

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Curriculum Analysis of English Language Teacher Education Programs: A Comparative Study of Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan

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## Ethical Statement

No ethics committee approval was needed for this manuscript as the study is based on Document Analysis.

## Funding Information

"No funding was received for the study."

## Conflict of Interest

"No conflict of interest is present in the conduction or the reporting of this study."

## ABSTRACT

English language teacher education programs (ELTEPs) are gaining importance as English is accepted as a lingua franca across the globe. Although, there can be found many studies on ELTEPs in Türkiye, the number of comparative studies between different countries is limited. This current study presents the findings of a comparative analysis of ELTEPs in Kyrgyzstan and Türkiye in terms of basic characteristics and the courses offered for developing linguistic, pedagogic and general knowledge competence. The results revealed that there are similarities and differences between two programs in terms of basic characteristics. Furthermore, Turkish ELTEP offers fewer courses for developing linguistic competence when it is compared to Kyrgyzstani ELTEP. On the other hand, the number of pedagogic courses in Turkish ELTEP is dramatically higher than the one in Kyrgyzstani ELTEP. Also, the number of general competence courses of Kyrgyzstani ELTEP is slightly higher than that of Turkish one. In the light of the findings, some implications were drawn for both programs at the end of the study.

**Keywords:** Türkiye, Kyrgyzstan, teacher education, English language teacher education program, comparative analysis

Received: 00/00/2023

Accepted: 18/08/2023

## INTRODUCTION

It is undeniable that English is increasingly becoming more and more prominent every day. Considering that it is the lingua franca of communication, the fact that it should be taught effectively is of serious concern, highlighting the significance of equipping and training language teachers efficiently with the necessary knowledge and skills (Gebhard, 2009). As it is claimed that the poor level of English results from the pitfalls of English Language Teacher Education Programs (ELTEPs hereafter), several changes in the curricula are often made to improve the quality of these programs. Therefore, research into these ELTEPs is of great significance and is considered to be a fruitful area for researchers (Kic-Drgas & Çomoğlu, 2017).

From a global perspective, comparative studies focusing on ELTEPs of various countries can assist in the improvement of such programs. This kind of research can also provide insights into the national education system and help transfer the good aspects of each program into the other ones. Considering the mentioned significance of such research, the current study will attempt to compare the selected ELTEPs of Türkiye and that of Kyrgyzstan. The study is limited to the ELTEPs of Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University and Batken State University. Their ELTEPs may not be representatives of those of the two countries. Another limitation of the study is that the analysis is limited to course titles. The following literature review will endeavor to present the structure of Turkish ELTEP and Kyrgyz ELTEP, and the current literature focusing on different ELTEPs.

### English Language Teacher Education Programs in Türkiye

Since the second half of the 20th century, a great need to improve the quality of the education system has emerged in European countries and Türkiye aiming to keep up to date with the most recent scientific, technological, political, and economic advances (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına, 2008). With the Bologna Process, which is one of the biggest attempts towards this goal, several main lines of action, namely the Qualifications Frameworks (QF), Quality Assurance (QA), the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), Diploma Supplement (DS) implementations, Mobility, Lifelong Learning Program (LLL), Joint Degrees, and the Social Dimension have been adopted in Türkiye (Katırcı, 2014). ELTEPs were naturally affected by these lines of action as well. However, there is a longer history of ELTEPs in Türkiye.

When the Republic of Türkiye was founded, the Ottoman Empire's teacher education institutions were changed to reflect the new republic's core values; as a result, new teacher training institutes were founded. In the starting years of the foundation of the Turkish Republic, the language teachers were the ones who had taken the courses of the English Teaching Certificate program after the university. However, between 1938 and 1939, the need for language teachers led to the foundation of a two-year Foreign Language High School in Istanbul to train language teachers including English. This two-year program was extended to a three-year curriculum in 1962 and to a four-year program in 1978 (Demircan, 1988). After being administered by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE hereafter) for several years, schools of English Language were connected to the education faculties in 1982 when all tertiary level institutions were assembled under the roof of the Council of Higher Education (CoHE hereafter). All language departments were separated into different majors in 1994 and were gathered under the roof of the Foreign Language Education Department in education faculties in 1998.

With regard to teacher education, all teachers need to obtain a university degree in Türkiye. Graduates of English Language Teaching (ELT) programs are given the chance to be able to teach at any public, private, or foundation schools

with their BA degrees. Before 2018, those graduates were also able to work at the language preparatory schools of universities; however, the new regulation (İngilizce Öğretmenliği Lisans, 2018) states that those who wish to pursue a career at universities as instructors of English need to have a master's degree.

Like the reforms in English teaching, the curriculum of ELTEPs was also subjected to change. In 1997, an innovation in curriculum occurred, which was followed by another innovation in 2005 which sprung from the Turkish government's policy to harmonize education with that of the European Union (EU). The curriculum in 1997 was developed by a Turkish team of experts in concert with international teacher educators (Kırkgöz, 2017). Most recently, the curriculum was revised in July 2017 in line with the general objectives of Turkish National Education as defined in the Basic Law of the National Education No.1739.

