will be presented by considering the questions and variables.

### Setting and Participants

#### Profile of the ELT MA Program of Ondokuz Mayıs University (OMU)

The aim of the English language Teaching (ELT) graduate program of the Foreign Languages Education Department is to train qualified science persons who are creative and can conduct research on the grounds of human rights and ethical values; have internalized the principles of the modern information society; can produce and implement knowledge related to the field of ELT; develop themselves continuously and follow scientific innovations of their day and age; can conduct basic and applied authentic scientific research in the fields of linguistics, literature, and methodology; possess analytical and critical thinking skills; and have developed interactional skills at the international level. To receive a master's degree in English Language Education, students are supposed to take at least 24 credits (ECTS equivalent) from the courses available in the master's programs of the Master's Department or other related departments and are expected to complete their seminar and specialization course and thesis work successfully.

## Participants

The research was conducted on 2020-2021 spring term MA students of ELT program in Ondokuz Mayıs University. The participants of the study were included through the convenience sampling method, which involves choosing the participant samples from the available ones, those who are easy to access. The participants of the study consist of 8 international and 8 native, 16 students in total are doing their MA at Ondokuz Mayıs University in the academic year 2020-2021. Four of the participants were male (one native and three international), and 14 were female. The participants' ages were between 22 and 39. The participants consisted of three Azerbaijani, two Kazakh, one Syrian, one Moroccan, one Iraqi, and eight Turkish students studying for a master's degree.

## Data collection and analysis

The data were obtained through semi-structured interview forms, which are used for collecting data in an interview or focus group setting in qualitative research. The questions were framed according to the related literature and expert opinions about the MA students. Before preparing the questionnaire, the clarity of the questions' language, scope of the research, and ethical codes was examined and approved after making some appropriate changes by the field experts. While applying the questionnaire, international students did not feel safe answering the question about the academic staff, and as a researcher, I guaranteed that the data collected would not be shared without participants' permission.

The participants were asked the following questions:

1. What are your three reasons to attend the master's program?
2. What are your three expectations from academics?
3. What are your expectations from the syllabus, teaching methods, and materials?
4. Do you find the given courses useful for your career? Why or why not?
5. Do you feel satisfied being an MA student at this department? Why or why not?
6. What are your suggestions for the MA program you (have) attended?

Descriptive content analysis, which examines the qualitative data collected th-

rough a questionnaire with the aim of summarising the informational contents of these data with respect to the research question, was used in the study. The informational content is presented in a descriptive summary structured according to the needs of the study (Yıldırım& Şimşek, 2008). To conduct the content analysis, first responses were selected according to the contents decided, considering the research questions, then a set of rules were determined for coding the text. Lastly, results were analyzed according to the codes, and the drawn data were presented in the study in accordance with the research questions.

### Ethics Committee Permission Information

All the instructions stated by the “Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive” were followed. Ondokuz Mayıs University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee, as a board performing the ethical review, assessed the research application and found no ethical issues presented in the ethical assessment document (Serial Number: 2020/897).

### FINDINGS

Findings of the study were presented with regard to survey questions, respectively. First, the aims of questions; frequent items were presented on tables.

#### 1. What are the three reasons for you to attend the master's program?

The first interview question aims to find out whether there is a difference between the reasons for attending the program of international and national students or not and to reveal the first three ranked reasons of the students' why they attended the MA program (see Table 1).

National		International		
Reason	<i>f</i>	Reason	<i>f</i>	
1	Professional development	5	Self-development	7
2	Professional development	5	Professional development	5
3	To be an academic	4	Intercultural development	4

Of the 8 international students, 7 of them emphasized 'self-development as their first reason.

As a second reason, 6 of the 8 international students ranked 'professional development as a second reason for attending the MA program. As a third reason, 4 of the 8 international students ranked 'intercultural development'.

Of the 8 national students, 5 of them ranked 'professional development' as the first reason behind their attending the MA program. As a second reason, 5 of the 8 national students also ranked second reason as 'professional development' and as the third reason, 4 of the 8 national students ranked 'to be an academic' as seen on Table 1.

