

An Analysis of the Content Knowledge Elective Courses of the ELT Departments: A Suggested Syllabus*

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Abstract

This research study took its sprouts from the reform implemented by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE), Turkey in 2018. The recent update has focused not only on the deficiencies of the existing programme but also enhancing the number of the elective courses up to 25 per cent. Correspondingly, CoHe suggested thirteen “Content Knowledge” electives along with granting authorization to universities to add six more electives on demand. Originated with these decision-making exigencies, this two-phased study was planned to disclose the favoured elective of 1093 EFL teachers in the first phase while the focus on the second phase changed direction to a syllabus design on the relevant elective with the guidance of teacher educators. The first phase of the research exploits a mixed method sequential exploratory design involving qualitative and quantitative research paradigms revealing “Current Trends in ELT” as the most favoured elective course, consequently. In the following phase, a further step was taken, and 62 teacher educators were consulted regarding the content of the course. Having analysed the responses by open-coding technique, the theme ‘technology integration’ was found out to be teacher educators’ main concern. Based on this data, the targeted topic-based syllabus was designed around the suggested sub themes of technology integration and ultimately fine-tuned through the lenses of two experts. The study also presented a compilation of teacher educators’ responses which should carefully be scrutinized and utilized by the policy makers and decision-making parties.

Keywords: Current Trends In ELT, Elective Courses, Content Knowledge Courses, Syllabus Design.

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Introduction

Elective courses in ELT enable students to receive more versatile content focusing on global awareness, critical thinking skills, communication skills, or else those electives contribute to their personal development by cultivating their interests. These courses provide invaluable understanding in many areas and give way to knowledge in a specialized area while developing personal skills. Without serving a specific purpose, they could even just satisfy a curiosity about a certain topic. In 2018, CoHe increased the percentage of the elective courses in the degree programs up to 25 per cent along with overviewing and revising the defective points in the system. In addition to suggesting an elective course list, they granted authorization to universities to be able to determine almost 25 percent of the courses except for the obligatory ones (Akbay & Cesur, 2019). As a consequence of this flexibility, English Language Teaching Departments have now been facing a decision-making process in terms of determining which electives to be added into their curriculum. Derived from the reality, this study is in an endeavour to throw light upon students' choices of content knowledge electives. In addition to pointing at the most preferred elective, it gains another dimension by suggesting a new syllabus.

Literature Review

Globalization has become one of the greatest identifiers of the twenty-first century by influencing the changing face of communication, media, international commerce, social life, and networks with the increasing demand for international travelling. In this comprehensive framework, the appropriateness of situational and contextual communication skills in English has become more crucial. As a modern lingua franca, the new role of English has become more of an issue in terms of applied linguistics and English Language Teaching. In this regard, since the effectiveness of the teaching programmes has a consistent relevance with language teaching, these programmes are recommended to be armed with the essential qualities meeting the demands of the nations, and they need to be updated by monitoring the contemporary changes in the world (Coşkun- Ögeyik, 2009). In the light of these perspectives, language policy in Turkey has gone through many changes and innovations along with the process of adaptation to the European Union and in association with the Bologna process. Under the coordination of Higher Education Council, English Language Programmes were updated in 1997, 2006 and more recently in 2018 (Akbay & Cesur, 2019). While overviewing these regulations, it should be noted that each has become a focus of interest for many scientific studies in terms of their procedural evaluations, educational analysis, and implementation.

Before 1997, aggregating all academies and teacher training institutions into the universities by following an incorporated model of higher education happened to be the most outstanding reform by that time (Güven, 2008). As an extension of this incorporated model, CoHE was authorized as the core of the decision-making procedure responsible for financial, administrative, and educational

