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Evaluating an English Language Teacher Education Program through Peacock's Model

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***Abstract:** The main aim of this study is to draw attention to the importance of program evaluation for teacher education programs and to reveal the pre-service English teacher education program components that are in need of improvement or maintenance both from teachers' and students' perspectives by using Peacock's (2009) recent evaluation model in a Turkish university context. The study is based on the data collected from teachers and fourth year student teachers who have had experience with the new teacher education program initiated by Higher Education Council (HEC) in 2006-2007 academic year. The data collected by means of questionnaires and interviews revealed that although participating teachers and student teachers have similar views about some program components, they hold different ideas about the balance among linguistic and pedagogic competences in the program. While teachers believe that the program does not suffice to improve student teachers' linguistic competence, student teachers think that the pedagogic side of the program needs to be improved.*

Introduction

In our globalized world where the English language is used as an international tool, teaching English is becoming an educational field that is worthwhile exploring within the general education system. The studies pertaining to English Language Teaching (ELT) deal with various issues and all of these issues are somewhat connected to the education of English teachers. Therefore, it is very important for pre-service teacher education programs to have a structured evaluation system so that necessary changes can be made about the program. As stated by Peacock (2009), evaluation of these programs is the starting point on the way towards professionalization of the field of ELT. It also contributes to program improvement; therefore, systematic evaluation should be placed at the very heart of a program (Rea-Dickins and Germaine, 1998).

Considering the relevant literature, it seems that evaluation of pre-service English teacher education programs has not been researched much so far. As Day (1991) points out, foreign language teacher education is quite a recent development when compared to teacher education in other areas. Similarly, Weir and Roberts (1994) rightly suggest that there have only been a few published studies about the evaluation of English teacher education programs. Moreover, only few attempts have been made in order to develop a model designed specifically for the evaluation of such programs. The main purpose of this study is to draw

attention to the importance of evaluation in the education of candidate English language teachers by reviewing relevant literature and applying Peacock's (2009) recent model of foreign language teacher evaluation to the context of English teacher education in a Turkish university. This study also aims to trigger more evaluation studies in other training contexts using similar approaches.

Literature Review

In this section, the pertaining evaluation studies done in different geographic regions will be introduced first. Then, studies carried out in Turkey will be discussed. After the description of the context of evaluation for the current study, the evaluation design will be presented.

In an attempt to reveal the strong and weak points of an English teacher education program in Saudi Arabia from the perspective of students and graduates, Al-Gaeed (1983) developed a questionnaire covering areas, ranging from methodology to issues like performance of faculty members and teaching atmosphere. It was found that the program was evaluated positively by the current students and graduates in terms of teaching practice, methodology, the quality of faculty members, and linguistic courses. However, they thought that the preparation for spoken English skills and the opportunities to communicate in English were not enough, and that the literature courses were not relevant to their preparation.

Barkhuizen (1997) focused on the anxiety factor that poses a problem to prospective English teachers when they first start teaching. To restructure their programs to eliminate the anxiety factor, problems of 120 senior student teachers in three South African teacher education programs were researched with open-ended questions. This study revealed that the participants were mostly concerned about students' low English proficiency, their attitudes, mother tongue interference, their own English proficiency, and the effectiveness of their teachers.

Minott and Young (2009) used reflective journaling as a source of teacher education program evaluation and specifically, they developed the idea of a hybrid evaluation approach enacted through evaluation survey and reflective journaling. Although the benefits of using a multi-source evaluation approach to program evaluation had been emphasized previously (Darling-Hammond, 2006 and Schwile & Dembele, 2007), their study introduced the concept of a hybrid evaluation approach that includes reflective journaling. Similarly, Chong and Cheah (2009) in their study conducted in Singapore, explain the development as well as the conceptual underpinning of the values, skills, and knowledge (VSK) framework and, through a program evaluation, they look at the validity and reliability of items developed through the VSK framework to measure the values, skills and knowledge that student teachers perceived through their initial teacher preparation program. Based on the data they collected from final year student teachers, they concluded that while the VSK framework provides the graduating student teacher with maxims of teaching and learning, it is isolated from the potential to implement these in practice. They claim that beginning teachers should see their initial teacher education as the start part of a continuum of professional learning and they need to develop a problem-solving attitude and the skills necessary to learn from experience through reflection. Therefore, "a challenge for teacher education then becomes one of acknowledging the totality of experience and of valuing the knowledge of contextualized experiences as a supplement to the theory of the framework to inform the practice of teaching and learning" (Chong and Cheah, 2009, p. 16).

There are a limited number of research studies on pre-service English teacher education in Turkey. Except for a few studies, not much has been researched and written

about the evaluation of such programs. Cosgun-Ogeyik's (2009) study seems to be the most recent one dealing with language improvement courses in the English language teacher education curriculum currently being implemented in Turkish universities. Through conducting a survey on the last year English teacher trainees in a Turkish university, she found that the program in implementation is considered to be consistent with their expectations in terms of outlining the goals of the teaching profession, the social objectives, and benefits obtained from the program. Although the program has generally been evaluated as sufficient, one lacking point in the program is thought to be culture specific courses.