## 2. What are your three expectations from the academics?

By this second interview question, the researcher aims to figure out if there is a considerable difference between the expectations of international and national students or not and to reveal the first three ranked expectations of the students.

**Table 2. The expectations of international and national students from the academics**

National			International		
Expectation		<i>f</i>	Expectation		<i>f</i>
1	To be a facilitator or a guide	4	To be a master in the field		6
2	To be a facilitator or a guide	8	To be kind and fair		5
3	To be more open-minded	4	To be a facilitator or a guide		3

Six of the international students expect the academics first 'to be a master in the field', five of the eight students expect from the academics secondly 'to be kind and fair' in terms of the attitude towards the students and as to the third-ranked expectations, three of the students expect the academics 'to be facilitator and guide while four of the eight native students firstly and all of the students secondly expect the academics 'to be facilitator and guide' and half of the native students expect their instructors to be more open-minded.

## 3. What are your expectations from the syllabus, teaching methods, and materials?

In this interview question, it is aimed to determine the similarities and differences between the expectations of international and national students' regarding syllabus, teaching methods, and materials implemented in the MA classes.

**Table 3. Expectations from the syllabus, teaching methods, and materials**

National			International		
Syllabus			Syllabus		
Expectation		<i>f</i>	Expectation		<i>f</i>
1	To be modular	4	To be modular		4
2	To be student-centered	4	To be student-centered		4
3	To be topic-based	4	To be more intense		4
Teaching methods			Teaching methods		
Expectation		<i>f</i>	Expectation		<i>f</i>

1	To implement eclectic approach	4	To be more discussion-based and interactional	6
Materials			Materials	
1	To be authentic, interactive, and easily accessible	4	To be more technological and interactive	4

According to international students' responses to the questionnaires, half of the international students expect the syllabus to be modular and more student-centered, moreover, to be intense. The other half stated that they were satisfied with the already followed syllabus.

As to teaching methods, six of the international students expect teaching methods to be more discussion-based and interactional. Two other students stated that they were already pleased with the teaching methods used in the classroom.

To evaluate the expectations for materials used in the classroom, half of the international students expect the materials used in the classroom to be more technological and interactive. The other half pointed out that they are already satisfied with the materials used in the classroom.

According to national students' questionnaires, half of the native students expect the syllabus to be modular and more student-centered by indicating to have a word in syllabus design and expect syllabus to be designed according to their needs to touch the untouched fields of the ELT by implementing topic-based syllabus and the other half stated that they like the way their syllabus designed.

To continue with the teaching methods, half of the native students expect instructors to implement an eclectic approach in the classroom.

Materials used in the classroom are expected by half of the national students to be authentic; to be interactive; to be easily accessible. (as seen in Table 3)

**4. Do you find the given courses useful for your career? Why yes? Why no?**

The aim of the question is to compare the usefulness between students' views about the given courses.

<b>Table 4. Course satisfaction of native students and international students</b>			
Course Satisfaction	<i>f</i>	Course Satisfaction	<i>f</i>
Native students	6	International Students	8

Eight of the eight international students found the given courses totally useful for their career, while six of the eight native students found the given courses totally useful while two of them found courses to some extent useful for their career without making any comment.

### 5. Do you feel satisfied being an MA student at this department? Why yes? Why no?

This question is included in the questionnaire to reveal the students' level of satisfaction about being an MA student at the ELT department.

**Table 5. MA satisfaction of native students and international students in ELT**

National			International	
Expectation		<i>f</i>	Expectation	<i>f</i>
1	Satisfied	4	Satisfied	5
2	Not sure	3	Not sure	2
3	Not satisfied	1	Not satisfied	1

Five of the international students feel satisfied, while two of them are not sure about their satisfaction, and one of them does not feel satisfied being an MA student in the English Language Teaching department because the medium of instruction is not a hundred percent English, workload and lack of out-of-classroom activities.

