



**A MIXED-METHODS STUDY ON PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS'
PREPAREDNESS TO TEACH ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS IN TURKEY**

Master of Arts Thesis

Burcu ZENGİN

Eskişehir 2025

**A MIXED-METHODS STUDY ON PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS'
PREPAREDNESS TO TEACH ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS IN TURKEY**

Burcu ZENGİN

Master of Arts THESIS

Department of Foreign Language Education

English Language Teaching Program

Advisor: Asst. Prof. Dilek ÜNÜGÜR ÇALIŞKAN

Anadolu University

Graduate School of Educational Sciences

June 2025

Eskişehir

JÜRİ VE ENSTİTÜ ONAYI



ÖZET

TÜRKİYE’DE ÇOCUKLARA İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETİMİNDE HİZMET ÖNCESİ İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN HAZIRLIK DURUMLARI ÜZERİNE BİR KARMA YÖNTEM ÇALIŞMASI

Burcu ZENGİN

Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı, İngilizce Öğretmenliği Programı

Anadolu Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü, Haziran 2025

Danışman: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi DİLEK ÜNÜGÜR ÇALIŞKAN

Bu karma yöntemli çalışma, Türkiye'deki hizmet öncesi İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının çocuklara İngilizce öğretme konusundaki hazırlık düzeylerine ilişkin algılarını incelemektedir. İngilizcenin ilkökul düzeyinde zorunlu ders hâline gelmesinin ardından, yaşa uygun öğretmen eğitimi ihtiyacı artmıştır. Ancak mevcut araştırmalar, çocuklara İngilizce öğretimi (TEYL) bağlamında teorik eğitim ile sınıf içi uygulamalar arasındaki uyumsuzluğa dikkat çekmektedir. Bu sorunu ele almak amacıyla araştırmada açıklayıcı sıralı desen kullanılmış; 92 son sınıf İngilizce öğretmenliği öğrencisinden nicel veriler toplanmış ve ardından sekiz gönüllüyle yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Nicel bulgular, cinsiyet veya not ortalamasına bağlı anlamlı bir fark olmaksızın, öğretmen adaylarının genelde yüksek bir hazırlık algısına sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Buna karşılık, nitel veriler sınıf yönetimi, materyal geliştirme, duygusal yeterlik ve özellikle çocuklarla çalışma deneyiminin eksikliği gibi temel sorunlara işaret etmektedir. Katılımcılar ayrıca, TEYL derslerinin içeriği ve öğretmenlik uygulamalarının geliştirilmesine yönelik önerilerde bulunmuştur. Çalışma, öğretmen adaylarının genel olarak kendilerini hazırlıklı hissettiklerini ancak bu hazırlık algısının alanlara göre değişkenlik gösterdiğini ve çoğunlukla pratik deneyimlere bağlı olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bulgular, Türkiye'deki öğretmen yetiştirme programlarında TEYL dersleri ve öğretmenlik uygulaması politikalarının geliştirilmesine yönelik önemli çıkarımlar sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hizmet öncesi öğretmenler, Genç öğrenenler, Öğretmen hazırlık düzeyi, Çocuklara İngilizce öğretimi (TEYL)

ABSTRACT

A MIXED-METHODS STUDY ON PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS' PREPAREDNESS TO TEACH ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS IN TURKEY

Burcu ZENGİN

Department of Foreign Language Education

English Language Teaching Program

Anadolu University, Graduate School of Educational Sciences, June 2025

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dilek ÜNÜGÜR ÇALIŞKAN

This mixed-methods study explores the perceived preparedness of pre-service English language teachers in Turkey to teach English to young learners (YLS). Following the introduction of English as a compulsory subject in primary education, the need for age-appropriate teacher training has grown. However, existing research highlights a gap between theoretical instruction and real classroom demands in TEYL (Teaching English to Young Learners) contexts. To address this, the study used an explanatory sequential design, collecting quantitative data from 92 senior ELT students and qualitative data through interviews with eight volunteers. Quantitative results indicated generally high levels of perceived preparedness, with no significant differences based on gender or GPA. In contrast, the qualitative findings revealed key challenges, including a lack of teaching practice experience with YLS, difficulties in classroom management, material development, and emotional preparedness. Participants also emphasized the importance of hands-on experience and suggested improvements to course design and the structure of the teaching practice component. The study concludes that while senior ELT students report feeling prepared overall, their sense of preparedness is varied and often dependent on practical exposure. The findings offer valuable implications for improving TEYL courses and teaching practice policies in teacher education programs in Turkey.

Keywords: Pre-service teachers, Young learners, Teacher preparedness, TEYL



*To my beloved parents,
Selahattin & Serpil Zengin*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all those who supported and guided me throughout the preparation of this thesis.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Dilek ÜNÜGÜR ÇALIŞKAN, for her invaluable guidance, thoughtful feedback, and continuous support at every stage of this research. Her insightful supervision and steady encouragement gave me both confidence and direction throughout this journey.

I extend my sincere thanks to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Meral CEYLAN and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa CANER for their invaluable contributions as members of my thesis jury. Their thorough reading, critical feedback, and academic generosity significantly contributed to the enhancement of this research.

Moreover, I am sincerely grateful to the Faculty of Education at Anadolu University for providing the institutional support necessary for the implementation of this research. I would also like to thank the senior ELT students who participated in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. Without their contributions and willingness to share their perspectives, this research would not have been possible.

I am especially thankful to my family, my parents and my brother, for always being there for me. Their steady presence gave me strength during difficult times, and their sincere concern reminded me that my well-being always comes first. I am truly grateful for their unwavering support, patience, and heartfelt belief in me throughout this journey.

Finally, I am also grateful to my friends who stood by me throughout this process with their encouragement, insight, and presence. I especially thank those whose calm advice and quiet strength helped me persevere when I felt most overwhelmed.

Burcu ZENGİN

June, 2025

Tarih: 11/06/2023

ETİK İLKE VE KURALLARA UYGUNLUK BEYANNAMESİ

Bu tezin bana ait, özgün bir çalışma olduğunu; çalışmamın hazırlık, veri toplama, analiz ve bilgilerin sunumu olmak üzere tüm aşamalarında bilimsel etik ilke ve kurallara uygun davrandığımı; bu çalışma kapsamında elde edilen tüm veri ve bilgiler için kaynak gösterdiğimi ve bu kaynaklara kaynakçada yer verdiğimi; bu çalışmamın Anadolu Üniversitesi tarafından kullanılan “Bilimsel İntihal Tespit Programı”yla tarandığını ve hiçbir şekilde “intihal içermediğini” beyan ederim. Herhangi bir zamanda, çalışmamla ilgili yaptığım bu beyana aykırı bir durumun saptanması durumunda, ortaya çıkacak tüm ahlaki ve hukuki sonuçları kabul ettiğimi bildiririm.

Burcu ZENGİN

Date: 11/06/2025

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND RULES

I hereby truthfully declare that this thesis is an original work prepared by me: that I have behaved by the scientific ethical principles and rules throughout the stages of preparation, data collection, analysis and presentation of my work; that I have cited the sources of all the data and information that could be obtained within the scope of this study, and included these sources in the references section; and that this study has been scanned for plagiarism with “Scientific Plagiarism Detection Program” used by Anadolu University, and that “it does not have any plagiarism” whatsoever. I also declare that, if a case contrary to my declaration is detected in my work at any time, I hereby express my consent to all the ethical and legal consequences that are involved.

Burcu ZENGİN

ÜRETKEN YAPAY ZEKÂ KULLANIM BEYANI

Bu tezi hazırlarken üretken yapay zekâ programlarından destek almadığımı beyan ederim.

Herhangi bir zamanda, çalışmamla ilgili yaptığım bu beyana aykırı bir durumun saptanması durumunda, ortaya çıkacak tüm ahlaki ve hukuki sonuçları kabul ettiğimi bildiririm.

Burcu ZENGİN

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USAGE

I declare that I did not receive support from generative artificial intelligence programs while preparing this thesis.

I also declare that, if a case contrary to my declaration is detected in my work at any time, I hereby express my consent to all the ethical and legal consequences that are involved.

Burcu ZENGİN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
COVER PAGE	i
FINAL APPROVAL FOR THESIS	ii
ÖZET	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
ETİK İLKE VE KURALLARA UYGUNLUK BEYANNAMESİ	vii
STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND RULES	viii
ÜRETKEN YAPAY ZEKÂ KULLANIM BEYANI	ix
DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USAGE	x
TABLE OF CONTENTS	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xvi
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Background of the Study	3
1.2. Statement of the Problem	5
1.3. Significance of the Study	7
1.4. Purpose of the Study	8
1.5. Research Questions	9
1.6. Definition of Key Terms	9
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.1. The Structure and Content of ELT Programs in Turkey: Implications for Teaching Young Learners	11
2.2. Early English Language and Young Learners in Turkey	13
2.3. Pre-service Teachers' Preparedness for Teaching Young Learners	16
2.4. Challenges and Realities of Teaching English to Young Learners	18
2.5. Conclusion of the Literature Review	21

	<u>Page</u>
3. METHODOLOGY	23
3.1. Research Design	23
3.2. Participants	25
3.3. Setting	28
3.4. Data Collection Tools	29
3.4.1. Quantitative data collection tool (Preparedness to teach scale) .	29
3.4.1. Qualitative data collection tool (Semi-structured interviews) ...	31
3.5. Data Collection Procedure	33
3.5.1. Quantitative data collection	33
3.5.2. Qualitative data collection	34
3.6. Data Analysis	35
3.6.1. Quantitative data analysis	35
3.6.2. Qualitative data analysis	37
4. RESULTS	40
4.1. Quantitative Results	40
4.1.1. Descriptive results: General preparedness levels	41
4.1.2. Descriptive results by sub-dimensions	43
4.1.3. Comparison of preparedness scores by gender	45
4.1.4. Comparison of preparedness scores by GPA	46
4.2. Qualitative Results	48
4.2.1. Emerging themes	49
4.2.1.1. Practical experience	50
4.2.1.2. Theory–practice gap	52
4.2.1.3. Classroom management and instruction	53
4.2.1.4. Material development	55
4.2.1.4.1. Digital material use and technology integration	57
4.2.1.5. Emotional preparedness	59
4.2.1.6. Suggestions for curriculum improvement	60
4.2.2. Summary of themes	62
5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	65
5.1. Discussion	65

	<u>Page</u>
5.1.1. Discussion of the quantitative results	65
5.1.2. Discussion of the qualitative results	68
5.2. Conclusion	72
5.2.1. Implications	74
5.2.2. Limitations of the study	76
5.2.3. Recommendations for further research	78
REFERENCES	80
APPENDICES	
CURRICULUM VITAE	



LIST OF TABLES

	<u>Page</u>
Table 3.1. Demographic characteristics of the quantitative participants (n = 92)	26
Table 3.2. Teaching practice school levels of interview participants during their final year	27
Table 3.3. Classification of perceived preparedness levels based on Likert scale scores	36
Table 4.1. Descriptive statistics for PTS items (n = 92)	42
Table 4.2. Descriptive statistics by sub-dimensions	44
Table 4.3. Descriptive statistics by gender	45
Table 4.4. Independent samples t-test results for preparedness scores by gender	46
Table 4.5. Descriptive statistics of preparedness scores by GPA group	47
Table 4.6. One-way ANOVA Results for preparedness scores by GPA group	48
Table 5.1. Research questions and conclusions: A summary of key findings	73

LIST OF FIGURES

	<u>Page</u>
Figure 4.1. Distribution of preparedness levels among pre-service teachers	42
Figure 4.2. Mean preparedness scores by sub-dimensions	44
Figure 4.3. Mean preparedness scores by GPA group	48
Figure 4.4. Emerging themes from the qualitative analysis	50



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	: English as a Foreign Language
ELT	: English Language Teaching
GPA	: Grade Point Average
MoNE	: Ministry of National Education
PTS	: Preparedness to Teach Scale
TEYL	: Teaching English to Young Learners
TYYÇ	: National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Turkey
YLS	: Young Learners
YÖK	: Council of Higher Education

1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Turkey has placed increasing emphasis on English language education at earlier stages of schooling. This emphasis culminated in a major curricular reform in 2013, when the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) officially introduced English as a compulsory subject beginning in the second grade of primary school. The policy was framed as part of a broader strategy to improve students' communicative competence in English and align the national curriculum with global educational standards (MoNE, 2013). By initiating English language instruction at a younger age, policymakers aimed to provide learners with extended exposure to the language throughout their schooling years, in the hopes of fostering greater linguistic proficiency and intercultural competence. The reform also reflected a growing awareness among teacher candidates and educators that early English language instruction could support children's long-term academic development and facilitate a more natural acquisition of the language (Kırkgöz, 2017; Sönmez & Köksal, 2022).

As a consequence of this policy shift, there has been a sharp increase in the demand for English language teachers who are well-prepared to work with young learners (YLS). Teaching English to children is fundamentally different from teaching adolescents or adults; it requires not only a strong command of the English language but also an in-depth understanding of child development, age-appropriate instructional techniques, and classroom management strategies tailored to younger age groups. Pedagogical methods such as storytelling, songs, games, and visual materials are often emphasized in the TEYL (Teaching English to Young Learners) literature as essential tools to sustain attention, foster motivation, and facilitate language acquisition among children (Bakhsh, 2016; Cameron, 2001; Pinter, 2014).

Children bring distinct developmental needs and learning styles to the classroom, which means that teaching English at the primary level requires more than simply adapting materials for a younger audience. Young learners often need variety, movement, emotional connection, and concrete tasks to stay engaged and absorb new language effectively. Teachers must be able to respond flexibly to their students' behaviour, sustain interest through creative activities, and manage the classroom in a way that balances fun with structure. Rather than relying solely on theoretical knowledge, effective TEYL instruction depends on a teacher's ability to interpret young learners' needs in real time

and create a learning environment that is both nurturing and cognitively stimulating (Bakhsh, 2016; Pinter, 2014; Soraya, Eryani, Andiyan, & Astuti, 2022).

Despite the growing prominence of early English language education in Turkey, multiple studies suggest that pre-service English teachers often feel unprepared to meet the unique challenges posed by YL classrooms (Gürsoy, Korkmaz, & Damar, 2013). In many teacher education programs, theoretical coursework dominates the curriculum, while practical training, particularly that involving direct experience with young children, remains limited. Courses such as “Teaching English to Young Learners I & II,” which are intended to fill this gap, have been subject to criticism regarding their effectiveness in preparing pre-service teachers for real classroom experiences. Some studies suggest that these courses may lack sufficient interactive and hands-on components, potentially limiting the pedagogical development of teacher candidates (Önal, 2023). Consequently, pre-service teachers may graduate with strong theoretical foundations but without the confidence, flexibility, or pedagogical intuition required to navigate the complexities of YL instruction.

Given the developmental characteristics of young learners and the pedagogical demands of early language education, the effectiveness of English language teacher education programs deserves close examination. Pre-service teachers must be prepared not only in terms of content knowledge and general pedagogical theory but also in developmentally appropriate practices, classroom-based problem solving, and emotional resilience (López, 2023). Without such preparation, the disconnect between training and classroom realities can undermine both teacher confidence and student outcomes.

In this context, it becomes imperative to investigate the current state of pre-service teacher education in Turkey, particularly as it relates to preparedness for TEYL. Understanding how teacher candidates perceive their preparedness, which factors shape this perception, and where gaps exist between university instruction and practical teaching will provide valuable insights for program reform and teacher development. This study seeks to address these needs by exploring the experiences and perceptions of senior ELT students in Turkey, thereby contributing to the growing body of literature on early English education and teacher preparation.

1.1. Background of the Study

The integration of English as a compulsory subject starting from the second grade in Turkey marked a major policy shift in the national language education agenda. Prior to this change, English instruction was commonly introduced at the secondary level. However, in response to globalisation, increasing demands for multilingual proficiency, and alignment with international educational standards, the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) launched a set of reforms aimed at lowering the age of foreign language learning (Kırkgöz, 2017; MoNE, 2013). The 2013 policy reform, which positioned English as a mandatory subject in early primary education, was strongly supported by research in second language acquisition. These studies highlight that earlier exposure to language learning tends to produce more positive long-term outcomes in pronunciation, fluency, and intercultural competence (Cameron, 2001; Nikolov & Djigunović, 2006).

While this shift created new learning opportunities for children, it also brought significant responsibilities for teacher education programs. The earlier introduction of English requires pre-service teachers to be equipped not only with subject matter knowledge, but also with skills specific to early childhood education. These include understanding the cognitive and emotional development of young learners, designing age-appropriate materials, managing classroom behaviour, and supporting early literacy in English (McKay, 2006; Pinter, 2014). However, many ELT programs in Turkey were not originally structured to meet these age-specific demands, as their focus traditionally centred on teaching adolescents or adults.

Many ELT programs in Turkey have included courses such as “*Teaching English to Young Learners I & II*” as either elective or compulsory components. However, some concerns have been raised that these courses may place more emphasis on theoretical knowledge than on practical experience, particularly in terms of classroom application (Yahşi, 2020). Moreover, teaching practice placements for pre-service teachers are not always guaranteed to occur in primary school settings, which may limit their opportunities to gain experience with younger learners. As a result, teacher candidates may complete their training without ever having taught or observed a young learner classroom, leading to a persistent gap between theory and practice.

In parallel with these structural limitations, some research has also highlighted that teacher candidates' perceptions of preparedness may vary depending on individual characteristics such as gender and academic achievement. For instance, studies have shown that female pre-service teachers often report higher levels of perceived preparedness in areas such as instructional planning and classroom interaction, which may be linked to differences in professional orientation and affective engagement (Aygün, 2019; Karaca, 2019). Similarly, candidates with higher GPA scores have been found to demonstrate stronger confidence in curriculum literacy and pedagogical implementation (Aygün, 2019). Including these variables in research does not suggest inherent differences in competence; rather, it provides an opportunity to understand how diverse learners experience teacher education. By investigating variables in the current study, it becomes possible to identify patterns of difference that may inform more equitable and responsive teacher preparation practices.

Moreover, while prior studies have explored these variables in general teacher education contexts, they have rarely, if ever, been examined specifically in relation to pre-service teachers' preparedness for Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL). In this respect, the present study contributes to the field by addressing an underexplored intersection between individual variation and TEYL-focused teacher preparedness. By bringing this lens into the TEYL domain, the study not only builds on existing findings in general teacher education but also helps to identify whether such differences manifest similarly, or differently, within the unique pedagogical demands of early English language instruction.

This broader consideration of both program structure and individual variation highlights a persistent disconnection between policy, training, and classroom expectations has raised questions about the alignment between ELT curricula and the demands of primary-level English instruction. Particularly for pre-service teachers nearing graduation, this misalignment may lead to feelings of unpreparedness, decreased teaching confidence, and difficulty in adapting to young learner environments. These concerns are echoed in both national and international research that highlights the need for more targeted, developmentally appropriate, and practice-based teacher education models for early language instruction (Zein & Butler, 2023; Zein & Garton, 2019).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Although early English language education has become a growing area of emphasis in national education policies in Turkey, concerns persist regarding how effectively teacher education programs prepare pre-service English language teachers for the demands of teaching young learners (YLS). The introduction of English as a compulsory subject beginning in the second grade has dramatically altered the expectations placed on language teachers, requiring them to possess not only linguistic proficiency but also a strong command of child-centred pedagogy (Gürsoy, Korkmaz, & Damar, 2013; Yavuz & Topkaya, 2013). However, current research suggests a gap between these expectations and the competencies pre-service teachers develop during their undergraduate studies.

Many ELT programs in Turkey offer courses such as Teaching English to Young Learners I & II, which may be delivered as a single-semester course, a two-part sequence, or as an elective depending on the institution. While these courses aim to address the needs of TEYL preparation, they have been described in some studies as placing relatively more emphasis on theoretical content than on practical classroom application. Some teacher candidates report limited opportunities to engage with primary-level teaching contexts, particularly when their teaching practice experiences take place in settings other than primary schools (Tekin & Baykara, 2023). As a result, many pre-service teachers enter the profession with limited experience in adapting materials, managing young learners, or implementing interactive, play-based teaching strategies, skills that are fundamental to success in TEYL classrooms. Many also report challenges in implementing interactive, play-based teaching strategies, skills that are considered essential for success in TEYL classrooms (Alyaz & Genç, 2016).

Another contributing factor is that existing ELT curricula are often not specifically designed with young learners in mind, offering limited specialisation for those intending to teach this age group (Öztürk & Aydın, 2019). Even when TEYL-related content is present, it is frequently confined to a single semester or elective format, thus failing to provide sustained pedagogical development. Inadequate preparation can lead to feelings of unpreparedness, lowered self-efficacy, and high levels of anxiety during the transition from training to classroom practice (İnceçay & Dollar, 2012; Uztosun, 2016).

Recent research from both international and Turkish contexts has revealed persistent challenges in preparing teachers to effectively teach English to young learners (YLS).

