

## A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON THE PROBLEMS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN TURKEY: REFLECTIONS FROM PRE-SERVICE ELT TEACHERS

### TÜRKİYE'DE İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİNİN SORUNLARI ÜZERİNE KAPSAMLI BİR ARAŞTIRMA: İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ GÖRÜŞLERİ

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**ABSTRACT:** The current study aimed to investigate the problems of English language teaching in Turkey from the perspectives of pre-service English language teachers. For this aim, qualitative data were collected from fifteen 4th year pre-service language teachers. Reflection papers and semi structured interviews were used in the data collection process. Based on the content analysis technique, themes and codes were formed. According to the participants, there are problems with teacher education program, teachers, learners, assessment, curriculum, and context in English language teaching in Turkey. Excessive number of education faculties and teacher candidates, no standardization among ELT departments, divergence between theory and practice, insufficient teaching practicum, absence of assessing communicative skills in YKS, unvaried assessment tools, washback effect, test anxiety, course hours, inflexible curriculum, lack of extracurricular activities, inappropriate course books, non-communicative activities, high amount of L1 use, lack of teacher autonomy, demotivation, unwillingness, fear of making mistakes and anxiety, lack of interaction, lack of self-confidence, discipline issues, crowded classes, inadequate physical and technological resources, and audit gap were stated by the pre-service teachers as some of the problems of English language teaching in Turkey. The findings were discussed in line with the previous findings and educational implications were offered.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** problems, teacher education, ELT, curriculum, assessment.

**ÖZ:** Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de İngiliz dili eğitiminin sorunlarını İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının bakış açıları ile ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamıştır. Bu amaçla, onbeş 4. sınıf İngilizce öğretmeni adayından nitel veriler toplanmıştır. Veri toplama sürecinde açık uçlu sorular, bireysel görüşmeler ve grup tartışmaları kullanılmıştır. İçerik analizi tekniğine dayalı olarak temalar ve kategoriler oluşturulmuştur. Katılımcılara göre, Türkiye'de İngilizce öğretiminde öğretmen yetiştirme programı, öğretmenler, öğrenciler, değerlendirme, müfredat ve bağlam ile ilgili sorunlar bulunmaktadır. Eğitim fakültesi ve öğretmen adayı sayısının fazlalığı, İngilizce öğretmenliği bölümleri arasında standardizasyon olmaması, teori ve uygulama arasındaki farklılık, öğretmenlik uygulaması derslerinin yetersizliği, YKS'de iletişim becerilerinin değerlendirilmemesi, değişken değerlendirme araçlarının kullanılmaması, sınavların ket vurma etkisi, sınav kaygısı, ders saatlerinin azlığı, esnek olmayan müfredat, eksiklik ders dışı etkinlikler, uygun olmayan ders kitapları, iletişimsel olmayan etkinlikler, yüksek oranda anadil kullanımı, öğretmen özerkliğinin olmaması, motivasyon kaybı, isteksizlik, hata yapma korkusu ve kaygısı, etkileşim eksikliği, özgüven eksikliği, disiplin sorunları, kalabalık sınıflar, yetersiz fiziki ve teknolojik kaynaklar ve denetim açığı Türkiye'de İngilizce öğretiminin bazı sorunları arasında gösterilmektedir. Bulgular, önceki bulgular doğrultusunda tartışılmış ve eğitsel çıkarımlar sunulmuştur.

**Keywords:** sorunlar, öğretmen eğitimi, müfredat, değerlendirme.

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# GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

## Giriş

İngilizce, iletişim dili olması, küreselleşme, uluslararasılaşma, batılılaşma ve rekabet gücü nedeniyle Türk eğitim sisteminin en önemli parçalarından biri olmuştur (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011; Solak & Bayar, 2015). Bugüne kadar birçok yatırım ve yeni reformlar yapılmış, farklı kararlar alınmış, yeni yaklaşımlar uygulanmış ve Türkiye'de yabancı dil öğretimi ve öğreniminin kalitesini artırmak için müfredat tekrar gözden geçirilmiştir (Çapan, 2021; Solak & Bayar, 2015; Kırkgöz, 2007). Ancak kazanımlar istenilen düzeyde olmamış ve yabancı dil eğitiminde yapılan yenilikler alanda verimli sonuçlar ortaya koyamamıştır (Çelebi, 2006; TEPAV, 2013). Türkiye, İngilizce Yeterlilik Endeksi'nde 112 ülke arasında 70. sırada yer almış ve bireylerin yalnızca basit e-postaları anlayabildiği ve meslektaşlarıyla kısa sohbetler yapabildiği düşük yeterlilik bandı olarak etiketlenmiştir (EPI, 2021). İngilizce öğretimi ve öğrenimindeki düşük başarının ardındaki nedenler TEPAV (2013) raporunda belgelenmiştir. Buna göre, iletişimsel dil öğretimi yerine dilbilgisi temelli yaklaşımın vurgulanması, yazılı alıştırmaların veya dilbilgisi testlerinin tamamlanmasına odaklanılması, öğretmenlerin iletişimsel dil pratiği için öğrencileri ikili veya gruplara ayırmaması, ders kitaplarının ve müfredatın öğrencilerin değişen düzey ve ihtiyaçlarını karşılamada yetersiz kalması ve öğretmenlerin müfredata uyma zorunluluğu Türk öğrencilerin İngilizce öğrenememesinin nedenleri olarak belirtilmiştir (TEPAV, 2013).

Türk öğrencilerin istenilen düzeyde İngilizce öğrenememesinin tüm nedenlerini ortaya çıkarmak için çok boyutlu bir çalışma yapılması gerekmektedir. Problemleri belirlemeye yönelik çeşitli paydaşlar ile farklı çalışmalar gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ancak İngilizce öğretmen adayları ile yapılan çalışmalar oldukça azdır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma, Türkiye'de İngilizce öğretiminin zorluklarını İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğretmen adaylarının bakış açısı ile ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğretmen adayları halen eğitim ve öğretim süreçlerinin paydaşları olması nedeniyle bu çalışmanın odak noktası olarak seçilmiştir. Böylece öğretmen adayları hem öğretme hem de öğrenme sürecinin paydaşlarıdır ve içeriden bir bakış açısıyla hem İngilizce öğretme hem de öğrenmenin zorluklarını belirleyebilirler. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma, Türkiye'de İngilizce öğretim sürecinde karşılaşılan sorunları İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğretmen adaylarının bakış açılarından belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla aşağıdaki araştırma sorusuna cevap aranmıştır:

1. İngilizce öğretmenliği öğretmen adaylarına göre Türkiye'de İngilizce öğretiminin sorunları nelerdir?