issues of Turkish universities. Teacher education programmes, their staff, logistics, alterations, and the curricula were inclusively united under CoHE so that there were no contradictions related to teacher education policies (Binbaşıoğlu 1995). However, it took more than a decade for four-year teacher training colleges and three-year foreign language high schools to centralize in universities (Altan, 1998). Additionally, Salı (2008) drew attention to the discrepancy among the content and practices of the first ELT programmes by pursuing their curricula. In 1997 Reform, following the collaboration of MoNE and CoHE in 1997, noticeable changes in English language policy became a current issue in order to revolutionize the ELT practice in Turkey. This led to a major change in the curriculum of the teacher education programmes that more practice time was allotted, and pedagogical knowledge gained more importance (Sağlam & Kürüm, 2005). Regarding this regulation, more hands-on experience for pre-service teachers became possible by adding more methodology courses and by promoting teaching practice time (Kırkgöz, 2005). Another major change was mainly about the introduction of the concept of communicative approach into ELT (Kırkgöz, 2005). Rather than the conventional teacher-centred approach, the communicative curriculum was mainly targeting student-centred learning. New roles and responsibilities were defined for teachers such as encouraging and comforting the use of the target language, cultivating to develop positive attitude towards learning and facilitating students in their learning processes. To be able orientate the prospective teachers to function more efficiently in parallel with the developing world standards, teaching programmes were concentrated on pedagogical grammar, discourse analysis, classroom-based research, curriculum and syllabus design and language testing (Altan, 1998).

With 2006 Reform, since the rapid changes in the world created an unavoidable impulse on education, CoHE restructured the curricula of education faculties considering social and educational needs under the influence of political, local, national, and international facts (Coşkun, 2008). The new curriculum seems to have more emphasis on teaching methodology and practice components (Kırkgöz, 2007; Seferoğlu, 2006) compared to the previous ones used between 1998 and 2006. There were three elective courses equivalent of six credits in the curriculum and all these electives were identified as content knowledge. Sanlı (2009) recommended increasing the number of elective courses so as to create variability and to address prospective teachers' needs in terms of local and national contexts. Other studies underlined the inefficiency of a single program for all levels and suggested that both teachers and students would benefit from a more specialized teacher education resulting in better qualified teachers (Aydoğan & Çılsal, 2007; Salihoğlu, 2012). This suggestion shows that content knowledge was still regarded as the fundamental source for teacher competences (Salihoğlu, 2012).

In 2018, CoHE implemented a new regulation after evaluating the existing programme. Expanding the time dedicated to teaching practice and adjusting the teacher education programs in accordance with the curricula by MoNE constituted the main starting points for this reform. In order

to form a common core curriculum, courses in all teacher education programmes were divided into three major areas having proximate percentage distributions. The courses were grouped and entitled as Content Knowledge (48%), Pedagogical Knowledge (34%), and General Knowledge courses (18%). In addition to the changes intended for the compulsory courses, there were also developments regarding the elective courses. The percentage of elective courses was increased up to 25 percent, and separate elective pools were formed for each category. Throughout the four-year programme, thirteen courses were identified as “Content Knowledge Electives” equivalent of 24 ECTS, which are; (1) Language and Society, (2) World Englishes and Culture, (3) Pragmatics and Language Teaching, (4) English Coursebook Evaluation, (5) Drama in Language Teaching, (6) Current Approaches in Language Teaching, (7) Material Design in English Language Teaching, (8) Teaching English Lexicon, (9) English in Mass Communication, (10) Classroom-based Language Assessment, (11) Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching, (12) Discourse Analysis and Language Teaching, (13) Teaching Integrated Language Skills. Since students are required to pick six courses from “Content Knowledge Electives” throughout their degrees, universities are required to open minimum six different elective courses each term (CoHE, 2018).

Method

To be able to suggest a syllabus as the main output of the study, this research firstly embraced a sequential exploratory design by utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data in the field (Creswell, 2014). Moreover, in the light of the review of literature, the study addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the 6 most preferred content knowledge electives?

RQ2: Which topics should constitute the syllabus of the mostly preferred elective?

First Phase of the Study

The focus of the first phase was to find out the 6 mostly preferred electives. This phase naturally involved an initial phase requiring a document analysis period and followed by a quantitative data collection. Having a multi-phase structure within its body, this phase followed a mixed method sequential exploratory design to understand the phenomenon profoundly. The details are illustrated in Figure 1 which summarizes the first phase with numbers and actions taken.