Large-scale investigations such as Garton, Copland, and Burns (2011) emphasised that pre- and in-service training for YL teachers needs to be considerably strengthened, particularly in pedagogical content knowledge and English language proficiency. Similar concerns are echoed in East Asian contexts, where teacher education programs often fail to provide adequate preparation for working with young learners due to a lack of specialised pedagogical models and limited professional development structures (Butler, 2015; Zein & Butler, 2023; Zein & Garton, 2019). In Finland, while early L2 education is broadly supported, teachers report facing challenges such as large class sizes, wide variation in student skills, and insufficient YL-specific teaching materials (Koyuncu, Kumpulainen, & Kuusisto, 2023).

In Turkey, pre-service teachers commonly express that their university education emphasizes theory over practice and leaves them underprepared for real classroom challenges such as managing young learners, adapting materials, or using interactive methods (Önal, 2023; Yahşi, 2020). For example, many feel unready to teach in pre-primary classrooms and lack confidence in applying what they learned to young age groups. Moreover, inadequate classroom management preparation and low self-efficacy among pre-service teachers remain common concerns (İnceçay & Dollar, 2012; Karaca, 2019). These findings suggest a consistent mismatch between teacher education programs and the demands of early English teaching, potentially weakening the effectiveness of early language instruction initiatives.

Given this context, there is a clear need for research that explores how pre-service English teachers perceive their preparedness to teach English to young learners. It is equally important to understand which factors contribute to or hinder their sense of preparedness. Without a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics, efforts to reform ELT programs may fall short of equipping future teachers with the competencies needed to implement effective early language teaching.

To contribute to a better understanding of this issue, the present study explores how senior ELT students in Turkey perceive their preparedness to teach young learners. It examines both the institutional factors shaping their training and the personal experiences that influence their sense of preparedness, with the aim of providing insights to inform future improvements in teacher education programs and policy.

1.3. Significance of the Study

The role of early English language education in Turkey has received increasing attention, particularly following the introduction of English as a compulsory subject in primary schools. This shift reflects broader global trends emphasising early language exposure as a foundation for long-term linguistic and cognitive development. However, the success of such policy reforms depends not only on curriculum design but also on the ability of teacher education programs to prepare future English teachers for the unique demands of teaching young learners (YLS) (Gürsoy, Korkmaz, & Damar, 2013; Kırkgöz, 2017). This study is significant in that it addresses the pressing question of whether current pre-service English language teacher education adequately equips candidates to meet those demands.

First, the study contributes to the academic literature on teacher preparedness in the context of Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL), a group that has received relatively limited research attention within the broader field of English language teacher education in Turkey. While various studies examine pre-service teacher training in general ELT contexts (Akdemir, 2019; Kaya, 2023), research that specifically addresses preparedness for teaching young learners appears to be relatively limited (Uysal & Yavuz, 2015). By investigating the perceptions of final-year pre-service teachers, this study offers insight into how they evaluate their preparedness to meet the unique demands of teaching children at the point of entering the profession.

Second, the findings are expected to provide practical implications for curriculum designers, teacher educators, and coordinators of teaching practice. Through its mixed-methods design, the study enables a more nuanced understanding of which components of pre-service training, such as course content, teaching practice exposure, or mentoring experiences, are perceived as most impactful in developing preparedness for teaching young learners. These insights may inform targeted improvements in TEYL preparation within ELT programs.

Third, the study holds policy relevance by drawing attention to potential gaps between national educational policy and teacher preparation practices. Although English instruction is mandated from the second grade onward by the Ministry of National Education, many pre-service teachers reportedly graduate with limited engagement in young learner contexts (Önal, 2023; Yahşi, 2020). Identifying such inconsistencies can

support future policy considerations related to teaching practice placement, curriculum alignment, and program accreditation standards.

Finally, by giving attention to the perspectives of pre-service teachers, the study aims to shed light on the experiences of those who are directly engaged with current teacher education practices. Their views may provide valuable input for institutions and offer a more personal dimension to ongoing discussions about teacher preparation and educational improvement. In doing so, the study seeks to support the development of teacher education practices that aim to align more closely with the pedagogical demands of early English education.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate how senior pre-service English language teachers in Turkey perceive their preparedness to teach English to young learners (YLS), in light of recent educational policies that prioritise early language instruction. While English has been formally introduced as a compulsory subject starting from the second grade, concerns persist regarding whether teacher education programs sufficiently equip future teachers with the practical skills and pedagogical knowledge required for young learner classrooms.

To explore this issue, the study employs a mixed-methods design, combining quantitative data from a self-report scale with qualitative findings from semi-structured interviews. The research aims to identify not only the overall level of perceived preparedness among participants but also the specific areas in which they feel most and least ready, such as classroom management, age-appropriate methodology, and material development.

By focusing on the views of final-year ELT students at Anadolu University, this study seeks to generate insight into the effectiveness of current ELT curricula and teaching practice experiences in preparing teacher candidates for the demands of TEYL. The findings are expected to inform teacher education practices, support program development, and contribute to the growing literature on pre-service teacher preparation for early English education.

1.5. Research Questions

This study investigates how well pre-service English language teachers in Turkey feel prepared to teach English to young learners. In line with the study's mixed-methods design, both quantitative and qualitative research questions have been formulated.

The quantitative part of the study focuses on the participants' self-perceived preparedness and examines whether this differs across demographic variables:

1. What is the perceived level of preparedness among senior pre-service English language teachers in Turkey to teach English to young learners?

1.1 Does perceived preparedness differ by gender?

1.2 Does perceived preparedness differ by academic achievement (GPA)?

The qualitative part aims to explore participants' personal views and reflections in more depth:

2. How do senior pre-service English language teachers perceive their preparedness to teach English to young learners, and what factors do they identify as contributing to or hindering their preparedness?

1.6. Definition of Key Terms

The definitions provided below are used consistently throughout the study, and readers are encouraged to refer to them when these terms appear in the text.

Young Learners (YLS): McKay (2006) defines young learners as children who begin learning a second or foreign language during the early years of formal education, typically within the first six or seven years of schooling. In most educational systems, this group includes primary or elementary school students, generally between the ages of five and twelve.

Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL): Puskás (2017) defines TEYL as an exciting and evolving field within the broader discipline of teaching English as a foreign or second language. She emphasises that, to design effective lessons, support skill development, and foster motivation among young learners, it is essential for teachers to understand the general characteristics and developmental needs of this target group.

Preparedness: According to Strakova (2015) preparedness refers to the internal sense of being ready to take on a professional task, taking into account all the educational and experiential components that influenced that feeling.



2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews key literature on early English language teaching (TEYL), with a focus on pre-service English teachers in Turkey. Section 2.1 examines the structure of Turkish ELT programs and their responsiveness to young learner needs. Section 2.2 introduces early English education and the developmental traits of young learners. Section 2.3 discusses how pre-service teachers perceive their preparedness, while 2.4 outlines the pedagogical, institutional, and emotional challenges of TEYL. Finally, section 2.5 synthesises major findings and justifies the present study by highlighting the need to explore pre-service teachers' perspectives on preparedness for teaching young learners.

2.1. The Structure and Content of ELT Programs in Turkey: Implications for Teaching Young Learners

English Language Teaching (ELT) programs in Turkey operate under the oversight of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), which defines the national curriculum framework for teacher education. In 2018, a comprehensive curriculum reform was introduced to align these programs with international standards, particularly those set by the Bologna Process. This reform emphasised learning outcomes, comparability of degrees, and teacher competencies, resulting in a shift toward a competency-based curriculum model (TYYÇ, 2022; YÖK, 2018).

The updated ELT curriculum consists of three primary components: Field Knowledge, Pedagogical Knowledge, and General Culture. While this tripartite design was intended to prepare pre-service teachers as both subject specialists and socially responsible educators, some researchers have raised concerns that it does not adequately address the specific pedagogical needs of those intending to teach English to young learners (Yaman, 2018).

A notable aspect of the 2018 curriculum is the inclusion of “*Teaching English to Young Learners I & II*” courses. These courses aim to equip pre-service teachers with knowledge of child development, classroom language use, and age-appropriate instructional strategies. However, despite their mandatory status, they are often scheduled in the later stages of the undergraduate program, in the third year, and tend to be delivered in a predominantly theoretical format (YÖK, 2018). As a result, pre-service teachers may

complete TEYL coursework without ever interacting with children or observing a primary school classroom.

This lack of experiential learning contributes to a broader concern: the difficulty of translating theory into effective practice. Studies show that teacher candidates often complete these modules with only a surface-level understanding of developmentally appropriate pedagogy and little to no practice in designing or delivering age-appropriate instruction (Yaman, 2018). This lack of experiential learning limits their ability to apply theoretical concepts in real classroom contexts, leaving them underprepared for the dynamic and interactive demands of young learner environments (Önal, 2023).

Another structural issue concerns the distribution and credit weight of essential pedagogy courses such as Teaching Language Skills and Material Design and Use in Language Teaching. In the 2018 curriculum, these courses often carry fewer credits than in the previous 2006 version, leading to concerns about insufficient coverage and depth (Yaman, 2018). The curriculum's overall contact hours were reduced, even though the number of required and elective courses increased. This raises questions about the balance between content breadth and pedagogical mastery, particularly for those entering the teaching profession without extensive teaching practice experience.

Another area of concern is the limited and often delayed inclusion of teaching practice experiences in ELT programs. Although the curriculum includes *Teaching Practice I & II*, these courses are typically scheduled in the final year, and due to institutional partnerships, many teacher candidates complete their teaching practice without interacting with young learners at all (Koç, 2023). This is particularly problematic considering that many graduates are eventually assigned to public primary schools where English teaching begins at the second grade.

When compared to teacher education systems in countries such as Finland and Poland, Turkey's ELT curriculum reveals some structural limitations. In Finland, pre-service teachers undergo extended teaching practice experiences throughout their education and receive specialised training in early childhood pedagogy (Koyuncu, Kumpulainen, & Kuusisto, 2023). Polish programs similarly embed practical modules in diverse school contexts, ensuring early and ongoing exposure to different learner groups

(Kic-Drgas & Çomoğlu, 2017). In contrast, Turkish ELT programs tend to delay teaching practice and do not typically offer specialisation tracks for teaching younger learners.

Following a policy shift in 2020, the Council of Higher Education granted universities greater curricular autonomy. Institutions were allowed to revise course contents and credit distributions as long as they adhered to national qualification frameworks such as TYYÇ (The National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Turkey) and respected the professional standards outlined by the Ministry of National Education (YÖK, 2020). This reform aimed to increase flexibility, promote responsiveness to local educational needs, and encourage program diversification. However, in practice, implementation has varied significantly across institutions. In some cases, key courses such as Teaching English to Young Learners were reduced to a single semester. Reflecting these concerns, Önal (2023) found that many pre-service teachers felt insufficiently prepared for teaching at the pre-primary level and suggested that ELT programs be restructured into distinct tracks for young learners and for adolescents/adults.

In conclusion, despite recent efforts to modernise ELT programs and promote curricular flexibility, substantial gaps remain in how Turkish teacher education prepares candidates for teaching English to young learners. The lack of age-appropriate teaching practice placements, the theoretical nature of TEYL instruction, and reduced emphasis on pedagogical skill development create a disconnect between pre-service training and the realities of early language education. Future reforms must prioritise practical immersion, early childhood pedagogical expertise, and developmental sensitivity across all stages of ELT preparation.

2.2. Early English Language Education and Young Learners in Turkey

The importance of early foreign language education has gained increasing recognition globally, and Turkey has actively participated in this trend. The prevailing belief in the field of second language acquisition is that earlier exposure to a foreign language leads to improved long-term linguistic, cognitive, and affective outcomes (Cameron, 2001; Nikolov & Djigunović, 2006). Starting language education at an early age utilises children's neuroplasticity and their natural capacity for language acquisition (Martin, Ketchabaw, & Turkeltaub, 2022).

In the Turkish context, a significant milestone in the expansion of early English education occurred with the curriculum reform of 2013 by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). This reform mandated English teaching beginning from the second grade in public primary schools (MoNE, 2013). The underlying rationale was to better equip future generations with communicative competence in English, considering its increasing importance as a global lingua franca. The policy shift aimed to align with international language education trends and enhance the quality of language acquisition to support national development goals (Sönmez & Köksal, 2022).

Young learners (YLS), generally considered to be children between the ages of 5 and 12, present specific developmental and pedagogical considerations. According to Pinter (2014), young learners are characterised by high curiosity, strong emotional responses, limited attention spans, and a preference for concrete and engaging learning experiences. These traits necessitate distinct teaching methodologies such as game-based learning, Total Physical Response (TPR), the use of songs and stories, and a visually rich classroom environment. These methods are intended not only to foster linguistic development but also to create positive emotional associations with language learning (Bakhsh, 2016).

Research in the Turkish context, however, suggests that the policy's implementation has not always met its original objectives. Several studies indicate a gap between curricular expectations and the realities encountered in primary school classrooms (Başok, 2020; Taşçı, 2023). One core issue lies in the limited availability of teachers who are specifically trained to work with young learners. Most English language teachers graduate from programs focused on general pedagogy and subject knowledge, without comprehensive training in child-centred instruction (Önal, 2023).

In addition to teacher training limitations, structural and systemic challenges further complicate early English teaching in Turkey. For instance, class sizes in many public schools are often large, making individualised instruction and interactive activities difficult to manage (Gürsoy, Korkmaz, & Damar, 2013). Inadequate physical resources and limited access to age-appropriate materials further reduce the effectiveness of the teaching process (Gustafsson, 2003). As a result, teachers often resort to using translation, grammar-focused instruction, or passive learning activities rather than employing communicative, play-based techniques suited for YLS.

Moreover, the exam-oriented culture that dominates Turkish education creates an additional barrier to communicative language teaching in the early years. The national focus on centralised testing at later stages of education pushes many schools to treat English lessons as a formality in the early years, rather than an opportunity for holistic language development. This test pressure, combined with curriculum overload, often discourages the use of creative, student-centred practices among teachers (Aksoy, 2023).

International comparisons offer valuable insights into how Turkey's early English language education practices can be strengthened. For example, in Finland and South Korea, English is introduced in early grades through immersive, child-centred environments that prioritise play, communication, and emotional well-being. In Finland specifically, early language instruction is often guided by educators with specialised qualifications in both language teaching and early childhood development, ensuring pedagogical alignment with children's cognitive and social needs (Koyuncu, Kumpulainen, & Kuusisto, 2023; Zein & Butler, 2023). These practices illustrate how systemic alignment and teacher specialisation can support more effective English instruction during the foundational years of schooling.

While Turkish education policies align with global trends in introducing English early, the support mechanisms for teachers remain relatively weak. Teachers often report feeling underprepared to manage young learner classrooms, especially regarding classroom management, differentiation, and age-appropriate instructional techniques (Camlibel-Acar, 2016). This issue is particularly relevant for pre-service English language teachers who may graduate without having had any practical experience with YLs through teaching practice placements.

In sum, while the integration of English into early primary education in Turkey is well-intentioned and theoretically justified, its practical success relies heavily on the preparedness of teachers to meet the developmental and pedagogical needs of young learners. Effective TEYL implementation requires not only curricular reform but also robust teacher training that addresses the specific challenges of working with children and promotes developmentally appropriate language instruction.

2.3. Pre-service English Teachers' Preparedness for Teaching Young Learners

Preparedness in teacher education refers to a pre-service teacher's internal sense of preparedness to take on professional teaching tasks, shaped by the combination of educational input and experiential learning opportunities throughout their training (Strakova, 2015). In the context of teaching English to young learners (YLS), this notion gains particular importance due to the unique challenges posed by early childhood classrooms. Teaching young children requires not only linguistic and subject-matter expertise but also sensitivity to their developmental needs, creativity, patience, and the ability to foster emotional connection and engagement (Garton, Copland, & Burns, 2011; Pinter, 2014). These qualities are essential in promoting motivation, managing behaviour, and delivering instruction that matches young learners' cognitive and emotional profiles.

Although many pre-service English teachers report confidence in their language proficiency and theoretical understanding, they frequently express uncertainty in managing classrooms, engaging young learners, and adapting instruction to match age-specific needs (Yahşi, 2020). This pattern suggests a recurring gap between university-based coursework and the dynamic realities of teaching children. Studies highlight the lack of experiential learning as a major factor undermining teacher preparedness in TEYL environments (Başok, 2020).

The presence of practical teaching experience during undergraduate education plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of preparedness. Pre-service teachers who have had early and regular exposure to YL classrooms, either through teaching practice placements, observations, or micro-teaching experiences, tend to report higher levels of preparedness (Rifattullah & Ciptaningrum, 2024). These experiences not only help bridge the gap between theory and practice but also allow candidates to develop classroom awareness, experiment with instructional techniques, and build confidence in managing real-time interactions (Can & Baştürk, 2018).

Specialised courses such as "*Teaching English to Young Learners I & II*" are designed to familiarise pre-service teachers with fundamental concepts related to child development, age-appropriate instructional strategies, and early language acquisition. While these courses offer valuable theoretical insights, some teacher candidates feel that they offer limited preparation for the practical demands of working with young learners (Yahşi, 2020). The absence of teaching practice-based components, such as classroom

observation or guided teaching practice, may reduce the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge in meaningful ways.

In addition to practical skills, how pre-service teachers perceive themselves as future professionals also plays a role in shaping their sense of preparedness. When teacher candidates develop a positive sense of identity and believe in their ability to handle the challenges of working with young learners, they are more likely to approach the profession with confidence and motivation. Feeling capable and supported during the training period not only enhances their classroom performance but also contributes to long-term satisfaction and commitment within the field of early language education (Uztosun, 2016).

Gender and academic achievement (GPA) have also been studied as potential variables influencing pre-service teachers' perceived preparedness. For example, Karaca (2019) reported significant gender-based differences in the domains of instructional planning and creating effective learning environments, with female participants perceiving themselves as more prepared. Similarly, Aygün (2019) found that female pre-service teachers had significantly higher levels of curriculum literacy and teacher preparedness. The same study also revealed a positive association between GPA and perceived preparedness, indicating that pre-service teachers with higher academic achievement felt more confident in their curriculum-related competencies. These findings suggest that demographic factors such as gender and GPA may influence specific dimensions of teacher preparedness, particularly in terms of planning instruction and understanding curriculum structures.

In contrast, Kaya (2023) conducted a mixed-methods study using the Preparedness to Teach Scale with 61 senior pre-service EFL teachers and found no statistically significant differences in preparedness scores based on gender or GPA. While participants generally reported feeling "well-prepared," the study emphasised that perceived preparedness was shaped more by qualitative factors such as teaching practice experiences, interpersonal skills, and the structure of teacher education programs than by demographic variables. Notably, unlike the aforementioned studies, Kaya's research was situated in the context of English language teaching (ELT). However, it did not specifically focus on teaching English to young learners. Therefore, although these studies contribute valuable insights

into the factors influencing perceived preparedness, there remains a need for further focused investigation within the specialized domain of TEYL.

With the growing emphasis on 21st-century skills, technology integration has emerged as a growing area in determining preparedness for modern classrooms (Aktaş, 2022). As digital tools become increasingly common in early childhood education, pre-service teachers are expected to use multimedia resources, educational apps, and interactive whiteboards effectively. Yet, limited training often hinders their ability to use these tools confidently and purposefully (Marais, 2019; Starkey, 2020). This highlights the importance of integrating digital competence development into teacher education programs through practice-based and pedagogically grounded approaches

Finally, research highlights the value of reflective practices such as self and peer assessment in enhancing teacher preparedness. Rather than serving only as evaluation tools, these practices support the development of essential skills including self-regulation, decision-making, and critical thinking. When embedded into teacher education, they help candidates recognize personal areas for growth, learn collaboratively through peer feedback, and engage more actively in the learning and assessment process, fostering a more participatory and responsive training environment (Bozkurt, 2020).

In conclusion, pre-service teachers' preparedness for teaching English to young learners is supported by both theoretical and practical components of their education. Courses, teaching practice experiences, digital tools, and reflective activities all contribute to this development. While current programs already offer many useful elements, there is still room to enrich them through more practice opportunities and applied training. With the right support, teacher candidates can feel more confident and ready to meet the needs of young learners in today's classrooms.

2.4. Challenges and Realities of Teaching English to Young Learners

For many language teachers, the initial year of teaching marks a period of “reality shock”, in which the optimistic ideals formed during teacher education are quickly confronted by the demands of everyday school life. Rather than implementing carefully planned pedagogical strategies, novice teachers often find themselves focused on adapting to institutional routines and managing unexpected classroom challenges (Farrell, 2009). This dissonance is often intensified during teaching practice experiences,

where pre-service teachers face difficulties in classroom management, material adaptation, and applying theory to practice. While some gradually develop confidence and competence, many encounter uncertainty, stress, and role ambiguity, underscoring the importance of realistic preparation and structured support during teacher training (Çakar & Özcan, 2024).

This experience becomes particularly challenging for pre-service teachers when they are assigned to young learner classrooms, which demand a distinct set of pedagogical and emotional competencies. Unlike adolescent or adult learners, children require developmentally sensitive instruction, emotionally supportive environments, and highly interactive, play-based activities to stay engaged (Bakhsh, 2016). While many people believe that children are naturally better at learning a second language, research shows that this depends a lot on how and where the learning takes place. In natural settings where children are exposed to language through daily interaction, they often pick it up quickly. However, in classroom environments that do not reflect this natural input, children may struggle unless the teaching is suited to their needs. That's why it becomes even more important for pre-service teachers to understand how young learners experience language learning differently from older students (Suryantari, 2018).