The curriculum in ELTEPs in Türkiye is highly centralized based on a structure regulated by the CoHE. The students are admitted to ELTEPs by Student Selection and Placement Centre based on the scores they get from the nationwide university entrance exam. The students who are enrolled in ELTEPs study at the education faculty for four years. Before they start their programs, the students are required to sit a language proficiency test to make sure that they have sufficient knowledge of English to be able to study at the department. Those who fail to pass the test take one year of English language preparatory class. The ones having sufficient knowledge start studying in the program. The four-year ELTEPs include courses that are based on knowledge (48%), pedagogical content (34%), and general culture (18%) (Öztürk & Aydın, 2018). In the first year of the programs, students take 10 courses, four of which aim to increase their English language proficiency in language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The other two courses aim to familiarize them with the pedagogical terms and educational sciences. Another course aims to increase the pre-service teachers' awareness and competency in information technologies. According to the new curriculum, they are also required to take another foreign language class in the first year of the program (Öztürk & Aydın, 2018). The last two classes aim to teach students about Turkish language and Turkish history. The subject-matter courses, namely linguistics, literature, and methodology, are introduced in the second year as well as some general education courses. The focus of the third year in the programs is on the ELT methodology regarding teaching language skills, which aims to make prospective teachers ready for lesson and materials preparation in each skill. In addition to the courses the ELT students take, they are also required to have school teaching practice in the last year of the program. All in all, those who study within the scope of ELTEP in Türkiye receive 1974 hours of theory and 196 hours of practical courses, making up 2170 hours of undergraduate courses and completing 240 credits in total (İngilizce Öğretmenliği Lisans, 2018).

### **English Language Teacher Education Programs in Kyrgyzstan**

Higher education in Kyrgyzstan includes training and retraining of bachelors, specialists, and masters to meet the needs of individuals for deepening and expanding education based on general, secondary, and higher professional education. Programs of higher professional education are implemented in higher professional education institutions (higher education institutions). The students who are admitted to ELTEPs of Kyrgyzstan must take a centralized nationwide university entrance exam (GST – General State Test) as it is nearly the same case in Türkiye.

In accordance with the Governmental Resolution of the Kyrgyz Republic No 496 of August 23, 2011 "On the establishment of a two-level structure of the higher professional education in the Kyrgyz Republic", a two-level structure of higher professional education was set for the 2012-2013 academic year with an award of academic

degrees “Bachelor” and “Master”, except for certain specialties. Level 1 includes bachelor’s programs whose duration of study is 4 years, and students need to take 240 credits. Those who study within the scope of ELTEP of Batken State University in Kyrgyzstan receive 1098 hours of theory and 1922 hours of practical courses, making up 3020 hours of undergraduate courses and completing 240 credits in total.

The courses for an academic year are equal to at least 60 credits for learners. One semester is worth 30 credits as the academic year is composed of two semesters. One credit is equivalent to 30 hours of academic work for students including lessons in the classroom, individual work, and all kinds of attestation. The intensity of the professional learning education for evening programs and extramural forms of study, and in the case of a combination of different forms of learning and the use of distance education technologies is at least 48 credits per academic year according to the regulations on the department of a higher educational institution of the Kyrgyz Republic (On the establishment, 2011) and on the educational organization of higher professional education of the Kyrgyz Republic (On the educational organization, 2020).

ELTEPs in Kyrgyzstan aim to train qualified specialists in the field of philology (English) who are able to successfully work in the field of education, possessing universal and professional competencies ensuring social mobility and sustainability in various conditions of introducing young people to world culture, and educational processes. They also aim to prepare an English teacher with psychological, pedagogical, organizational, managerial, and research skills. Finally, they aim to form cultural and moral values, professional and ethical responsibility, critical thinking skills, self-realization, and self-education throughout life according to the regulation on the department of a higher educational institution of the Kyrgyz Republic (On the department, 2012).

In the first year of the ELTEPs in Kyrgyzstan, students take subject-related courses such as linguistics, phonetics, and pedagogy; however, they also take different courses such as psychology, ecology, math, and introduction to civil rights, and so on. In their second years of study, students at ELTEPs take courses like theoretical phonetics, practical grammar, English language, etc., yet again they receive courses on different subjects such as anatomy, philosophy, and geography. Only in the 6th and the 7th semester, there are two methodology courses named “Methods of ELT”. Finally, besides some courses that help their linguistic competence development, prospective teachers of English in Kyrgyzstan have teaching practices in the last two terms.

### **Comparative Studies on ELTEPs**

Higher Comparative education studies have served a variety of purposes in the past, depending on what the researcher(s) or authorities wanted to find out. Such studies aim to compare the similarities and differences of two programs in two specific nations. There are several comparative studies conducted in various countries. To exemplify, Wiczorek (2008) compared the USA and the Japanese educational systems and practices to answer how they differ and aimed to answer how Japanese practices could possibly improve the American ones. The findings revealed that the Japanese education system enables teachers to foster the learning of the students with the help of a national curriculum which involves different subjects engaging students to create a stronger classroom environment.