Table 1. Visual model for mixed methods sequential exploratory design procedures (adapted from Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006).

| Phase | Procedure | Products |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| QUALITATIVE Data Collection | Document Analysis: ELT Curriculums of State Universities (N:44) Reviewing CoHE's Suggested ELT Curriculum | Elective Courses opened in State Universities 13 Content Electives |
| QUALITATIVE Data Analysis | Content Analysis Combining similar courses under one title, filtered, and sorted by name in EXCEL Frequency Analysis | The most frequent Elective Courses Frequency Tables |
| Connecting Qualitative and Quantitative Phases | Analysing the frequency tables, 24 CK Electives were derived from the QUAL phase | A Questionnaire consisting of 28 items with 3 parts |
| Quantitative Data Collection | Piloting to teacher educators & in-service teachers (N:10) Snowball Sampling: Google forms web-based survey | Nominal (Categorical) item scores |
| Quantitative Data Analysis | Frequencies and cross tabulations | Descriptive statistics |
| Integration of the Quantitative and Qualitative Results | Interpretation and explanation of QUAL & QUAN results | Discussions & Implications Further research |

Sequential exploratory designs may also function as a procedure of choice when researchers require formulating an instrument due to the lack of compatible or no instruments at all (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). It was also stated that when an unexplored topic is to be explored, researchers may have to look through qualitative data and develop an instrument ultimately (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). When a researcher intends to design an instrument compatible with the study, sequential exploratory designs may function incomparably effective using a three-step procedure where the researcher collects qualitative data and analyses it, and benefits from the gathered data to design an instrument that is consequently applied with a sample group (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

Based on this model, the data gathered by reviewing the elective pools of 44 Turkish state universities was stored into a spreadsheet for further analysis. Through a content analysis, similar elective titles were given the same name as a preparation step for the frequency analysis (Berg & Lune, 2017). On the grounds of the effectiveness of Excel as a qualitative data analysis tool, the frequency analysis of the elective courses was conducted with the help of Microsoft Excel 2010 (Meyer & Avery, 2009). This frequency analysis revealed that 32 elective courses frequently existed in the elective pools of the state universities. When these 32 electives were checked against the elective pool suggested by CoHE in 2018, it was seen that 8 of them had been labelled as compulsory

content knowledge courses in the new ELT programme. In the light of the frequency analysis and the new regulations; 24 elective courses, 11 of which were different from the suggested electives, constituted the instrument of the first phase named as “Elective Preference Questionnaire” (See Appendix A).

The first phase of the study was planned to be carried out both with pre-service and in-service teachers to gain insight on the tendencies of both parties. Snowball sampling model, in which sample participants were specified primarily and used as informants to transmit the instrument to other representative samples (Bailey, 1994, p. 438), was adopted. Snowball sampling is seen as an unsystematic process, and finds its way of its own; therefore, researchers are believed to minimize the potential sampling bias which roughly refers to participants’ referral errors.

As the last step of the first phase, the online questionnaire was administered to 1093 participants via google-forms. The data obtained from the participants through “Elective Preference Questionnaire”. The collected data were coded to Statistical Package for Social Sciences; SPSS.22. Having completed the data entry; the frequencies and the percentages of the items were calculated and converted into tables.

Second Phase of the Study

Based on the findings in the first phase of the study, the second phase focused on designing a syllabus for the most preferred elective by the participants. Krosnick and Fabrigar (2013) argued that the use of explicit response alternatives might not be favourable in general qualitative research. Instead, they recommended “requests with open answer categories”, and added they might work the best due to their flexible structures that do not demand participants to respond within the confines of the researcher. On the grounds of this approach, teacher educators were requested to answer a single question that is “What do you think should be included in the undergraduate syllabus of the elective course “Current Trends in ELT?”. With this question, the primary objectives were not only gaining insight into teacher educators’ perceptions, but also exploring responses that may be less anticipated (Singer & Couper, 2017).

The participants consulted in the second phase of the study were solely teacher educators who work at English Language Departments in Turkey. Altman and Cashin (1992) highlighted the idea of teachers’ being the centre of the decision-making procedure in forming a syllabus where their personal aims and opinions along with the school’s objectives are reflected. Throughout the study, the question was administered to a random sample of respondents. The online survey was sent to 583 teacher educators, and eventually 62 teacher educators responded to the question.