Half of the native students feel satisfied, while three of them are not sure about their satisfaction, and one of them does not feel satisfied being an MA student in the English Language Teaching department. This dissatisfaction mainly takes its source from the workload assigned to students.

### 6. What are your suggestions for the MA program you attended?

The question aims to find out the similarities and differences between the suggestions of international and native students and to make some improvements in the department regarding the points made by each student.

Half of the international students did not make any suggestions, while the other half made the following suggestions for the MA program they attended, and all of the native students except one made suggestions for the MA program they attended. Suggestions were synthesized and presented accordingly.

#### 6.1. Courses

National Students' suggestions in course contexts, workload, contemporariness, attendance, etc., were presented along these lines:

### Student 9 "Instructors should give the students less homework."

Student 13 "The courses could be updated. When I look at the course lists of other universities' programs, I see some different courses such as 'Teaching in Bilingual Classrooms.' This kind of contemporary courses can be added to the alternatives."

Student 16 *"Sometimes it feels like I am in a BA class. Our instructors force us a lot. They forget we don't only have a life here. This balance must be arranged appropriately."*

Student 10 *"I suggest having more unity between the courses."*

Student 14 *"I think we wouldn't be have to attend classes every week; instead, we would read related articles, write a paper every week and attend classes when we need to."*

International Students' suggestions about courses are consisted of the medium of instruction and the program itself which are presented as follows

Student 1 *"All the courses should be given in English, and the number of students should be decreased."*

Student 4 *"The program should increase the competitiveness."*

### 6.2. Extra-curricular Activity

Considering extracurricular activity suggestions, only international students made some suggestions about extracurricular activities.

Student 3 *"I suggest making visits to cinemas as well as a theatre which are presented in English."*

Student 6 *"I am quite happy with it, yet there should be conferences held in English and about ELT related topics."*

### 6.3. Regulations

Two native students presented their suggestions about acceptance and supervisor selection in this way:

Student 12 *"Selection for this program should be made in a more detailed way to*

*select more knowledgeable people. "*

Student 15 *"Students should be given a 'real' chance to choose their supervisors."*

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to figure out the views and expectations of native and international MA students at a state university in Turkey. In the previous section, the reasons why students have attended to master's program, the students' expectations from course instructors, syllabus, teaching methods, and materials, however, the study was set out to discover whether students find the given courses useful for their career or not and whether students are satisfied for being an MA student at this department or not, along with these, suggestions of the students have been presented. The results will be discussed and synthesized in accordance with the research questions. Finally, the limitations and suggestions for future studies will be presented.

The first interview question focused on figuring out the reasons why students have attended a master's program. It is a well-known fact that a master's degree can open many employment doors opportunities, including some business fields and highly-paid positions. Findings revealed that students have attended master's programs in the ELT department for self-development, professional development, having a prestigious profession, intercultural development, following current trends in the ELT world, just for the sake of having an MA degree. In the same vein, the results of the study show a similarity to the previous study on native MA students (Çömek, Arı & Pehlivanlar, 2005). To this end, it can be understood that international students have given more importance to their self-development rather than their professional development in the MA program according to their rankings of the expectations; however, international students are seemed to be more into the program's efficacy rather than other matters such as highly-paid professions, and they included intercultural development in the list due to the fact they are more into self-development compared to the native students. Native students implied that they mainly aimed to attend an MA program for professional development and to have a prestigious job; these results indicate that native students are literally aware of the current employment problems in Turkey. Likewise, Aydemir and Şefika (2015) found out that most of the students prefer graduate education for an academic career in Turkey. Their expectations have been identified as being competent and effective in their areas and gaining respect in the community. In other words, regarding the naive students' and international students' reasons for attending MA shows differences to some extent in accordance with their point of view, it may be suggested that international students' worldviews might be broader than native students.