Erozan (2005) evaluated the language improvement courses in the pre-service English teacher education program in a Turkish university. By means of course evaluation questionnaires for student teachers, interviews with student teachers and their teachers, classroom observations, and examination of relevant written documents such as course policy sheets, course materials, and assessment tools used in the courses, she revealed that the language improvement courses were generally effective. She lists some of the points her participants' recommended as follows: more practice component in the language improvement courses, a wider variety of authentic materials, various methods and activities, and continuity as well as coherence between or among the courses. The student teachers in her study urged for more micro-teaching and practice teaching activities in the program. Also, because of the method used in some courses and their irrelevance to their teaching profession, some courses were criticized by candidate English teachers. Focusing on the practical component of a pre-service English teacher education program, Seferoglu (2006) carried out a qualitative study and asked last year student teachers' opinions about the methodology and practice component of the program. It was found that most of the student teachers expressed the need for more micro-teaching activities in addition to more observations of different aspects of different teachers at different levels in the school experience courses.

Salli-Copur (2008) explored the extent to which graduates of an English teacher education department in a Turkish university from 2002 to 2006 perceive themselves as competent English teachers and the extent to which they find the components of the program successful in helping them gain these competencies. Through questionnaires and interviews, she revealed that the graduates perceived themselves to be competent in most of the competency areas described by the Higher Education Council while expressing a need for improvement for competencies of language knowledge, spoken use of English, classroom management, assessment and instruction. Furthermore, most of the participants thought that there are some unnecessary overlaps among some courses and some of them believed that the practice component of the program could be more emphasized.

Context of the Evaluation

Training teachers in Turkey is the responsibility of universities that are under the governance of the constitutional state body, Higher Education Council (HEC) that is responsible for the organization, planning, recognition and supervision of all higher education institutions. This body is also in charge of making program reforms by revising the content of courses offered by different departments at Turkish universities including the departments in the education faculties. English language teacher education departments are one of these departments the curriculum of which has recently been reshaped to conform to the changing social necessities and educational developments in Turkey (Grossman et al, 2007). This recent English teacher education program was introduced by HEC in the 2006-2007 academic year. Cosgun-Ogeyik (2009) states that this new program depends not only on Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) that provides a common ground for language

programs so that autonomous learners and teachers can reach personal and professional development opportunities but also on the European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages (EPOSTL) which is a tool for promoting professional growth by means of reflection and dialogue.

The program to be evaluated within this study is the implementation of this new English teacher education program at a Turkish university in the Black Sea Region. The program which aims to educate pre-service English language teachers for public and private primary and secondary schools is a four year program. When students successfully complete this undergraduate program, they are eligible to sit for the Kamu Personeli Secme Sinavi (The Selection Examination for Professional Posts in Public Organizations) that is the test that needs to be taken to become a teacher in public schools. Contrary to most other English language teacher education programs in Turkey, the current program does not require compulsory one-year English preparatory education that prepares students for their future departments in terms of language proficiency. The assessment in most courses in the program is based on a mid-term and a final exam that generally includes open-ended questions or classroom presentations prepared either as a group or individually. The text-books selected for the courses are generally imported either from Britain or the U.S.A.

As in most of similar programs in Turkey, the program includes compulsory and elective courses, and students are provided with knowledge about how English works from different perspectives (e.g. contextualized grammar, listening and pronunciation) in the first and the second years. In the third and fourth years, they are equipped with more professional expertise (e.g. teaching methodology, curriculum design and testing). Through one or two departmental elective courses (e.g. current issues in ELT and course book evaluation) offered each term, students are provided with knowledge in various professional subjects they are interested in. The program also includes compulsory practice-based courses which enable student teachers to observe classes in primary or secondary schools (School Experience I) and to practice teaching under the guidance of the course instructor (School Experience II). In the Practice Teaching course that is offered in the final semester of the fourth year, student teachers do teaching practice in schools for one full day a week (minimum 12 weeks). In this course, student teachers are expected to observe and teach lessons that reflect the competences they develop through their four year education at the university. Part of the course is carried out as a two-hour seminar with the university instructor (see http://www.yok.gov.tr/egitim/ogretmen/yeni_programlar_ve_icerik.htm for a more detailed explanation of the courses). As the balance among competences addressed in the program is a major issue to be dealt with in this evaluation study, a statistical picture of the balance of competences that are linguistic, pedagogic and managerial competencies is presented below after an analysis of the contents of each course. As a result of this analysis, it was found that courses related to student teachers' pedagogic competence makes up % 68 of the program while linguistic competence courses make up % 32 of the whole program. Managerial competence makes up only 1% of the program with only one course that is "Classroom Management" (see Appendix A for the table of courses addressing to linguistic and pedagogic competences).

The program accepts full time undergraduate students who want to teach English in primary schools, high schools or universities. Except for a few Erasmus exchange students coming from different parts of Europe, a great majority of student teachers are from Turkey. The enrollment into the program is only possible after getting the required score in the YDS (Foreign Language Exam) including multiple-choice questions assessing students' level of English proficiency. The majority of the student teachers are female and most of them come from Anatolian or Anatolian Teacher Training High Schools that provide a more intensive English training. There are currently seven teacher educators in the program.

Evaluation Design

The main purpose of this evaluation is to reveal the program aspects that need to be improved and maintained from the perspective of both teachers and students at the department of English teacher education, a program that has not been evaluated before. Considering this purpose, the research question has been formulated as follows: What aspects of the English teacher education program should be maintained and improved depending on Peacock's (2009) model of evaluation depending on the following sub-questions?