One of the challenges pre-service teachers encounter in young learner (YL) classrooms is managing behaviour in a developmentally appropriate way. Young learners are generally characterised by high levels of curiosity, limited attention spans, strong emotional responsiveness, and a preference for interactive and concrete learning experiences (Pinter, 2014). For teachers with limited classroom exposure, striking a balance between maintaining order and fostering an engaging atmosphere can be difficult. While theoretical training may introduce classroom management techniques, many teacher candidates report struggling to apply these strategies effectively in unpredictable classroom situations (Camlibel-Acar, 2016; Önal, 2023).

Another significant challenge involves adapting instructional materials and methods to suit the developmental needs of young learners. While games, songs, visual aids, and storytelling are widely recognized as effective tools in TEYL contexts, many teacher candidates report uncertainty in selecting and implementing these resources appropriately (Kumar, Akhter, Yunus, & Shamsy, 2022). This often includes difficulties in giving clear and age-appropriate instructions, which can hinder the effectiveness of otherwise

engaging activities (Poudel, 2024). Limited hands-on experience and lack of guided practice during training contribute to these challenges, leading some pre-service teachers to either avoid using such methods or apply them ineffectively. Therefore, addressing both material adaptation and instructional delivery through practical, modelled experiences is essential in preparing teachers for TEYL settings.

Institutional and infrastructural limitations further complicate early language instruction. Overcrowded classrooms, lack of age-appropriate materials, and limited physical space often restrict teachers from conducting group work or interactive activities. In under-resourced schools, even basic tools like flashcards or storybooks may be unavailable, forcing teachers to fall back on passive or teacher-dominated methods (Taşçı, 2023). In such environments, even highly motivated teachers may struggle to sustain engagement and instructional quality. This situation was similarly observed in a Turkish case study conducted by Caner, Subaşı, and Kara (2010), where early-grade English teachers reported challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, lack of developmentally appropriate teaching materials, and difficulties adapting instruction to young learners' needs despite their pedagogical commitment. Although the teachers were enthusiastic and attempted to use songs, role-play, and visuals in their practice, they still expressed a strong need for specialized training programs tailored to teaching English at the early childhood level. Their experience further underscores how even dedicated teachers can face structural and pedagogical barriers that limit the effective implementation of TEYL principles in actual classroom settings.

Curricular misalignment is another frequently noted concern. National syllabi may impose unrealistic expectations on young learners and offer little flexibility for teachers to adapt content to students' developmental levels. The dominance of an exam-oriented culture discourages playful and communicative teaching practices, even in early grades where testing is not yet prominent (Başok, 2020).

In addition, emotional demands play a critical role in shaping how prepared and confident pre-service teachers feel in YL settings. The unpredictability of working with children, combined with high emotional labour, can lead to stress and feelings of inadequacy, especially in the absence of consistent mentoring or peer support (Sener & Çokçalışkan, 2024). These emotional pressures are not limited to pre-service contexts; even experienced in-service teachers frequently report high levels of emotional

exhaustion, particularly when working with young learners in primary school settings. A recent study conducted in the Turkish EFL context (Kimsesiz, 2019) found that primary school teachers exhibited significantly higher levels of burnout across all dimensions, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, compared to their peers in other school types. This suggests that teaching young learners may carry unique psychological burdens, which, if left unaddressed, can negatively affect teacher motivation, classroom performance, and overall well-being. Therefore, preparing future teachers for the emotional realities of early language education is just as crucial as equipping them with pedagogical skills.

Ultimately, teaching English to young learners is not simply a matter of simplifying content or using playful activities, it is a complex, demanding, and emotionally intense responsibility that requires specialised preparation. The challenges faced by pre-service teachers in TEYL classrooms are not isolated incidents, but systemic indicators of what remains missing in current teacher education models. Without authentic exposure to classroom realities, structured mentorship, and emotional support, even the most well-intentioned training programs fall short. Therefore, preparing future teachers for the realities of young learner education must be treated not as a supplementary concern, but as a central goal of ELT programs, one that merges theory with lived experience, and equips teachers not only to teach, but to thrive.

2.5. Conclusion of the Literature Review

The reviewed literature clearly indicates that, despite progressive policy reforms and growing international alignment in early English language education, many pre-service English language teachers in Turkey face ongoing challenges in feeling fully equipped to address the pedagogical and emotional demands of working with young learners. While the introduction of English in the early grades is supported by sound developmental and theoretical reasoning, the effectiveness of this policy depends significantly on the quality and relevance of teacher preparation, particularly for those at the beginning of their professional careers.

A consistent concern in the literature is the limited extent to which pre-service teachers are exposed to real classroom experiences involving young learners. Although courses such as *Teaching English to Young Learners I & II* offer essential theoretical foundations, they are frequently offered late in the program and with minimal practical

components. The absence of direct teaching practice placements in early primary classrooms limits opportunities to develop age-appropriate teaching strategies, manage behaviour effectively, or adapt instructional content to the needs of young children. This lack of applied experience may contribute to a sense of uncertainty when teacher candidates begin their careers in early education settings.

Structural factors such as large class sizes, rigid curriculum structures, and inadequate material resources further complicate the classroom environment and can make the transition from training to practice more demanding. In parallel, limited preparation in integrating digital tools or engaging in reflective teaching processes may reduce teacher candidates' confidence in navigating modern classroom expectations. Additionally, the emotional and relational aspects of teaching young learners, such as establishing trust, responding to emotional needs, and maintaining enthusiasm, are not always adequately addressed in teacher education curricula, even though they play a central role in the TEYL context.

While previous studies have contributed valuable insights into the design and delivery of ELT programs, there remains a noticeable lack of research exploring pre-service teachers' own perspectives on their preparedness. Understanding how teacher candidates interpret and evaluate their training in relation to young learners is essential for creating more responsive and contextually relevant education programs.

In this regard, the present study aims to fill a meaningful gap in the literature by investigating the perceptions of final-year ELT students regarding their preparedness to teach English to young learners in Turkey. By foregrounding the voices and experiences of pre-service teachers, this research seeks to inform improvements in teacher preparation practices and contribute to the development of more effective and sustainable approaches to early language education.

3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methodology of the study, including the research design, participant profile, data collection procedures, and analysis methods for both quantitative and qualitative components. It is organized into six subsections: research design (3.1), participants (3.2), research setting (3.3), data collection tools (3.4), data collection procedures (3.5), and data analysis techniques (3.6).

3.1. Research Design

This study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, which involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by qualitative data, in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2009). In this model, the qualitative phase is conducted after the quantitative phase and is used to elaborate, interpret, or explain the initial statistical results (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006). This design was considered appropriate for the present study, as it allowed the researcher to first identify patterns regarding pre-service English language teachers' self-perceived preparedness to teach English to young learners (YLS), and then explore the underlying reasons, personal interpretations, and contextual factors that could account for those patterns through in-depth qualitative inquiry.

In the quantitative phase, data were collected from 92 senior-year pre-service English language teachers enrolled in the ELT undergraduate program at Anadolu University. The data were obtained through a face-to-face, paper-based administration of a self-report scale. This method was preferred over online surveys to ensure maximum participation and to control the data collection process more closely. Necessary permissions were obtained from the faculty, and all participants provided informed consent before completing the survey. The questionnaire included an open invitation for participation in the second, interview-based phase of the study, whereby participants could indicate their willingness to take part by voluntarily sharing their contact information.

In the qualitative phase, eight participants who had voluntarily indicated their interest during the survey phase were contacted and invited to participate in individual interviews. As all volunteers were included, the interview participant selection was carried out through a volunteer-based sampling strategy. This approach ensured that only those who were genuinely willing to share their views were engaged in the second phase of the study,

thereby fostering openness and depth in the responses. Although the number of participants was relatively small, the qualitative data provided valuable insights into the lived experiences and perceptions of pre-service English teachers regarding their preparedness to teach English to young learners. The interviews allowed for a more detailed understanding of individual interpretations of preparedness, as well as personal reflections on the challenges and supports encountered during their teacher education process. This phase of the study played a vital role in complementing the broader trends identified through the quantitative data and contributed to a more nuanced and holistic perspective on the issue (Creswell, 2009).

The interviews were conducted via voice calls on WhatsApp, as this method was both accessible and convenient for participants with limited availability. Voice-based mobile platforms are recognized as effective tools for qualitative interviews, especially when participants are geographically dispersed or face time constraints (Farooq & Villiers, 2017; Self, 2021). Each interview lasted approximately 25 minutes and was conducted in Turkish, which allowed participants to express their ideas more naturally and comfortably (Temple & Young, 2004). The interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed verbatim, following standard procedures for qualitative data documentation (Creswell, 2009). The transcripts were first analysed in Turkish, and illustrative quotes were translated into English during the reporting phase. To maintain the accuracy and integrity of meaning, a meaning-focused translation strategy was followed, and back-translation was used to enhance the credibility of the translated excerpts (Esposito, 2001; Nes, Abma, Jonsson, & Deeg, 2017).

This study adopts a methodological complementarity approach, which aims to integrate quantitative and qualitative data in a way that enhances the explanatory richness of the findings (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). Complementarity is particularly valuable in educational research when distinct data strands are used to explore different but related aspects of a phenomenon, allowing researchers to construct more complex and grounded explanations (Zhao & Xu, 2024). In this framework, the two types of data are seen as mutually informative, with the qualitative findings offering insight into the mechanisms, beliefs, and contextual realities behind the statistical results (Carroll & Rothe, 2010; Mason, 2002).

By utilizing this research design, the study was able to move beyond simple quantification of preparedness and offer a more nuanced, multifaceted understanding of how pre-service teachers perceive their preparedness for TEYL. This design also aligns with the study's goal of informing both teacher education practices and curriculum development efforts in a practical and evidence-based manner.

3.2. Participants

The participants of this study were final-year undergraduate students enrolled in the English Language Teaching (ELT) program at Anadolu University, located in Eskişehir, Turkey. These individuals were selected because they had completed the majority of their teacher training courses and were concurrently enrolled in the teaching practice component of the curriculum. Their advanced standing in the program positioned them to provide informed perspectives on their preparedness to teach English to young learners (YLS), making them an appropriate target group for this research. As previous studies have noted, final-year pre-service teachers are well-suited to evaluate their preparedness to teach, as they have experienced both pedagogical coursework and practical teaching contexts (Girgin & Akcanca, 2021; Strakova, 2015).

Participants were selected using a combination of purposeful and convenience sampling strategies. Purposeful sampling was employed because the study specifically targeted senior ELT students who had already taken the Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL) course and were expected to be enrolled in the teaching practice course. This ensured that participants had relevant academic and practical exposure to the topic. Although it could not be guaranteed, selecting final-year students increased the likelihood that they had practiced teaching young learners during their school placements. Convenience sampling was used as the participants were accessible within the researcher's institution. In line with qualitative research ethics, voluntary participation was emphasized in both data collection phases.

The quantitative phase of the study included 92 participants who voluntarily completed a paper-based questionnaire. Originally, 95 students were approached; however, three participants were excluded from the dataset because they did not submit signed consent forms (see Appendix A). Data collection was conducted in person, within the faculty premises, during scheduled class hours. Institutional permission was obtained to access classrooms and to administer the surveys face-to-face. The use of paper-based

data collection was preferred over online methods to ensure better response rates and higher data quality (Wu, Zhao, & Fils-Aime, 2022).

Demographic analysis of the quantitative participants indicated that 58 were female and 34 were male, which reflects the typical gender distribution observed in ELT programs in Turkey. Participants' ages ranged from 21 to 32 years, with a mean age of 22.37 (SD = 1.53). The Grade Point Averages (GPA) of participants varied from 1.98 to 3.91, with a mean GPA of 3.01 (SD = 0.44). As previously described, all participants had taken compulsory TEYL course and had some level of exposure to teaching methodologies, classroom management strategies, and child development theories through coursework. A summary of the participants' demographic characteristics is presented in Table 3.1. below.

Table 3.1.

Demographic characteristics of the quantitative participants (n = 92)

Variable	Value
Gender	58 Female (63.0%), 34 Male (37.0%)
Age	21–32 years, Mean = 22.37 (SD = 1.53)
GPA	1.98–3.91, Mean = 3.01 (SD = 0.44)

For the qualitative phase, a volunteer-based sampling strategy was used. At the end of the survey, participants were invited to indicate whether they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. A total of eight participants had volunteered by leaving their contact information, and all of them were included in the qualitative phase. This group included four female and four male students, all in their final year of study. To ensure anonymity and clarity throughout the analysis, participants were assigned numbers (e.g., Participant 1 to Participant 8). This practice allowed for accurate attribution of quotations while preserving confidentiality, and it demonstrated that findings emerged from multiple, diverse sources.

While all eight were enrolled in the same teacher education program, there was variation in terms of prior teaching experience with young learners: seven had previous experience working with children aged 5–12, either through teaching practice placements or volunteer teaching activities, whereas one participant (Participant 5) reported no prior experience with this age group. According to the Ministry of National Education (MoNE,

Turkish education system, 2025), primary education in Turkey includes both primary school (Grades 1–4, ages 6–10) and secondary school (Grades 5–8, ages 10–14). Therefore, in this study, the term 'young learners' refers to children aged 5 to 12, encompassing both primary and part of the lower secondary level. Students placed in secondary schools may also have had teaching experiences with young learners, not just adolescents.

The teaching practice placements of these participants across the two semesters of their senior year are summarized in Table 3.2 below, with school levels categorized as primary schools (1st–4th grades), secondary schools (5th–8th grades), and high schools (9th–12th grades). This table provides further context on the grade levels and school settings in which participants were placed during their teaching practice, which may have shaped their familiarity with teaching young learners in different educational stages.

Table 3.2.

Teaching practice school levels of interview participants during their final year

Participant No / Gender	1st Semester	2nd Semester
Participant 1/ M	Secondary School	Secondary School
Participant 2/ F	Primary School	High School
Participant 3/ F	Secondary School	High School
Participant 4/ F	Secondary School	Secondary School
Participant 5/ F	Secondary School	Secondary School
Participant 6/ M	Secondary School	Primary School
Participant 7/ M	Secondary School	Secondary School
Participant 8/ M	Primary School	Secondary School

Ethical considerations were rigorously addressed throughout the research process. Ethical approval was obtained from the university's Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee. Written informed consent was collected from all participants prior to data collection. Furthermore, additional institutional permission was granted by the faculty to conduct both the survey and interviews within the university setting. Participants were assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and the voluntary nature of their participation, and no identifying information was included in the analysis or reporting of the data.

3.3. Setting

This study was conducted within the English Language Teaching (ELT) undergraduate program at the Faculty of Education, Anadolu University, in Eskişehir, Turkey. The program provides pre-service teachers with a combination of theoretical courses and practical experiences aimed at equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to teach English effectively at various educational levels, including primary education (see Appendix B). As part of this program, the course titled Teaching English to Young Learners (İNÖ 330) is offered as a compulsory third-year course. It is delivered in a 2+2 format (2 hours of theory and 2 hours of practice per week), carrying 5 ECTS credits. The course content includes the following: characteristics of early-age language learners; implications of these characteristics for language teaching; principles of early foreign language teaching (e.g., contextualized instruction, visually supported learning, activity-based learning, and the use of games); classroom language (e.g., instruction-giving and transition markers); development of visual materials for young learners; and the teaching of listening, storytelling, reading, speaking, and writing skills (AÜ, 2025).

Quantitative data collection took place in the faculty classrooms during the spring semester of the 2024–2025 academic year. After obtaining ethical approval from the university's ethics committee (see Appendix C) and formal permission from the Faculty of Education, the researcher was granted access to the weekly class schedules of senior-year students. In coordination with course instructors, the researcher visited the designated classrooms and administered printed versions of the survey to the participants. Surveys were completed voluntarily and anonymously within the classroom environment under the supervision of the researcher. This approach ensured a high response rate and allowed for the efficient collection of high-quality data in a controlled academic setting.

The qualitative phase of the study was carried out in the subsequent month following the survey. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted via WhatsApp voice calls between March 26 and April 28, 2025. Participants joined the interviews from locations of their choice, creating a flexible and accessible environment for data collection. This method was particularly effective in minimizing scheduling conflicts and allowed participants to express their views in a more relaxed and familiar context.

Throughout the entire process, permissions were obtained not only from the faculty administration but also from individual course instructors to ensure that classroom visits

and participant recruitment complied with institutional regulations. This facilitated smooth access to the target group and contributed to a respectful and ethical research environment.

3.4. Data Collection Tools

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools in line with its explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. Each tool was selected and prepared to ensure that the data would comprehensively address the research questions, reflect participants' perceptions accurately, and allow for effective integration during analysis.

3.4.1. Quantitative data collection tool (Preparedness to teach scale)

In the quantitative phase of this study, data were collected using the Preparedness to Teach Scale, a self-report instrument originally developed by Darling-Hammond, Chung, and Frelow (2002) to assess the perceived preparedness of novice teachers for their professional responsibilities. The scale was initially used in a large-scale study conducted in public schools in New York, targeting early-career teachers with fewer than four years of experience. It aimed to evaluate how well teacher education programs equipped them to handle real-world classroom demands.

In the Turkish context, the scale was adapted and validated by Yıldırım and Kalman (2017), who conducted a comprehensive psychometric analysis with 535 prospective teachers. As a result of this study, a 20-item, four-factor structure was confirmed. The scale is structured on a 5-point Likert continuum ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The four underlying dimensions of the instrument include creating an effective learning environment, designing the instructional process, techno-pedagogical competence, and understanding learners. These sub-dimensions collectively measure how well pre-service teachers feel prepared to meet the instructional, technological, and developmental needs of learners in the classroom.

The Turkish version of the scale demonstrated strong psychometric properties. The internal consistency reliability was reported as .923 for the overall scale, with subscale reliabilities ranging between .739 and .838. Factor loadings ranged between .51 and .74, and item-total correlations were between .55 and .69, suggesting strong construct validity and item discrimination. Furthermore, the linguistic equivalence between the English and

Turkish forms was supported by Kaya's study (2023) with ELT students, in which a significant correlation ($r = .81, p < .001$) was found between the two versions. This finding justifies the use of the English version in Turkish contexts where participants possess sufficient language proficiency.

The English version of the instrument used in this study (see Appendix D) was accessed through the master's thesis of Kaya (2023), who employed it with Turkish ELT students in a similar research context. Kaya's version was originally based on the Turkish adaptation of the Preparedness to Teach Scale developed by Yıldırım and Kalman (2017). Prior to the administration of the scale, the researcher obtained written permission from Yıldırım and Kalman, as well as from Kaya, to use the scale in the current study. The version used remained faithful to the item structure of the original adaptation and required no further translation or modification. Before implementation, the scale was also reviewed by two field experts, including the researcher's thesis advisor, to ensure its content appropriateness and contextual relevance for the study population.

The scale was administered in a face-to-face format using printed forms during scheduled class hours. The researcher personally distributed the questionnaires in the classroom, provided necessary clarifications, and ensured that participants completed the forms individually and voluntarily. This method facilitated immediate collection of completed surveys, thereby minimising the risk of missing data. Face-to-face administration is known to yield higher response rates compared to other modes, as the physical presence of the researcher can encourage participation and reduce nonresponse bias. Additionally, this approach allows for real-time clarification of any ambiguities, enhancing the overall quality of the data collected (Jong, 2016).

Although the scale was originally designed to assess general teacher preparedness rather than preparedness specific to teaching English to young learners (TEYL), its use in this study is supported by several key justifications. First, while the items on the scale are not specifically tailored to the TEYL context, its four main dimensions are broad enough to be relevant to the developmental and pedagogical requirements of working with young learners. In order not to compromise the established validity and reliability of the instrument, no modifications were made to the original item pool.

To ensure that participants responded within the TEYL context, the researcher provided clear framing prior to data collection. The consent form given to all participants explicitly stated that the aim of the study was to examine preparedness to teach English to young learners aged 5 to 12. In addition to this written explanation, the researcher offered a brief verbal clarification before distributing the scale, reminding participants to consider this specific age group when answering the items. Without this contextual guidance, there was a risk that participants might have interpreted the items more generally. These measures helped ensure that the responses collected through the scale reflected participants' perceptions of preparedness in the context of teaching young learners.

In conclusion, although the Preparedness to Teach Scale was not specifically developed for the TEYL context, its structure was deemed suitable for use with senior ELT students through expert consultation and careful contextual framing. The decision to use the unmodified version preserved the scale's psychometric integrity, while participant awareness of the study's focus ensured that the data collected reflected their perceptions of preparedness to teach young learners aged 5-12. Furthermore, to address the inherent limitation of using a general preparedness scale in a TEYL-specific study a complementary qualitative phase was conducted. Through semi-structured interviews, the study was able to explore these nuanced areas in depth, providing a more comprehensive and context-specific understanding of pre-service teachers' preparedness to teach English to young learners. This mixed-methods approach thus enabled the researcher to overcome the scale's limitations and strengthen the overall validity of the findings.