The second interview question of this research aimed to see the student's expectations from course instructors. This question is posed because the clarity of expectations of students from instructors facilitates learning (Fredericksen, Shea, & Pickett, 2000). Students have attended MA programs with some expectations from instructors. These expectations change according to their attitudes towards academics, the program, and the place of students regarded themselves in the program. An academic should know the field well enough to help the student determine the relative importance of various aspects and also guide students in understanding more than one side of critical issues within a discipline. The investigation of the issue showed that students commonly expected their instructors to be a master in the field, to be professional, to be kind and fair towards them, to be a facilitator and guide, to be easily accessible, and to give timely feedback but in different ranks. Reviewing the relevant literature, Ötтеkin-Demirbolat (2005) performed a study on post-graduate students and reached relevant results. It can be drawn that having a full field knowledge of instructors has greater importance than being a facilitator or kind and fair according to international students' views. Compared to international students, instructors, having a good grasp of field knowledge do not mean so much unless they are not facilitators and guides in the classroom according to the views of national students. To say that native students feel themselves in need of being guided to some extent, this may result from Turkey's education system's lack of implementations about raising autonomous learners in accordance with the study which was conducted by Çakıcı (2017) also supported this by stating that in EFL context native students are regarded to be open to shoulder more responsibility and monitor their learning in some points of learner autonomy, while in other certain fields learners continues to call for teacher's assistance and guidance.

It has been intended to find out the students' in-class expectations in the third interview question. These in-class expectations mainly consist of three components, which are about the syllabus, implemented teaching methods, and materials used during the class. Half of both national and international students stated that they are already satisfied with the current syllabus of the program. According to the other participants of the study, the syllabus is expected to be designed as modular and more student-centered, to be more intense regarding the current one. There can be seen as nearly no difference between native and international students' expectations considering the current syllabus. Taking expectations of the students into consideration is really important to facilitate the MA program in question because a study conducted by Steele (1992) revealed that the prudent handling of the expectations of students from different groups could certainly influence maintenance and success.

As to teaching methods, students expect instructors' teaching methods to be discussion-based and interactional, to involve an eclectic approach, which is a met-

hod of language education that unites several approaches and methodologies to teach language rather than employing only one style of teaching in the classroom and to be purely informational. A significant number of international students ask teaching methods to be discussion-based and interactional, while native students commonly prefer their instructors to implement an eclectic approach during the courses. Demir and Sönmez (2021) also indicated in their study that students need more interaction, exposure, and speaking time in the classroom as English instruction expectations of Generation Z, which also constitutes most of the participants in the current study, in addition, quite relevant results were matched with the current study in teaching methods' expectations sense. Only one native student has a single word about the discussion-based teaching method; however, some of them implied that the teaching method should purely intend to inform students. This is a sad fact that this may result from the stereotype of the roles of students and teachers in the classroom in Turkey. Conventionally, the stereotype indicates that a teacher is the only source of reliable information, and students are supposed to just learn what has been taught to them in the classroom. Therefore, it can be concluded that the effect of this stereotype could be clearly read from the native students' responses in the interview questionnaires.

It is an undeniable fact that the materials used in the classroom have a significant impact on supporting student learning and increasing student success. The vast array of possible information available on a subject is narrowed to the reading material selected for the class and the information provided by the professor, however; MA Students also have some expectations from the materials to facilitate their learnings, according to students, materials used in the classroom to be more technological and interactive, authentic, easily accessible, more informational and article-based. Regarding the difference between native and international students' expectations, it cannot be seen as a significant difference due to the fact that both native and international students are the learners of this new educational era. Therefore, they both are aware of the need for the above-mentioned quality of materials.

As for the views of students about the usefulness of courses for their careers, the fourth interview question was posed because courses provide guidance into a subject or into deeper levels of a subject; they should meet the expectations of the students. Porter and Umbach (2001) stated that the satisfaction of students from lessons changes according to students' needs and expectations. All of the international students stated that they found the given courses quite useful for their career; furthermore, a significant number of native students also implied their satisfaction with the given courses, comparing this study and Çömek, Arı and Pehlivanlar (2005)'s study suggests no similarity. This main reason may be the courses themselves, which are discourse analysis and language teaching, syntax and language

teaching, scientific research methods and ethics, contrastive analysis of teaching Turkish and English as a foreign language, or the instructors' teaching methods may facilitate the courses efficacy in this regard; another remote possibility can be student's holding same expectations from the courses.