In the context of comparative ELTEP studies, Nguyen (2013) compared the ELTEP curriculum in Australian and Vietnamese universities and found that the curriculum in the universities in Australia are stronger with regard to contextual knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and skills whereas little time is devoted to these matters in Vietnam. Another instance is the study conducted by Altmisdort (2016) who examined the ELTEPs of Denmark, Netherlands,

Sweden, Finland, and Norway. The study attributed the high-level proficiency of those countries to teachers' success.

Comparative data remain relatively restricted in the Turkish context. Oruç (2007) conducted a comparative study to compare the teacher education programs in Türkiye and in Belgium, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, and Spain. The student interview data revealed that Turkish prospective teachers are not as eager as those in the European countries. It also revealed that they can teach at any level after their undergraduate program in Türkiye; however, in European countries, they need special training for each level. Another study particularly pertinent to the present study is the one conducted by Kic-Drgas and Çomoğlu (2017) analyzing the ELTEPs of Türkiye and Poland. Big differences were found between the two programs in terms of the length of education, the places where the graduates of the programs can work, and the teaching practice. In a similar vein, Katırcı (2014) compared the ELTEPs in Finland, Sweden, Spain, and Türkiye and found out that all of the countries have been undergoing the same processes although they are the policymakers who make the decisions to be implemented in higher education in Türkiye and Spain whereas there is no such an obligation in Finland and Sweden. Karakaş and Yavuz (2018) also conducted a comparative study, comparing the ELTEPs in Türkiye and Malaysia. The results revealed that more compulsory courses are offered in Malaysia than language-related courses as there are in Türkiye. The Malaysian program also includes religion-related courses while that of Türkiye does not offer them. Most recently, Baimbetova and Çakır (2021) compared Kazakh and Turkish ELTEP curricula and concluded that the ELTEP curriculum in Türkiye offers a considerable number of pedagogic courses while it offers substantially fewer courses related to improving prospective teachers' linguistic competence.

The present literature review demonstrates that ELTEP in Türkiye has received considerable attention. As Karakaş and Yavuz (2018, p. 289) stated, "comparative studies are useful in respect of determining similarities and differences as well as weaknesses and strengths in ELTEPs of different institutions". Therefore, more research studies comparing the ELTEPs of Türkiye and other countries could be considered significant. Also, no research study has been conducted comparing the ELTEP of Türkiye to that of Kyrgyzstan. Reasoning from the aforementioned views, the current paper aims to analyze the ELTEP in Türkiye by comparing it to that of Kyrgyzstan. In this vein, the following research questions were asked:

1. What are the similarities and differences between ELTEP in Türkiye and ELTEP in Kyrgyzstan in terms of basic characteristics such as status of the curriculum, length of the program, lesson hours, status of the courses, compulsory practice at school, requirements for graduation, and recruitment of teachers?
2. What are the similarities and differences between ELTEP in Türkiye and ELTEP in Kyrgyzstan in terms of linguistic competence?
3. What are the similarities and differences between ELTEP in Türkiye and ELTEP in Kyrgyzstan in terms of pedagogical competence?
4. What are the similarities and differences between ELTEP in Türkiye and ELTEP in Kyrgyzstan in terms of general knowledge competence?

## METHOD

The study follows qualitative research methodology based on the comparative analysis of two documents, the programs designed for English language teacher education in Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for evaluating printed and electronic documents. Like other analytical methods in qualitative

research, it needs data which can be examined and interpreted with the aim of demonstrating meaning, understanding and developing empirical knowledge. Documents can contain texts and images that have been recorded without a researcher's intervention (Bowen, 2009).

### **Trustworthiness of the Study**

To ensure trustworthiness, Creswell and Miller (2000) recommend a list of nine different procedures. In this research study, the researcher made use of peer debriefing and member checking to ensure trustworthiness. A peer debriefing is "the review of the data and research process by someone who is familiar with the research or the phenomenon being explored" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p.129). In other words, "peer debriefing ensures the trustworthiness of a qualitative research study through the researcher's exploring the research design, data collection process, and data analysis while colleagues, serving as critical friends, encourage the researcher to examine the research process from multiple perspectives" (Figg et al., 2009, p. 20). In this study, the researcher got feedback from two experts who are qualified in qualitative research and English language teaching programs. Also, the data analysis was discussed together with four PhD candidates of English language teaching. At the end, 100% agreement among the researchers, experts and PhD candidates on the final classification of the lessons was achieved.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

In this study, data gathered through online official documents of the programs designed for English language teacher education in two countries. Initially, the data was downloaded from the relevant webpages of the institutions and each curriculum was analyzed separately for its general outlook in terms of its basic characteristics such as status of the curriculum, length of the program, lesson hours, status of the courses, compulsory practice at school, required credits for graduation, recruitment of teachers.

The content of each curriculum was analyzed, and the courses were grouped under three categories such as linguistic competence, pedagogic competence, and general knowledge competence. Finally, tables were prepared and presented to demonstrate the similarities and differences between English language teacher education programs in Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan.