3.4.2. Qualitative data collection tool (Semi-structured interviews)

The qualitative data in this study were gathered through semi-structured interviews (see Appendix E) conducted with a subgroup of participants following the quantitative phase. The interviews aimed to explore pre-service English language teachers' preparedness to teach English to young learners from multiple perspectives, including their practical teaching experience, perceptions of university education, and challenges in classroom settings.

To guide this process, a comprehensive interview guide was developed by the researcher. A question pool was initially created in both English and Turkish, informed by a focused review of relevant literature in the fields of teacher education, early language

instruction, and ELT curriculum. Although no single source was directly replicated, existing research provided conceptual grounding for the formulation of questions related to core themes such as classroom confidence, teaching practice experiences and technology use. From this question pool, ten open-ended items were selected and refined to align with the aims of the current study.

The draft interview questions were evaluated for clarity and relevance by four field experts, including the researcher's thesis advisor. Based on their feedback, minor revisions were made to improve the structure and wording of the questions. As the participant group consisted of English Language Teaching students with high English proficiency, the interview guide was prepared in both Turkish and English prior to data collection, allowing participants to choose the language they were most comfortable with. A meaning-based translation approach was used to ensure conceptual accuracy between the versions. Although the researcher is not a certified translator, particular attention was paid to linguistic clarity, academic tone, and consistency across both versions. Ultimately, all participants preferred to be interviewed in Turkish.

The interviews were conducted via WhatsApp voice calls, allowing participants to join the conversation from their own chosen environments. This flexible approach helped to create a more comfortable and natural setting, encouraging open reflection. Each interview lasted approximately 25 minutes. Before each session, participants provided verbal informed consent, and they were fully briefed about the confidentiality of their responses, their right to withdraw at any time, and the audio recording process. All interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim by the researcher.

The same set of questions was used with all eight participants to ensure consistency. The resulting transcripts formed the primary qualitative data for analysis. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the interview data, following the six-phase model proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This model includes (1) familiarising oneself with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the final report. Given the relatively manageable size of the dataset and the researcher's close engagement with the material, the coding and theme development were carried out manually, without the use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software.

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

In line with the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design of this study, data were collected in two phases: the quantitative phase, followed by the qualitative phase. Each phase was implemented by the researcher personally and systematically, after obtaining the required ethical and institutional permissions.

3.5.1. Quantitative data collection

The quantitative data were collected using the Preparedness to Teach Scale, a validated instrument originally developed by Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) and later adapted into Turkish by Yıldırım and Kalman (2017). For this study, the English version of the scale was utilised, based on the version employed by Kaya (2023) in a similar Turkish ELT context. Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained written permission from both Kaya and the original Turkish adapters of the scale to ensure ethical compliance and proper academic usage.

Kaya's version preserved the psychometric structure confirmed in the Turkish validation study, comprising 20 items across four sub-dimensions: creating an effective learning environment, designing instructional processes, techno-pedagogical competence, and understanding learners. The instrument was presented to participants in English, as they were senior ELT students with sufficient language proficiency to comprehend and respond to the items accurately.

The target population consisted of senior-year pre-service English language teachers enrolled in the ELT undergraduate program at Anadolu University. These participants were deliberately selected based on their advanced standing within the program, having completed the majority of their theoretical coursework and concurrently participating in school-based teaching practice experiences. This positioning enabled them to provide not only retrospective evaluations of their academic preparation but also current, experience-informed reflections on their perceived preparedness to teach English to young learners.

The researcher adopted a paper-based, face-to-face survey administration strategy instead of an online form. This decision was made to maximize participation, enhance data quality, and ensure participant engagement. During the Spring semester of 2024–2025, the researcher visited ELT classrooms with the prior consent of instructors and distributed printed questionnaires. Participants were given a short briefing on the purpose

of the study and their rights, including voluntary participation, anonymity, and withdrawal. A total of 92 valid responses were obtained. The use of printed forms allowed the researcher to answer participant questions instantly and verify questionnaire completeness on-site, thereby reducing item nonresponse and enhancing data reliability.

3.5.2. Qualitative data collection

To complement the survey findings and explore the concept of preparedness more deeply, qualitative data were collected through individual semi-structured interviews. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were invited to indicate their willingness to participate in a follow-up interview by providing their contact details. A total of eight participants volunteered, all of whom were subsequently included in the qualitative phase. This volunteer-based sampling ensured that participants were genuinely motivated to share their experiences and perspectives in depth.

All interviews were conducted remotely via WhatsApp voice calls, offering participants the flexibility to join from their own environments, such as their homes. This method was chosen for its convenience and ability to minimize logistical barriers. Interviews were scheduled over a one-month period, with each lasting approximately 25 minutes. Although the interview questions were prepared in both English and Turkish, all participants preferred to be interviewed in Turkish, which enabled them to express their thoughts more naturally and in greater depth.

Prior to the interviews, participants were once again informed about the confidentiality and voluntary nature of the study and were asked for verbal consent to record the conversation. The interview guide consisted of ten open-ended questions, designed to probe participants' practical experiences, training background, and emotional preparedness to teach young learners (see Appendix E). These questions were developed based on relevant literature and were evaluated for clarity and relevance by field experts.

All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. Transcripts were anonymized to protect participant identity, and digital recordings were securely stored. This phase of data collection provided rich narrative accounts that informed the thematic analysis and added explanatory depth to the quantitative findings.

3.6. Data Analysis

This section presents the procedures followed for analysing the quantitative and qualitative data collected in the study. In accordance with the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, the data were analysed in two distinct but interconnected phases. The quantitative data were first analysed to identify overall trends and patterns in pre-service teachers' perceived preparedness. Subsequently, the qualitative data were examined to gain deeper insight into the contextual and experiential factors underlying these patterns.

3.6.1. Quantitative data analysis

The quantitative data in this study were collected through the Preparedness to Teach Scale (PTS), originally developed by Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) and adapted into Turkish by Yıldırım and Kalman (2017). The version used in this study was the English form of the scale, as utilized and validated by Kaya (2023), who reported strong correlations between the Turkish and English versions, along with high internal consistency. The scale consists of 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and is structured around four sub-dimensions: understanding learners, creating an effective learning environment, designing instructional processes, and techno-pedagogical competence.

A total of 95 senior-year pre-service English language teachers participated in the quantitative phase. However, three responses were excluded from the final dataset because the participants had not signed the voluntary participation form. Consequently, the analysis was carried out on 92 valid responses. Data entry and statistical analyses were conducted using a computer-based statistical software

Prior to conducting inferential tests, the dataset was examined for completeness and accuracy. Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values were computed to summarize the participants' overall preparedness levels and sub-dimension scores. In order to interpret the preparedness levels, the Likert scale responses were categorized into three levels of perceived preparedness following the method suggested by Alkharusi (2022). By dividing the total scale range ($5-1=4$) into three equal intervals ($4\div3=1.33$), the following classification was adopted: scores between 1.00 and 2.33 indicated low preparedness, scores between 2.34 and 3.66

indicated moderate preparedness, and scores between 3.67 and 5.00 indicated high preparedness. These score ranges and their corresponding preparedness levels are summarised in Table 3.3. below.

Table 3.3.

Classification of perceived preparedness levels based on Likert scale scores

Score Range	Level of Preparedness
1.00 – 2.33	Low Preparedness
2.34 – 3.66	Moderate Preparedness
3.67 – 5.00	High Preparedness

To assess the reliability of the Preparedness to Teach Scale (PTS), Cronbach's alpha coefficient was employed as a measure of internal consistency. Values above .70 are generally considered acceptable, and coefficients exceeding .90 are regarded as excellent indicators of scale reliability (Taber, 2018). Prior to conducting parametric tests, the assumption of normality was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test, which is recommended for small to moderate sample sizes. Additionally, skewness and kurtosis values were to be considered in interpreting the extent of deviation from a normal distribution. As noted by Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012), moderate deviations may not invalidate the use of parametric tests if the sample size is sufficiently large and skewness/kurtosis values fall within acceptable thresholds. Based on these criteria, parametric analyses were planned for the present study.

Inferential statistical analyses were conducted to determine whether participants' preparedness scores differed according to gender and academic achievement (Kotronoulasa, et al. 2023). An independent samples t-test was used to compare preparedness scores between male and female participants. Additionally, participants' self-reported GPA scores were categorized into four academic achievement groups, and a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to examine differences among these groups. All analyses were conducted using a significance level of $p < .05$.

These analyses aimed to address the first research question and its sub-questions by identifying general preparedness levels and assessing whether participants' demographic characteristics influenced their perceived preparedness to teach English to young learners.

3.6.2. Qualitative data analysis

The qualitative component of this study was analysed using thematic analysis, which is recognized as a flexible and robust method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This method was deemed appropriate due to its compatibility with a constructivist framework and its capacity to reflect participants' lived experiences and perceptions regarding their preparedness to teach English to young learners.

The analysis was conducted on semi-structured interviews with eight volunteer senior pre-service English language teachers. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim in Turkish, which was the language used during data collection. To maintain the authenticity and contextual nuance of participants' expressions, the thematic analysis was carried out on the original Turkish transcripts. Quotations selected for illustrative purposes were translated into English only after the thematic analysis had been completed. A back-translation procedure was also applied to ensure semantic accuracy and preserve the intended meaning of participants' original responses.

Thematic analysis was employed to identify and interpret meaningful patterns within the qualitative data. This study followed the six-phase approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which offers a flexible yet rigorous framework for analysing participant perspectives in qualitative research. The process was conducted manually and iteratively, ensuring close engagement with the data and adherence to a systematic procedure. As noted by Wiltshire and Ronkainen (2021), this data-driven (inductive) approach allows themes to emerge organically from participants' narratives rather than being shaped by pre-existing theories.

In line with the second research question, the analysis explored how senior pre-service English language teachers perceive their preparedness to teach young learners, and what factors they identify as contributing to or hindering that preparedness. In the first phase, the researcher immersed herself in the data by reading and re-reading the transcribed interviews. During this stage, preliminary notes were taken to capture initial observations and recurring ideas. This familiarization allowed for a holistic understanding of each participant's narrative and the context in which their statements were made.

In the second phase, initial codes were generated inductively. These codes represented meaningful features of the data relevant to the research focus, namely, perceived preparedness to teach English to young learners. Examples of such codes included “lack of self-confidence,” “material design difficulty,” “realization through teaching practice,” and “instruction clarity problems.” Coding was carried out using a semantic approach, focusing on the explicit content of the interviews rather than latent meaning.

In the third and fourth phases, related codes were clustered into candidate themes and then reviewed in relation to the entire dataset. Codes were refined, merged, or reorganized based on how coherently they represented a shared concept across participants. This recursive process led to the development of six distinct themes, each capturing a different aspect of preparedness. One sub-theme was also identified to capture a specific dimension within a broader theme.

In the fifth phase, themes were clearly defined and named. Attention was given to ensuring that each theme was internally coherent yet distinct from others. One sub-theme was also identified to capture a specific dimension within a broader theme. Finally, in the sixth phase, the themes were organized and written into a coherent narrative, supported by illustrative quotes from the participants. This report aims to present not only what the participants said, but also how their experiences and perceptions relate to the broader construct of teacher preparedness in the TEYL context.

Throughout the analysis process, the researcher regularly consulted with the thesis advisor to ensure alignment between the emerging themes and the overall objectives of the study. Ongoing feedback from the advisor contributed to maintaining methodological rigor, clarity, and consistency. In addition, intercoder reliability was established through collaboration with a second coder, a graduate researcher in the field of education, who was familiar with qualitative data analysis procedures. Although not specialised in ELT, the second coder independently analysed the transcripts and generated initial codes. The coding process was followed by discussions to reach full consensus on the final themes. This procedure was conducted in accordance with the recommendations of Campbell et al. (2013), who emphasize the importance of coder agreement in enhancing interpretive credibility. The combined contributions of regular advisor input and the intercoder agreement process helped ensure the trustworthiness and confirmability of the qualitative findings.

Thematic analysis revealed several connected themes that reflect how participants view their preparedness, the difficulties they face, and the factors that influence their preparedness to teach young learners. Although the results are based on a specific group, the analysis process was clear and systematic, which supports the credibility and relevance of the findings.



4 RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of the study by integrating findings from both the quantitative and qualitative phases. The two strands of data complement one another to provide a comprehensive understanding of how pre-service EFL teachers perceive and experience their preparedness to teach English to young learners. Section 4.1 reports the results of the quantitative analysis, which explores overall preparedness levels and examines whether these differ based on variables such as gender and GPA. Section 4.2 then expands on these findings through qualitative insights, drawing on interview data to explore the factors that shape pre-service teachers' sense of preparedness. Together, these findings offer a holistic view of pre-service teachers' preparedness by combining statistical patterns with personal insights.

4.1. Quantitative Results

The quantitative part of this study aimed to assess the perceived preparedness levels of senior-year pre-service English language teachers to teach English to young learners. Data were collected from a total of 95 participants using a paper-based questionnaire. However, three responses were excluded from the analysis due to the absence of signed voluntary participation consent forms. Therefore, the final dataset consisted of 92 valid responses.

The instrument used in the quantitative phase was the Preparedness to Teach Scale (PTS), originally developed by Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) and later adapted into Turkish by Yıldırım and Kalman (2017). For the purposes of this study, the English version of the scale was employed, as validated and previously used by Kaya (2023). The scale includes 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). It is structured around four sub-dimensions: (1) Understanding Learners, (2) Creating an Effective Learning Environment, (3) Designing Instructional Processes, and (4) Techno-Pedagogical Competence.

The data were entered and analysed using statistical software. Before conducting inferential analyses, the dataset was examined for missing values, and descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores) were calculated to summarize participants' responses.

The internal consistency of the Preparedness to Teach Scale was assessed using the data collected from 92 participants, and Cronbach's alpha was calculated as .91, indicating a high level of reliability. In terms of normality, the Shapiro-Wilk test produced a statistically significant result ($p < .001$), suggesting deviation from a normal distribution. However, further inspection of the data revealed skewness = -1.205 and kurtosis = 3.798, both of which are considered within acceptable ranges for moderate samples. Given these values and the sample size ($n = 92$), the dataset was deemed suitable for parametric testing.

Overall, this phase provided a statistical foundation for understanding pre-service teachers' self-reported levels of preparedness to teach English to young learners and served as the basis for further comparative analyses by demographic variables.

4.1.1. Descriptive results: General preparedness levels

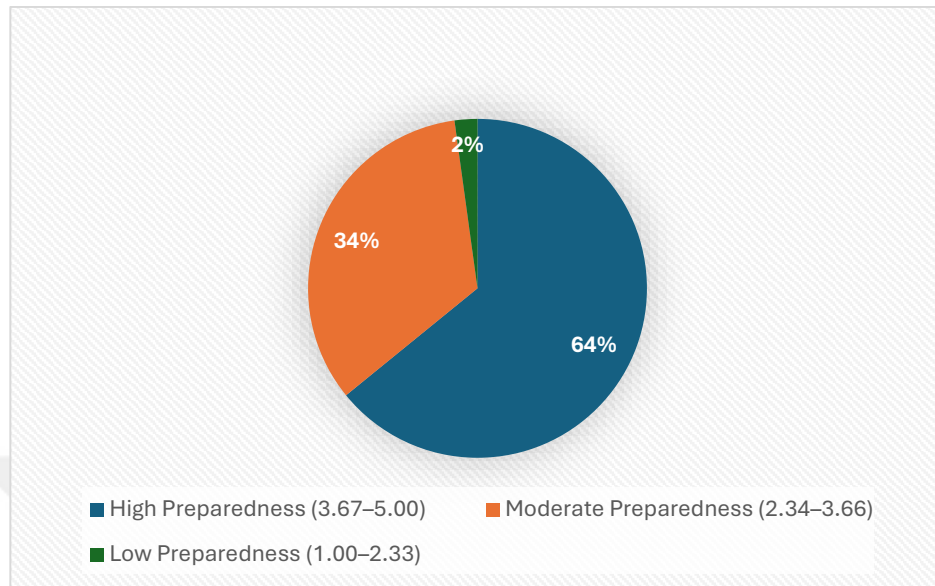
The primary aim of the first research question was to identify the overall level of preparedness among senior pre-service English language teachers to teach young learners. To this end, descriptive statistics were calculated using participants' scores on the Preparedness to Teach Scale (PTS), which consists of 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale. As each item is scored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

In the current study, participants' mean scores ranged from 1.20 to 4.95. The overall mean score was 3.82 ($SD = 0.57$), which, based on the classification proposed by Alkharusi (2022), falls within the high preparedness category. According to this classification, scores between 1.00 and 2.33 indicate low preparedness, scores between 2.34 and 3.66 indicate moderate preparedness, and scores between 3.67 and 5.00 indicate high preparedness.

Based on this classification, 59 out of 92 participants (64%) were categorized as highly prepared, while 31 participants (34%) were moderately prepared, and only 2 participants (2%) reported low levels of preparedness. The overall mean item score across all participants was 3.82, which falls within the high preparedness category. Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of preparedness levels among pre-service teachers.

Figure 4.1

Distribution of preparedness levels among pre-service teachers



In addition to overall scores, item-level descriptive statistics were also calculated to assess how participants responded to individual statements on the scale. As presented in Table 4.1, the item means ranged from 3.50 to 4.08, while standard deviation values varied between 0.83 and 1.16. The lowest mean score was found in Item 15, which asked about helping students develop self-assessment skills ($M = 3.50$, $SD = 1.16$). On the other hand, the highest mean was recorded for Item 16, which focused on increasing student interest and learning levels ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 0.83$).

These findings indicate that participants rated themselves consistently across the scale, with all item means falling within the high or moderate preparedness range.

Table 4.1

Descriptive statistics for PTS items ($n = 92$)

	Min.	Max	M.	SD
Q1- Teach the concepts, information and skills related to the field in a way that students can understand.	1	5	3,73	,840
Q2- Understand how much students in the class have learned.	1	5	3,82	,811
Q3- Create challenging, appropriate learning and achievement expectations for students.	1	5	3,72	,830
Q4- Understand how students' family and cultural backgrounds will affect their learning.	1	5	3,89	,919
Q5- Identify and focus on specific learning needs or difficulties.	1	5	3,78	,862

[Table 4.1 (Continue) *Descriptive statistics for PTS items (n = 92)*]

Q6- Choose appropriate teaching strategies for different instructional purposes.	1	5	3,80	1,051
Q7- Choose teaching strategies to respond to student needs.	1	5	3,79	,908
Q8- Enable students to learn both independently and in a group.	1	5	3,88	1,036
Q9- Plan the teaching process using subject area knowledge, curriculum, and student development.	1	5	3,82	,889
Q10- Create a classroom environment that improves social development and group responsibility.	1	5	3,97	,857
Q11- Use effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to guide students' learning and behaviours.	1	5	4,03	,857
Q12- Use questions to encourage students to learn in different ways.	1	5	3,91	,945
Q13- Help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.	1	5	3,67	,939
Q14- Encourage students to think, question and interpret different ideas.	1	5	3,83	,979
Q15- Help students develop self-assessment skills.	1	5	3,50	1,163
Q16- Increase the interest and learning level of the student.	2	5	4,08	,829
Q17- Support research and analysis (via the internet).	1	5	3,58	,940
Q18- Assess and monitor student success.	1	5	3,87	,880
Q19- Communicate with others (school, province, country and worldwide).	1	5	3,83	1,001
Q20- Improve group collaboration and teamwork.	1	5	3,90	1,017
Overall mean (participant average)	1,20	4,95	3,82	,57

4.1.2. Descriptive results by sub-dimensions

The Preparedness to Teach Scale (PTS), as adapted by Yıldırım and Kalman (2017), is structured around four sub-dimensions that represent key components of teaching competence for young learners. These sub-dimensions are: (1) Creating an Effective Learning Environment, (2) Designing Instructional Processes, (3) Techno-Pedagogical Competence, and (4) Understanding Learners. The first sub-dimension, Creating an Effective Learning Environment, comprises Items 4 to 9 and reflects participants' perceptions of their ability to manage classroom dynamics, foster engagement, and establish a positive learning climate. The second, Designing Instructional Processes, includes Items 10 to 15 and focuses on skills related to planning, sequencing instruction, and supporting higher-order thinking. The third dimension, Techno-Pedagogical Competence, consists of Items 16 to 20 and evaluates participants' preparedness to integrate technological tools into teaching. Finally, Understanding Learners, which covers Items 1 to 3, pertains to recognizing student needs, monitoring learning, and setting appropriate expectations.

Descriptive statistics were calculated based on participants' average item scores within each sub-dimension. As presented in Table 4.2, the highest mean score was observed in the Techno-Pedagogical Competence dimension ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.66$), indicating a strong perceived preparedness in using digital tools and resources effectively in the classroom. This was closely followed by Creating an Effective Learning Environment ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.64$) and Designing Instructional Processes ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.71$), which also fell within the high preparedness range. The sub-dimension with the lowest mean score was Understanding Learners ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.69$). Although this score was slightly lower compared to the others, it too reflected a high level of perceived preparedness based on the predetermined classification scheme.