Does the program...

- 1) ... have a clearly stated philosophy?
- 2) ... reflect program philosophy?
- 3) ... promote trainee flexibility in using different teaching approaches for different situations?
- 4) ... promote the ability to use, and to adapt, foreign-language-teaching materials?
- 5) ... balance received versus experiential knowledge?
- 6) ... incorporate and encourage trainee reflection on the experiences and values they have when they enter the program? In particular, does it encourage trainee reflection on their 'apprenticeship of observation'?
- 7) ... promote the skill of reflection and self-evaluation as a teacher?
- 8) ... promote future reflective practice?
- 9) ... promote the 'long-term, developmental nature of learning to teach' – does it promote post-qualification teacher growth and development?
- 10) ... have good linkage among courses, avoiding overlaps?
- 11) ... balance teacher- and student-centered learning?
- 12) ... prepare EFL teachers to function in the sociocultural context in which they will work?
- 13) ... incorporate and balance linguistic, pedagogic, and managerial competence to an appropriate degree? Linguistic competence here means L2 proficiency. Pedagogic competence refers to teaching skills plus knowledge of language and second language acquisition.
- 14) Is the program up-to-date?
- 15) Do students believe the program meets their needs, is relevant to their needs, and adequately prepares them for classroom teaching?

The evaluation model developed by Peacock to evaluate an English teacher education program in Hong Kong seems to be a practical way of program evaluation in the context of this study as the model is based on a comprehensive list of 15 questions that arose from relevant literature and it encourages the researcher to collect valuable information from various program stakeholders. Also, the data-collection instruments in his model worked very well in his context and he claimed that his model would facilitate and encourage the evaluation of some other teacher education programs in some other contexts.

Participants and Data Collection Procedure

The participants in the current study are 55 last year student teachers and three university instructors in the department because the new program has been implemented only for four years and these students are the ones who have studied most of the courses in the current program except for the ones in the second term of their final year. While 30 of these students are registered as evening students, the rest 29 are day-time students. The majority of them are female (n: 41) and only 14 are male. Their age range is between 20 and 25. Out of 55 student teachers, 10 were invited to the focus-group interview. The university instructors

who were interviewed for this study (n: 3) have also had experience with teaching the new program in the department. Data were collected both thorough quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. Questionnaires, interviews and document analysis were applied in order to triangulate the data.

The first data collection instruments are questionnaires filled in by 55 last year student teachers. The five point scale (strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree, strongly disagree) questionnaire is intended to reveal student teachers' opinions on the sub-questions in the research question. The questionnaire included items that depend on Peacock's reviewed literature about what makes up adequate training of a foreign language teacher (e.g. promoting the skill of reflection and self-evaluation as a teacher). The questionnaire sought student teachers' opinions pertaining to whether the program incorporates some of the important features of an English teacher education program.

In addition to questionnaires, 10 out of 19 participating student teachers who expressed an interest in further cooperation in the evaluation process by marking the questionnaire statement "I can give more information about the program in an interview" were randomly selected for a focus group interview. In this type of interview, participants discuss issues, ideas, and experiences among themselves and the researcher takes the role of a moderator introducing the subject, keeping the discussion going, and trying to keep the focus on the intended questions. According to Thomas et al. (1995), the data collected through the interactions in the focus-group interview are often deeper and richer than those gained from one-to-one interviews. Similarly, Patton (1990) suggests that focus groups interviews are essential in the evaluation process. Two general questions were discussed during the focus-group interview: What are the program components that should be improved and maintained and what suggestions they can give for the improvement of the program.

Since the program being evaluated was a new one, it seemed necessary to collect information from the university instructors who can reflect on change, and absorb and manipulate new ideas and developments (Ekiz, 2004). Out of seven instructors in the department, three who have been teaching the new program were selected for the semi-structured interviews to elicit their views and comments about the program. The reason why a semi-structured interview format was used in this part of the data collection procedure was to add, revise or expand on previous questions depending on the participants' response so that a more in-depth understanding of what instructors think about the program could be obtained. The participating instructors were provided with the list of 15 questions in the research question and asked to make related comments, especially on program components that need to be improved and maintained. They were also encouraged to make suggestions on how to improve the program.

Finally, courses offered in the department were evaluated to see the distribution of courses in the program addressing linguistic (L2 proficiency), pedagogic (both teaching theory and teaching practices), and managerial competences. To draw a conclusion about the balance among different competences, the course contents were downloaded from the website of HEC and two researchers were given a checklist including the explanation of linguistic, pedagogic and managerial competences and the name of the offered courses. They were then asked to mark "L" for linguistic, "P" for pedagogic and "M" for managerial competence at the beginning of each course. A detailed description of each course was also given on the checklist. The percentages of the balance of competencies have been presented before to describe the context of this evaluation.

Data Analysis

Before the actual administration of the questionnaire, two experts were consulted about whether the items in the questionnaire and the interview were appropriate for the Turkish evaluation context to achieve construct validity. Based on the feedback obtained, no modifications were needed. Also, the data collected via interviews were analyzed by two researchers in order to ensure inter-rater reliability. The data collected via the questionnaires were entered into SPSS 15, a statistical package program. The questionnaire is reliable with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of 0,90. As for the data analysis of the questionnaire, frequency tables are given (see Appendix B) to provide an overall insight into participants' level of agreement data under three headings, uncertain, agree and disagree for a clearer presentation.