The fifth interview question was included in the study to reveal whether native and international students feel satisfied with being an MA student in the ELT department or not. There exist lots of factors affecting the satisfaction of students, most importantly personal factors related to the student and institutional factors related to the educational experience: gender, personality, favorite learning method (Brokaw, Kennedy, & Merz, 2004; Stokes, 2003), maturity, career goals (Fredericksen, Shea, & Pickett, 2000b). Almost half of the both native and international students commonly mentioned that they feel satisfied by indicating that they are taking advantage of the courses, while nearly the other half, mostly suffering from adaptation to the program, are not sure about their satisfaction. The level of satisfaction is determined by the personal expectations of the people in question; therefore, this frequency may result from the personal expectations of the students from this MA program.

The final interview question aimed to reveal if the students have any suggestions or further points to make some improvements in the department regarding the points made by each student. This question has great importance due to the fact that it permitted the students to feel free to point out whatever they want to express without limiting themselves to the interview questions, and also taking suggestions of the students into account is a universally endorsed tool for facilitating teaching (Katz 1988; Weimer 1990; Dianda 1992; McKeachie 1994). To start with international students' suggestions, their recommendations for the program are commonly about facilitating teaching and promoting a friendly atmosphere in the classroom environment. As to native students, half of their suggestions are in accordance with international students', while nearly the other half of native students recommend instructors to give fewer assignments and suggest that there should not be compulsory attendance conditions to pass the courses.

Last but not least, the study has shown that there are some differences between native and international students' views of and expectations from the ELT master's program, although the outcomes sometimes overlap each other. However, there can be no difference in international students' views and behaviors depending on their ages, nationalities, or where they came from; still mostly female international students mentioned their adaptation problem to the program. This may result from gender differences depending on the fact that there are significant differences by gender regarding graduate study (Brooks & Perot, 1991; Ethington & Pisani, 1994; Mallinckrodt and Leong, 1992; Turner & Thompson, 1993). Accordingly, this may

be a conclusion of the level of stress felt by females; according to a study conducted by Mallinckrodt, Leong and Karaj (1989), it has been found that, compared to men, women reported significantly more negative life changes and significantly more psychological symptoms of stress. In consequence, it is evident that expectations and views show us a lot about the lack and sufficiencies of the MA program and the importance of all the factors in question contributing to the program.

### Suggestions for Future Studies

The sample of this study is limited only to the MA students of the ELT Program in Ondokuz Mayıs University in Turkey due to feasibility and focus reasons. It is suggested to extend this study to more than one university context. Moreover, researchers should include not only the students, who are still in the course stage, views and expectations but also those in the thesis stage of their MA to reach more sound and reliable conclusions in future studies. Regarding these viewpoints, expectations, and suggestions, authorities of MA programs should not ignore these results, and there should be made some regulations in the current MA program considering this study's outcomes. To keep pace with internationalized higher education systems, it is a necessity to take into consideration not only native students but also international students to enhance the internalization of the university and to promote an inviting atmosphere not only for native students but also for international students.

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## Appendix A

### International Students' Questionnaire

Gender : Male : ( ) Female : ( )

Age :

Nationality:

University :

1) What are the three reasons for you to attend the master's program?

- 
- 
- 

2) What are the three expectations of you from the academics?

- 
- 
- 

3) What are your expectations from syllabus, teaching methods, and materials ?

- Syllabus :
- Teaching Methods :
- Materials :

4) Do you find the given courses useful for your career? Why yes? Why no?

- 

5) Do you feel satisfied being a MA student at this department? Why yes?

Why no?

-

6) What are your suggestions for the MA program you attended?

-

## **Appendix B**

Native Students' Questionnaire

Gender : Male : ( ) Female : ( )

Age :

University :

1) What are the three reasons for you to attend the master's program?