Table 4.2

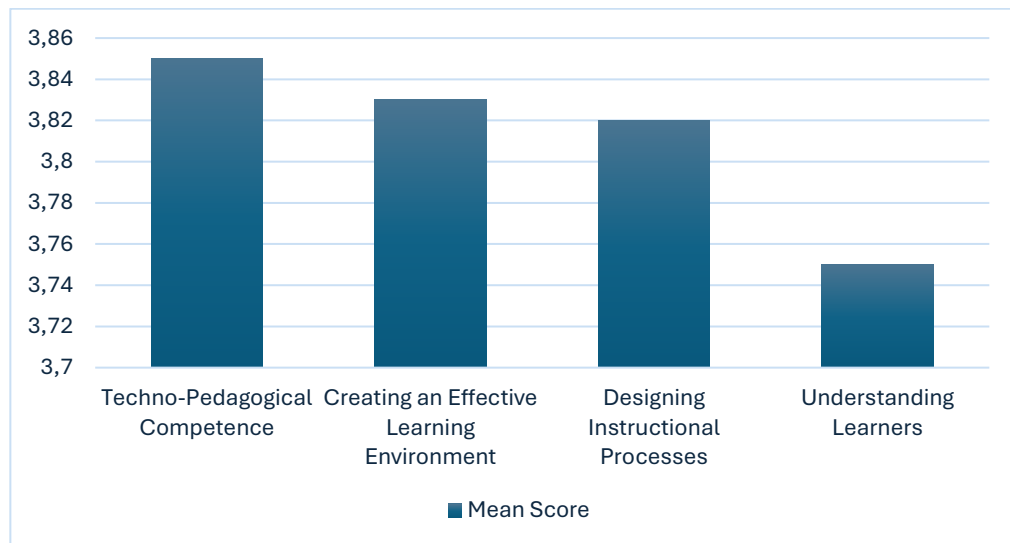
Descriptive statistics by sub-dimensions

Dimensions	Items	Min.	Max	M.	SD
Creating an Effective Learning Environment	Q4–Q9	1,00	5,00	3,83	,64
Designing Instructional Processes	Q10–Q15	1,17	5,00	3,82	,709
Techno-Pedagogical Competence	Q16–Q20	1,60	5,00	3,85	,661
Understanding Learners	Q1–Q3	1,00	5,00	3,75	,692

Figure 4.2 presents the same results visually, illustrating participants' mean scores across the four preparedness sub-dimensions.

Figure 4.2

Mean preparedness scores by sub-dimensions



All four sub-dimensions received average scores above the high preparedness threshold of 3.67, indicating that participants generally felt confident in each area assessed by the scale. The mean scores ranged from 3.75 to 3.85, showing a relatively even distribution of perceived preparedness across dimensions. While these differences were not large, the slightly higher scores in techno-pedagogical competence and classroom-related practices may point to areas where participants felt more comfortable. On the other hand, the slightly lower score in understanding learners, though still within the high range, suggests a comparatively more cautious self-evaluation in that domain. Overall, the study reveals that participants had a strong sense of preparedness in all areas, though some aspects stood out slightly more than others.

Although sub-dimension analysis was not explicitly stated in the research questions, it was included to provide a more detailed and structured understanding of the overall preparedness construct. Given that the scale is theory-based and organized around conceptually distinct components, examining participants' responses at the subscale level allowed for a more nuanced interpretation of their strengths and potential areas for development. This additional layer of analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of how pre-service teachers perceive their preparedness to teach young learners across different pedagogical dimensions.

4.1.3. Comparison of preparedness scores by gender

To address Research Question 1.1, which aimed to determine whether participants' preparedness levels differed based on gender, an independent samples t-test was conducted. Prior to the analysis, descriptive statistics were examined to compare the overall preparedness scores of female and male participants. As presented in Table 4.4, female participants ($n = 58$) reported a mean preparedness score of 3.83 ($SD = 0.58$), while male participants ($n = 34$) had a mean score of 3.80 ($SD = 0.57$). Scores ranged from 1.20 to 4.80 for females, and from 2.25 to 4.95 for males. These findings suggest that both groups perceived themselves as similarly prepared to teach English to YLs.

Table 4.3

Descriptive statistics by gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Female	58	3,83	,58	1,20	4,80
Male	34	3,80	,57	2,25	4,95

To assess the assumption of homogeneity of variances, Levene's test was performed and yielded a non-significant result, $F(1, 90) = 0.056$, $p = .814$, indicating that the variances between the two gender groups were statistically equal. Accordingly, the independent samples t-test was conducted under the assumption of equal variances. As shown in Table 4.5, the results revealed no statistically significant difference in preparedness scores between female and male participants ($t(90) = 0.25$, $p = .804$). For completeness, the unequal variance results were also reported ($t = 0.25$, $df = 70.33$, $p = .803$), though the primary interpretation is based on the equal variances model.

Table 4.4

Independent samples t-test results for preparedness scores by gender

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Equal variances assumed	,056	,814	,249	90	,804
Equal variances not assumed			,250	70,33	,803

Taken together, these findings indicate that gender did not have a significant effect on participants' self-perceived preparedness to teach English to young learners. Both female and male pre-service teachers reported comparable levels of confidence, suggesting that gender was not a distinguishing factor in this dimension of teacher preparedness within the present sample.

4.1.4. Comparison of preparedness scores by GPA

To address Research Question 1.2, which aimed to determine whether participants' perceived preparedness to teach English to young learners differed according to their academic achievement, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed. For this purpose, participants' GPA values were categorized into meaningful bands that would allow for statistical comparison. Initially, a five-level structure based on equal-width intervals of 0.50 GPA points was considered: ≤ 2.00 , 2.01–2.50, 2.51–3.00, 3.01–3.50, and 3.51–4.00. This grouping scheme was designed to be symmetrical and conceptually balanced, and such interval-based classifications are frequently used in educational research for detecting achievement-related variation in survey responses.

However, upon examining the actual GPA distribution, it was found that only two participants had a GPA at or below 2.00, with the lowest value being 1.98. Including this group in the analysis would have resulted in a subgroup with an insufficient sample size (Serdar, Cihan, Yücel, & Serdar, 2020), thereby limiting the reliability and interpretability of the ANOVA results. To maintain the robustness of the inferential analysis while preserving the full observed range of GPA scores, the two lowest intervals (≤ 2.00 and 2.01–2.50) were merged into a single category, resulting in a revised four-group structure: ≤ 2.50 , 2.51–3.00, 3.01–3.50, and 3.51–4.00. This adjustment ensured a more balanced group distribution without excluding any valid data point from the analysis.

Descriptive statistics for each GPA category are presented in Table 4.5. A slight but consistent increase in preparedness scores was observed across GPA groups. Participants with GPAs between 3.51 and 4.00 reported the highest average preparedness score ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.83$), followed by those in the 3.01–3.50 range ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.90$). The Moderate GPA group (2.51–3.00) had a mean score of 3.71 ($SD = 0.91$), while participants in the lowest GPA group (≤ 2.50) had the lowest mean preparedness score ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.87$). Despite this upward trend, the total difference between the highest and lowest group means was minimal.

Table 4.5

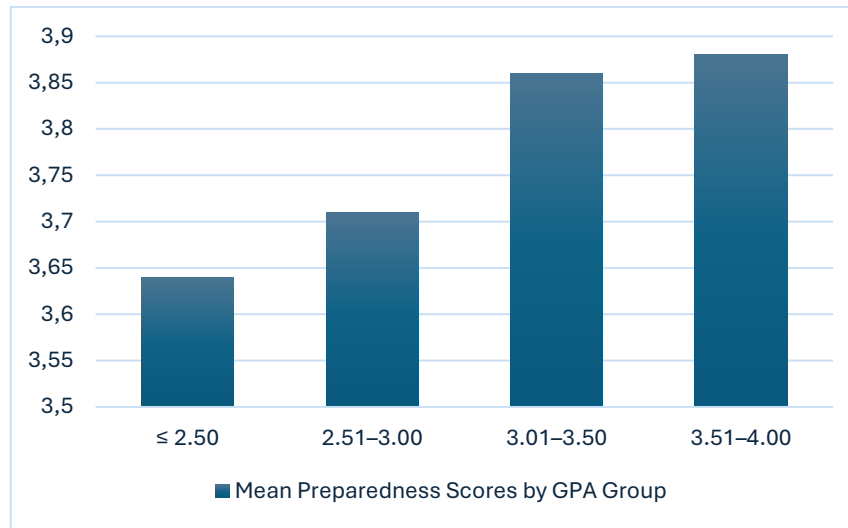
Descriptive statistics of preparedness scores by GPA group

GPA Range	N	Mean	SD	Min GPA	Max GPA
≤ 2.50	12	3,64	,86	1,98	2,50
2.51–3.00	35	3,71	,91	2,51	3,00
3.01–3.50	31	3,86	,89	3,01	3,50
3.51–4.00	14	3,88	,83	3,51	3,91

Figure 4.3. below illustrates the mean preparedness scores across the four GPA groups. While the data display a modest upward trend, this variation did not reach statistical significance in the subsequent analysis.

Figure 4.3

Mean preparedness scores by GPA group



To test the statistical significance of these differences, a one-way ANOVA was performed. As shown in Table 4.6, the result was not statistically significant, $F(3, 88) = 0.54$, $p = .653$. This indicates that academic achievement, as measured by GPA, was not significantly associated with participants' perceived preparedness to teach English to young learners in this sample. In light of this non-significant finding, no post-hoc comparisons were conducted.

Table 4.6

One-Way ANOVA Results for Preparedness Scores by GPA Group

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	,546	3	,182	,544	,653
Within Groups	29,458	88	,334		
Total	30,004	91			

4.2. Qualitative Results

This section presents the qualitative findings of the study, which aim to explore senior pre-service English language teachers' perceptions of their preparedness to teach English to young learners (YLS). Based on in-depth semi-structured interviews with eight participants, the analysis focuses on how individual experiences, emotions, and educational practices shape their sense of preparedness. Thematic analysis was employed

to identify recurring patterns and meaningful categories within the data. The emerging themes reflect various dimensions of preparedness, including practical experience, theory–practice alignment, classroom management, material development, emotional preparedness, and participants’ suggestions for curriculum enhancement. Each theme is discussed in detail with supporting excerpts from the interviews to illustrate the lived experiences and perspectives of the participants.

4.2.1. Emerging themes

The analysis of interview data revealed six main themes and one sub-theme that together reflect how senior ELT students perceive their preparedness to teach English to young learners. These themes offer a multi-dimensional account of the participants’ developmental, pedagogical, and emotional experiences as they approach professional practice. Although each theme captures a distinct component of teacher preparedness, they often overlap and interact, highlighting the complex and evolving nature of learning to teach.

The first theme, Practical Experience, underscores the central role of the teaching practice in shaping participants’ teaching confidence and professional identity. Theory–Practice Gap, on the other hand, captures participants’ concerns about the disconnect between theoretical coursework and real classroom demands. The theme of Classroom Management and Instruction reflects the challenges of maintaining control in young learner classrooms while also delivering clear and effective instructional input, skills participants often felt unprepared to enact.

Another major theme, Material Development, addresses the need to design and implement age-appropriate, engaging teaching materials. Within this theme, a distinct sub-theme of Digital Material Use and Technology Integration emerged, reflecting participants’ recognition of the increasing importance of technology in young learners’ classrooms and their efforts to use it meaningfully and appropriately.

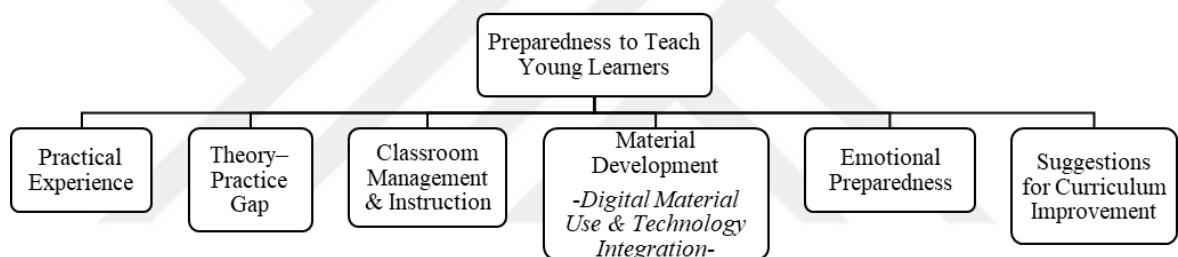
The theme of Emotional Preparedness adds a personal layer to the findings, illustrating how individual traits, anxieties, and classroom experiences shaped participants’ emotional preparedness to teach young learners. Lastly, Suggestions for Curriculum Improvement reveals participants’ constructive feedback on how teacher

education programs might better support their development, particularly through more experiential, age-specific, and practically grounded learning opportunities.

Collectively, these themes offer insight into the interrelated aspects of what it means to feel prepared to teach English to young learners. They reflect the voices of pre-service teachers who are navigating both personal growth and professional formation, and who seek a more integrated and supportive teacher education experience. As shown in Figure 4.4, the main themes and the sub-theme derived from the interviews are represented through their headings to provide an overview of the qualitative findings. The following sections elaborate on each theme in turn, with illustrative quotations drawn from the interviews.

Figure 4.4.

Emerging themes from the qualitative analysis



4.2.1.1. Practical experience

The transition from theoretical preparation to hands-on teaching emerged as a crucial factor in shaping pre-service teachers' sense of preparedness to teach English to young learners. In particular, participants' teaching practice experiences were consistently described as pivotal moments of growth, reflection, and realization. Unlike abstract pedagogical instruction, practical experience provided the participants with opportunities to internalize, test, and adapt their knowledge in real classroom settings, especially with primary-aged students.

One of the dominant insights voiced by participants was the transformative role of classroom experience in reducing anxiety and increasing confidence. Prior to entering the teaching practice, many teacher candidates expressed uncertainty and apprehension about their abilities, largely due to their limited exposure to authentic teaching contexts. As one participant explained:

“Before my teaching practice, I used to feel more anxious because I hadn’t been in a classroom for a long time. I had very little idea what a real classroom would look like, which made me nervous. I also didn’t know what to expect in terms of challenges or what might be missing. But after the teaching practice, it really guided me a lot, and I felt much better.” (Participant 1)

This reflection illustrates how experiential learning plays a vital role in the development of professional identity. The teaching practice not only functioned as a context for skill acquisition but also served to demystify classroom realities, enabling participants to engage in reflective practice. Through direct interaction with students and classroom dynamics, participants began to recognize what effective teaching actually entails beyond the scope of textbooks or university lectures.

Moreover, the teaching practice helped participants refine their understanding of age-appropriate teaching strategies, especially when working with younger learners. Exposure to real students, often in second or third grade, allowed participants to observe learning behaviours, adjust instructional strategies, and improve classroom management. One participant remarked:

“Right now, in my teaching practice school, I’m teaching second and third grade students. I feel that these experiences have helped me improve myself.” (Participant 6)

This statement not only reflects personal growth but also suggests a developing pedagogical awareness. Working with young learners in real time enabled participants to explore what techniques work best for maintaining attention, fostering participation, and communicating instructions effectively, competencies that are essential for early language teaching.

In sum, practical experience served as a catalyst for bridging abstract knowledge and concrete classroom action. Through it, participants did not merely rehearse teaching techniques; they encountered the lived complexity of teaching, confronted their uncertainties, and gradually developed a more grounded, confident sense of themselves as future educators. The findings strongly suggest that meaningful, age-appropriate teaching practice opportunities are indispensable for preparing ELT students to teach young learners effectively.

4.2.1.2. Theory–practice gap

One of the most strongly articulated themes across the interviews was the disconnect between university-based theoretical training and the practical realities of teaching in real classrooms. Participants frequently acknowledged the value of their coursework but simultaneously emphasized that theoretical knowledge alone was insufficient for effective teaching, especially in the context of young learners. The gap between “knowing what to do” and “being able to do it” emerged as a recurring challenge, affecting their sense of preparedness and confidence as future teachers.

Participants repeatedly pointed out that theoretical instruction provided a foundation, but it did not prepare them for the unpredictability and complexity of real classroom situations. As one participant metaphorically explained, theoretical knowledge was like having a list of ingredients for a meal, but not knowing how to cook it:

“Theory and classroom practice are very different. Okay, in theory, how can I explain this, you know how recipes list ingredients like ‘add this, do that’? Theory gives you that part. But actually, cooking the dish is entirely up to you. Like, do you add the salt first or the water first? Those kinds of things can vary a lot.” (Participant 4)

This vivid analogy reflects the participants’ perception that university courses often provide declarative knowledge, what to do and why, but fall short in cultivating procedural knowledge, how to do it effectively in real-life teaching conditions.

Many participants emphasized that real understanding emerged only after they were immersed in practical experiences. For example, one participant explained how the teaching practice helped them realize whether they could implement what they had learned:

“Before the teaching practice, I only had theoretical knowledge. I knew what to do and when to do it, but during the teaching practice I was able to put that into action. I clearly saw whether I could really apply what I had learned, and I realized I could.” (Participant 3)

This statement illustrates a crucial pedagogical insight: theory alone may foster conceptual understanding, but only real teaching situations reveal whether this knowledge can be transferred into practice. The participant’s experience exemplifies how teaching practice serves as a testing ground for translating learned strategies into classroom behaviour, thereby narrowing the theory–practice divide. Same participant further

emphasized the indispensable value of practical experience in complementing and, to some extent, correcting the limitations of theoretical learning:

“To me, the teaching practice part is even more important, because theory is very different from practice. The more we put things into practice, the more we can improve ourselves.”
(Participant 3)

This perspective highlights a developmental trajectory in which hands-on experiences help convert theoretical principles into pedagogical routines and decision-making strategies. Participants noted that while university courses provided knowledge about teaching techniques, classroom management, or lesson planning, they often lacked the depth and context-specific detail required to prepare them for unpredictable real-world challenges.

Beyond personal experiences, the theory-practice gap was also attributed to structural factors within the teacher education curriculum. Some participants criticized the way TEYL-related content was delivered, often confined to a single semester, highly theoretical, and not sufficiently adapted to the realities of public-school settings such as large class sizes, lack of resources, or limited instructional time. In this regard, the gap is not merely about the absence of practical exposure, but also about the misalignment between what is taught and the conditions in which that knowledge must be applied.

In summary, the perceived theory-practice gap among pre-service English teachers was not simply a pedagogical concern, but a central determinant of their preparedness. The participants viewed theory as valuable but incomplete, emphasizing that without opportunities to apply and adapt this knowledge in context, they could not fully develop as competent and confident teachers. These findings underscore the need for teacher education programs to integrate more experiential and context-responsive components. Specifically, curricula should include extended teaching practice periods, collaborative teaching models, and reflective opportunities that allow pre-service teachers to bridge the divide between theoretical ideals and classroom realities, particularly in the demanding field of early English language teaching.

4.2.1.3. Classroom management and instruction

Another salient theme that emerged from the interviews was the challenge of managing young learners in the classroom and delivering clear, age-appropriate

instructions. Participants repeatedly highlighted classroom management not only as a critical pedagogical skill but also as one of the areas in which they felt the least confident. The unpredictable, high-energy nature of young learners, combined with their developmental need for structure and clarity, was cited as a major source of difficulty. In this context, effective classroom management and instructional clarity were viewed as deeply intertwined components of teaching preparedness.

“Young learners are very easily distracted. They tend to lose focus quickly and start interacting among themselves. For example, when one student says something, teases, or asks a question, suddenly the whole class gets noisy and starts chatting. They’re incredibly energetic.” (Participant 7)

This observation illustrates how easily the classroom dynamic can shift off-task and highlights the necessity of proactive and responsive classroom management strategies. In addition to behavioural control, participants emphasized the importance of delivering effective instructions. Instruction-giving was seen not just as a communication skill, but as a fundamental classroom management strategy. Several participants reported that they initially underestimated the difficulty of giving instructions clearly and concisely. As one of them reflected:

“I find it a bit difficult to give instructions, because you have to do it in a way that is very clear, direct, and without missing anything. Otherwise, children start doing different things.” (Participant 1)

This experience points to the connection between classroom control and communicative clarity. In environments where language itself is the object of instruction, young learners often rely heavily on non-verbal cues and explicit guidance. Therefore, poorly delivered instructions can lead to confusion, distraction, or off-task behaviour, which can undermine the flow of the lesson.

Another participant further emphasized how the importance of instruction becomes more apparent in real classroom settings:

“I learned that classroom management is actually much more important when giving instructions. It’s not just what we say, but how we do it, whether the children are listening or not. Instruction was taught to us in a very theoretical way in our courses, but in real teaching, I saw how much more essential it is.” (Participant 6)

This insight illustrates how instruction and management operate simultaneously in young learner classrooms. Unlike with older students, where verbal cues may suffice, effective instruction for YLs must be supported by tone of voice, gestures, routines, and immediate feedback, elements often underemphasized in university training.