The analysis of both the focus-group interview with student teachers and semi-structured interviews with university instructors were also made by applying content analysis. Common trends and patterns in the interviews emerge during the analysis so that results can make sense and the quality of the program can be evaluated (Brown, 1995). For instance, the focus-group interview with student teachers brought up two main issues, such as strengths (e.g. theoretical content) and weaknesses (e.g. lack of practice opportunities) of the program and interviews with instructors revealed common trends such as the need for more courses addressing student teachers' language proficiency and the importance of the school experience courses.

First of all, questionnaire findings will be presented and this will be followed by focus-group interview results. Then, data collected through semi-structured interviews with three teachers will be analyzed. In order to maintain anonymity, participants will be referred to with a number (e.g. Student Teacher (ST) 1, Instructor 1).

Results of the Student Teacher Questionnaire

As can be seen from the frequency table in Appendix B, participating student teachers have a strong agreement with the program in general. Items 8, 11, 14, 15 attracted the highest levels of student teacher agreement.

Among all items in the questionnaire, 84% agreed with item 8 "The program encouraged me to be a reflective teacher (when I start teaching)". The same percent also applies to item 15 "The program taught me how to adapt foreign language teaching materials". Even a higher agreement level can be seen for items 11 "The program taught me how to teach English" (85% agreed) and 14 "The program taught me how to use foreign language teaching materials (87% agreed).

On the other hand, items 2, 18, 21 attracted the lowest levels of student teacher agreement. Only 44% of the participants agreed with statement 2 "The program avoids overlapping information between different courses". The other two items receiving the least agreement are about whether the program is related to student teachers' needs and whether the program met their needs. There was an agreement only among 49% of the participants when it comes the item 18 "The program is relevant to my needs" and nearly half of the participants agreed with item 21 "The program met my needs".

Results of the Focus-Group Interview with Student Teachers

The data collected by means of the focus-group interview fell into two categories as strengths and weaknesses of the program. Some suggestions for program improvement were

also made by the participating student teachers. The strengths of the program are presented first and then the program weaknesses are reported to better understand what needs to be maintained and improved from student teachers' perspectives. Extracts from the interviews are also provided as typical responses under each category to illustrate the findings.

The most common strength of the program is that the program provides student teachers with theoretical background in ELT. Student teachers all agree with their classmate who said "there is a lot in the program in terms of theory and I have learnt quite a lot about theory in ELT" (ST 4). Another strength of the program is that instructors have good relationships with student teachers. Almost all the student teachers (n: 9) agree with their classmate who made the following utterance:

"Our instructors are very whole-hearted and sincere. As this is a small university, we have close relationships with our instructors. When we have problems, we just go and talk to them. I believe they all want us to be good teachers and work hard for it" (ST 8).

There are also strengths of the program that students illustrated with examples from specific courses in the program. For example, most student teachers (n.7) made comments on courses related basically to materials development, such as 'materials evaluation and adaptation' as well as 'teaching technologies and materials development' by saying that these courses helped them prepare "...good lesson plans and develop nice materials" (ST 2). Also, some student teachers (n: 5) shared how positive they felt about the teaching English to young learners course. One student teacher indicated that he had taught English in a kinder garden in this course, which was very fruitful for him.

Another strength of the program that was voiced by three student teachers is that students are allowed to decide on the content of some courses together with the teacher. In relation to this, one of the student teachers gave the example of the community service course: "...in the community service course, I decided to teach English to a child living in a small village as my project and this made the course very interesting for me" (ST 3).

On the other hand, student teachers underlined some weaknesses and made helpful suggestions for program improvement. First of all, all the participants claimed that the program lacks practice opportunities. As one student teacher said "... although theory has its place in the program, practice is missing" (ST 10). Some student teachers also referred to specific courses to illustrate their opinions about the lack of practice involved in the program. One student teacher gave the example of the drama course: "In our drama lesson, I was expecting to learn how to teach English through drama but it was not like that. We wrote short dramas, which was useless" (ST 6). Similarly, another student teacher made the following comment: "We were taught reading-writing but we were not unfortunately taught how to teach these two skills. Also, I know a lot about English literature but I can't use literature in my own teaching" (ST 2).

Related to the practice component of the program, eight student teachers expressed their views about the fourth year course 'School Experience' in which they observe mentor teachers and prepare micro-teachings in real classrooms. A typical comment from one of the student teachers is as follows:

"The School Experience course should be not only in the fourth year but also in the first year as it was in the old program (1998-1999). I know that student teachers used to attend these courses both in their first and last years in the past. There should also be a course to share our experiences in the schools with our friends and teachers to get feedback. In this course, we should deal with different cases that our classmates have come across" (ST 5).

Another student teacher who would like to see more practice opportunities in the program made a similar comment:

“We always learn what is good or bad according to some American or British course books that I think are away from the realities of the Turkish EFL classroom. So we absolutely need more school experience and chances to develop our teaching abilities” (ST 3).