## Yöntem

Bu çalışmada nitel araştırma yöntemleri benimsenmiş ve bu yaklaşımın Türkiye bağlamında etkili yabancı dil öğretiminin zorluklarını daha doğru bir şekilde yansıtabileceğinden nitel araştırma araçları kullanılmıştır.

Bu çalışma bir devlet üniversitesinde 4. sınıf öğretmen adayları ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu çalışmaya on beş İngilizce Öğretmenliği adayı gönüllü olarak katılmıştır. Katılımcıların seçiminde amaçlı örneklem yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Katılımcılar hem İngilizce öğrenip hem de öğrettikleri için amaçlı örneklem yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca, katılımcılar uygulama okullarında mentor öğretmenlerini gözlemleme şansına da sahiptirler. Bu nedenle, öğrenme ve öğretme deneyimlerine dayalı olarak sorunları belirlemek için içeriden bir bakış açısına sahiptirler.

Bu araştırma, verilerin açık uçlu sorularla toplandığı nitel bir araştırma olarak tasarlanmıştır. Veri toplama sürecinde açık uçlu sorular kullanılmıştır çünkü açık uçlu sorular bireysel yanıtlar almaya olanak tanır ve tutum ve görüşler hakkında geçerli bir veri toplama yolu olarak görülür (Fraenkel, Wallen ve Hyun, 2011). Yazılı açık uçlu soruların yanı sıra konuyla ilgili daha derin bir bakış açısı elde etmek için bireysel görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Kaydedilen veriler yazıya dökülmüş ve nitel veriler içerik analizi yöntemi ile analiz edilmiştir.

## Bulgular

Bulgular, Türkiye'de İngilizce öğretiminin sorunlarının, öğretmen eğitimi programı, değerlendirme, müfredat ve metodoloji, öğretmenler, öğrenciler ve bağlamsal konularla ilgili sorunlar olmak üzere 6 ana kategoriden kaynaklandığını göstermektedir.

Katılımcılar, öğretmen yetiştirme programının yetersiz olması, öğretim elemanlarının yetersiz olması, öğretmenlerin materyal geliştirme ve uyarlama konusundaki yetersizlikleri, eğitim fakültesi ve öğretmen adayı sayısının fazla olması, üniversitelerin İngilizce öğretmenliği bölümleri arasında standardizasyonun olmaması, teori ile uygulama arasındaki farklılık, öğretmenlik uygulamasının yetersiz olması ve eğitim fakültesi dışından mezunların devlet okullarında istihdam edilmesinin öğretmen yetiştirme programının sorunları olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir.

İngilizce öğretmen adaylarına göre değerlendirme ile ilgili sorunlar YKS'de iletişimsel becerilerin ölçülmemesi, çoktan seçmeli sınavlar veya değişken olmayan değerlendirme araçları, özetleyici değerlendirme, puana yönelik sınavlar, sınavların ket vurma etkisi, sınav kaygısı ve sınavların yetersiz olması ve öğretmen niteliklerini belirleyen sınavların yetersiz olması şeklinde ifade edilmiştir.

İngilizce öğretmen adayları, ders saatlerinin İngilizce öğretmek için yeterli olmadığını belirtmişlerdir. Esnek olmayan müfredat, ders dışı etkinliklerin eksikliği, özgün öğretim materyallerinin eksikliği, uygun olmayan ders kitapları, iletişimsel olmayan etkinlikler, kelime ve dil bilgisi kurallarının ezberlenmesi, ders kitaplarında tekrarlanan konular, metinlerin doğrudan çevirisi ve öğretmen merkezli dersler öğretim programı ve metodoloji ile ilgili olarak öğretmen adayları tarafından belirtilen sorunlardır.

Katılımcılar öğretmen olmanın düşük değerini hissetmekte ve düşük maaş almaktadırlar. Öğretmenlerin alan, pedagojik ve teknolojik bilgi açısından yeterince yetkin olmaması, İngilizce öğretiminde yüksek oranda anadil kullanımı, sınıfta düşük etkileşim, disiplin ve sınıf yönetimi sorunları dil eğitimi başarısını düşüren öğretmen nedenli etmeler olarak ifade edilmiştir.

Öğrenci ile ilgili sorunlarda ise motivasyon kaybı, isteksizlik, hata yapma korkusu ve kaygı, etkileşim eksikliği, özgüven eksikliği, disiplin sorunları, sosyoekonomik durum ve fırsat eşitsizliği en sık dile getirilen sorunlar arasında yer almaktadır.

Velilerin çocuklarından sınavlardan yüksek not alma beklentisinin sosyal bağlamla ilgili bir sorun olduğu belirtilmiştir. Velilerin matematik ve fizik gibi diğer derslerin İngilizceden daha önemli olduğu düşüncesi de öğretmen adaylarının dile getirdikleri bir diğer sorundur. Kalabalık sınıflar, sınıf etkileşimini azalttığı için dil öğretiminin okul bağlamı sorunlarından biri olarak belirtilmiştir. Yetersiz fiziksel ve teknolojik imkanlar da bir zorluk olarak belirtilmiştir.