### **Data Analysis**

The current study analyzed the two sample ELTEPs and compared them in terms of distribution of courses among linguistic, pedagogic, and general knowledge competencies. As for data analysis in this study, document and content analysis were used because of the fact that with document analysis produces data that can be organized into major themes and categories through content analysis (Labuschagne, 2003). Content analysis technique, preferred as qualitative research, is a document analysis strategy used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts. "Researchers quantify and analyze the presence, meanings and relationships of such words and concepts then make inferences about the messages within the texts" (Chanda, 2021, p. 5). Correspondingly, as an initial step, a frame was constructed based on the research questions. Each course was analyzed and grouped under the categories of linguistic, pedagogic, and general knowledge competencies to find out the distribution of courses in the programs. A rubric having the titles of offered courses was given to two experts. The experts marked 'L' for linguistic, 'P' for pedagogic and 'G' for general knowledge competence at the beginning of each course. The researchers and four PhD candidates discussed the results and agreed upon the final classification. Then, all similarities and differences were

arranged in tables to conduct a comparative analysis of the documents. Finally, the similarities and differences were described and evaluated on the basis of two curricula of the ELTEPs of the two countries.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Basic Characteristics

The comparison of the curricula of the ELTEPs in Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan revealed some similarities and differences in terms of their basic characteristics such as status of the curriculum, length of the program, lesson hours, status of the courses, compulsory practice at school, required credits for graduation, and recruitment of teacher.

**Table 1.** Basic characteristics of ELTEPs curricula in Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan.

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS	TURKIYE	KYRGYZSTAN
Status of the curriculum	Centralized	Decentralized
Length of the program	4 Years + 1 year (Prep Class)	4 Years
Lesson hours	1974 Hours of theory + 196 hours of practical courses = 2170 hours	1098 Hours of theory + 1922 hours of practical courses = 3020 hours
Status of the courses	50 Compulsory 16 Elective courses	63 Compulsory 9 Elective courses
Compulsory practice at school	7th and 8th Terms	7th and 8th Terms
Requirements for graduation	240 Credits, No final exam	240 Credits, Final exam or a qualification work
Recruitment of teachers	Being assigned as teachers by MoNE through a nationwide exam Better conditions at state schools	Working in the field of education with their BA diploma Better conditions at private schools

Initially, as illustrated in the table above, in Turkish context, there is a highly centralized curriculum structure of ELTEP provided by the CoHE. The regular period of education for undergraduate degree programs is four academic years. However, students who fail to pass a language proficiency exam at the beginning of fall term have to take one year of English language preparatory class before they start the undergraduate program. In other words, students who are successful in the English Proficiency Exam start their departments directly. In addition, those who study within the scope of ELTEP in Türkiye receive 1974 hours of theory and 196 hours of practical courses, making up 2170 hours of undergraduate courses and completing 240 credits in total. The ELTEP contains 50 compulsory and 16 elective courses. Students are also required to be involved in compulsory teaching practice in the 7th and 8th terms of the program. At the end of the ELTEP in Türkiye, there is no graduation examination for the teacher candidates (İngilizce Öğretmenliği Lisans, 2018). As for recruitment of English teachers in Türkiye, graduates can take a nationwide exam called Public Personnel Selection Exam (PPSE hereafter) which is composed of multiple-choice questions on social sciences, pedagogical knowledge, and subject matter knowledge and language proficiency. Teacher candidates who achieve a certain level of ranking in this exam are interviewed by officers from MoNE. Based on the scores they get from these interviews, they are assigned as teachers by MoNE at state schools all around the country. On the other hand, they have the opportunity of working at private sector. Private sector mostly organizes their own in-service training programs for their teachers such as workshops and conferences (Öztürk & Aydın, 2018). The conditions of state schools, especially the teachers' salaries, teachers' rights, etc., are better than those of private schools for teachers.

As for Kyrgyzstan ELTEP, the curriculum is decentralized in contrast to Turkish ELTEP. To put it differently, each university has the power to implement its own curriculum. The regular period of education for undergraduate degree programs is four academic years just like ELTEP in Türkiye. As opposed to ELTEP in Türkiye, students do not have to take one year of English language preparatory class in any circumstances. Furthermore, those who study within the scope of ELTEP in Kyrgyzstan receive 1098 hours of theory and 1922 hours of practical courses, making up 3020 hours

of undergraduate courses and completing 240 credits in total. As it is seen, the total course credit is the same as the total course credit of ELTEP in Türkiye. Nevertheless, the number of practical courses of ELTEP in Kyrgyzstan is strikingly more than the ones of ELTEP in Türkiye. Also, the number of theory lessons in ELTEP in Kyrgyzstan is less than the ones of ELTEP in Türkiye considerably. The ELTEP in Kyrgyzstan contains 63 compulsory and 9 elective courses for the students. It is obvious that there are more compulsory lessons and less elective courses than the ones of ELTEP in Türkiye. Teaching practice in the 4th year of the undergraduate program is compulsory for Kyrgyzstan ELTEP similar to ELTEP in Türkiye. At the end of the undergraduate program, students have to either take a graduation examination or write qualification work in contrast with the students in Türkiye. Finally, in Kyrgyzstan, after graduation from four-year undergraduate programs, a teacher candidate has the opportunity of working in the field of education and has psychological, pedagogical, organizational, managerial, and research skills (On the department, 2012) as a language teacher. Private schools pay higher salaries than state schools do in Kyrgyzstan.