Since the second phase of the study focused only on the open-ended responses collected from teacher educators, these responses were analysed thematically to classify and understand the

qualitative data in a better way. Thematic analysis is defined as “method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within data” and the principles constitute a theme are not firm (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). Therefore, it is accepted to be possible to address the data in various forms (Javadi & Zarea, 2016). However, the first stage of the analysis is usually minimizing the data by either breaking the data down into smaller indicative sections or classifying them by using a coding system (Attride-Stirling, 2001). To this respect, the qualitative data in the second phase was analysed through an open coding technique where some common specific themes were used indicatively to categorize the responses meaningfully. Moreover, in order to enhance validation through triangulation, codes were formed based on the classification of the book “Current Trends in ELT” (Yaman, Ekmekçi, & Şenel, 2016) which is fundamentally a compilation of recent studies in the realm of English Language Teaching. The edited book consists of studies written on recent issues in ELT by distinguished practitioners from Turkish universities.

Results

Results of Research Question 1

The first research question focused on actualizing the main objective of the first phase. The questionnaire was planned to explore “6” most preferred electives in the framework of the current regulations made by CoHE, in 2018 as in the new English Language Teaching Programme, elective courses - six of which are content knowledge courses- constituted 25 per cent of the whole programme within the scope of Bologna process. Moreover, according to these regulations, universities are required to open minimum six different elective courses, and they are also allowed to suggest up to six more courses excluding the electives suggested by CoHE.

Table 2. Frequency distribution of the preferences of the participants

| Course Title | Course Preferences of the Participant | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| | F | P |
| Current Trends in Language Teaching | 598 | 54.7 |
| Current Approaches to English Teaching | 543 | 49.7 |
| Material Design in English Language Teaching | 482 | 44.1 |
| Computer Assisted Language Learning | 453 | 41.4 |
| Drama in Language Teaching | 451 | 41.2 |
| World Englishes and Culture | 349 | 31.9 |
| Teaching English Lexicon | 333 | 30.5 |
| Critical Thinking in Academic Language Skills | 329 | 30.1 |
| Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language | 297 | 27.2 |
| English Language Awareness | 291 | 26.6 |
| English Coursebook Evaluation | 282 | 25.8 |
| Classroom-based Language Assessment | 247 | 22.6 |
| Intercultural Communication | 241 | 22 |
| Language and Society | 237 | 21.7 |
| Semantics | 229 | 21 |

| | | |
|------------------------------------------|-----|------|
| Pragmatics and Language Teaching | 166 | 15.2 |
| American Literature | 154 | 14.1 |
| Linguistic Philosophy | 144 | 13.2 |
| English in Mass Communication | 142 | 13 |
| English Poetry | 136 | 12.4 |
| Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching | 131 | 12 |
| Error Analysis | 124 | 11.3 |
| Teaching Integrated Language Skills | 98 | 9 |
| Discourse Analysis and Language Teaching | 66 | 6 |

In this scenery pattern, Current Trends in ELT was ranked highly by the participants ($f=598$, 54.7%), while the frequencies of Current Approaches to Teaching ($f=543$, 49.7%), Material Design ($f=482$, 44.1%), Computer Assisted Language Teaching ($f=453$, 41.4%), Drama in Language Teaching ($f=451$, 41.2%), and World Englishes and Culture ($f=349$, 31.9%) followed each other respectively. Based on the information gathered at the first phase of the study, list of suggested topics for the syllabus of the elective course “Current Trends in ELT” was provided in the second phase.

Results of Research Question 2

This research question was the main concern of the second phase of the study. Based on the frequency analysis carried out in the first phase, the mostly preferred elective course was found to be as “Current Trends in ELT”. From this point of start, 62 teacher educators were consulted with a single open-ended question to be able to form a content regarding the current trends in English language teaching. To start with, findings of the initial analysis of the open-ended responses showed that teacher educators taking part in the study responded to the question with 232 topics. At this stage, a thematic analysis was conducted, and the number of the occurrences of the predetermined themes was calculated. Based on the analysis, Table 3 below illustrates the frequency levels of the recurring themes.