## **Tartışma ve Sonuç**

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'de İngilizce öğretiminin sorunlarını öğretmen adaylarının bakış açısı ile belirlemektir. Öğretmen adaylarının ifade ettiği sorunlar öğretmen eğitimi programı, değerlendirme, müfredat ve metodoloji, öğretmenler, öğrenciler ve bağlamsal sorunlar olmak üzere 6 ana grupta toplanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın sonuçları alanyazındaki sonuçlar ile benzerlik göstermektedir. Örneğin, Kömür (2010) öğretmen yetiştirme programında teori-uygulama dengesinin yeterli olmadığını ve İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının dil bilgisi ve dil becerilerinin öğretiminde zorluklar yaşadıklarını bulmuştur ki bu da Türkiye'deki öğretmen yetiştirme programının yetersiz olduğunu göstermektedir. Öğretmenlerin materyal geliştirme ve uyarlama konusundaki yetersizlikleri de Akdağ Çimen'in (2017) bir bulgusu olup, öğretmen yetiştirme programlarında materyal geliştirme eğitime yer verilmesini önermiştir. Ekoç (2022), mevcut araştırma bulgusuna paralel olarak, devlet ve vakıf üniversitelerinin sayısının artmasıyla birlikte eğitim fakültelerinin sayısının arttığını ve bunun bir kalite sorunu yarattığını bildirmiştir. Erdoğan ve Savaş'ın (2022) çalışmasında katılımcılar, YKS'nin konuşma, dinleme veya yazma becerilerinden çok, çoktan seçmeli bir sınav testi stratejisi olduğunu ve bu nedenle gerçek dil yeterliliğini kanıtlamakla sınırlı olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Müfredat ve metodoloji ile ilgili sorunlarla ilgili literatür incelendiğinde, dil bilgisi temelli yaklaşımın başarısızlığın ana faktörlerinden biri olarak tespit edildiği tespit edilmiştir (TEPAV, 2013; Solak ve Bayar, 2015; Çapan, 2021). Öğretmenlerin düşük prestiji ve düşük geliri daha önceki birçok çalışmada vurgulanmıştır (Akdağ Çimen, 2017; Madalińska-Michalak & Bavli, 2018; Taşçı, 2019). Öğrenen motivasyonunu kaybetme, isteksizlik, hata yapma korkusu, yüksek kaygı ve özgüven eksikliği alanyazında dil öğretiminde sıkça bahsedilen sorunlardır (Akdağ Çimen, 2017; Çapan, 2021; Dağtan ve Cabaroğlu, 2021; Erdoğan ve Tunaz, 2012; Genç ve Aydın, 2017). Valizadeh (2021), okul yönetiminin duygusal ve psikolojik desteğinin olmamasının, kalabalık sınıfların ve velilerin İngilizce'nin öneminin farkında olmamasının Türkiye'de İngilizce eğitiminin zorlukları arasında olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Tütüniş, Ünal ve Babanoğlu (2022) yaptıkları çalışmada öğretmenlerin karşılaştığı yaygın sorunların internet bağlantı sorunları, donanım eksikliği gibi altyapı sorunları, bakımsızlıktan kaynaklanan donanım ve yazılım sorunları olduğunu belirlemişlerdir.

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'de öğretmen yetiştirme programı, değerlendirme, müfredat ve metodoloji, öğretmenler, öğrenenler ve bağlamda temel sorunlar olduğunu göstermiştir. Ancak bu çalışmada ortaya

çıkan tüm sorunlar birbiriyle ilişkili görünmektedir. Bir sorun, başka bir sorunun nedeni veya sonucudur. Problemlerden birinin çözülmesi, diğerini doğrudan veya dolaylı olarak çözebilir.

## INTRODUCTION

English being the lingua franca language of communication has been one of the most important parts of Turkish education system due to globalization, internationalization, westernization and competitiveness (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011; Solak & Bayar, 2015). So far, lots of investments and new reforms have been made, different decisions have been taken, new approaches have been implemented and the curriculum has been revised to increase the quality of teaching and learning foreign languages in Turkey (Çapan, 2021; Solak & Bayar, 2015; Kırkgöz, 2007). However, the outcomes have not been at the desired level and the renovations in foreign language education have not revealed productive results in the field (Çelebi, 2006; TEPAV, 2013). Turkey ranked 70<sup>th</sup> place out of 112 countries in the English Proficiency Index and labeled as a low proficiency in proficiency band in which individuals can only understand simple e-mails and engage in small talk with colleagues (EPI, 2021). The reasons behind the low level of success in English language teaching and learning have been documented in the TEPAV report (2013). Accordingly, emphasizing grammar-based approach rather than communicative language teaching, focusing on completing written exercises or grammar tests, teachers' failure to organize students into pairs or groups for communicative language practice, inefficiency of textbooks and curriculum to meet varying levels and needs of students, and teachers' obligation to follow the curriculum were stated to be the reasons for the failure of Turkish students to learn English (TEPAV, 2013).

It is necessary to conduct a multi-dimensional study to reveal all the reasons behind the failure of Turkish students to learn the desired level of English. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the problems related to ELT in Turkey from the perspectives of pre-service ELT teachers.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

With the effect of globalization, internationalization, westernization and competitiveness, there have been a great demand for English by the speakers of other languages, which challenged the traditional teaching practices (Salih & Holi, 2018). According to Cook (2003), English language learners nowadays are more creative due to a variety of learning methods, chances, resources, and objectives. Even though the number of creative learning methods, chances, resources, and objectives have increased considerably, English language teaching still faces a great number of problems around the world. Turkey is not an exception. Thus, it is necessary to shed light on the challenges of ELT in different contexts and Turkey to find possible solutions to these problems.

### Problems of ELT in International Contexts

A variety of studies were conducted in different countries to determine the challenges ELT face. Among these studies, Safari and Sahragard (2015) aimed to explore the challenges of ELT in Iran. Incompetency of language teachers, teacher-centered instruction, demotivated teachers, crowded classes, grammar-based teaching and assessment, time limitation, and lack of facilities were reported to be the reasons of failure in Iranian context by the researchers. In Saudi context, Al-Nasser (2015) noted that late English education, incompetent teachers, outdated curriculum, lack of information and communication technologies, intensive use of L1, and lack of interaction in the classroom were among some problems of ELT. In Thai context, Noom-Ura (2013) listed the problems of ELT as teachers' minimal use and exposure to English, ineffective use of games and songs, students' not having enough practice and extra-curricular assignments, lack of exposure to English, low level of confidence in students, impracticality of guidelines in curriculum, heavy loaded curriculum, inappropriateness of the curricula for local conditions, inadequacy of technological infrastructure, limited time, and crowded classes as the barriers for the effective English teaching in Thailand. Hu (2005) summarized the problems of ELT in China as unavailability of teachers with a high level of proficiency, ample instructional time, lack of suitable learning materials, incompetent teachers, lack of supportive language environment, outdated curriculums and teaching content of teacher

training programs, teacher-dominated, textbook-based and transmission-oriented pedagogy, shortage of teachers, and the widening gap in the quality of basic English language education between different regions of China. Similarly, lack of materials, structural and multiple-choice assessment, and lack of multimedia materials were reported by Wu (2001) as the constraints of language teaching in China.