All the students who are in favor of a more practice-oriented program criticized the article presentations that are assigned to them by their instructors in some courses. Below are student teachers' comments about the place of student presentations as a teaching learning activity in the program. There seems to be a shared feeling among student teachers that asking students to deliver presentations in the lessons is useless and in need of improvement. Also, student teachers seem to think that by making presentations, they only deliver the content to each other and they cannot benefit from instructor's expertise. A typical comment made by a student teacher is as follows:

“Some instructors always want us to deliver presentations in pairs or in groups. Actually, we need to learn from the instructor as well, not only from our classmates. I really can't understand the rationale behind these presentations. Everybody is focusing on his/her own presentation and is missing other important ones” (ST 4).

One other weakness of the program seems to be related to the fact that the department instructors are not evaluated by students (n: 5). As one of the student teachers indicated below, some student teachers consider student evaluation as a means of teacher development and thus program improvement:

“I know that some ELT departments in Turkey give great importance to student evaluation of teaching but here, instructors are not evaluated by us at all. Our evaluation will help them improve their teaching and the program in general” (ST 7).

About assessment, two student teachers urged for more alternative assessment types in the program: “We need more alternative testing types. It seems to me that written exams including open-ended questions should be replaced by more process-oriented testing instruments” (ST 9).

Overall, the focus group interview revealed that although there are some program strengths (e.g. the theoretical component of the program, instructors' sincere attitudes towards student teachers, and specific courses like Materials Development, Teaching English to Young Learners and Community Service), student teachers mostly emphasized the weaknesses of the program that need to be improved. These weaknesses can be summarized in three categories:

1. Lack of practice opportunities
2. Overuse of presentations as a teaching learning technique
3. Lack of instructor evaluation by student teachers

Results of the Semi-Structured Interview with Instructors

Instructor interviews provided different perspectives from those of student teachers. A summary of the information obtained from each instructor is presented separately under three headings as Instructor 1, Instructor 2, and Instructor 3.

Instructor 1

About the question whether the program has a clearly stated philosophy, he said that the program did not have a written philosophy although the general philosophy of HEC could be regarded as the departmental philosophy as it is the case for all ELT departments in Turkey. As for the relationship between the program and trainee reflection, he commented that because most of the course books are imported from native-speaker countries, instructors in the department are encouraging reflection in order to make the content relevant to the Turkish EFL context.

In terms of linkages among courses, he believes that although the program encourages links among different courses, student teachers cannot transfer the knowledge they gain from one course to another because of their traditional education backgrounds. He refers to the School Experience course as requiring the use of received theoretical knowledge in actual classrooms, which seems to be an important means of training future English teachers in link with the 15 questions in Peacock's model. He emphasizes the incentive system for supervisor teachers and the lack of mentor teacher and administrator awareness about the importance of this course for their schools as some of the problems regarding this important course and provides valuable suggestions on how these problems could be dealt with. He also claims the school experience course is approached very negatively both by the mentor teachers and the administrators of schools where student teachers do the practice component of this course. Focusing on the novelty and the motivation student teachers bring to these schools, he thinks that these people should be trained about the importance and the advantages of the school experience course.

Another important point he highlighted was about the balance in the program among courses addressing to students' linguistic, pedagogic and managerial competences. He believes that the program is weak in terms of linguistic competence and suggests that some courses like translation, scientific research methods, approaches in ELT that are offered in the second year in the new program should be switched to their third year as student teachers do not have enough linguistic competence yet in their second year to handle these courses.

Regarding student teachers' lack of linguistic competence, he suggests that a one-year English preparatory education before taking departmental courses could be necessary for some students.

In order to further comment on the program features on the list given to him, he made a comparison between the old (1998-1999) and the new program (2006-2007) that is being evaluated for this study. He claimed that the new program includes courses that have contributed a lot to the improvement of the program. He pointed out, for example that the addition of the new course, teaching language skills, established a link to the School Experience course. Another course he touched on during the interview was Literature and Language Teaching that was not available in the old program. About this course, he commented as follows: "...in the past, literature was taught independently from ELT, but now with this course, literature is taught as a tool for teaching English." He also shared his positive feelings about the increasing number of materials development courses offered in the program by suggesting that having two materials development courses "Language Teaching Materials Adaptation and Development" and "Instructional Technology and Materials Design" is better than the earlier program that had only one relevant course.

Instructor 2

The second instructor interviewed responded to the question whether the program has a clearly stated philosophy by saying that the philosophy of HEC for teacher education is the philosophy of the department. As far as trainee flexibility in using different teaching approaches for different situations is concerned, she stated that it really depends on the trainer, not the program. As for the reflection component in the program, she gave an example from the school experience course she has been supervising for some time. She pointed out that reflection is an important component of the program and said that she encourages her students to share and reflect on what they are doing in their school experience course through a social online network called as Ning.

To illustrate the linkage between courses, she suggested that the linkage between teaching methods and teaching language skills that has recently been added to the program is a good one as the former is more theory-based and the latter helps students to transfer the theory into practice through microteaching activities.

To answer the question whether the program is up-to-date, she compared the English teacher education program offered in Turkey and in most European EFL contexts. She stated that in most English teacher education departments in Europe, mostly literature and linguistics courses are offered while there are many teacher education courses in Turkey, which shows that the program is up-to-date.

Regarding the balance of courses pertaining to student teachers' linguistic, pedagogic and managerial competences, she described the new program as "a program of pedagogy" and she felt that the number of courses addressing student teachers' linguistic competence in the new program does not suffice. She exemplified her point by drawing attention to the fact that reading and writing courses were two separate courses in the old program and these courses were offered not only in the first year but also in the second; however, in the new program, the program just have one course that is advanced reading and writing. She underlined the importance of the need to develop students' linguistic competencies.