Table 3. Frequency distribution of the themes

| Themes suggested by the teacher educators | Codes | F | P |
|-------------------------------------------|--------|----|------|
| Technology Integration | TB | 57 | 24.6 |
| Alternative Approaches | LR | 48 | 20.7 |
| Culture | OT | 13 | 5.6 |
| Skills | TR, LR | 10 | 4.3 |
| ELF | OT | 8 | 3.4 |
| Issues in Linguistics | OT | 8 | 3.4 |
| Professional Development | TR | 8 | 3.4 |
| Research | TR, LR | 7 | 3 |
| Curriculum | CR | 6 | 2.7 |
| Gamification | OT | 5 | 2.1 |
| Assessment | AR | 5 | 2.1 |
| Multimodality | LR | 5 | 2.1 |
| Pedagogy | TR | 5 | 2.1 |
| Post-method | LR | 5 | 2.1 |

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------|-----|-----|
| Classroom Management | TR | 4 | 1.7 |
| World Englishes | OT | 4 | 1.7 |
| Autonomy | LR | 3 | 1.3 |
| Communication | LR, TB, OT | 3 | 1.3 |
| Issues in Learning | LR | 3 | 1.3 |
| Materials | LR | 3 | 1.3 |
| Psychology | LR | 3 | 1.3 |
| Affective Factors | LR | 2 | 0.8 |
| Distant Learning | TB | 2 | 0.8 |
| Globalization | OT | 2 | 0.8 |
| Native Language | LR | 2 | 0.8 |
| Pronunciation | TR, TB | 2 | 0.8 |
| Reflective Practice | TR | 2 | 0.8 |
| Accreditation | CR | 1 | 0.4 |
| Critical Thinking | LR | 1 | 0.4 |
| Drama | LR | 1 | 0.4 |
| Educational Models | TR | 1 | 0.4 |
| Future Directions | OT | 1 | 0.4 |
| Leadership | OT | 1 | 0.4 |
| Role of Teachers | TR | 1 | 0.4 |
| Total | | 232 | 100 |

* LR = Learner and Learning Centred Trends, TB = Technology Based Trends, TR = Teacher Related Trends, CR = Curriculum Related Trends, AR = Assessment Related Trends, OT = Other Trends.

Table 3 shows all the themes inferred from teacher educators' responses indicating their categorized main codes and frequencies. According to the findings, integrating technology into language classrooms ($f=57$, 24.6%) seems to be the biggest concern of the teacher educators. Under this single theme, several topics such as mobile learning, blended learning, flipped classrooms, distant learning, artificial intelligence, and the role of technology in ELT were unified. Following the issues regarding the integration of technology, alternative approaches ($f=48$, 20.7%) became the second widely suggested topic by teacher educators. Alternative approaches consisted of project-based learning, brain-based learning, individualized learning, diagnostic learning, embodied learning, competency-based learning, content and language integrated learning, context-based learning, cooperative language learning, communicative method, critical pedagogy, approaches to grammar teaching, social constructivism, and eclectic method. Other topics diversified from culture to educational leadership highlighting that language teaching is a complex task for a teacher, and teachers are expected to use effective teaching strategies to boost acquisition together with arousing interest towards learning (Amjah, 2014).

Table 4. Frequency distribution of the topics regarding technology integration.

| Technology Integration | F | P |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|------|
| Blended Learning & E-Learning | 19 | 33.4 |
| Computer Assisted Learning | 6 | 10.6 |
| Virtual Exchange: Tele Collaboration, Digital Games and Virtual Reality | 5 | 8.8 |
| Artificial Intelligence in ELT | 4 | 7.1 |
| Web 2.0 and new technologies in language learning: corpus tools, LMS, Web 2.0 tools, infographics, video, graphic novels, digital badges, web quests, concordances. | 4 | 7.1 |
| Designing Flipped Classrooms | 3 | 5.4 |
| Mobile Assisted Learning | 3 | 5.4 |
| The Use of Social Media | 2 | 3.5 |
| Automated Writing Instruction | 1 | 1.7 |
| Awareness Raising in Media-Based Listening and Speaking | 1 | 1.7 |
| Digital Learning: Theory and Practice | 1 | 1.7 |
| Digital Literacies | 1 | 1.7 |
| Generation Gap and IT | 1 | 1.7 |
| Machine Scoring of EFL Students' Essay Writing | 1 | 1.7 |
| Podcasts and Subtitles for Learning and Teaching | 1 | 1.7 |
| Pronunciation in Dehumanized Language Software | 1 | 1.7 |
| Reactions of English Speakers to Robots and Human-Beings | 1 | 1.7 |
| The Use of Podcasts and Subtitles for Learning and Teaching | 1 | 1.7 |
| The Use of Transcription Programmes | 1 | 1.7 |
| Total | 57 | 100 |