### **Problems of ELT in Turkish Context**

As in the international contexts, there are some problems to be dealt with in Turkish context. A great number of studies have been conducted to determine the problems of ELT in Turkey and various reasons have been found for the failure. However, it is not practical to collect data from all the stakeholders and to evaluate all the factors in a single study. A number of studies taking the opinion of different stakeholders have been conducted to find out the challenges of ELT. As the context of a study changes, the stated problems change accordingly. For example, Akdağ Çimen (2017) tried to reveal the challenges of ELT from the perspectives of 15 university instructors and identified external, teacher-related, and student-related factors as the challenges of ELT in Turkey. Physical conditions, curriculum, lack of teaching material, examination, and lack of technology were among the external factors that negatively affect the quality of ELT. As for the student-related factors, demotivation, lower life standards and low proficiency were the frequently stated problems. Traditional teaching habits, lack of qualities, demotivation and value of teaching were found to be teacher-related factors that lower the efficiency of language teaching in this study (Akdağ Çimen, 2017). A recent study carried out by Çapan (2021) with 2<sup>nd</sup> year ELT department students revealed the problems related to learners, teachers, curriculum, and social factors. Low motivation and unwillingness to learn English were stated to be learner-related reasons of underachievement in ELT. Low qualification, overemphasis of grammar, overuse of L1, and lack of oral skills were found to be teacher-related reasons for failure. Lack of materials, lack of speaking exercises, and repetitive topics were found to be curriculum-related challenges. Parent attitudes, lack of L2 exposure, and facilities of schools were among the social factors that diminish the efficiency of language teaching. Similarly, conducted with English language learners studying at various departments, Solak and Bayer (2015) concluded that the objectives of English language teaching should be realistic and new topics should be introduced instead of repeating the same topics at each level. The study also suggested that the focus should be on teaching the four skills instead of grammar-centered language teaching. This study implicated that the materials such as course books, videos, and internet web sites should be chosen carefully depending upon the interests, level, and needs of the students and teachers should consider individual differences to increase the efficiency of language teaching.

Kızıldağ (2009) aimed to identify the problems faced by English language teachers teaching at public primary schools and revealed that the teachers have institutional, instructional, and socio-economic problems. The study showed that the lack of support, heavy workload and crowded classes were among the institutional challenges while unrealistic learning goals, inappropriate textbooks, and grammar-oriented placement tests were among the instructional challenges that diminish the quality of language teaching (Kızıldağ, 2009). As for the socio-economic challenges, the study determined that the lack of support from the families and working with low socio-economic level students were barrier in front of the efficient language teaching which was also well documented in the study of Tunaz and Önem (2017). In a similar vein, Madalińska-Michalak and Bavli (2018) reported the problems teachers face in Poland and Turkey under classroom level, school level and system level. The researchers found students' motivation to learn, students' emotional inhibitions, and crowded classrooms as classroom level problems. The need for qualified professional development and low number of teaching hours were stated to be school level problems. The researchers demonstrated that the quality of pre-service education and training, unattractiveness of teaching and lack of financial incentives were found to be system-based problems teachers faced. Valizadeh (2021) also aimed to identify the challenges ELT teachers face in Turkey and revealed that lack of emotional and psychological support from school administration, crowded classes, low level of students' interest, parents being unaware of the importance of English, pressure from curriculum demands and limited time to meet the requirements of curriculum were among the challenges of ELT in Turkey. As previous studies show, there are lots of problems of ELT in Turkey and these problems were identified in different contexts with different participants. However, the studies conducted with pre-service ELT students are limited. Therefore, this study aims to identify the challenges of ELT in Turkey from the perspective of 4<sup>th</sup> year pre-service language teachers.

Even though there are a variety of studies aiming at determining the problems of ELT in Turkey, studies conducted with pre-service English language teachers are very rare. Collecting data from pre-service

ELT teachers might provide in-depth information about this issue since pre-service ELT teachers are the stakeholders of both teaching and learning processes and can identify the challenges of both teaching and learning of English from an insider perspective. Therefore, the current study aims to identify the problems encountered in English language teaching process in Turkey from the perspectives of pre-service ELT teachers. For this aim, the answer of the following research question was sought:

1. What are the problems of English language teaching in Turkey from the perspectives of pre-service ELT teachers?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

The study adopted a qualitative methodology and used qualitative research tools on the basis that this approach may more accurately reflect the challenges to effective FL instruction in the Turkish context.

### Participants

This study was conducted at a public university with 4<sup>th</sup> year pre-service ELT teachers. Fifteen pre-service ELT teachers (4 males and 11 females) voluntarily participated in the current study. Their age ranged from 18 to 23. The participants learned English throughout their academic life and they were teaching English at the practicum schools when the data of this study were collected. Purposeful sampling method was employed in the selection of the participants. Teddlie and Yu (2007) stated that “purposive sampling is undertaken for several kinds of research including: to achieve representativeness, to enable comparisons to be made, to focus on specific, unique issues or cases” (p. 80). Thus, the participants were chosen on purpose because they are both learning and teaching English. In addition, the participants have chance to observe their mentor teachers at their practicum school and their instructors at the university. Therefore, they have an insider perspective to identify the problems based on their learning and teaching experience.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The current study was designed as a qualitative study in which the data were collected through reflection papers and interviews. Open-ended questions were asked both in reflection papers and interviews because they allow for getting individual responses and are seen as a valid way of data collection about attitudes and opinions (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2011). As the aim is to uncover the problems of ELT from the perspectives of pre-service teachers in Turkish context, the participants were asked to write reflection papers based on their experiences and considering the following open-ended questions:

1. Is there any problem in ELT in Turkey?
2. If yes, what are the problems of ELT in Turkey as a learner?
3. If yes, what are the problems of ELT in Turkey as a teacher?
4. Is there any problem in teacher training program?

Before the interviews, reflection papers were analyzed and themes were created. Content analysis technique was used in the analysis of reflection papers. Considering the themes emerged in reflection papers, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted. To get a deeper perspective about the issue, semi structured interviews were conducted with the participants. The interviews lasted for about 15 minutes and were conducted after the analysis of reflection papers. The questions clarifying the issues and about the themes emerged in the analysis of reflection papers were asked to the participants in the interviews such as:

1. What are the problems of teachers in Turkey?
2. What are the problems of teacher training programs in Turkey? Why?
3. Can you list some of problems related to assessment in Turkish context?
4. What kind of problems do you encounter in your teaching practicum process?
5. What are the challenges related to methodology of teaching?