For a justification of the fact that student teachers, especially the ones in the first year, have serious problems in terms of their linguistic competence, she seems to agree with Instructor 1 by highlighting that there is a need for an English preparatory education before accepting student teachers to the program.

Finally, similar to Instructor 1, she drew attention to the fact that there are problems that need to be dealt with to for a more effective School Experience course. She thought that the major problem in the School Experience course seems to result from lack of cooperation between schools and the university: "...schools receiving our student teachers are not willing to cooperate with them and us"

Instructor 3

She said that the program had only an introduction and a general mission statement on the website of the department. For experiential learning in the program, similar to Instructor 1 and Instructor 2, she said that there are certain problems to solve about the School Experience course to encourage more experiential learning. Like the other two instructors, she pointed out that university and schools should cooperate more to educate English language teachers who are ready to teach.

Pertaining to the balance among different competences in the new program, she held views similar to the other instructors. She thought that the program should focus more on language proficiency to fill in the gaps in student teachers' linguistic competence. She pointed

out student teachers have difficulty in writing a research project in their second year just because they are not good at writing that is one of the basics of language proficiency.

Similar to Instructor 2, she added that reading-writing courses should be separated again as it was in the old program because she believed that these courses would be more beneficial for student teachers' linguistic competence when taught separately. Related to student teachers' linguistic competence, she favored the idea of studying English in the preparatory school for one year before they start taking courses in the department as the other two instructors emphasized.

In terms of whether the program is up-to-date, she referred to one of the elective courses, Current Issues in ELT, to express her positive feelings about how such courses provide students with up-to-date knowledge in the field.

She suggested two additional ways of improving the program: Firstly, she said that the elective courses could be increased so that each student teacher can choose the courses that appeal to their needs and interests. Secondly, she stressed the need for a course called "Orientation" that she thought could be offered to help students to decide on their future career:

"We should have something like an orientation course as our student teachers just don't know how to apply for jobs or what they should do to do an MA or PHD. It is a pity that they are only focused on centrally administered exams, nothing else"

Overall, analyzing instructors' perspectives on the program, there are some common noteworthy thoughts shared by all three of them. There seems to be a feeling among teachers that the new program puts more emphasis on student teachers' pedagogic competence and more courses are needed to develop their linguistic competence. The separation of the reading and writing courses was also brought forward as an important issue to consider by all the participating instructors. Another opinion common to all instructors was that a preparatory English education might prepare student teachers for the department in terms of their linguistic competence. For experiential learning, the importance of increasing the effectiveness of the School Experience course was highlighted.

Discussion and Conclusion

The major finding of this study is to the balance between linguistic and pedagogic competences in the program. On one hand, student teachers agree with the idea that the pedagogic side of the program is weak, not allowing sufficient teaching practice opportunities. Student teachers' reflections about the practice component of the program corroborates with findings of evaluation studies done in Turkey (Seferoglu, 2006; Erozan, 2005; Salli-Copur, 2008). Students argue for more pedagogic courses and teaching practice opportunities by supporting their arguments with program features, such as the lack of realism and lack of practice chances in the program. They seem to consider the school experience course as one way of incorporating more practice chances into the program by underlining that this course should be offered early in the program and the number of hours allocated to this course should be increased. One student teacher who knows about the old program suggested that taking a practice-based course both in the first and in the last year of the program was better. Also, some student teachers think that a course is needed in which they can reflect on their school experiences and get feedback from each other as well as from the teacher. In terms of student teachers' hands-on teaching experience, courses that include teaching opportunities are appreciated more whereas theoretical courses requiring a lot of presentation assignments and only little teaching practice in the classroom do not seem to be enjoyed. Some student teachers also complained about the way some courses are conducted.

Typical complaints were that the presentations are overused by some teachers, there is a lot of memorization involved in some courses, and lecturing is the most common way of delivering courses in the program.

On the other hand, instructors think that the new program focuses mainly on student teachers' pedagogic competence neglecting their linguistic competence. It is underlined by Richards (1998) that the proficiency level of prospective non-native English speaking teachers is a very important concern in English teacher education; therefore, the language proficiency aspect in teacher education programs should be totally dealt with (Medgyes, 1999).

The instructors who were interviewed argue that without enough linguistic competence, student teachers are not ready for some of the second year courses (e.g. translation) that require production of work. They all point out that the number of courses offered to improve student teachers' linguistic competence, especially in the first year, does not suffice and student teachers' linguistic competence can be improved either through increasing the number of relevant courses in the first year or by making student teachers study English in the preparatory school for one year before admitting them to the department. Regarding teaching practice opportunities as means of experiential learning, all of the instructors and student teachers emphasized the importance of the School Experience course and instructors touched on specific problems to sort out regarding this course. It was asserted, for example that mentors and administrators at schools are not cooperative enough and did not seem to understand the contribution their students are making to their schools. One of the instructors also suggested that the supervising teachers do most of the work and they are not paid enough for the work they are doing.

As far as the balance of competences is concerned, the number of courses addressing student teachers' pedagogic competence seems to be much higher than those related to their linguistic competence. In addition to this, student teachers and instructors believe that the number of practice-based courses also needs to be increased. Instructors' perception that the program does not pay enough attention to student teachers' language proficiency might be an issue for further research as student teachers themselves did not mention anything about their language proficiency or the number of courses addressing their level of English.