As illustrated in Table 4, teacher educators referred to several topics including the use of technological applications in general (corpus tools, LMS, Web 2.0 tools, infographics, video, graphic novels, digital badges, social platforms) but also e-learning (MOOCs), blended learning, designing flipped learning environments, mobile and computer assisted learning (YouTube & TedEd), artificial intelligence in ELT, Web 2.0 and new technologies in language learning, the use of concordances and transcription programmes in ELT. Teacher educators also suggested the topics of generation and gender gap in IT, awareness rising in media-based listening and speaking, automated writing instruction, virtual exchange, tele collaboration, the use of podcasts and subtitles for learning and teaching, machine scoring of EFL students' essay writing and lastly digital literacies.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Research Question 1 tried to find out six most preferred electives offered in ELT departments, and "Current Trends in ELT" with 54.7% was found to be the mostly preferred elective throughout the study. First of all, this finding is significant since this elective was added to the questionnaire as a result of the document analysis of the first phase. In other words, the most preferred course was also an initial output of the study itself and the course was not listed in CoHE's suggested elective pool.

First of all, Şallı-Çopur (2008) investigated early career teachers' teaching efficiency in a case study, and on the basis of the findings of her study, she highlighted the significance of equipping teacher candidates with current trends and developments by shifting the English Language Teacher Training Programme (ELTTP hereafter) in the light of the recent research. Aiming at revealing the defective or developable components of the ELTTP, Coşkun and Daloğlu (2010) asked to what

degree the program is up-to-date, and they received some positive reference regarding elective courses, such as Current Issues in ELT. The course, specifically, was referred as an effective way of remaining up to date in the field and increasing the number of such electives appealing to students' needs and interests was advised to be able to keep ELTTP updated.

Moreover, when the two top rated electives are taken into consideration, it can be stated that participants made their choices in the direction of newer innovations, approaches, and teaching techniques. Highlighting the evolving nature of learning and teaching languages, Karakaş (2012) stated that any program is supposed to be reconsidered and renewed systematically with the aim of embodying the recent perspectives and innovations compatible with the field of teacher education globally. The evergreen nature of ELTTP would also be more attainable and feasible by updating the content of the two above mentioned electives if required.

Yavuz and Zehir-Topkaya (2013) in their study of teacher educators' evaluation of the 2006 ELTTP drew attention to the positive feedback of teacher educators regarding the addition of some courses such as "Instructional Technologies and Material Development" and "Drama Analysis and Teaching". The two lessons which were entitled as "obligatory courses" in 2006 ELTTP were revised and amended as "elective courses" in 2018 by CoHE. The findings of the study signify that those two subjects do matter for both pre-service and in-service teachers notwithstanding the altered condition of the subjects.

Being one of the six mostly preferred electives, "World Englishes and Culture" was referred by Karakas (2012) in his study where he evaluated the 2006 ELTTP in Turkey. According to his findings, the programme was evaluated as outdated, insufficiently practice and culture oriented whilst pedagogically and theoretically satisfactory. He emphasized that the new status of English as an international language is not addressed sufficiently throughout the program which should also be responsible for not only introducing the types of English but also the international use of it. Karakas (2012) took a further step and put emphasis on teaching the target cultures of all English-speaking countries regardless of being native or non-native. Coşkun-Ögeyik (2009) also laid stress on the absence of culture-oriented subjects and advocated the idea that "culture" should be a component of ELTTP.

"Computer Assisted Language Learning" (CALL) was also among the top six electives preferred by the participants of this study. In terms of describing the students of today, Prensky (2001, p.1) highlights the distinction between former and today's students. He describes today's students as Digital Natives, who are "native speakers of the digital language of computers, video games and the Internet". Correspondingly, the teachers who become a part of this digital world by following newer technologies throughout their professional lives are called as Digital Immigrant instructors. By using those definitions, Prensky (2001, p.4) draws attention to a potential disconnect between teachers and

students and suggests that “today’s teachers have to learn to communicate in the language and style of their students”. Kartal (2005) also claims that technology inclusion is respectively more essential for language teaching in comparison to what degree other disciplines of social sciences need it. Apart from underlining the requirement of technology integration in language classrooms, the lack of technology training in ELTTP was also referred as a concern by several researchers (Egbert, Paulus & Nakamichi, 2002; Hall, Fisher, Musanti & Halquist, 2006; Hubbard, 2008; Kessler, 2006).