The interviews were recorded and the data were transcribed. The data obtained from interviews were analyzed by using content analysis method. Codes were formed by two independent researchers. The codes

were grouped under themes. The findings of reflection papers and interviews were merged and presented. In addition, direct quotations of the participants were presented in the findings section. In order to secure the confidentiality of the participants' personal information, codes like PT1, PT2, etc. are assigned for each of them.

## **Ethical Approval**

In this study, research ethics principles were observed and necessary ethics committee permissions were obtained. Within the scope of ethics committee permission, the document numbered 2100099654 was obtained from Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University Ethics Committee on 27/04/2022.

## **FINDINGS**

As Table 1 shows, six different themes emerged as the problems of ELT in Turkey. The themes are problems with teacher education program, teachers, learners, assessment, curriculum, and context in English language teaching in Turkey. Each theme has varying number of sub-themes. The themes and sub-themes were explained and direct quotations of the participants are presented in the related sections below.

### **Problems with the Teacher Education Program**

The participants of the current study stated that teacher education program is not sufficient in terms of pedagogical and content knowledge, the lecturers at the universities are not competent enough to teach field and technological knowledge, to adapt and develop teaching materials and there is no standardization among teacher education programs of different universities because there are excessive number of education faculties and teacher candidates. The quality of lecturers was also stated as a serious problem by the participants. The pre-service teachers uttered the following sentences:

*“High number of universities in Turkey accept students with lower scores without limiting the number of the students. Students with high scores are accepted at qualified universities, but others graduate after 4 years of education without necessary qualifications. Insufficient students are accepted and, in the end, we have incompetent teachers”* PT4.

*“In addition to insufficient students, we also have academicians who are not qualified enough to train pre-service teachers. Many academicians who are educating pre-service teachers still use Stone Age techniques which do not meet the expectations of the contemporary educational system needs. Moreover, academicians are not keeping up with technological advancements. On the other hand, academicians are dealing with a mass group of students at universities which is much more than it supposes to be.”* PT2

As seen in the explanations above, pre-service ELT teachers criticized high number of universities and quality of lecturers and believed that high number of universities and students decreased the quality of teachers and lecturers in Turkey and affected the quality standardization of education among universities.

Apart from the quality and standardization, participants also expressed that the theories taught at universities do not comply with the practices they experience at the practicum school. Two semester of school experience lesson is far from meeting the needs of the participants. Besides, the teacher candidates doing school practicum at high school have possibility to work at primary or high schools, which poses an important problem for the teacher candidates. One of pre-service teachers stated that:

*“Since it is not certain what kind of school we will work when we graduate, it is really important and necessary for the internship to prepare prospective teachers for each school type (primary school, secondary school, or high school) and student type (young learners or teenagers.”* PT8

According to the participants, teacher education curriculum is not sufficient enough since there are too many Turkish elective courses and the teacher candidates feel the absence of content knowledge courses. Lack of leadership and public speaking courses in the curriculum, which are some of the important qualifications of language teachers, create a challenge for pre-service teachers. Employing non-education

faculty graduates at state schools stands as a problem according to pre-service teachers. The direct quotation of a pre-service teacher is as shown below:

*“There are many courses taught at the university that will not be used by teachers in the future. When I think about the elective courses, I see that many of them did not provide important information and they are Turkish.” PT10*

Table 1.

*The problems of English language teaching in Turkey*

Teacher Education Program	Assessment	Curriculum and Methodology	Teachers	Learners	Contextual Issues
Insufficient	Absence of assessing communicative skills in YKS	Not enough course hours	High expectation from the teachers	Demotivation	<b>Social Context</b> Influence of social context (family, Peer pressure)
Incompetent lecturers (lack of filed and technological knowledge)	Only multiple-choice exams or unvaried assessment tools	Inflexible and impractical curriculum	Low value of being a teacher	Unwillingness	Pressure of parents and schools (math, physic)
The inadequacy of teachers in developing and adapting materials	Summative assessment	Lack of Extracurricular activities	Low salaries of the teachers (low motivation)	Fear of making mistakes	FL environment not SL No chance to go abroad
Excessive number of education faculties and teacher candidates	Score oriented exams (performance- and practice-oriented)	Lack of teaching materials Lack of authentic materials	Lack of field and pedagogical knowledge (interest, content)	Anxiety and lack of interaction	<b>School Context</b> Crowded classes
No standardization	Washback effect	Inappropriate course books (private schools)	High rate L1 use	Lack of self confidence	Inadequate in resources, physical and technology
Divergence between theory and practice	Test anxiety	Non-communicative activities mechanical practice	Lack of constructive feedback	Discipline issues	Lack of maintenance
Insufficient teaching practicum (primary school, secondary school, or high school)	Exams (KPSS; ÖABT) do not determine the qualifications of Teachers	Memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules	Not competent in integrating students into courses (ineffective classroom management)	Socioeconomic status Inequality of opportunity	Private vs state schools
Too many Turkish elective courses		Repetitive topics	Lack of teacher autonomy		Lack of support from administration
Lack of leadership and public speaking skills		Direct translation	Lack of in-service training		Audit gap
Employing non-education faculty graduates		Teacher centered			Teaching English to everybody

## Problems with Assessment

According to the participants, there are some major problems with student and teacher-assessment. Pre-service teachers noted that national exams in Turkey do not assess communicative skills and consist of only multiple-choice questions. The views of the participants about the issue are as stated below:

*“One another problem is national examination, nowadays our examination system just tests our memorization and reading skills; it doesn’t test or focus on the other productive skills such as speaking and writing. In order to teach a language with all edges we need to test the whole areas as well.”* PT2

*“However, it is obvious that teacher competencies cannot be determined by a test-based measurement method. Especially, in the field of foreign language teaching, unfortunately, not those with high teaching skills but those with good testing technique are appointed as language teachers.”* PT1

Based on the sayings above, the participants emphasized the necessity to assess all language skills to make accurate evaluation. Focusing only on receptive skills was not enough to assess students in all aspects and the participants highlighted the necessity of including different question types.