The above findings of this study lead to some suggestions for program improvement at the department where this study was conducted. The suggestions that will be discussed in link with the relevant literature are based on the data discussed before.

1. Courses should be restructured to meet the practical, teaching-related needs of the student teachers. It would be fair to suggest that teachers should incorporate more micro-teaching and classroom observation chances in pedagogic courses.
2. The theory and the practice components of the program should be balanced as there seems to be a feeling among many students that the program puts more emphasis on the theory rather than the practice. A teacher education program should only be neither theoretical (received knowledge) nor practical (experiential knowledge) and the components of a teacher education program reflect the harmony of both knowledge and application (Ur, 1992).
3. The School Experience course should start earlier in the program and should be allocated more time and importance for experiential learning. As Enginarlar (1996) stated, one school experience course with very limited hours of observation and actual teaching would not suffice to prepare student teachers for teaching profession. Also, preparation to teach in more than one level, such as the elementary and secondary levels is a necessity because most student teachers do not know where they will be teaching. Instructors at the universities, and mentor teachers and administrators at schools where the school experience courses are carried out play vital roles in practice-based courses. Therefore,

these people should be trained enough to understand the importance of these courses for teacher candidates and be aware of their responsibilities within these courses. As Arnold (2006) indicates, the quality of the mentoring is important as a means of teacher development. Also the school-university cooperation should be strengthened for more effective practice-based courses.

4. There is a need to have a course in the program to help student teachers to share ideas and get feedback about their School Experience course and reflect on their teaching practices so that they can establish the link between theory and the practice. Goodman (1984) refers to John Dewey who long ago wrote that the primary purpose of teacher preparation programs should be to help students reflect upon the underlying principles of practice. He warned that if programs emphasized only technical expertise and failed to help student teachers understand the relationship between theory and practice, the growth of future teachers would be stunted and the education of children thus impaired.
5. Teachers should use more modern teaching techniques. Lecturing should be abandoned and the level of memorization involved in the program should be reduced.
6. Using presentation as a teaching and learning technique should be approached more critically by the instructors because almost all student teachers complained about the fact that presentations are overused in some courses.
7. Courses relevant to student teachers' linguistic competence should be increased in number.
8. English preparatory education for program student teachers is necessary to better enable them to deal with the courses offered in the program more effectively. Those who fail to demonstrate sufficient English language proficiency should have an additional one year of basic English language education.
9. There is a need for more elective courses offered in the program. Analyzing the variety of elective courses offered in different English teacher training departments, Sanlı (2009) found that the variety of these courses is very limited and more options about these courses should be given to student teachers.
10. As there seems to be only one course, Classroom Management, directly related to students' managerial competence, there is a need for new courses to improve students' managerial competence so that student teachers can deal with possible problems they may experience in their future working environments.
11. Alternative testing types, such as portfolios can be used rather than the traditional open-ended tests. Alternative assessment includes test types like self- and peer-assessment, conferencing, diaries, portfolios, learning logs and teacher checklists and observations. Also, as suggested by Altan (2006), the current system requiring candidate teachers to get a passing score in a standardized test (KPSS) containing questions related to history and mathematics should be replaced by exams like Praxis or Multiple Subjects Assessment for Teachers that are used in the United States. The Praxis I test, for example measures basic academic skills, and the Praxis II test measures general and subject-specific knowledge and teaching skills.
12. Literature courses should be approached as a tool for teaching English.
13. To avoid overlaps among different courses, teachers should work in cooperation, collaboration and integration in order to consider overlaps and resolve disagreements in terms of course contents.
14. There is a need for a clear program philosophy reflected into the program. Wallace (1991) attracts attention to the need for a clearly stated philosophy in teacher education programs.
15. A course called "Orientation" should be offered to help students make decisions about their future careers.

16. Teachers should be regularly evaluated by students so that teachers can both improve themselves and thus the program. For a constructive, manageable and regular use of student evaluation, Daloglu's (1998) model including three main components (content of the course, teaching techniques employed in the lessons, and assignments and assessment procedures) can be used as many students seem to complain mostly about these three aspects of the current program.

In addition to the above list of program components in need of improvement from both teachers and students' point of views, there are certain aspects of the program that needs to be maintained. First of all, the relationship between teachers and student teachers is favorable. Also, the theory part of the program is quite strong. Student teachers' involvement in the decisions made about the content of some courses is another good point to note down. Courses related to materials development also seem to be favored by both student teachers and instructors. The addition of some courses in the new program (e.g. teaching four skills, literature and language teaching) and the separation of the listening course from the speaking course in the new program are regarded as positive changes by the instructors. Finally, courses involving practice chances for student teachers are the ones that should be maintained in the program.