Finally, Gürler (2018) indicated some courses to be added to the current ELT program by asking some open-ended questions to his participants consisting of both prospective teachers and teacher trainers. To address a more collective overlap between two studies, it can be stated that 4 out of 6 courses referred in this study were also specified by his participants. ‘English and Different Cultures’, ‘Computer Assisted Language Learning’, ‘Drama’, and ‘Material Design’ were reported as appropriate, and recommended to be added to the ELT curriculum.

RQ2 attempted to specify a content-based syllabus for the mostly preferred elective course ‘Current Trends in ELT’. This part of the study acquired some irreplaceable data by asking the opinions of 62 teacher educators working at ELT departments of Turkish state universities. The data was irreplaceable with great authenticity since the responses were recommendatory relying on the combination of teacher trainers’ personal anticipations and appraisements, pre-service teachers’ needs and ultimately reflecting recent academic studies in the field. Although numerous recent issues referring different fields of studies were addressed by the teacher educators, the final syllabus was recommended to be focused on the most referred theme to achieve a more consistent and effective syllabus for a short span of time, namely a semester. Therefore, the theme ‘technology integration’ ($f=57$, 24.6 %) was agreed to be taken as a basis for the targeted syllabus. (See Appendix B)

As being referred by many teacher educators throughout this study, blended learning constituted an important part of the suggested syllabus. Although BL is not a new concept for language teachers; the changing face of learning and teaching, the innovations in technology, the spread of the Internet have started to have dominance over face-to-face learning environments. It is underlined that there is an ongoing transformation in instructional innovations and language teachers are required to keep up with the recent technological applications.

Although it is impossible to see entirely what the future holds, it is certain that the trend toward blended learning systems will increase. It may even become so ubiquitous that we will eventually drop the word blended and just call it learning. (Graham, 2006, p. 7)

Many studies reveal that language teachers have difficulty in implementing technology into their classrooms due to insufficient training during their teacher preparation programs (Hall et al., 2006; Kirschner & Selinger, 2003). Başal (2015) pointed at a few possible reasons for this

phenomenon such as curriculum, the teacher educator, and the inadequacy of technology courses in general. Promising a more learner-centred classroom, it is known that ICT and CALL stimulate information exchange and communication between students in real time (Padurean & Margan, 2009, p. 98). With the help of web-based learning, students are likely to be more analytical, communicative, and powerful rather than being teacher-dependent. Autonomy in language classrooms also becomes possible if students learn to be self-directed, take responsibility for their own learning, and critically reflect on their learning process. Jones (2001) highlighted the significance of CALL for teachers in enabling learner autonomy provided that teachers learn the integration of technology in educational frameworks.

As stated by Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2008), the instant shift from Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) to Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) also caused an attitude shift towards language learning due to the personal and portable nature of the used devices. Reinforcing cooperative learning skills and reducing anxiety, increasing stimulation and positive attitudes towards learning (Yanguas & Flores, 2014), integration of MALL into school curriculum and syllabus becomes a prominent issue for language teachers. Jarvis (2015) stated that language teachers should understand, explore and formulate pedagogies to be able to benefit from the advantages of those smart devices. According to Chinnery (2006), the productiveness of the devices is determined by an efficient teacher with good pedagogical knowledge. In addition to underlining the significance of technology integration into teacher education and in-service training; Başal, Yılmaz, Tanrıverdi and Sarı (2016) also pinpointed a completely notable notion in terms of teacher education programmes. Based on the dynamic nature of technological applications, trying to implement all the Web 2.0 tools into teacher education programmes is not conceivable. Instead, prospective teachers should be equipped with the pedagogical foundations of learning and teaching to be able to integrate these tools into their teaching. According to Başal et al. (2016), in which ways the new tools should be used for educational purposes is the only question to be discussed.

The findings of the study might provide some insight into the elective course design of the ELTTP on behalf of all the shareholders of the program. Köksal & Ulum (2018) emphasized that teacher education in Turkey is in need of taking profound actions and should consider focusing on more qualitative advancements instead of quantitative adjustments. As an extension of this idea, teacher education programmes were recommended to be consolidated by reviewing the earlier attainments and underperformances.