In sum, participants viewed classroom management and instruction not as isolated competencies but as interrelated domains essential to teaching young learners. While most had encountered these topics in theoretical coursework, their interviews revealed a lack of practical strategies and real-life rehearsal. The theme also demonstrates how unpreparedness in this area can undermine teachers' confidence, affect classroom climate, and hinder instructional delivery. These findings suggest that teacher education programs should offer more experiential training focused specifically on managing and instructing young learners, particularly through modelled instruction, peer teaching, and supervised practice in authentic classroom environments.

4.2.1.4. Material development

Developing and utilizing effective teaching materials was a recurring theme in participants' reflections on their preparedness to teach English to young learners. While most participants recognized the significant role of materials in sustaining attention and enhancing learning, their level of confidence and experience in material development varied significantly. This theme captures how participants perceive the role of materials in classroom engagement, the specific challenges associated with designing age-appropriate content, and the pedagogical growth they experienced through hands-on practices.

Participants emphasized that young learners, due to their developmental characteristics, require multisensory and interactive materials to stay focused and motivated. One participant explained that the concrete nature of young learners' cognitive processes necessitates visual and tactile materials to support learning:

“What are the challenges? One of them could be materials, because these children are concrete learners. So naturally, they need to see and touch things in order to learn. Preparing materials related to the topic is really important for them.” (Participant 3)

This statement reflects a foundational pedagogical principle in early language education: young learners are concrete, sensory-oriented individuals who benefit most

from visually rich and manipulable learning tools. Unlike older students who may engage effectively with abstract concepts, young learners need tangible experiences to grasp and retain new language. As such, the use of concrete, topic-related materials become not just a classroom enhancement, but a developmental necessity. Participants' recognition of this need also reveals a growing awareness of how material design must align with children's cognitive and sensory learning processes.

For several participants, their own experiences confirmed how well-designed materials could transform the classroom dynamic. One participant described how using colourful, hands-on materials allowed them to connect more easily with students, especially after the initial challenges of classroom adaptation:

“As I got used to the students, it became easier, not from the second lesson, but from the third lesson onwards, after I built a connection with them. Once I gained the ability to bring more colourful characters and materials, things they could touch, cut, and paint, to the classroom, the lessons started to flow much more smoothly.” (Participant 2)

This statement highlights the dual function of materials, as pedagogical tools and as affective bridges that foster connection between teacher and student. Especially in early childhood education, where verbal instructions may be less effective, materials serve as an extension of instruction and a source of engagement.

While some participants expressed uncertainty or limitations in their ability to design materials, others shared more positive experiences, particularly when theory and practice were aligned. One participant described how a university course on material development provided practical strategies that were reinforced through their teaching practice:

“I think I'm competent in material development. In the first semester of the fourth year, we had a more intensive course on material development. Since it aligned with my teaching practice, I had the opportunity to try out what I learned there and observe the results. In that sense, it was really beneficial for me. It was useful to observe what kind of materials work for which age groups and how students' responses differ.” (Participant 7)

This account shows how theoretical instruction, when coupled with practical experimentation, can result in meaningful pedagogical development. Participants who

were able to apply material design concepts directly in the classroom reported a greater sense of control and creativity in their teaching practice.

In sum, participants regarded material development as both a critical component of early language education and a key determinant of their classroom effectiveness. While the perceived importance of materials was nearly universal, the ability to design and use them varied depending on the quality of coursework, alignment with teaching practice opportunities, and the individual's level of initiative. The findings suggest that ELT programs should provide more structured and practice-oriented training in material design, particularly for young learners. Such training would not only enhance lesson effectiveness but also improve teacher confidence, classroom rapport, and pedagogical adaptability.

4.2.1.4.1. Digital material use and technology integration

The integration of digital tools and materials in young learner (YL) classrooms emerged as a prominent subtheme in participants' reflections. As digital-native children increasingly dominate the primary education landscape, pre-service teachers expressed strong awareness of the necessity of incorporating technology to maintain engagement and facilitate effective instruction. While participants generally viewed technology as a valuable asset in TEYL settings, they also offered critical reflections on its limitations and the importance of balanced use.

Several participants emphasized that young learners are naturally drawn to technology, as it aligns with their everyday experiences outside of school. The widespread presence of digital devices in children's lives, from tablets to smartboards, was cited as a reason why technology-enhanced instruction feels both relevant and motivating. One participant explained:

"Technology is quite important for young learners, at least based on my own experience. From what I've seen, all English classes are taught using smartboards. At this point, I can't even imagine a lesson without one." (Participant 1)

This reflection underscores how digital materials, such as videos, animations, and interactive slides, have become integral to the teaching process. For many pre-service teachers, smartboard usage has shifted from being an optional aid to a pedagogical necessity.

Another participant similarly highlighted both the motivational and instructional value of technology, particularly for learners who have grown up surrounded by screens:

“We are now living with children who grow up with technology. You know, times have really changed. Even very young children now have phones and tablets in their hands. Naturally, technology grabs their attention. In that sense, I can say we benefit a lot from it. I also believe I integrate technology into my lessons quite well.” (Participant 3)

Here, the participant highlights not only their own confidence in using technology but also an understanding of its pedagogical relevance for today’s learners. The emphasis is on integration, using technology meaningfully and strategically, rather than merely displaying digital content.

Despite general positivity, some participants offered more critical perspectives. One participant warned against the passive overuse of smartboards, arguing that digital resources should be complemented by physical interaction, dialogue, and kinaesthetic activities:

“In some cases, using technology is very important. Firstly, authentic materials can be delivered most effectively through technology. But if all we do is use a smartboard, without speaking or interacting with students, or without bringing any physical materials into the classroom, then it’s not helpful.” (Participant 7)

This statement points to an emerging pedagogical awareness: while digital tools enhance access and interest, they must be embedded in interactive and communicative contexts. Without teacher-student dialogue and physical engagement, technology risks becoming a passive delivery tool rather than an active learning resource.

In summary, participants recognized the importance of digital material use and technology integration in early language classrooms. They associated it with learner motivation, instructional efficiency, and access to rich multimedia content. However, a nuanced understanding also emerged, participants acknowledged the potential drawbacks of overreliance on technology, especially when it replaces rather than supports communicative and experiential learning. These findings suggest that teacher education programs should not only promote digital literacy but also foster critical pedagogical thinking about how and when to use technology effectively in the context of teaching young learners.

4.2.1.5. Emotional preparedness

The emotional dimension of teaching preparedness emerged as a significant theme in the participants' reflections. While pedagogical and content knowledge were acknowledged as crucial, many participants emphasized that their emotional preparedness, especially when working with young learners, was equally important in determining their classroom confidence and effectiveness. The data revealed a spectrum of emotional states ranging from anxiety and self-doubt to confidence shaped by temperament and reflective growth.

Several participants shared that they felt nervous or unprepared prior to engaging with young learners. Their concerns were often rooted in uncertainty about how children would perceive them, how to maintain engagement, or how to adapt instruction to meet developmental needs. One participant described the emotional tension they experienced before each lesson, which gradually eased through experience:

“Before each class, I usually feel nervous and inadequate. The younger the age group, the harder it is for me to communicate. I think the age gap and their emotional states contribute to this. But after the first lesson, this anxiety disappears, because I find it easier to understand them.” (Participant 2)

This reflection illustrates the internal transition many pre-service teachers experience. Although initial contact with young learners may evoke stress and hesitation, repeated exposure often fosters emotional adaptation and a greater sense of control.

Some participants highlighted personal characteristics that supported their emotional preparedness. For instance, traits such as patience, calmness, and emotional stability were cited as assets that helped them feel more equipped to work with children:

“I’m generally a calm person. I think I can work well with young learners in that sense. I’m also patient, and I believe that has an impact. These are the reasons why I feel somewhat prepared to teach them.” (Participant 1)

This perspective suggests that emotional preparedness is not solely the result of formal training or experience; intrinsic qualities also play a key role in how future teachers perceive their ability to manage the affective demands of young learners.

On the other end of the spectrum, some participants admitted feeling emotionally unready despite gaining practical experience. This was often linked to perceived gaps in

developmental understanding or communication skills specific to younger age groups. One participant reflected:

“I feel that I’ve improved a bit through my teaching practice experience, but I still don’t feel ready to actually deliver a lesson for younger children.” (Participant 6)

Such comments reflect a complex interplay between knowledge, practice, and self-perception. While teaching practice helps, it does not always resolve deeper concerns about preparedness, especially when internal doubts persist, or developmental needs of children are not fully grasped.

In summary, emotional preparedness was a nuanced and personal aspect of participants’ preparedness to teach young learners. Some expressed confidence derived from personal traits and positive classroom experiences, while others struggled with anxiety, communication challenges, or a perceived mismatch between their abilities and the needs of young learners. These findings underscore the importance of not only pedagogical training but also emotional resilience building in pre-service teacher education. Programs that incorporate reflection, peer discussion, and gradual exposure to diverse learner profiles may better support candidates in developing both cognitive and emotional preparedness.

4.2.1.6. Suggestions for curriculum improvement

Participants shared a range of ideas regarding how the current teacher education curriculum might be enhanced to better support pre-service teachers in preparing to teach English to young learners. While suggestions varied across individuals, several recurring themes emerged from their reflections. These included a desire for broader teaching practice experiences across different age levels, calls for more in-depth and sustained instruction on TEYL-related content, and an interest in making existing coursework more interactive and practice-oriented. Although participants acknowledged the value of theoretical foundations in their training, many expressed that increased opportunities for practical engagement, particularly with younger learners, could help bridge the gap between theory and practice.

One of the most frequently expressed suggestions was the need to diversify and extend teaching practice placements across different age groups. Participants noted that

limiting teaching practice experiences to only middle school students left them feeling unprepared to handle younger learners in real classrooms:

“I think internships must definitely include primary school, not just primary, but all grade levels. I believe we should do internships at all levels. We need to see them all.” (Participant 3)

“I think we need to experience every age group, not just the young learners. At the very least, we should teach a few lessons at each age level.” (Participant 7)

These reflections indicate that participants view developmental diversity as a critical part of their professional growth. They believe that more comprehensive exposure to various learner profiles would enhance their adaptability and instructional confidence.

Another recurring theme was the perceived inadequacy of the current course duration dedicated to teaching English to young learners. Several participants felt that a single-semester TEYL course was insufficient for covering the wide range of strategies, age-specific needs, and classroom practices necessary for success:

“The TEYL course could be offered not just for one semester but for two. That way, it could be more detailed and spread out over a longer period. It could also be more practice-based, for example, with more demo lessons.” (Participant 1)

“We only take this course for one semester. Maybe it should be two, maybe even three, I don't know, but I believe it should be longer.” (Participant 3)

Such statements suggest that participants recognize the complexity of teaching young learners and are asking for a more structured and sustained instructional approach. This indicates a desire not only for more time, but also for greater depth in both theory and application.

Finally, several participants proposed that the content of existing courses could be enhanced by incorporating more hands-on activities and practical examples. Rather than increasing the total number of courses, an idea some acknowledged might be impractical, they favoured making current courses more interactive and contextually relevant:

“It might be difficult to add new courses due to the course load, but I think the content of the existing courses could be improved. If we include more experience-based and activity-oriented elements, more active participation, I think it would be more beneficial. Additionally, seminars could be organized on how to implement activities specifically for children.” (Participant 5)

This view reflects a balanced approach: appreciating the constraints of formal curricula while advocating for more experiential learning opportunities within existing structures. The mention of optional seminars further shows participants' motivation to engage with professional development resources when made available.

Overall, participants conveyed a sincere investment in the quality of their preparation and offered practical, constructive feedback aimed at curriculum improvement. While they acknowledged the value of theoretical instruction, they called for more immersive and differentiated practice opportunities, longer and more detailed TEYL training, and a shift toward more active learning formats. These insights highlight a broader recognition among pre-service teachers that successful instruction for young learners requires not only knowledge, but also experience, reflection, and adaptive practice, elements that teacher education programs can support through thoughtful curricular reform.

4.2.2. Summary of themes

The qualitative findings of this study revealed a multifaceted landscape of pre-service English teachers' preparedness for teaching young learners. While each participant brought their own experiences and perspectives, several common themes emerged across the interviews, offering valuable insights into both strengths and areas for improvement within the current teacher education framework.

One of the most frequently emphasized themes was the critical importance of practical experience, particularly through the teaching practice. Participants described classroom engagement as a transformative component of their training, allowing them to confront real-life challenges, reflect on their teaching identities, and bridge the gap between abstract knowledge and professional practice. Closely related to this was the theory–practice gap, as many participants expressed that theoretical coursework alone did not adequately prepare them for the unpredictability and complexity of real classrooms. While acknowledging the value of theory, they emphasized the need for more structured opportunities to apply their knowledge in authentic teaching contexts.

Another prominent theme was classroom management and instruction, which participants often identified as one of the most challenging aspects of teaching young learners. Delivering clear instructions and managing high-energy learners were cited as

interrelated competencies that required both pedagogical skill and emotional adaptability.

The theme of material development also emerged as central to participants' perceptions of preparedness. They emphasized the value of using age-appropriate, hands-on materials to sustain engagement and support learning among young learners. Participants who had opportunities to apply what they learned in material design courses during their teaching practice reported increased confidence and creativity in lesson planning. However, levels of perceived competence varied based on the quality of instruction and opportunity for practice.

As a subtheme, digital material use and technology integration was also frequently mentioned. Participants recognized that today's young learners are digital natives, and thus integrating smartboards, videos, and interactive content into language instruction was seen as both motivating and necessary. While the use of technology was generally viewed positively, participants also cautioned against its overuse in passive formats. Instead, they advocated for balanced use in conjunction with physical materials and communicative interaction.

The theme of emotional preparedness added a personal and affective dimension to participants' preparedness. Many reflected on the anxieties they experienced prior to working with children, particularly regarding classroom communication and engagement. Over time, exposure to real classrooms and students appeared to ease these concerns, with personal traits such as patience and calmness playing a role in emotional adaptation. Nonetheless, some participants continued to feel unready, particularly in addressing the unique developmental and emotional needs of younger learners.

Finally, participants offered a range of suggestions for curriculum improvement, many of which pointed toward increasing the duration and depth of TEYL-specific instruction, broadening teaching practice placements to include multiple age groups, and enriching existing coursework with more interactive and practice-based content. Rather than dismissing theoretical instruction, participants called for a more integrated and responsive curriculum that would help them transition more effectively into real classroom settings.

In sum, the themes that emerged from the data collectively portray a group of pre-service teachers who are aware of both their developing strengths and remaining uncertainties. Their reflections underscore the importance of experience-based, emotionally attuned, and pedagogically responsive training programs in preparing future educators for the complex demands of teaching English to young learners.



5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the overall discussion and conclusion of the study. It first interprets the results obtained from both the quantitative and qualitative data in light of the research questions and relevant literature. The quantitative and qualitative findings are discussed separately to highlight key insights, followed by a conclusion synthesising the overall outcomes. Lastly, this chapter presents the implications for teacher education programs, the limitations of the current study, and the directions for further research. The results collected from both data strands shed light on pre-service teachers' preparedness. Below, the findings are discussed in alignment with the research questions about the existing literature in the field of TEYL.

5.1. Discussion

This section discusses the findings by interpreting the quantitative and qualitative data related to the research questions and the relevant literature. The results are examined separately to explore how pre-service English language teachers perceive their preparedness to teach English to young learners. While the quantitative data offer a broad overview of participants' self-reported preparedness levels, the qualitative data provide deeper insights into their lived experiences, challenges, and reflections. These data contribute to a better, comprehensive understanding of teacher preparedness in early English language teaching in Turkey.

5.1.1. Discussion of the quantitative results

In response to the first research question, "*What is the perceived level of preparedness among senior pre-service English language teachers in Turkey to teach English to young learners?*", the quantitative findings revealed a generally high level of self-reported preparedness. The overall mean score on the Preparedness to Teach Scale was 3.82 on a 5-point Likert scale. This suggests that participants, in the final year of their undergraduate ELT program, perceived themselves as well-equipped to teach English to young learners. These results positively imply teacher candidates' self-confidence as they approach graduation and potential entry into the profession.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that explored pre-service teachers' perceptions of preparedness in TEYL contexts. Koç (2023) reported that senior ELT students developed a more positive outlook on teaching young learners after participating

in structured microteaching sessions, despite many still feeling unprepared to implement developmentally appropriate instruction fully. Similarly, Önal (2023) found that while many teacher candidates believed their programs provided them with a solid theoretical background, they acknowledged a lack of practical opportunities tailored to younger learners. Supporting these results, Çamlıbel-Acar (2016) emphasized that direct interaction with young learners during teaching practice experiences helped shift prospective teachers' attitudes from hesitation to confidence. The study showed that hands-on engagement allowed teacher candidates to better understand the needs and behaviours of young learners, which, in turn, enhanced their perceived preparedness to teach in early childhood classrooms.

Overall, the findings present a positive picture of senior pre-service English language teachers' perceived preparedness to teach young learners. The relatively high scores suggest that participants are leaving their programs with a sense of confidence in their abilities. This is an encouraging outcome for teacher education programs aiming to prepare graduates for the realities of primary-level language teaching. However, as the scale measures perceptions rather than demonstrated teaching performance, the results should be interpreted with some caution. Particularly in the context of TEYL, where specialised skills and age-sensitive approaches are essential, further investigation is needed to understand how this sense of preparedness translates into real classroom effectiveness.

The Preparedness to Teach Scale results indicated that participants felt highly prepared across all four sub-dimensions: creating an effective learning environment, designing instructional processes, techno-pedagogical competence, and understanding learners. The highest scores were observed in technology-related competencies, suggesting that participants felt most confident integrating digital tools into their teaching. In contrast, understanding learners received comparatively lower scores, reflecting a more cautious self-assessment in addressing young learners' developmental needs. While all sub-dimensions scored within the "high preparedness" range, the variance among them highlights potential areas for targeted curriculum improvement, especially in fostering deeper understanding of young learners' cognitive and emotional characteristics.

Although Kaya's (2023) study did not specifically focus on teaching English to young learners, it employed the same scale with a similar group of pre-service EFL teachers. His

findings followed a comparable pattern, with higher scores in techno-pedagogical competence and relatively lower ratings in understanding learners. The alignment between the two studies, despite differences in context, suggests that certain dimensions of perceived preparedness may consistently require greater emphasis in teacher education programs.

Beyond the overall analysis of preparedness levels, the study also addressed two sub-questions to explore the potential influence of individual background characteristics on participants' perceptions: (1.1) *Does perceived preparedness differ by gender?* And (1.2) *Does perceived preparedness differ by academic achievement (GPA)?* While the primary aim of the study was to investigate general perceptions of preparedness among pre-service English language teachers, examining these variables allowed for a more nuanced understanding of whether demographic and academic factors play a role in shaping self-reported preparedness. Including such comparisons helps identify whether perceived preparedness is uniformly experienced across diverse groups within the teacher candidate population.

As a response to the first sub-question focusing on gender, the statistical analysis in the current study indicated no significant gender-based differences in perceived preparedness levels. This finding aligns with previous research conducted in the Turkish context. For instance, Akdemir (2019), using the Preparedness to Teach Scale with pre-service teachers from various departments, reported no statistically significant differences between female and male participants across all sub-dimensions of preparedness, including understanding learners and techno-pedagogical competencies. Similarly, Karaca (2019) found that senior pre-service teachers perceived themselves as equally prepared in areas such as instructional planning and creating learning environments, regardless of gender. While neither of these studies focused specifically on teaching English to young learners (TEYL), they reflect broader patterns in pre-service teacher education programs in Turkey. The limited availability of TEYL-specific studies addressing gender-based variation in preparedness highlights a gap in the literature. Thus, the present study provides a valuable contribution by exploring this question in the TEYL context and suggesting that gender may not play a significant role in shaping self-perceived preparedness among prospective teachers of young learners.

The relationship between academic achievement and perceived preparedness was also explored in this study through participants' GPA categories. Although participants with higher GPAs reported slightly higher preparedness scores, the overall difference was not statistically significant. Similar patterns have been identified in earlier research. Kaya (2023), for example, investigated pre-service EFL teachers' preparedness and found no meaningful difference in scores based on GPA levels. His results pointed to the stronger influence of practical exposure and program design over academic metrics. In contrast, a significant GPA effect on preparedness levels was reported among pre-service teachers in other fields of teacher education (Karakaya, Uzel, Gül, & Yılmaz, 2019), suggesting that those with higher academic standing tended to feel more confident in their preparedness to teach. The contrast between these findings highlights how disciplinary focus and institutional context may shape the perceived role of GPA in teacher preparedness. It is also important to note that neither study was conducted specifically within the TEYL domain. Since early language instruction involves unique developmental, affective, and linguistic challenges, the relevance of GPA in this specialised area remains uncertain. By addressing this gap, the current study suggests that academic achievement alone may not be a reliable predictor of perceived preparedness in the TEYL context.

In summary, the quantitative results of the study indicate that senior pre-service English language teachers generally perceive themselves as well-prepared to teach English to young learners. Participants reported high levels of preparedness across all sub-dimensions, particularly in techno-pedagogical competence, while expressing slightly more uncertainty in understanding young learners' developmental needs. Furthermore, statistical analyses showed no significant differences in perceived preparedness based on gender or academic achievement (GPA), suggesting a shared sense of preparedness across diverse student profiles. These findings highlight strengths and limitations within current teacher education practices and emphasise the importance of aligning perceived preparedness with the specific cognitive, emotional, and linguistic demands of early English language instruction.