The assessment types at schools and national exams are generally summative. Not only national exams but also exams conducted at schools are score-oriented, not considering students’ performance. Therefore, the exams create washback effect and test anxiety. Unvaried assessment tools are used at state schools. National exams such as KPSS (Public Personnel Selection Exam) ÖABT (Teaching Profession Field Exam), which are conducted to recruit teachers, are not sufficient enough to determine teacher qualifications. Pre-service ELT teachers articulated the following remarks about the issue:

*“We assess our students with traditional test items such as fill in the blanks activities, multiple-choice activities and transformation drills, etc.”* PT4

*“Students are mostly raised with test anxiety, score anxiety and pass-and-stay anxiety, and result-oriented rather than process-oriented.”* PT9

Considering the statements of pre-service teachers, summative assessment is used at the end of the teaching process rather than formative or self-assessment during instruction, posing a major difficulty in the assessment process. As a result of summative assessment, mentor teachers assess lower cognitive abilities of the students by using traditional testing methods such as fill-in-the-blanks, multiple-choice questions, and drills in their instructions. The participants also emphasized the inability of teacher recruitment exams to identify qualified teachers.

## Problems with the Curriculum and Methodology

Pre-service English language teachers stated that course hours are not enough to teach English. Language teachers have to follow an inflexible and impractical curriculum, which causes them not to give extracurricular assignments. One of the participants asserted that:

*“Unfortunately, trying to comply with the curriculum undermines the productivity and encouragement of many teachers. The teacher, who is already trying to connect with impossibilities, is interrupted by such a tight program.”* PT11

In the light of the assertion above, it can be claimed that curriculum is too intense to allocate time for out-of-class activities and having to deal with a dense curriculum demotivates language teachers.

Apart from inflexible curriculum, lack of teaching and authentic materials was stated to be a basic problem. According to the participants, state schools have to use inappropriate course books, which were written by Ministry of National Education in Turkey. The book consists of non-communicative activities

and mechanical practices. Non-communicative activities cause lessons to be based on memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules. The topics in the course books were stated to be repetitive and teachers teach the same things each year. On the other hand, private schools use authentic course-books, which creates inequality among students. The participants expressed their views with the following sentences:

*“No one can learn a language just by studying grammar rules and memorizing vocabulary. We cannot communicate without knowing what to use in what context.”* PT8

*“The English course books that government provides to all students for free are not really the good ones. But the teachers can only use these books and it is forbidden to use any other material that is not provided by the government in public schools. Under these circumstances, teachers in Turkey do what the system wants them to do.”* PT14

Recurrent statements of the participants revealed that the teachers working at state schools generally concentrated on grammar and vocabulary teaching. This tendency might be assumed as a barrier for the improvement of communicative skills. As stated by the participants, repetitive coursebooks makes the courses boring and do not provide opportunity to improve students' language skills. Moreover, using different coursebooks in public and private schools was cited as an inequality among students.

Pre-service teachers also expressed that the use of direct translation method in the instructions to catch up with the curriculum makes the lessons teacher-centered. The following expression of one of the participants might represent the problem related to methodology:

*“The direct method, which is one of the oldest methods, is the main basis of schools in Turkey. My teacher at my internship school often uses this method, translating texts into Turkish and making children write down words they don't know.”* PT11

Based on the expression above, it can be claimed that pre-service teachers criticized in-service teachers in terms of the methodology they use. Direct translation method was not favoured on grounds that it makes the courses teacher-centered by the pre-service teachers.

### **Problems with the Teachers**

The participants expressed that there are high expectations from language teachers in the society. On the other hand, they feel low value of being teachers and get very low salary, which seriously demotivates them.

*“After all effort, English language teachers are given a comparatively low salary. However, there are many other job opportunities for speakers of English with higher salaries such as tourist guiding or being a translator. That means most qualified candidates of English language teaching do not choose to teach because of low salaries.”* PT4

According to the participants, in-service language teachers are not competent enough in pedagogical, technological and content knowledge. The participants also stressed high amount of L1 use and lack of constructive feedback in the instructions. In-service teachers were also criticized by the pre-service teachers in terms of sustaining interaction, providing discipline, and lack of autonomy. The participants pointed out the need for in-service trainings. The following utterances of the participants reflect upon these problems

*“Some teachers do not know how to use technological devices enough which leads to another big problem.”* PT6

*“How can the system be good if teachers do not have the knowledge, skills, and equipment to implement the system? Most of the foreign language teachers in our country do not have an adequate level of verbal communication skills.”* PT13

*“In our country, English lessons are mostly taught in Turkish. When the teachers speak in English, the students do not understand the lesson and the teachers continue their lessons by speaking in Turkish. Turkish should be used at a minimum level in lessons.” PT3*

Based on the explanations above, it can be said that teachers are not competent enough in terms of field, pedagogical and technological knowledge, which in turn causes high rate of L1 use in English language instructions. Insufficient pedagogical knowledge also causes lack of constructive feedback and failure in integrating students into courses. Low interaction in the classroom creates discipline and classroom management problems. Teachers are not autonomous to take their decisions in their teaching and they do not have enough in-service training.

### **Problems with the Learners**

The participants noted that learners are demotivated and unwilling to learn English. The learners were expressed to have fear of making mistake, which causes them to be anxious and not to participate in the lessons. This situation decreases learners’ self-confidence. The learners who do not participate in the lessons create discipline problems. The statements of participants concerning the problems related to the learners are provided below:

*“Another thing that prevents children from learning languages are fear I've heard a lot from students about things like "I can't do it, I don't know, it's already hard", which is due to mistakes in their past learning.” PT11*

*“The student may hesitate to speak a foreign language in the classroom for fear of being criticized by their teacher or ridiculed by their friends.” PT7*

*“At the beginning of our reasons for not learning languages is a lack of motivation, enthusiasm, and discipline.” PT5*

As can be understood from the statements above, low level of motivation is a major source of problems related to the learners since low motivation causes learners to experience anxiety, which prevents them from participating in the courses.

Socio-economic status or inequality of opportunities were also expressed as the problems that demotivated the learners. Inequality among students in terms of socio-economic status and opportunities also affected the attitudes of learners towards language learning. One of the pre-service teachers stated that:

*“As the socio-economic levels of students' parents increase, students become more aware of the importance of learning English.” PT15*

### **Problems with Contextual Issues**

Some of the problems stated by the participants were categorized as contextual issues. The problems related to the social environment were grouped as social context and the problems related to school environment were grouped as school context.