### Courses for Developing Linguistic Competence

The analysis of the two curricula shows a striking difference in terms of the linguistic competence course credits. As it can be seen from the data in Table 2, the ELTEP curriculum in Türkiye contains just 44 credits for linguistic competence courses whereas the ELTEP of Kyrgyzstan contains 131 credits. To put it differently, linguistic competence courses comprise just 18% of total 240 credits of ELTEP in Türkiye. In contrast, linguistic competence courses comprise 55% of total 240 credits of ELTEP in Kyrgyzstan.

**Table 2.** Turkish and Kyrgyzstan curricula courses addressing linguistic competence.

TURKIYE	KYRGYZSTAN
1. Reading Skills 1	1. Phonetics
2. Writing Skills 1	2. English Language Courses 1
3. Listening and Pronunciation 1	3. Foreign Language
4. Oral Communication Skills 1	4. Theoretical Phonetics
5. Reading Skills 2	5. Practical Grammar 1
6. Writing Skills 2	6. English Language Courses 2
7. Listening and Pronunciation 2	7. Practical Grammar 2
8. Oral Communication Skills 2	8. Country Studies
9. Structure of English Language	9. Latin Language
10. English Literature 1	10. English Language Courses 3
11. Linguistics 1	11. Lexicology
12. Critical Reading and Writing	12. Phraseology
13. English Literature II	13. Contrastive Typology
14. Linguistics II	14. English Language Courses 4
15. Language Acquisition	15. Stylistics
16. Translation	16. English Language Courses 5
	17. Elective Course 1
	18. Foreign Language (German)
	19. Literature
	20. Elective Course 2
	21. Elective Course 3
	22. English Language Courses 6
	23. Theory of Grammar
	24. Elective Course 4
	25. Foreign Language (German)
	26. Elective Course 5

	27. English Language Courses
	28. History of English Language
	29. Theory of Practical Translation
	30. Culture and Education of England
	31. Elective Course 6
	32. Course Work on Methods
	33. English Language Courses 8
	34. Literature of England
	35. Mass Media in English
	36. Elective Course 7
	37. Elective Course 8
	38. Course Work on Language
	39. Final Exam
Total credits 44	Total credits 131

In addition, the numbers of the courses related to linguistic competence are quite different from each other. ELTEP in Türkiye consists of only 16 linguistic competence courses. They comprise 24% of total 66 courses of ELTEP in Türkiye. By comparison, ELTEP of Kyrgyzstan consists of 39 linguistic courses and they comprise 54% of total 72 courses. It is apparent that very few linguistic competence courses are offered in ELTEP of Türkiye when compared to that of Kyrgyzstan.

### Courses for Developing Pedagogic Competence

The similarities and differences between the ELTEPs in Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan in terms of the courses addressing pedagogic competence are presented in Table 3. It is apparent from Table 3 that there is a considerable difference regarding the credits of pedagogic courses. The ELTEP curriculum in Türkiye contains 154 credits for pedagogic competence courses. In contrast, the ELTEP of Kyrgyzstan contains only 54 credits. In other words, whereas pedagogic competence courses comprise 64% of total 240 credits of ELTEP in Türkiye, they comprise almost 22% of total 240 credits in Kyrgyzstan ELTEP.

**Table 3.** Turkish and Kyrgyzstan curricula courses addressing pedagogic competence.

TURKIYE	KYRGYZSTAN
1. Introduction to Education	1. Educational Psychology 1
2. Educational Sociology	2. Pedagogy1
3. Educational Philosophy	3. Educational Psychology 2
4. Educational Psychology	4. Pedagogy 2
5. Teaching Principles and Methods	5. Practice Placement
6. Instructional Technologies	6. Methods of ELT1
7. Approaches to English Language Learning and Teaching	7. Methods of ELT 2
8. Professional Knowledge Elective 1	8. Prof/Basic/Practice
9. Subject Teaching Elective 1	9. Methods of ELT 3
10. Turkish Educational History	10. Prof/Basic/Practice
11. Research Methods in Education	
12. English Language Teaching Programs	
13. Subject Teaching Elective 2	
14. Professional Knowledge Elective 2	
15. Classroom Management	
16. Morality and Ethics in Education	
17. Teaching English to Young Learners I	
18. Teaching English Language Skills I	

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19. Language and Literature Teaching I
20. Professional Knowledge Elective 3
21. Subject Teaching Elective 3
22. Testing and Evaluation in Education
23. Turkish Education System and School Management
24. Teaching English to Young Learners
25. Teaching English Language Skills I
26. Language and Literature Teaching I
27. Subject Teaching Elective 4
28. Professional Knowledge Elective 4
29. Special Education and Inclusion
30. Course Content Development in English Language Teaching
31. Teaching Practice I
32. Professional Knowledge Elective 5
33. Subject Teaching Elective 5
34. Counselling at Schools
35. Test Preparation in English Language Teaching
36. Teaching Practice II
37. Professional Knowledge Elective 6
38. Subject Teaching Elective 6
Total credits 154

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Total credits 54

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Moreover, the numbers of the pedagogic courses in two curricula have a dramatic difference. ELTEP in Türkiye consists of 38 courses related to pedagogic competence. To put it simply, pedagogic competence courses comprise 58% of total 66 courses of ELTEP in Türkiye. However, ELTEP of Kyrgyzstan consists just 10 courses and they comprise approximately 14 % of total 72 courses. It is clear that English teacher candidates in Türkiye are exposed to pedagogic competence courses more than their Kyrgyz counterparts are.