5.1.2. Discussion of the qualitative results

The qualitative findings of this study provided a deeper understanding of how senior pre-service English language teachers perceive their preparedness to teach English to young learners (YLS). Through the analysis of semi-structured interviews, several

interrelated themes emerged, shedding light on participants' pedagogical awareness, emotional preparedness, and reflections on teacher education programs. These themes reinforced the quantitative results, offering richer insights into the complex, multifaceted nature of teacher preparedness in TEYL. In particular, the qualitative data directly addressed the second research question of the study: *"How do senior pre-service English language teachers perceive their preparedness to teach English to young learners, and what factors do they identify as contributing to or hindering their preparedness?"* The responses revealed both internal and external factors, including teaching practice experiences, classroom realities, emotional characteristics, and the structure of TEYL-related coursework, that shaped participants' sense of preparedness. Together, these insights contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics that influence future teachers' preparedness in early English language teaching. Below, each theme is discussed in relation to existing literature.

Practical Experience emerged as the most influential contributor to participants' perceived preparedness. Many participants stated that engaging with young learners during their teaching practice was instrumental in transforming abstract theoretical knowledge into actionable classroom practice. This finding is supported by Tekin and Baykara (2023), whose teaching practice-integrated TEYL study demonstrated that direct teaching experience enabled pre-service teachers to apply their knowledge of child development, develop age-appropriate lesson plans, and gain confidence in their teaching abilities. Moreover, the teaching practice helped participants reflect more critically on their career preferences and understand the distinct demands of working with children, ultimately clarifying their professional goals. Similarly, Önal (2023) found that ELT students who had the opportunity to engage with primary-level learners during their teaching practice felt significantly more prepared than those whose teaching practice was limited to older students. Participants in his study emphasised that practical experience strengthened their pedagogical skills and exposed gaps in their training, particularly about classroom management and instructional strategies for young learners. These findings underscore the crucial role of teaching practice-based, TEYL-specific experiences in fostering confidence and professional clarity among pre-service English language teachers.

Participants frequently emphasised the disconnect between theoretical instruction and real classroom demands when teaching young learners. While university courses provided foundational knowledge, many felt unprepared for the dynamic and affective challenges in actual classrooms. This aligns with Koç (2023), who found that although TEYL courses introduce essential concepts, they often remain abstract without teaching practice-based application. Similarly, Cabaroğlu and Öz (2023) identified the theory-practice gap as a recurring issue in ELT teaching practice studies, highlighting that real teaching experiences, supported by reflection and feedback, help internalise theoretical knowledge. In this study, participants exposed to teaching practice-based opportunities reported more confidence in their instructional decisions, suggesting that experiential learning is key to bridging this gap. However, the absence of consistent and age-specific teaching practice placements was cited as a major shortcoming, indicating a need for structural revisions in teacher education curricula to ensure more targeted field experiences in early language teaching contexts.

Participants reported that managing young learners and delivering effective instructions were among the most demanding aspects of teaching. Many expressed uncertainties about keeping students on task and giving clear directions, especially in noisy or high-energy classrooms. This aligns with Dinçer (2020), who found that pre-service teachers often lacked confidence in managing primary-level learners due to minimal exposure to age-specific techniques. Complementing this, Salazar and Larenas (2019) argue that young learners benefit most when clear instructions are paired with modelling and visual aids, which support comprehension and behavioural engagement. These findings highlight the need for TEYL programs to integrate more structured practice in instructional clarity and classroom management, treating them as interdependent competencies.

Participants consistently emphasised that young learners require concrete, multisensory materials to stay engaged and understand new content. While many recognised the importance of such materials, their confidence in designing them varied, often depending on whether their coursework aligned with teaching practice experiences. This aligns with Kılıçkaya (2019), who found that material development tasks embedded in pre-service teacher education promote creativity and pedagogical awareness. Participants who could apply what they learned during teaching practice

reported greater control and responsiveness in the classroom. Most participants viewed digital tools and technology as a necessary component of TEYL, frequently citing smartboards, videos, and interactive visuals as helpful. However, several expressed concerns about overuse and the lack of interactive balance. Uzundurdu (2022) similarly observed that while teacher candidates feel ready to use technology, they often lack guidance in meaningful integration. These findings suggest the need for physical and digital material design through guided, practical, and age-specific training for TEYL.

Participants' reflections revealed that emotional preparedness was as critical as pedagogical knowledge in shaping their confidence and effectiveness with young learners. Many described feeling nervous before lessons, unsure of how to communicate or connect with children, emotions that gradually subsided with repeated classroom exposure. Others highlighted personal traits such as patience and calmness as assets that supported their emotional preparedness. However, some participants still felt emotionally unready, citing difficulties in addressing the developmental and communicative needs of younger students. These findings align with Çelik and Topkaya (2023), who emphasise that emotional preparedness in pre-service TEYL teachers is influenced by internal dispositions, such as patience and calmness, which aligns with the participant reflections in this study. Likewise, Uztosun (2016) emphasised that emotional self-efficacy remains low when teaching practice lacks opportunities for meaningful interaction with children. Overall, the data suggest that TEYL programs should incorporate structured emotional reflection, peer support, and graduated classroom exposure to build the affective dimension of teaching preparedness alongside cognitive and pedagogical skills.

The participants' suggestions for curriculum enhancement align with broader Turkish pre-service teacher education research findings. Tekin and Baykara (2023) emphasise that integrating teaching practice experiences into TEYL courses enables pre-service teachers to apply theoretical knowledge in real classroom settings, increasing their confidence and teaching skills. Similarly, Güngör (2016) highlights that reflective practices, such as video-recorded microteaching sessions and reflective journals, contribute significantly to pre-service teachers' professional development and preparedness to teach English to young learners. These studies support the participants' calls for more diversified teaching practice opportunities and extended, practice-oriented TEYL instruction. Implementing

curricular reforms could bridge the gap between theory and practice, fostering pedagogical competence and emotional preparedness among future TEYL educators.

In conclusion, the qualitative findings of this study offer a comprehensive view of the multifaceted nature of pre-service teachers' preparedness to teach English to young learners. Participants' experiences revealed that preparedness is not a fixed outcome of coursework alone, but a dynamic process shaped by practical exposure, emotional development, and the alignment of theory with classroom realities. Themes such as teaching practice experience, classroom management, material design, and curriculum expectations illustrate that effective TEYL preparation requires more than subject-matter knowledge, it necessitates integrated, reflective, and learner-centred teacher education. The consistency between participants' voices and the literature reinforces the urgent need for TEYL programs in Turkey to adopt more experiential, sustained, and responsive training models tailored to the developmental needs of young learners. Ultimately, empowering future English teachers to meet the demands of early language instruction depends on programs that integrate practical skill development with contextualised, hands-on learning.

5.2. Conclusion

This study examined the perceived preparedness of senior-year pre-service English language teachers in Turkey to teach English to young learners (YLS), adopting a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design. The research aimed to offer a general picture of teacher candidates' self-reported preparedness and a deeper understanding of the factors shaping these perceptions. Data were collected through a quantitative scale administered to 92 participants and follow-up interviews conducted with eight volunteers from the same group. The findings of both phases were interpreted in light of the two research questions guiding the study.

The quantitative results revealed that participants generally perceived themselves as well-prepared, with the mean preparedness score reaching 3,82 out of 5. They expressed the highest confidence in technology use and designing learning environments, while the lowest scores were observed in their perceived ability to understand young learners. Despite this variation, all subdimensions fell within the "well-prepared" range, suggesting that participants, overall, held a positive perception of their preparedness. Further analysis showed no statistically significant differences in preparedness levels based on gender or

academic achievement (GPA), indicating a relatively shared sense of preparedness among the participants regardless of their background characteristics.

The qualitative findings added nuance and depth to these results by exploring how participants interpreted and experienced their preparedness in more detail. Thematic analysis of the interview data revealed six interconnected themes: practical experience, theory–practice gap, classroom management and instruction, material development (with digital technology use as a sub-theme), emotional preparedness, and curriculum-related suggestions. Practical experience, especially during the teaching practice, was identified as the most critical contributor to perceived preparedness, enabling participants to translate theoretical knowledge into practice and to reflect on their teaching identity. At the same time, participants voiced concerns about the short duration and limited scope of the teaching practice and TEYL course, particularly in terms of age-level diversity.

Participants also highlighted classroom management and instruction as challenging aspects of teaching young learners, often citing a lack of specific strategies and rehearsal opportunities. Similarly, while they pointed to the importance of using concrete and digital materials, they expressed varying confidence levels in developing and implementing them effectively. Emotional preparedness emerged as another significant theme, shaped by individual dispositions, teaching experiences, and personal adaptation processes.

In conclusion, this study suggests that pre-service teachers' preparedness to teach English to young learners is a multifaceted construct shaped by theoretical, experiential, and emotional dimensions. While participants reported generally high levels of preparedness, they also identified clear areas for improvement within their teacher education programs. These insights may inform future efforts to design more responsive, age-appropriate, and grounded TEYL components within pre-service education. Table 5.1 below presents a summary of the main conclusions drawn from the current study.

Table 5.1

Research Questions and Conclusions: A Summary of Key Findings

Research Questions	Conclusion
1) What is the perceived level of preparedness among senior pre-service English language teachers in Turkey to teach English to young learners?	Participants reported a generally high level of preparedness ($M = 3,82/5,00$). They felt most confident in using technology and least confident in understanding young learners. Statistical analyses

[Table 5.1(Continue) *Research Questions and Conclusions: A Summary of Key Findings*]

1.1) Does perceived preparedness differ by gender?	revealed no significant differences in preparedness based on gender or GPA. This suggests a shared perception of preparedness across student profiles.
1.2) Does perceived preparedness differ by GPA?	
2) How do senior pre-service English language teachers perceive their preparedness to teach English to young learners, and what factors do they identify as contributing to or hindering their preparedness?	Participants highlighted both facilitating and limiting factors. The most influential contributors to preparedness were practical experience and personal traits. Hindrances included the theory, practice gap, limited teaching practice diversity, short TEYL course duration, challenges in classroom management, and a lack of support in material development and technology integration. Participants also emphasised the importance of emotional preparedness and offered constructive suggestions for curriculum improvement.

5.2.1. Implications

The findings of this study have several implications for English Language Teaching (ELT) programs in Turkey, particularly in the context of preparing pre-service teachers for teaching English to young learners (YLS). Although participants reported generally high levels of perceived preparedness, their narratives revealed several structural and pedagogical shortcomings within current teacher education programs. These implications should guide curriculum designers, faculty members, teaching practice coordinators, and policymakers in revising and enhancing TEYL-related components of teacher education.

First, the findings underscore the need to revise the structure and scope of TEYL courses. Participants frequently emphasized that a single, theoretically oriented course is insufficient for preparing them to meet the developmental and pedagogical demands of YLS. Teacher education programs should consider offering longitudinal TEYL instruction across multiple semesters, allowing pre-service teachers to progressively deepen their knowledge and skills. These courses should also include integrated components such as microteaching, age-appropriate lesson planning, child observation tasks, and hands-on activity design. Embedding these elements within TEYL courses would foster both pedagogical preparedness and confidence.

However, it is important to note that the design and duration of TEYL courses vary across institutions in Turkey. For instance, while some universities already offer TEYL as a two-semester sequence, others, such as Anadolu University, the setting of the present study, offer it as a single-semester course with extended weekly hours (e.g., 4 hours instead of the typical 3). Therefore, the recommendation to expand the scope and duration

of TEYL instruction may be particularly relevant for programs where the course is currently delivered in a more limited format. Moreover, considering the developmental complexity of teaching young learners, even a two-semester sequence may benefit from further expansion and enrichment, especially through increased exposure to hands-on, experiential, and classroom-oriented content. Readers are encouraged to consider such institutional differences and curricular depth when interpreting this implication.

Second, there is a clear need to reform the teaching practice structure to ensure meaningful exposure to young learners' classrooms. Several participants reported that their teaching practice placements were limited to secondary or high school contexts, leaving them underprepared for the realities of primary-level teaching. To address this, ELT programs should implement teaching practice placements that span multiple school levels, including at least one semester in a primary school. Moreover, these placements should involve structured observation protocols, collaborative teaching with mentor teachers experienced in TEYL, and regular feedback sessions. Such reforms would help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and classroom realities, a gap that many participants cited as one of the greatest challenges in their preparation.

Third, to address the persistent theory-practice gap, ELT curricula should incorporate reflective and practice-based learning experiences throughout the program. For instance, project-based assignments tied to real classroom contexts, simulation activities, peer feedback sessions, and reflective journals can provide pre-service teachers with the tools to connect theory to practice. These strategies also support the development of pedagogical adaptability and problem-solving skills, which are essential in dynamic YL environments.

Another important implication relates to teacher identity and professional self-efficacy. While some participants felt confident in their teaching abilities, others expressed emotional uncertainty, particularly in managing YL behaviour and communication. To nurture a stronger sense of teacher identity, programs should integrate mentorship initiatives, resilience-focused seminars, and opportunities for professional dialogue among pre-service teachers. These efforts can help reduce early-career anxiety and foster long-term engagement with the profession. Teacher educators should also consider offering structured opportunities for identity formation and emotional preparedness, especially in the context of child-centred teaching.

While the integration of digital tools was viewed positively by participants, the findings also revealed a need for balance and intentionality in technology use. Although not the central focus of this study, it is important that teacher education programs ensure that pre-service teachers are equipped with both technical skills and pedagogical judgment to select and use digital materials appropriately in early childhood contexts. This training should remain developmentally informed and aligned with the needs of YLs.

Finally, the findings point to broader policy implications. Effective TEYL preparation cannot be achieved solely at the program level. National education authorities and decision-makers responsible for teacher education policy should work in collaboration with universities. They should ensure that teaching practice placements in primary schools are institutionally supported and clearly specified as a formal requirement within teacher education programs. Moreover, greater alignment is needed between the Ministry of National Education's early English language policy and university-level training. Establishing TEYL-specific teaching practice requirements and building partnerships with local primary schools could enhance the coherence and practical impact of teacher education efforts.

In conclusion, this study highlights the multifaceted nature of preparedness for teaching English to young learners. Building such preparedness requires not only knowledge and technical skill, but also experience, reflection, and emotional resilience. Teacher education programs must move beyond theory-driven curricula and toward more integrated, context-responsive, and experiential models of professional learning that meet the specific challenges of TEYL. Only through such reforms can teacher candidates be genuinely empowered to meet the needs of Turkey's youngest language learners.

5.2.2. Limitations of the study

While this study offers important insights into the perceived preparedness of pre-service English language teachers for teaching young learners in Turkey, several limitations must be acknowledged to contextualise the findings and guide future research.

First, the study was geographically and institutionally limited to a single public university, Anadolu University. All participants were senior-year students enrolled in the same ELT undergraduate program. As such, the results may not reflect the experiences of teacher candidates from other institutions, particularly those with different curricular

structures or institutional resources. The findings, therefore, cannot be generalised to all pre-service English language teachers in Turkey.

Second, the Preparedness to Teach Scale was originally designed to measure general teacher preparedness rather than preparedness to teach young learners. However, it was used with careful framing and expert approval, and participants were clearly informed, both in writing and verbally, that their responses should reflect their preparedness to teach young learners aged 5–12. While this helped adapt the tool to the TEYL context, some age-specific competencies may still remain underrepresented in the quantitative data.

Third, the quantitative data were derived from self-reported responses on the Preparedness to Teach Scale. Although the scale demonstrated high internal reliability, self-assessment data are susceptible to social desirability bias and may not accurately reflect actual teaching competence. Participants may have overestimated or underestimated their preparedness depending on confidence levels, personal standards, or expectations of the research context.

Fourth, the qualitative part of the study involved only eight participants, all drawn from the same university. While thematic analysis allowed for depth and nuance, the limited sample size and the fact that all data came from a single institutional context constrain the transferability of the findings to other settings. Additionally, the interviews, although rich in content, were not triangulated with other qualitative sources such as mentor feedback or classroom observations.

Fifth, no pilot study was conducted prior to data collection. A preliminary pilot could have helped identify potential issues related to item clarity, question interpretation, and overall procedural flow. The absence of a pilot phase may have limited the opportunity to fine-tune the instruments and improve the effectiveness of both the quantitative and qualitative data collection processes.

Finally, the study did not include direct observation of teaching practices or external evaluations from teaching practice supervisors. As a result, it was not possible to compare self-perceived preparedness with actual classroom behaviour. This restricts the study's ability to assess the alignment, or misalignment, between perceived competence and demonstrated instructional performance in TEYL settings.

Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable contributions to a relatively under-researched area of teacher education in Turkey. It highlights critical structural and pedagogical gaps in TEYL preparation and provides a foundation for future research and policy development aimed at improving the quality and relevance of pre-service teacher education for early English instruction.

5.2.3. Recommendations for further research

Building on the findings and limitations of the present study, several directions for future research are recommended to further advance the understanding of pre-service English language teachers' preparedness for teaching young learners (YLS) in Turkey.

First, future studies should expand the scope beyond a single institution to include pre-service teachers from multiple universities across different regions of Turkey. Such comparative, multi-site research would allow for a more comprehensive exploration of how institutional differences, such as curriculum structures, teaching practice models, and faculty support, affect perceived preparedness. This approach would also help identify regional disparities in TEYL teacher education and contribute to more equitable policy development.

Second, future research should consider including participants from various stages of teacher development, such as first-year students, recent graduates, and novice in-service teachers. A longitudinal or cross-sectional design could reveal how perceptions of preparedness evolve over time and through different phases of professional formation. This would deepen our understanding of how preparedness is constructed and reconstructed across the continuum of teacher education.

Third, to complement self-reported perceptions, future studies should incorporate additional data sources such as classroom observations, lesson plans, teaching portfolios, and mentor teacher evaluations. These forms of triangulation would allow researchers to assess the alignment between perceived preparedness and actual teaching practices, thus offering a more holistic view of teacher preparedness.

Fourth, more focused qualitative studies could explore in depth the emotional dimensions of teacher preparedness, such as self-efficacy, identity formation, and coping with classroom-related anxiety. While the current study addressed emotional preparedness as one of several themes, future work could prioritise this area to investigate

how emotional and psychological factors influence professional development in TEYL contexts.

Fifth, in light of recent developments in teacher education policy, future studies could explore how recent structural reforms influence pre-service teachers' preparedness for TEYL. These include the establishment of the National Education Academy, a newly institutionalized body responsible for the recruitment, training, and certification of teachers, and the implementation of the Century of Türkiye Education Model, a national curriculum reform introduced in 2023. As Karataş (2025) points out, the National Education Academy has introduced significant changes to the traditional teacher education structure. Investigating the implications of this shift may offer valuable insights for teacher education policy and practice.

Finally, future research could focus on how specific changes in TEYL courses, like longer teaching practice experiences, microteaching activities, or structured mentoring, affect pre-service teachers' confidence and teaching skills. Studies using experimental or comparative methods could help determine which teaching approaches are most effective in improving long-term preparedness for teaching English to young learners.

In conclusion, sustained and diversified research efforts are needed to strengthen the evidence base for effective TEYL teacher education in Turkey. By addressing institutional, developmental, emotional, and contextual variables, future studies can offer richer insights into what it means to be genuinely prepared to teach English to young learners.