By looking at the most preferred electives, it was understood that participants were mainly interested in the new developments and innovations in language teaching, material design and technological applications along with communication and culture-based courses. Globalization is the key word of 21st century, and the new status of English has also enhanced the language teaching and

learning environments; therefore, it is so natural that language learners prioritize improving their intercultural awareness and competencies to communicate effectively in this multicultural world.

Since course books cannot resist the transformation of the changing perspective of language teaching and learning anymore, the implementation of technology into language learning draws great attention by teachers. It can be suggested that the use of ICT should not be ignored for instructional purposes and prospective teachers should be encouraged to make use of it in various ways through provided courses at faculties. As stated by Bařal et al. (2016), technology integration training should be an integral part of teacher education and in-service training.

Based on the findings, it can be stated that current trends in language teaching should be considered to rank in priority for ELT curriculums. Having an adjustable nature, the course can be redesigned each year to train prospective teachers in accordance with the recent developments and applications in the field. Based on the findings of this study, technology integration was found to be the most recurring theme referred by the teacher educators; however, the compilation specified by the teacher educators should carefully be scrutinized and utilized by the decision-making parties. In this regard, an evergreen dynamic syllabus consisting of newer innovations and techniques would serve a useful purpose in order to keep the future teachers updated.

Although this study ensures the reliability of its findings by relying on a great number of participants, the preferences or the needs of the students may change over time or vary by institution; therefore, universities might embrace a practice of applying a needs analysis for their students before forming new elective course pools. Regarding CoHE's 2018 reform in ELLTP, institutions should administer more research on the perceptions of pre-service teachers and teacher educators. The implementation of the new program, the possible effects of the change on prospective teachers' educational and career objectives, the results of the rise in the number of elective courses, and the reflections of shareholders in the post-implementation of newly opened elective courses might be explored meticulously.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Content Knowledge Elective Course Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

In 2018, the Council of Higher Education made some regulations in English Language Teaching Programmes, and consequently students are required to take 6 “Content Knowledge Electives” as part of their degrees. Considering the recent changes in ELT programmes, this questionnaire was designed to project a view on the preferences of EFL teachers.

Your sincere and volunteer contributions are of great importance for the reliability of the study. Your responses will be kept confidential and never associated with your name.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Personal Information | |
| Gender | |
| Female | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Male | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Service Status | |
| English Teacher / Lecturer | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pre-service English Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> |

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2. Please choose 6 “Content Knowledge Electives”. | |
| Critical Thinking in Academic Language Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| American Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Semantics | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Computer Assisted Language Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| English Language Awareness | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Linguistic Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Current Trends in Language Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Language and Society | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| World Englishes and Culture | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Pragmatics and Language Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Error Analysis | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| English Course Book Evaluation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Drama in Language Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Material Design in English Language Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Current Approaches to Teaching English | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Teaching English Lexicon | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| English in Mass Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intercultural Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Classroom-based Language Assessment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Discourse Analysis and Language Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| English Poetry | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Teaching Integrated Language Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Please indicate: | |

Appendix B: Suggested Syllabus for the Most Preferred Course: Current Trends in ELT

| Weeks | Topics |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | What is Digital Literacy? |
| 2. | Digital Learning: Theory and Practice |
| 3. | The concepts of “Blended Learning” and “E-Learning” |
| 4. | Designing Flipped Learning Environments |
| 5. | Computer-Based Language Learning: Introducing English Learning Apps for EFL. |
| 6. | Web 2.0 and New Technologies in Language Learning: Corpus Tools, LMS, infographics, video, graphic novels, digital badges, web quests, concordances |
| 7. | Mobile-Assisted Language Learning Tools: Youtube, TedEd, Mobile Applications. |
| 8. | Use of Social Media for Learning and Teaching |
| 9. | Midterm |
| 10. | Artificial Intelligence in Education Pronunciation in Dehumanized Language Software English Speakers’ Reactions to Robots and Human Beings |
| 11. | Automated Writing Instruction Machine Scoring of EFL Students’ Essay Writing |
| 12. | Awareness Raising in Media-Based Listening and Speaking Podcasts and Subtitles for Learning and Teaching The use of Transcription Programs |
| 13. | Virtual Exchange: Tele Collaboration, Digital Games and Virtual Reality |
| 14. | Generation Gap and IT |