### Courses for Developing General Knowledge Competence

Apart from linguistic and pedagogic courses, there are some other courses in the two ELTEPs for developing prospective teachers' general knowledge competence. Considering the courses addressing general knowledge competence, the analysis of the two curricula shows a slight difference in terms of the course credits. As presented in the Table 4, the ELTEP curriculum in Türkiye contains 42 credits for general competence courses and the ELTEP of Kyrgyzstan contains 54 credits. General knowledge competence courses comprise almost 18% of the total 240 credits of ELTEP in Türkiye and general knowledge competence courses of Kyrgyzstan ELTEP comprise approximately 23% of the total 240 credits. It is significant to mention that the percentages of the general knowledge competence course credits are close to each other.

**Table 4.** Turkish and Kyrgyzstan curricula courses addressing general knowledge competence.

TURKIYE	KYRGYZSTAN
1. Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History 1	1. Introduction to Linguistics (Kyrgyz)
2. Information Technologies	2. Russian Language
3. Turkish Language 1	3. Introduction to Manas Studies
4. Foreign Language 1	4. Ecology
5. Atatürk's Principles and Revolution History 2	5. Maths
6. Turkish Language 2	6. Physical Training 1
7. Foreign Language 2	7. Russian Language 2
8. General Knowledge Elective 1	8. Kyrgyz Language 1

9. General Knowledge Elective 2	9. Computer skills
10. General Knowledge Elective 3	10. Law
11. General Knowledge Elective 4	11. Migration and Time
12. Community Service Practices	12. Kyrgyz Language 2
	13. Anatomy
	14. Philosophy
	15. Geography
	16. History of Kyrgyzstan
	17. Natural Science
	18. Physical Training 2
	19. Kyrgyz Language 2
	20. Attestation
	21. Elective Course (Computer skills)
	22. Safety Life of Humans
	23. Intercultural Communication
Total credits 42	Total credits 55

The most obvious finding to emerge from Table 4 is that the number of the general knowledge competence courses in two curricula has a moderate difference. ELTEP in Türkiye consists of 12 courses related to general knowledge competence. To put it in a different way, general knowledge competence courses comprise 18% of the total 66 courses of ELTEP in Türkiye. ELTEP of Kyrgyzstan consists of 23 courses and they comprise 32% of the total 72 courses. The number of the general knowledge courses of ELTEP of Kyrgyzstan is higher than that of ELTEP of Türkiye.

In this study, ELTEPs in Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan were compared in terms of their general characteristics, the number and distribution of courses related to linguistic, pedagogic, and general knowledge competencies. Four-year undergraduate ELTEP of Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University from Türkiye and ELTEP of Batken University from Kyrgyzstan were chosen to be compared. On the other hand, no detailed information on the course contents or about contextual factors which may have any possible effects on ELTEP curricula under scrutiny were taken into consideration. As the findings put forth, there were both similarities and differences between the two programs.

The first difference between the two programs in terms of their basic characteristics was that Türkiye's ELTEP is tied to a centralized system, while Kyrgyzstan's is decentralized, which is the same case in Kazakhstan as well (Baimbetova & Çakır, 2011). This may be causing some practices that vary from university to university in Kyrgyzstan. However, nearly all universities in Türkiye and the programs they offer must comply with the legislation determined by CoHE, and there are no university-related differences across the country. Both ELTEPs last for four years. However, there is one-year preparatory class for the students who are not successful in the proficiency test they take before they start to ELTEP in Türkiye, which is different from Kyrgyzstan. In this one-year preparatory class in Türkiye, students of ELTEP take intensive linguistic skills courses. Another difference between the two ELTEPs in terms of their general characteristics is the total number of lesson hours. While there are 2170 hours, 1974 of which are theoretical and 196 of are practical in Turkish ELTEP, this number is 850 less lesson hours (totally 3020 lesson hours) than the number of courses in Kyrgyz ELTEP. While 1098 of these 3020 hours consist of theoretical courses, the remaining 1922 hours consist of practical courses, which is almost ten times more than the number of Turkish ELTEP practical lesson hours. From this point of view, the long hours of practice lessons in the Kyrgyz ELTEP are a great advantage for their prospective English teachers to see or experience the knowledge they learned in the theoretical lessons in practice. This point was also touched on in Kic-Drgas and Çomoğlu (2017) by mentioning the inadequate hours of practical courses in Türkiye when compared with the longer hours in Poland. Although there are more total lesson hours in Kyrgyzstan, the