Expectations of parents from their children to get high grades from the exams was stated to be a problem related to social context. The idea of the parents that other courses such as math and physics are more important than English was also another problem stated by the pre-service teachers. Other social contextual problems were Turkey’s having foreign language environment, not second language environment, and learners’ not having chance to go abroad. Consequently, students have no exposure to language other than classroom. The following sentences are the direct quotations from the participants concerning the problems related to social context:

*“Most of the time, families may think that other courses are more important. Subjects such as mathematics, physics, and chemistry are really important to them.” PT10*

*“For years, parents pushed their children to take science courses and succeed in that field because they believed that being successful in these fields is the key point in life.” PT11*

*“Many students do not have this chance (being exposed to native authentic language) and learning cannot be completed in an environment where the target language is used very little.” PT15*

Crowded classes were stated as one of school context problems of language teaching, since it decreases classroom interaction. Inadequate physical and technological opportunities were also stated as a challenge. Classes with technological opportunities have lack of maintenance. Some participants emphasized the inequality between state schools and private schools. Lack of support from administration and audit gap were among the problems related to school context. Pre-service teachers uttered the following sentences about the problems related school context:

*“As the classes get more crowded, the speaking time decreases in the classroom, which is almost the only place where students can speak English.” PT1*

*“As well as the crowded classes, lack of technological materials is also a problem very much related to the learning environment.” PT4*

Considering the statements, it can be proposed that classroom facilities in some schools of Turkey do not meet the demands of effective language teaching. Moreover, crowded classes decrease the time allocated for each learner, which, in turn, reduce exposure to language and student talking time.

## **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION and IMPLICATIONS**

The purpose of the current study was to identify the problems of English language teaching in Turkey from the perspectives of pre-service teachers. The results pointed to six major categories of problems in ELT. The findings suggest that the problems of English language teaching stem from six major categories including problems related to teacher education program, assessment, curriculum and methodology, teachers, learners, and contextual issues.

Insufficient teacher education program, incompetent lecturers, inadequacy of teachers in developing and adapting materials, excessive number of education faculties and teacher candidates, no standardization among ELT departments of universities, divergence between theory and practice, insufficient teaching practicum, a great number of Turkish elective courses, lack of leadership and public speaking skills, and employing non-education faculty graduates at state schools were stated to be among the problems related to teacher education program. Although there are studies in the literature about the problems of ELT in Turkey and international contexts from different perspective, the current study is a comprehensive one; therefore, not all findings correspond to each other. Among the findings, Kömür (2010) found that theory-practice balance in teacher training program is not adequate and pre-service English teachers experienced difficulties in teaching grammar and language skills, which shows that teacher training program in Turkey is insufficient. ELT in China also face outdated curriculums and teaching content of teacher training programs (Hu, 2005). Similarly, Madalińska-Michalak and Bavli (2018) reported in their study that “teachers would like the pre-service teacher education to aim at organizing the right conditions for developing teachers’ competencies to help students learn.” (p. 699) and suggested that pre-service teachers should engage in teaching practice in a variety of school types and settings. Inadequacy of teachers in developing and adapting materials was also a finding of Akdağ Çimen (2017) and she suggested including materials development training in teacher education programs. Parallel to the finding of the current study, Ekoç (2022) reported that the number of education faculties had risen with the increase in the number of state and private universities, which created an issue of quality. The increase is also the reason of non-standardization among the departments of English language teaching. In a similar vein, Hu (2005) emphasized the widening gap in the quality of basic English language education between different regions of China as in the different universities of Turkey.

According to the pre-service English teachers, the problems related to assessment included absence of assessing communicative skills in YKS, multiple-choice exams or unvaried assessment tools, summative assessment, score oriented exams, washback effect, test anxiety, and inability of exams (KPSS, ÖABT) to

determine teacher qualifications. The findings showing problems related to student and teacher assessment were in line with the previous findings. For example, in the study of Erdoğan and Savaş (2022), the participants expressed that YKS is a multiple-choice exam testing test-takers strategy rather than speaking, listening, or writing skills, and was thus limited to prove actual language proficiency. Speaking, listening, or writing, not being part of student selection exam skills were therefore likely not practiced during test preparation, which creates negative washback effect (Erdoğan & Savaş, 2022; Çapan, 2021; Yıldırım, 2010). Çimen (2022) reported that some teachers do not measure learners' language and communication skills, yet they measure memorization of vocabulary and structures. In Chinese context, Wu (2001) reported that large-scale exams whose design is structuralism and whose format is predominantly multiple choice have been found to constrain language teaching in a rather negative way. Pre-service teachers emphasized that national exams such as ÖABT or KPSS were insufficient to identify teacher qualifications. The exams may display unintended consequences, which diminishes their fairness and validity (Yeşilçınar & Çakır, 2020).

Not enough course hours, inflexible and impractical curriculum, lack of extracurricular activities, teaching materials and authentic materials, inappropriate course books, non-communicative activities, mechanical practices, memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules, repetitive topics in coursebooks, direct translation of texts, and teacher-centered teaching were among the stated problems related to curriculum and methodology. When the literature is examined about the problems related to curriculum and methodology, it was found that grammar-based approach was identified as one of the main factors of failure (TEPAV, 2013; Solak & Bayar, 2015; Çapan, 2021). Non-communicative activities, mechanical practices and memorization of vocabulary and grammar rules may cause courses to be grammar-based and impact negatively the quality of learning, which in turn, may create teacher centered and coursebook centered learning. Coursebooks were stated to be another barrier to language learning. Previous studies also showed that exercises in the coursebooks emphasize the importance of grammar and vocabulary, are far from fostering the use of English for communicative purposes (Çapan, 2021; Dağtan & Cabaroğlu, 2021). The current study showed that inflexible and impractical curriculum was another challenge for language learning, which may cause time related-challenges (Akdağ Çimen, 2017; Kızıldağ, 2009; Madalińska-Michalak & Bavli, 2018). The problems related to curriculum and methodology were mostly in line with the findings from international contexts. Safari and Sahragard (2015) revealed that grammar-based teaching and assessment, time limitation, and teacher-centered instruction were the problems encountered in Iranian context. Students' not having enough practice and extra-curricular assignments, impracticality of curriculum, heavy loaded curriculum, inappropriateness of the curricula for local conditions, and limited time were the common problems of ELT in Turkey and Thailand (Noom-Ura, 2013).