-

-

-

2) What are the three expectations of you from the instructors?

-

-

-

3) What are your expectations from the syllabus, teaching methods, and materials?

- Syllabus :

- Teaching Methods :



- Materials :

4) Do you find the given courses useful for your career? Why yes? Why no?

-

5) Do you feel satisfied being a MA student at this department? Why yes?  
Why no?

-

6) What are your suggestions for the MA program you attended?

-

## ULUSLARARASI VE YERLİ YÜKSEK LİSANS ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN İNGİLİZCE DİLİ EĞİTİMİ YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMINA İLİŞKİN BEKLENTİ VE GÖRÜŞLERİ

### GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET:

Yüksek Lisans programı, beşeri bilimler, sosyal bilimler veya güzel sanatlar alanlarında lisansüstü öğrencilere verilen temel bir lisansüstü derecedir ve öğrencilerin ilgilendikleri alanlarda daha ileri gitmenin bir yolunu bulmalarını sağlar. Bu lisansüstü eğitim, dört yıllık lisans programlarından sonra kişinin yüksek lisans derecesi almasını ve belirli disiplinlerde uzmanlaşmasını sağlayan bir eğitimidir. Bazıları sosyal statü kazanmak veya çağımızın giderek artan rekabetçi öğretim koşullarında tercih ettikleri herhangi bir konuda uzmanlaşmak için eğitimde yüksek lisans yapmayı seçerken, bazıları da yüksek ücretli pozisyonlar elde etmek amacıyla yüksek lisans yapıyor. Ünal ve İltter'e (2010) göre, lisansüstü eğitimin birinci amacı, yüksek öğretim kurumlarının geleceği konusunda akademisyen ve araştırmacı yetiştirmek ve akademik altyapı oluşturmak; ikinci amaç, ülkelerin teknolojik, ekonomik ve kültürel gelişmeler ile ilgili sorunların çözülmesidir. Bu gelişmelerle birlikte, yüksek öğretimde uluslararasılaşma sürecinin tüm dünyada hızla devam etmesi beklenmektedir. Dolayısıyla uluslararasılaşma, Türkiye'de de yükseköğretimin bugünü ve geleceği için gerekli bir adımdır (Çetinsaya, 2014; Kireççi, 2016). Turpin (2002), öğrencilerinin enstitülerdeki uluslararasılaşmasıyla birlikte müfredat ve derslerin yüksek öğretim kurumları tarafından uluslararasılaştırılma gereklidir ancak bu sürecin etkileri belirsizdir. Programın hedeflerine göre programın tüm alanlarında sürekli iyileştirmeler olması gerektiği anlaşılabilir. Yüksek öğretimde uluslararasılaşmanın hedefleri şu şekilde sıralanabilir: öğrencilerin deneyimini küreselleştirmek; kıtalararası deneyim yoluyla öğrenciler için iş tekliflerini artırmak; müfredatın uluslararası kapsamını kolaylaştırmak ve uluslararası rekabete dayalı ittifakları, ağları ve işbirlikleri geliştirmek.

Üniversitelerin uluslararası bir eğitim kaynağı olma pozisyonlarının gereği olarak, uluslararası öğrencilerin talepleri göz ardı edilmemelidir (Sheppard ve Bellis, 2008). Bir sınıfta uluslararası bir öğrenciye sahip olmak sadece öğretmenler için değil, aynı zamanda bir öğrencinin kendisi için de gerçekten zor olabilir. Öğrencilerin geldikleri ülkenin akademik gelenekleri ile Türkiye'nin akademik gelenekleri arasındaki farklılıklar, aynı zamanda yurtdışındaki öğrencilerde farklı bir ülkeye yerleşmek de stres yaratmaktadır. Sümer, Poyrazlı ve Grahame (2008) davetkar bir üniversite olarak kabul görebilmek için sosyal çevrenin uluslararası öğrencilerin ruhsal durumlarında önemli bir faktör olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Sadece hedefleri uluslararası öğrencilerin akademik ihtiyaçları ile ilgili olan üniversiteler, mevcut pedagojik ortamda potansiyel başarılarının veya başarısızlıklarının önemli bileşenlerini ihmal etmektedir. Öğrencilerin akademik ihtiyaçları dışında beklenti ve önerilerinin de bu amaçla dikkate alınması gerektiği konusunda hiçbir şüphe