total number of courses throughout the ELTEP does not differ so much between two curricula. There is a total number of 66 courses, 50 of which are compulsory and 16 are elective, in Türkiye; and 72 courses, 63 of which are compulsory in Kyrgyzstan. Similarly, the comparative study done by Karakaş and Yavuz (2018) between the ELTEPs of Türkiye and Malaysia revealed that Malaysia also has more compulsory courses plus religion-related courses than Türkiye. The third difference is that while there is no final examination to graduate from Turkish ELTEP, there is one in the Kyrgyz's and also a qualification work like a thesis to be accepted as a graduation work of that ELTEP. Lastly, two curricula differ in terms of employment opportunities after graduation. The Turkish prospective teachers of English language have to enter PPSE plus an oral exam to become a teacher at state schools (primary, secondary or high schools). There is no PPSE exam requirement for graduates only if they want to teach in private schools. However, there is no such an exam for ELTEP graduates to become teachers in Kyrgyzstan. This may mean that Turkish graduates find it harder to find a job after graduation and they will have anxiety about finding a job. They can work in private schools in their early career years as an obligation since they cannot find a job with a satisfactory salary immediately after graduation. As a matter of fact, their salaries at private schools are usually below-average when compared to the ones working in state schools. On the other hand, Kyrgyz graduates of ELTEP may teach in private schools even becoming in the administrative staff with higher salaries than working in the state schools. This is an important issue that enables them to be on the firm ground in the first years of their careers and to look to the future with more confidence. When the general characteristics of the two ELTEPs are compared in terms of their similar aspects, it was found that both programs have 240 ECTS credits requirements for graduation and the compulsory teaching practice periods are during the 7th and 8th semesters.

Another aspect of the study that searched for the similarities and differences between the two ELTEPs was the courses related to the linguistic competence. In Turkish ELTEP, only 44 credits (18%) of the total 240 ECTS of the program, in other words 16 (24%) of the total 66 courses, are linguistic competency courses, while in Kyrgyzstan more than half of the 240 ECTS –131 credits (55%), (39/72 courses, 54%) –consists of these courses. The reason for the fewer linguistic competence courses in the Turkish ELTEP may be that the students study at the preparatory school for one year before they start to the program. There are preparatory schools, schools of foreign languages, and preparatory departments in universities that provide foreign language education to address the problem of foreign language in Türkiye and to bring students up to a sufficient level in foreign languages (Özkanal & Hakan, 2010). Preparing the students of the ELT department with a linguistically intensive one-year preparatory school provides the opportunity to include pedagogic courses that will prepare them for teaching, instead of the linguistic competency courses that they already have sufficient knowledge of when they move to the department.

When it comes to courses developing the pedagogic competence of students in ELTEP, it turned out that the program with fewer courses is that of the Kyrgyz ELTEP. While the credits of pedagogic competence courses required to be completed by Turkish students is 154, this number is only 54 for Kyrgyz ELTEP. When the names of the courses in Turkish ELTEP aiming to develop pedagogic competence are examined, it is seen that there are 38 different courses. Among these, there were such lessons aimed at improving important teaching skills to become competent teachers such as Classroom Management, Teaching English to Young Learners, Instructional Technologies, Language and Literature Teaching, Testing and Evaluation, Turkish Educational System and School Management, Special Education and Inclusion, Course Content and Development in ELT, Counselling at Schools and Test Preparation in ELT. These aforementioned courses help prospective teachers gain different teaching perspectives, by giving them the opportunity to learn the theoretical knowledge of how to create an effective learning and teaching environment by applying various

teaching methods and strategies for learners from different age groups with different learning styles. For instance, the students of ELTEP may do their practicum courses in primary schools, so the theoretical knowledge they gained in Teaching English to Young Learners will be beneficial for them to put into practice. As it is a well-known fact that there are great differences between what and how to teach English to a child and an adult. Ellis (2014) indicated that because of physical, psychological, social, emotional, conceptual and cognitive developmental differences, there should be a distinction between learners who are under and above 11 or 12 years old. These differences usually cause some different teaching approaches to teach them. According to Hird et al. (2000), despite some common practices of young learners and adults among English language teachers, they also differ in the teaching strategies they utilize in their courses, proving that the age of the students affects what language teachers do in their classrooms. Another crucial course for ELTEP is Testing and Evaluation. Language testing is regarded as a “notoriously difficult domain of knowledge for students in second language teacher education programs” because of the complexity between its theory and practice (O’Loughlin, 2006, p. 71). English teachers will not only teach but also test and evaluate their learners; thus, they should know how to do this. In this regard, including such a course in ELTEP should be seen as a must to equip the prospective language teachers with the required knowledge. However, when the ELTEP of Kyrgyzstan was analyzed, it is apparent that they have only 10 courses aimed at developing the pedagogic competence with too general names such as Methods, Pedagogy and Educational Psychology. In this vein, the present study is in line with that of Baimbetova and Çakır (2021). Their study also indicated that Turkish ELTEP had more pedagogic and fewer linguistic courses when compared to Kazakh ELTEP. Like the Turkish ELTEP, Japan ELTEP, when compared to that of American (Wieczorek, 2008) and Australian ELTEP, when compared to Vietnamese (Nguyen, 2013) turned out to have stronger curricula in terms of contextual, pedagogic and skills competencies which brought about engaged learners in a stronger classroom atmosphere with the positive effect of including different courses.