The challenges related to teachers were stated to be high expectation from the teachers, low value of being a teacher, low salaries, lack of field and pedagogical knowledge, high amount of L1 use, lack of constructive feedback, ineffective classroom management, lack of teacher autonomy, and lack of in-service training. The findings of the previous studies are consistent with the present findings. Low prestige of teachers and low income have been highlighted in a number of previous studies (Akdağ Çimen, 2017; Madalińska-Michalak & Bavli, 2018; Taşçı, 2019). Çapan (2021) emphasized that poor teacher qualifications, failure in addressing students' needs and interests, failure in integration of technology, and overuse of L1 were some of the significant problems related to teachers, which is parallel to the findings of the current study. In the international contexts, the most shared problem related to teachers were stated to be about the quality of language teachers. In Saudi, Chinese, and Iranian contexts, incompetent language teachers and unavailability of teachers with high level of proficiency were noted to be one reason of failure in ELT (Al-Nasser, 2015; Hu, 2005; Safari & Sahragard, 2015). Tırfarlıoğlu and Öztürk (2007) suggested to provide language teachers with in-service training to improve the quality of English language teaching, which supports the findings of the current study.

As for the student related problems, demotivation, unwillingness, fear of making mistakes and anxiety, lack of interaction, lack of self-confidence, discipline issues, socioeconomic status, and inequality of opportunities were among the most frequently stated problems. Learner demotivation, unwillingness, fear of making mistakes, high anxiety, and lack of self-confidence were commonly mentioned problems of language teaching in the literature (Akdağ Çimen, 2017; Çapan, 2021; Dağtan & Cabaroğlu, 2021; Erdoğan & Tunaz, 2012; Genç & Aydın, 2017; Noom-Ura, 2013). The factors causing learner demotivation can vary from teacher attitude to teaching approach, personal difference, teaching material, social environment, and inappropriate feedback (Akdağ Çimen, 2017; Çapan, 2021; Solak & Bayar, 2015). Socioeconomic status or inequality of opportunities between the private and state school students was also stated one of the demotivating factors for the learners, as the quality of language teaching in private school is higher and

private schools offer more educational opportunities and extracurricular activities (Ölçü-Dinçer & Seferoğlu, 2020).

Stated contextual problems which were divided into social and school context can be listed as influence of parents or peers, pressure of parents and schools, FL environment, no chance to go abroad, crowded classes, inadequate physical and technological resources, lack of maintenance, lack of support from administration, audit gap, and the perception towards teaching English to everybody. The findings were consistent with the findings of numerous previous studies. For example, Valizadeh (2021) revealed that lack of emotional and psychological support from school administration, crowded classes, and parents being unaware of the importance of English were among the challenges of ELT in Turkey. Crowded classes and lack of facilities were reported to be the reasons of failure in Iranian context (Safari & Sahragard, 2015). Tütüniş, Ünal and Babanoğlu (2022) identified in their study that the widely expressed problem teachers faced was infrastructure problems such as internet connection problems, lack of equipment, hardware and software problems because of lack of maintenance. Similar to the findings of the current study, crowded classes were stated to be one of the basic problems of language teaching in Turkey (Çapan, 2021; Kızıldağ, 2009), which decreases classroom interaction. Another important problem emerged in this study is that students do not have enough chance of practice and exposure to foreign language (Solak & Bayar, 2015), which stems from Turkey's being foreign language environment, not second language, and students do not have opportunity to go abroad to practice language. Correspondingly, lack of exposure to English lack of supportive language environment were identified as the problems in international contexts (Noom-Ura, 2013; Hu, 2005). Considering this finding, the participants questioned the necessity to teach English to everybody and stated that not everyone has to learn English.

The present study showed that there are basic problems in teacher education program, assessment, curriculum and methodology, teachers, learners, and context in Turkey. The findings also showed that most of the problems of ELT in Turkey were similar to the problems faced in international contexts. However, all the problems emerged in this study seem to be related to each other. One problem is a reason or a result of another problem. Solving one of the problems may directly or indirectly solve another one.

Considering the findings of the current study, some implications were offered for each theme. In order to improve the quality of teacher training programs, the courses should be improved to include more practice-based courses to minimize the divergence between theory and practice and Turkish elective courses should be replaced with English content elective courses. Teaching practicum should be updated to provide students with opportunities to experience different school types. More precise assessment can be conducted if national exams in Turkey include productive skills such as writing and speaking and varied assessment tools can be used in these exams. In addition to score-oriented exams, students' performance should be measured with practice-oriented exams, which decreases dependence on summative assessment and in turn lowers students' anxiety. In addition to exams, demo courses can be used and considered for determining teacher qualifications and recruiting teachers. To increase the quality of education in state schools, coursebooks can be revised to include more communicative activities and in-service training should be conducted to increase teachers' awareness about authentic material design. In addition, English language course hours should be increased to make room for extracurricular activities and project tasks should be assigned to the students to make the courses more student-centered. Low value of being a teacher and low income are some sources of low teacher motivation. This challenge can be overcome by increasing teachers' salaries. Preparing more flexible and practical curriculum would increase teacher autonomy. Conducting communicative courses may provide learners with opportunities for foreign language practice, which may increase classroom interaction and students' self-confidence and decrease fear of making mistake, unwillingness to participate, and students' demotivation. Involving students into courses may also solve discipline problems related to classroom management. The government should allocate more resources for the renovation and maintenance of classroom facilities, which may decrease the gap between private and state schools. In order to increase students' awareness of English as a foreign language, students might be encouraged to participate in international exchange programs such as Erasmus+ and Comenius, which may increase exposure to foreign language and culture. Finally, government policy could focus on educating the public on the benefits of learning English, which could persuade parents that English is just as important as other subjects.

Although the current study tried to uncover the problems in ELT from the perspectives of pre-service ELT teachers, it has some limitations to be improved. First of all, the number of participants might be increased for further studies to reach more generalizable results about the issue. Secondly, the data of the current study were collected only from pre-service ELT teachers on grounds that they can identify the

challenges from both teaching and learning perspectives. It is suggested for further studies to collect data from all the stakeholders such as in-service teachers and students.

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