yoktur. Gerekli deęişikliklerin yapılabilmesi için öğrencilere danışılması gerekmektedir. Rowley'e (2003) göre öğrencilerle görüşmenin temel amaçları şunlardır: Öğrencilerin fikirlerini ve öğrenme deneyiminden memnuniyet düzeylerini ifade edebileceklerine dair kanıt sağlamak; öğrencileri öğrenimleri üzerinde düşünmeye teşvik etmek ve üniversitelerin potansiyel öğrencileri çekmek için kullanabilecekleri kalite göstergeleri oluşturmak. Söz konusu üniversitede kendi yüksek lisans derslerine devam eden öğrencilere danışmak, yüksek lisans programındaki mevcut sistemi doğaçlama yollarında yürümeye ışık olabilir.

Bu araştırma, katılımcıların görüş ve fikirlerini ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlayan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeye dayalı nitel bir çalışmayı içermektedir (Creswell, 2014). Altı sorudan oluşan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanmakta ve itibar koruyuculuęu özellięi açısından veri toplama aracı olarak kullanılmaktadır.

Çalışmanın katılımcıları, ulaşılması kolay olan mevcut örneklerden katılımcı örneklemlerinin seçilmesini içeren uygun örnekleme yöntemi ile dahil edilmiştir. Araştırmanın katılımcıları, 2020-2021 Eğitim Öğretim yılında Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi'nde yüksek lisans yapmakta olan toplam 8 uluslararası ve 8 ulusal olmak üzere toplam 16 öğrenciden oluşmaktadır.

Bulgular, öğrencilerin yüksek lisans programına katılma nedenleri, öğrencilerin ders hocalarından beklentileri, müfredat, öğretim yöntemleri ve materyallerden beklentileri dikkate alınarak, öğrencilerin verilen dersleri kariyerleri için yararlı bulup bulmadıklarını ortaya çıkarmak amacıyla çalışma yapılmıştır. Öğrencilerin bu bölümde yüksek lisans öğrencisi olmaktan memnun olup olmadıkları ve memnuniyet adına önerileri açıklanmıştır.

Uluslararası öğrencilerin önerileriyle başlamak gerekirse, programa yönelik önerileri genellikle öğretimi kolaylaştırmak ve sınıf ortamında dostane bir atmosfer sağlamakla ilgilidir. Yerli öğrencilere gelince, önerilerinin yarısı uluslararası öğrencilerin yarısı ile uyumluyken, yerli öğrencilerin yaklaşık dięer yarısı öğretim üyelerine daha az ödev vermelerini ve dersleri geçmek için zorunlu devam koşulu olmaması gerektiğini önermektedir. Çalışmada sonuçların bazen birbiriyle örtüşmesine rağmen, İngilizce öğretimi yüksek lisans programına ilişkin yerli ve yabancı öğrencilerin görüşleri ve beklentileri arasında bazı farklılıklar olduğunu da göstermiştir. Ancak, uluslararası öğrencilerin görüş ve beklentilerinde yaşlarına, milliyetlerine veya nereden geldiklerine baęlı olarak bir farklılık söz konusu olamamakla birlikte, yine de çoğunlukla uluslararası kız öğrenciler programa uyum sorunlarından bahsetmişlerdir. Bu amaçla, beklentilerin ve görüşlerin bize yüksek lisans programının eksiklikleri ve yeterlilikleri hakkında çok şey gösterdięi ve öğrencilerin yanıtları doğrultusunda gerekli deęişiklikleri önermemize yol açtıęı açıktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** uluslararası öğrenciler, ulusal öğrenciler, yüksek lisans, lisansüstü çalışmalar.