The last aspect under scrutiny was the courses offered on general knowledge. Although it seems that there is a slight difference in the credits of general knowledge courses of two curricula (42 ECTS credits in Turkish ELTEP and 55 ECTS credits in Kyrgyzstan), the number of courses related to general knowledge in Kyrgyz ELTEP (22 courses) is higher than the one in Turkish ELTEP (12 courses). Although the number of the courses is high, their equivalences in the credit system seem lower. However, the variety of courses such as Migration and Time, Ecology, Law, Anatomy, Geography, Natural Science, etc. is like an opportunity presented for prospective teachers in Kyrgyz ELTEP to think and develop themselves in a multidimensional way. Contrary to the situation in pedagogic competence courses, the general knowledge courses in Turkish ELTEP are insufficient both in number and in variety. General cultural knowledge, which is one of the three main pillars of teacher training, together with academic subject knowledge and pedagogic knowledge, has been the most neglected topic in Türkiye’s process of modernizing undergraduate education programs (Sağdıç, 2020). Considering the refugees coming to Türkiye, migration is also a very current issue for Türkiye. However, the absence of a related course in the curriculum of a language such as English, which will enable communication with different people and cultures, can be considered as a lacking point. In this regard, the current study is in line with Kic-Drgas and Çomoğlu (2017), since they also indicated that the number of courses on general knowledge in Türkiye was insufficient when compared to that of Poland’s. Kyrgyz ELTEP, by providing various general knowledge courses for its prospective English teachers, encourages them to become competent and knowledgeable teachers in numerous ways. A qualified general knowledge curriculum is essential for increasing global awareness, better recognizing cultural legacy, and better understanding the indivisibility of human knowledge and its interwoven nature (Freedman, 2001).

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In sum, the current comparative study aimed at shedding light on the similarities and differences between ELTEPs of two different countries, namely Türkiye and Kyrgyzstan and drawing some implications for both parties to improve the quality of ELTEPs offered. Since we live in a multicultural era, it is of great importance to keep up with the recent trends in education not to fall behind the world and to deal with the needs and weaker points by learning from each other to improve the current situation. In other words, the main purpose of the study was to present suggestions and implications for improvement for each program by taking into consideration the superior or stronger aspects of each one when compared to the other. There appeared some important implications for both ELTEPs.

For the side of Turkish ELTEP; the number of practical courses should be increased since the knowledge taken from courses cannot remain on the theoretical level, but should be applied in an appropriate and effective way during practicum. At the end of the 4-year ELTEP, a final exam or a qualification work as in Kyrgyz ELTEP where a certain score is expected can be included in the Turkish program as well. This can provide feedback for the program's efficacy on the level of knowledge that the students have learned in all semesters and their readiness to teach, as well as their overall grade point averages (GPAs). In addition, students who both fulfil the requirements of the program and get a passing grade in the qualification work can graduate as more qualified language teacher candidates. The number and variety of courses on general competence may be increased in order to improve the quality of the education in the program. As in the Kyrgyz ELTEP, some courses related to current topics in the country such as Migration and Time, Law, Attestation, etc. can be included in the ELTEP of Türkiye as well. These courses should be culture or country specific as well. For instance, the course "Law" can provide prospective teachers with important gains in terms of what rights they or their students will have when they become real teachers of English.

For the Kyrgyz ELTEP; a centralized system such as CoHE in Türkiye can eliminate the ambiguities resulting from different practices among universities in Kyrgyzstan. Instead of having too many courses on linguistic competency, the program can offer a preparatory class for the prospective teachers of ELTEP. By this way, they will start the department as they will be linguistically more competent. Since teaching a foreign language is not a one-dimensional issue, providing more pedagogic courses focusing on the methodological issues in a multi-dimensional way may be very beneficial on behalf of Kyrgyz ELTEP. Moreover, the scope of the courses should be enlarged as the ones in Turkish ELTEP. Courses which will equip the prospective teachers with the knowledge of different teaching strategies and methods for different learners from different age groups or with special needs or different learning styles, testing and evaluation process in ELT, technology use in foreign language education, etc. should be added into the program as the necessary pedagogic courses instead of having too many linguistic ones. The names of the pedagogic courses should be renamed to cover a more focused area rather than being too general, just like the more specific ones in Turkish ELTEP such as Teaching English to Young Learners, Instructional Technologies, Language and Literature Teaching, etc. The credit equivalences of the courses on general knowledge can be increased since there are more course numbers but fewer credits for the related courses. In that way, prospective teachers may attach more importance to such lessons as they help them become better teachers with better world knowledge.

As for further research studies, student teachers and program instructors can be interviewed or observed. Furthermore, it can be better to collect the syllabi of the courses and make a more detailed analysis.

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