Although the recommendations and discussion above seem to be special to the context of this evaluation, it would be fair to conclude this study by claiming that some of what has been found in this study overlaps with the findings in the report of pre-service English teacher training programs in Europe. The report "European Profile for language teacher education in the 21. century" written by Kelly et al. (2004) offers a frame of reference for language education policy makers and language teacher educators in today's Europe. The report yielding findings that are based on the experience of eleven European teacher education institutions in different countries indicates some guidelines for quality assurance by serving as a checklist for English teacher education programs. According to the report, foreign language teacher education in the twenty-first century should include the following elements which overlap with the recommendations of this study:

1. Training in language teaching methodologies, and in state-of-the-art classroom techniques and activities,
2. an explicit framework for teaching practice,
3. training for school-based mentors in how to mentor,
4. a detailed outline of the cooperation between the school and the trainees' educational institution,
5. training in ways of maintaining and enhancing ongoing personal language competence, and
6. initial teacher education that includes a course in language proficiency and assesses trainees' linguistic competence.

Evaluation of the Evaluation

Peacock's (2009) model has been effective in providing multidimensional feedback about the program being evaluated. More specifically, Peacock's questions have encouraged the participants to consider the following aspects of the program: its philosophy, the knowledge provided through the program, the reflection student teachers engage in during the program and the reflective skills they develop, relationship among the courses in the program, the types of competences developed through the program, and the extent to which student teachers' needs are met. Contrary to most program evaluation models that have a chronological approach that addresses the planning, implementation, and evaluation phases of

a program, Peacock's model has enabled addressing components that are critical in educating English language teacher candidates.

All of the data collection instruments giving different perspectives about the program provided valuable data. Although there are similarities, there seems to be more differences in student responses given to questionnaire items and interview questions. As one can see from the questionnaire findings, there is a high level of agreement and satisfaction with the program features; however, when it comes to the interview, they mostly brought up the weak sides of the program that are in need of improvement.

This evaluation study is based on student teachers' and instructors' subjective judgments about the program and more objective data could have been gathered if classroom observations of participants had been made or employers of the program graduates had also participated in the evaluation study. Also, more participants could have provided more in-depth perspectives about the program. It is also important to note here that as evaluation is an issue under the influence of its sociocultural context, the same evaluation might yield different results in different places. Therefore, it would be fair to call for more evaluation research in various contexts to better understand the contextual factors that influence the program as a whole and increase accordingly the quality of future English teachers that will be teaching our children this international language.

Overall, this study is important as an attempt to raise awareness of the importance of program evaluation for teacher education programs by showing the application of a new evaluation approach to a pre-service English teacher education program in a university context. By doing so, this study has aimed to contribute to the lack of literature in the field of pre-service English teacher education program and to underline the need for similar evaluation studies done in different contexts.

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Appendix A

| <u>Linguistic Competence</u> | <u>Pedagogic Competence</u> |
|---|--|
| Contextual Grammar I/II | Approaches in ELT I/II |
| Advanced Reading/Writing I/II | School Experience |
| Listening and Pronunciation I/II | Teaching Principles and Methods |
| Oral Communication Skills I/II | Teaching Foreign Language to Young Learners I/II |
| Vocabulary | Teaching Methods I/II |
| Translation (Eng-Turkish)/ (Turkish-English) | Teaching Language Skills I/II |
| | Computer Assisted Education |
| | Community Service |
| | Material Analysis and Development in ELT |
| | Current Issues in Language Teaching |
| | Test Construction and Evaluation in ELT |
| | Special Education |
| | Practicum |
| | Course book evaluation |
| | Introduction to Educational Science |
| | Educational Psychology |
| | Measurement and evaluation |
| | Guidance |
| | Scientific research methods |

Appendix B

| Student (n:55) questionnaire results | Agree/ Strongly Agree | Uncertain | Disagree/ strongly disagree |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 The program has good linkage between different courses. | 34 | 14 | 7 |
| 2 ... avoids overlapping information between different courses. | 24 | 22 | 9 |
| 3 ... gave me adequate training in English. | 38 | 5 | 12 |
| 4 ... gave me adequate training in teaching skills. | 43 | 8 | 3 |
| 5 ... gave me adequate training for the needs of the local context (Turkey) | 31 | 18 | 6 |
| 6 ... is up-to-date. | 34 | 17 | 4 |
| 7 ... encouraged me to reflect on my past experiences as a language learner. | 39 | 12 | 4 |
| 8 ... encouraged me to be a reflective teacher (when I start teaching). | 46 | 6 | 3 |
| 9 ... promotes flexibility in using different teaching practices for different situations. | 45 | 8 | 2 |
| 10 ... balances teacher-centred and student-centred learning on its courses. | 44 | 6 | 5 |
| 11 ... taught me how to teach English. | 47 | 8 | - |
| 12 ... taught me how to evaluate myself as a teacher. | 43 | 11 | 1 |
| 13 ... taught me classroom management skills. | 44 | 11 | - |
| 14 ... taught me how to <i>use</i> foreign language teaching materials. | 48 | 5 | 2 |
| 15 ... taught me how to <i>adapt</i> foreign language teaching materials. | 46 | 7 | 2 |
| 16 ... increased my powers of self-evaluation. | 44 | 14 | 1 |
| 17 ... taught me foreign language testing and evaluation skills. | 37 | 13 | 5 |
| 18 ... is relevant to my needs. | 27 | 24 | 4 |
| 19 ... has a good balance between the teaching of: English, teaching skills, and classroom management skills. | 43 | 10 | 2 |
| 20 ... prepared me to teach English in the classroom. | 43 | 11 | 1 |
| 21 ... met my needs. | 29 | 21 | 5 |
| 22 By the end of this programme, I will be ready to teach English. | 43 | 8 | 4 |