REFERENCES

- Akdemir, Ö. A. (2019). Student teachers' preparedness to teach: The case of Turkey. *International Education Studies*, 12(3), 90-96. doi:10.5539/ies.v12n3p90
- Aksoy, E. (2023). Teaching or testing, which matters more? The transition among education levels in Turkey. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 10(2), 470-483. doi:https:10.52380/ijcer.2023.10.2.376
- Aktaş, İ. (2022). Öğretmen adaylarının 21. yüzyıl becerilerinin çeşitli değişkenler açısından incelenmesi. *Disiplinlerarası Eğitim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 6(12), 187-203. <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/jier/issue/72377/1134109>
- Alkharusi, H. (2022). A descriptive analysis and interpretation of data from Likert scales in educational and psychological research. *Indian Journal of Psychology and Education*, 12(2), 13-16. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373096780_A_descriptive_analysis_and_interpretation_of_data_from_Likert_scales_in_educational_and_psychological_research
- Alyaz, Y., & Genç, Z. S. (2016). Digital game-based language learning in foreign language teacher education. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 17(4), 130-146. doi:10.17718/tojde.44375
- AÜ. (2025). *Anadolu Üniversitesi Öğrenci İşlemleri Ders Kataloğu*. 2022-2023 Öğretim Yılı Kataloğu: <https://oidb.anadolu.edu.tr/ogrenci-islemleri/ders-katalogu/2022-2023>
- Aygün, H. E. (2019). The prediction of the teaching readiness level of pre-service teachers in terms of curriculum literacy. *Uluslararası Eğitim Programları ve Öğretim Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 9(2), 203-220. doi:10.31704/ijocis.2019.009
- Bakhsh, S. A. (2016). Using games as a tool in teaching vocabulary to young learners. *English Language Teaching*, 9(7), 120-128. doi:10.5539/elt.v9n7p120

- Başok, E. (2020). The gap between language teaching policies and classroom practices in the Turkish EFL context: The effects on teacher motivation. *MEXTESOL Journal*, 44(2), 1-14. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED604755>
- Bozkurt, F. (2020). Teacher candidates' views on self and peer assessment as a tool for student development. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 45(1), 47-60. doi:10.14221/ajte.2020v45n1.4
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- Butler, Y. G. (2015). English language education among young learners in East Asia: A review of current research (2004–2014). *Cambridge University Press*, 48(3), 303 - 342. doi:10.1017/S0261444815000105
- Cabaroğlu, N., & Öz, G. (2023). Practicum in ELT: A systematic review of 2010–2020 research on ELT practicum. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 48(2), 1-20. doi:10.1080/02619768.2023.2242577
- Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching languages to young learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511733109
- Camlibel-Acar, Z. (2016). Teaching english to young learners: some challenges faced by pre-service teachers. *The Eurasia Proceedings of Educational & Social Sciences*, 5, 323-327. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/epess/issue/30752/366815>
- Campbell, J. L., Quincy, C., Osserman, J., & Pedersen, O. K. (2013). Coding in-depth semi-structured interviews: Problems of unitization and intercoder reliability and agreement. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 42(3), 294-320. doi:10.1177/0049124113500475
- Can, D. T., & Baştürk, M. (2018). Qualitative research: the pre-service EFL teachers' opinions on teaching practicum. *Trakya Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 20(1), 187-212. doi:10.26468/trakyasobed.437672
- Caner, M., Subaşı, G., & Kara, S. (2010). Teachers' beliefs on foreign language teaching practices in early phases of primary education: A case study. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 1(1), 62-76. doi:10.17569/tojq.32543

- Carroll, L. J., & Rothe, J. P. (2010). Levels of reconstruction as complementarity in mixed methods research: a social theory-based conceptual framework for integrating qualitative and quantitative research. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 7(9), 3478-3488.
doi:10.3390/ijerph7093478
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. London: SAGE Publications.
https://www.ucg.ac.me/skladiste/blog_609332/objava_105202/fajlovi/Creswell.pdf
- Çakar, N., & Özcan, M. B. (2024). Evaluation of pre-service teachers' views on the reality shock of the teaching practicum course. *Bartın University Journal of Faculty of Education*, 14(1), 163-180. doi:10.14686/buefad.1413305
- Darling-Hammond, L., Chung, R., & Frelow, F. (2002). Variation in teacher preparation: How well do different pathways prepare teachers to teach? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 53(4), 286-302. doi:10.1177/0022487102053004002
- Dinçer, Z. Ö. (2020). Preservice English teachers' motivation for teaching different grade levels. *Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*(54), 133-155. doi:10.21764/maeuefd.616995
- Esposito, N. (2001). From meaning to meaning: The influence of translation techniques on non-English focus group research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11(4), 568-579. doi:10.1177/104973201129119217
- Farooq, M. B., & Villiers, C. D. (2017). Telephonic Qualitative Research Interviews: When to consider them and how to do them. *Meditari Accountancy Research*, 25(2), 291 - 316. doi:10.1108/MEDAR-10-2016-0083
- Farrell, T. (2009). *Novice language teachers: Insights and perspectives for the first year*. (T. Farrell, Dü.) London: Equinox. doi:10.1002/tesq.45
- Garton, S., Copland, F., & Burns, A. (2011). Investigating global practices in teaching English to young learners. *British Council*, 1-24.
<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/publications/case-studies-insights-and-research/investigating-global-practices-teaching-english>

- Ghasemi, A., & Zahediasl, S. (2012). Normality tests for statistical analysis: A guide for non-statisticians. *International Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 10(2), 486-489. doi:10.5812/ijem.3505
- Ghasemi, A., & Zahediasl, S. (2012). Normality tests for statistical analysis: A guide for non-statisticians. *International Journal of Endocrinology and Metabolism*, 10(2), 486-489. doi:10.5812/ijem.3505
- Girgin, D., & Akcanca, N. (2021). The readiness of primary and preschool pre-service teachers' for teaching profession in Turkey: A mixed methods research. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research*, 8(2), 98-117. doi:10.33200/ijcer.750217
- Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11(3), 255-274. doi:10.2307/1163620
- Gustafsson, J.-E. (2003). What do we know about effects of school resources on educational results? *Swedish Economic Policy Review*, 77-110.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265577190_What_do_we_know_about_effects_of_school_resources_on_educational_results
- Güngör, M. N. (2016). Turkish pre-service teachers' reflective practices in teaching English to young learners. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 41(2), 137-151. doi:10.14221/ajte.2016v41n2.9
- Gürsoy, E., Korkmaz, Ş. Ç., & Damar, E. A. (2013). Foreign language teaching within 4+4+4 education system in Turkey: language teachers' voices. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 13(53A), 59-74.
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/290162270>
- İnceçay, G., & Dollar, Y. K. (2012). Classroom management, self-efficacy and readiness of Turkish pre-service English teachers. *International Association of Research in Foreign Language Education and Applied Linguistics*, 1(3), 189-198.
<https://dergipark.org.tr/en/pub/eltrj/issue/5475/74375>

- Ivankova, N. V., Creswell, J. W., & Stick, S. L. (2006). Using mixed-methods sequential explanatory design from theory to practice. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 3-20.
doi:10.1177/1525822X05282260
- Jong, J. d. (2016). *Face-to-face surveys*. Michigan: Guidelines for Best Practice in Cross-Cultural Surveys. <https://ccsg.isr.umich.edu/chapters/data-collection/face-to-face-surveys/>
- Karaca, N. (2019, September). A study on preservice teachers' perceived preparedness levels regarding instructional planning and creating learning environments. *A thesis submitted to the graduate school of social sciences of METU*. METU.
<https://open.metu.edu.tr/handle/11511/45160>
- Karakaya, F., Uzel, N., Gül, A., & Yılmaz, M. (2019). Pre-service teachers' levels of preparedness to teach. *Gazi Üniversitesi Gazi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 39(1), 373-396. doi:10.14686/buefad.1059588
- Karataş, İ. H. (2025). Türkiye Yüzyılı Maarif Modeli ve Millî Eğitim Akademisi eğitim fakültelerinin sonunu mu getirdi? *Alanyazın*, 6(1), 1-7.
<https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/alanyazin/issue/91993/1698937>
- Kaya, İ. (2023, July). A mixed-methods study on the concept of teacher preparedness and perceptions on pre-service EFL teacher preparedness to teach. *Master of Arts Thesis*. Anadolu University Graduate School of Educational Sciences.
<https://core.ac.uk/outputs/643439002/?source=4>
- Kic-Drgas, J., & Çomoğlu, İ. (2017). A comparison of English language teacher education programs in Poland and turkey. *Western Anatolia Journal of Educational Sciences*, 8(2), 112-121.
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328875416>
- Kılıçkaya, F. (2019). Pre-service English teachers' views on coursebook evaluation and designing supplementary materials. *Kastamonu Education Journal*, 27(2), 523-536. doi:10.24106/kefdergi.2574
- Kimsesiz, F. (2019). The effect of school type on EFL teachers' burnout: The case in Turkey. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 15(4), 1413-1425.
doi:10.17263/jlls.668533

- Kırkgöz, Y. (2017). English education policy in Turkey. R. Kirkpatrick (Dü.) içinde, *English Language Education Policy in the Middle East and North Africa* (s. 235–256). Washington: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-46778-8_14
- Koç, H. K. (2023). The perceptions and views of prospective ELT teachers on teaching English in preschools: A microteaching lesson study and practical experiences. *The Journal of Education, Theory and Practical Research*, 9(3), 179-192. doi:10.38089/ekud.2023.144
- Kotronoulasa, G., Miguelb, S., Dowlingc, M., Fernandez-Ortega, P., Colomer-Lahiguerae, S., Bagcivan, G., . . . Papadopoulouk, C. (2023). An overview of the fundamentals of data management, analysis, and interpretation in quantitative research. *Seminars in Oncology Nursing*, 39(2), 1-9. doi:10.1016/j.soncn.2023.151398
- Koyuncu, S., Kumpulainen, K., & Kuusisto, A. (2023). Teaching English as a second language in the early years: teachers' perspectives and practices in Finland. *Education Sciences*, 13(12), 1-14. doi:10.3390/educsci13121177
- Kumar, T., Akhter, S., Yunus, M. M., & Shamsy, A. (2022). Use of music and songs as pedagogical tools in teaching English as foreign language contexts. *Education Research International*, 1-9. doi:10.1155/2022/3384067
- López, M. G. (2023). Pre-service English language teachers' emotional needs during practicum. *Innovación Educativa*, 22(88), 120-139. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366864823>
- Marais, E. (2019). The development of digital competencies in pre-service teachers. *Research in Social Sciences and Technology*, 8(3), 134-154. doi:10.46303/ressat.2023.28
- Martin, K. C., Ketchabaw, W. T., & Turkeltaub, P. E. (2022). Plasticity of the language system in children and adults. *Handb Clin Neurol*, 184, 397–414. doi:10.1016/B978-0-12-819410-2.00021-7
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative researching*. London: SAGE Publication. http://www.sxf.uevora.pt/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Mason_2002.pdf

- McKay, P. (2006). *Assessing young language learners*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511733093
- MoNE. (2013). *İngilizce dersi (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 ve 8. sınıflar) öğretim programı*. Ankara: Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu Başkanlığı.
https://ookgm.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2013_02/18122521_kurulkarar.pdf
- MoNE. (2025). *Turkish education system*. Eurydice:
<https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/tr/eurypedia/turkiye/turk-egitim-sistemi>
- Nes, F. v., Abma, T., Jonsson, H., & Deeg, D. (2017). Language differences in qualitative research: Is meaning lost in translation? *European Journal of Ageing*, 7(4), 313–316. doi:10.1007/s10433-010-0168-y
- Nikolov, M., & Djigunović, J. M. (2006). Recent research on age, second language acquisition, and early foreign language learning. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 26, 234-260. doi:10.1017/S0267190506000122
- Önal, A. (2023). Should English language teaching undergraduate programs in Turkey be restructured? Views of pre-service English language teachers. *International Journal on Social and Education Sciences*, 5(3), 518-535.
doi:10.46328/ijonses.502
- Öztürk, G., & Aydın, B. (2019). English language teacher education in Turkey: Why do we fail and what policy reforms are needed? *Anadolu Journal of Educational Sciences International*, 9(1), 181-213. doi:10.18039/ajesi.520842
- Pinter, A. (2014). *Teaching young language learners: second edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://www.scribd.com/document/735413303/527744258-Teaching-Young-Language-Learners-Second-Edition>
- Poudel, G. P. (2024). Giving instruction in the English language classroom: Principles and the practices. *Journal of Educational Research*, 24, 56-69.
doi:10.3126/sss.v24i1.75324
- Puskás, A. (2017). *Assessing young learners in the English language classroom*. Szeged: Belvedere Meridionale. doi:10.14232/belvbook.2017.58527

- Rifattullah, M., & Ciptaningrum, D. S. (2024). Exploring pre-service teacher professional learning on their preparedness for teaching practicum. *Formosa Journal of Sustainable Research*, 3(8), 1779-1798. doi:10.55927/fjsr.v3i8.10969
- Salazar, G. U., & Larenas, C. D. (2019). Reflecting on the role of instructions, modelling and visuals on young learners' comprehension. C. S. Campos, C. D. Larenas, & C. Diaz-Vargas (Dü) içinde, *Innovations in EFL Teaching, Learning and Assessment: On the Threshold of the University of Concepcion's Centennial* (s. 81-88). Chile: Editorial Universidad de Concepción.
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/337800611>
- Self, B. (2021). Conducting interviews during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 22(3), 1-18. doi:10.17169/fqs-22.3.3741
- Sener, S., & Çokçalışkan, A. (2024). Understanding the challenges and coping practices in teaching English to young learners: A study of primary school English teachers' perspectives. *Journal of Education Theory and Practice Research*, 10(3), 330-343. doi:10.38089/ekud.2024.200
- Serdar, C. C., Cihan, M., Yücel, D., & Serdar, M. A. (2020). Sample size, power and effect size revisited: Simplified and practical approaches in pre-clinical, clinical and laboratory studies. *Biochem Medical*, 31(1), 1-27.
doi:10.11613/BM.2021.010502
- Soraya, K., Eryani, F., Andiyan, A., & Astuti, P. (2022). Classroom management strategies on the teaching English to young learners at elementary school. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Culture*, 8(6), 259-266.
doi:10.21744/ijllc.v8n6.2195
- Sönmez, G., & Köksal, O. (2022). A critical overview of English language education policy in Turkey. *International Journal of Education*, 11(1), 1-9.
doi:10.34293/education.v11i1.5721
- Starkey, L. (2020). A review of research exploring teacher preparation for the digital age. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 50(1), 37-56.
doi:10.1080/0305764X.2019.1625867

- Strakova, Z. (2015). The perception of readiness for teaching profession: A case of pre-service trainees. *Journal of Language and Cultural Education*, 3(1), 1-10. doi:10.1515/jolace-2015-0003
- Suryantari, H. (2018). Children and adults in second-language learning. *Tell Journal*, 6(1), 30-38. doi:10.30651/tell.v6i1.2081
- Taber, K. S. (2018). The use of Cronbach's alpha when developing and reporting research instruments in science education. *Research in Science Education*, 48, 1273–1296. doi:10.1007/s11165-016-9602-2
- Taşçı, S. (2023). A comprehensive study on the problems of English language teaching in Turkey: reflections from pre-service ELT teachers. *Trakya Eğitim Dergisi*, 13(3), 1656 - 1672. doi:10.24315/tred.1174706
- Tekin, S., & Baykara, T. (2023). Teaching English to young learners: Combining theory and practice through practicum in pre-service teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education and Lifelong Learning*, 5(1), 400-412. doi:10.51535/tell.1310265
- Temple, B., & Young, A. (2004). Qualitative research and translation dilemmas. *Qualitative Research*, 4(2), 161-178. doi:10.1177/1468794104044430
- TYYÇ. (2022). 2022 lisans programlarının güncellenmesinde TYYÇ ve alan yeterlikleri ve program çıktıları arasındaki uyumun gözden geçirilmesine ilişkin açıklamalar ve kanıtlar. <https://egitimold.mehmetakif.edu.tr/upload/egitim/3-form-1921-85801452-2022-lisans-programlari-guncellenmesinde-tyyc-ve-alan-yeterlikleri-ve-program-ciktilari-arasindaki-uyumun-gozden-gecirilmesine-iliskin-aciklamalar-ve-kanitlar.pdf>
- Uysal, N. D., & Yavuz, F. (2015). Teaching English to very young learners. *7th World Conference on Educational Sciences*, (s. 19-22). Athens. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.07.042
- Uztosun, M. S. (2016). Pre-service and in-service English teachers' efficacy beliefs about teaching English at primary schools. *Elementary Education Online*, 15(4), 1191-1205. doi:10.17051/io.2016.80068

- Uzundurdu, G. (2022, January). Technological readiness of pre-service English language teachers. *Master's Thesis*. Foreign Languages Teaching Department Akdeniz University.
<http://acikerisim.akdeniz.edu.tr/xmlui/handle/123456789/7301>
- Wiltshire, G., & Ronkainen, N. (2021). A realist approach to thematic analysis: making sense of qualitative data through experiential, inferential and dispositional themes. *Journal of Critical Realism*, 20(1), 1-35.
doi:10.1080/14767430.2021.1894909
- Wu, M.-J., Zhao, K., & Fils-Aime, F. (2022). Response rates of online surveys in published research: A meta-analysis. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports*, 7, 1-11. doi:10.1016/j.chbr.2022.100206
- Yahşı, M. (2020). The effects of the teaching English to young learners course on teachers' Perceptions of their current levels of competencies and classroom practices. *Master's thesis*. Kocaeli Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.
https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tezDetay.jsp?id=VgzlxYmWKV0rQO5CJ_r-Zg&no=c1KSJfu96ToDkXmHqJ_uAg
- Yaman, İ. (2018). A comparative evaluation of the 2006 and 2018 undergraduate English language teaching programmes. *EKEV Akademi Dergisi*, 22(76), 149-164. doi:10.17753/Ekev966
- Yavuz, A., & Topkaya, E. Z. (2013). Teacher educators' evaluation of the English language teaching programme: A Turkish case. *Research on Youth and Language*, 7(1), 64-83. <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/111820>
- Yıldırım, İ., & Kalman, M. (2017). Öğretmenliğe hazır olma ölçeği'nin Türkçe formunun geçerlik ve güvenirlik çalışması. *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi*, 25(6), 2311-2326. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323167515>
- YÖK. (2018). *İngilizce öğretiminde ders içeriği ve gereçleri tasarımı teori ve ilkeleri*. Ankara: Yükseköğretim Kurulu.
https://eski.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Kurumsal/egitim_ogretim_dairesi/Yeni-Ogretmen-Yetistirme-Lisans-Programlari/Ingilizce_Ogretmenligi_Lisans_Programi.pdf

- YÖK. (2020, August 18). *YÖK'ten eğitim fakültelerine önemli yetki devri kararı*. Yükseköğretim Kurulu: <https://str.giresun.edu.tr/Files/UploadFiles/b-1-1-d-yok-mufredat-degi...-2032021172315.pdf>
- Zein, S., & Butler, Y. G. (Dü). (2023). *English for young learners in Asia: challenges and directions for teacher education*. New York: Routledge.
doi:10.4324/9781003016977
- Zein, S., & Garton, S. (Dü). (2019). *Early language learning and teacher education: international research and practice*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
doi:10.21832/9781788922661
- Zhao, X., & Xu, R. (2024). Trends and challenges in mixed methods educational research: A comprehensive analysis of empirical studies. *International Journal of Asian Education*, 5(4), 262-273. doi:10.46966/ijae.v5i4.450

APPENDİCES

Appendix A - Participants' Consent Form

ARAŞTIRMA GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

Bu çalışma, *Türkiye’de Çocuklara İngilizce Öğretiminde Hizmet Öncesi İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Hazırlık Durumları Üzerine Bir Karma Yöntem Çalışması* başlıklı bir yüksek lisans tez çalışmasıdır. Çalışma, Burcu Zengin tarafından yürütülmektedir. Çalışma kapsamında Türkiye’deki İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümlerinde öğrenim gören son sınıf öğretmen adaylarının çocuklara (5-12 yaş) İngilizce öğretiminde kendilerini ne kadar hazır hissettikleri ve bu durumun arkasındaki nedenler incelenecektir. Çalışmanın sonuçları, öğretmen adaylarının çocuklara yönelik dil öğretimi bağlamında hazır olma düzeylerini ve bu düzeyleri etkileyen faktörleri daha iyi anlamayı hedeflemekte, aynı zamanda öğretmen yetiştirme programlarının geliştirilmesine yönelik öneriler sunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

- Bu çalışmaya katılımınız gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır.
- Çalışmanın amacı doğrultusunda, anket ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılarak sizden veriler toplanacaktır.
- İsmınızı yazmak ya da kimliğinizi açığa çıkaracak bir bilgi vermek zorunda değilsiniz/araştırmada katılımcıların isimleri gizli tutulacaktır.
- Araştırma kapsamında toplanan veriler, sadece bilimsel amaçlar doğrultusunda kullanılacak, araştırmanın amacı dışında ya da bir başka araştırmada kullanılmayacak ve gerekmesi halinde, sizin (yazılı) izniniz olmadan başkalarıyla paylaşılmayacaktır.
- Bireysel görüşmeler anket sonrası görüşme için gönüllü katılımcılar ile icra edilecektir ve veri toplama süreci ses kaydı ile kayıt altına alınacaktır. Bu kayıtlar yalnızca çalışmanın bilimsel amaçları doğrultusunda kullanılacak ve başka bir kişi veya çalışmayla paylaşılmayacaktır.
- İstemeniz halinde sizden toplanan verileri inceleme hakkınız bulunmaktadır.
- Sizden toplanan veriler bilgisayar depolama ve klasik dosyalama yöntemi ile korunacak ve araştırma bitiminde arşivlenecek veya imha edilecektir.
- Veri toplama sürecinde/süreçlerinde size rahatsızlık verebilecek herhangi bir soru/talep olmayacaktır. Yine de katılımınız sırasında herhangi bir sebepten rahatsızlık hissederseniz çalışmadan istediğiniz zamanda ayrılabilirsiniz. Çalışmadan ayrılmanız durumunda sizden toplanan veriler çalışmadan çıkarılacak ve imha edilecektir.

Gönüllü katılım formunu okumak ve değerlendirmek üzere ayırdığınız zaman için teşekkür ederim. Çalışma hakkındaki sorularınızı araştırmacıya yöneltebilirsiniz.

Araştırmacı Adı : Burcu Zengin
Adres :
Cep Tel :

Bu çalışmaya tamamen kendi rızamla, istediğim takdirde çalışmadan ayrılabileceğimi bilerek verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlarla kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.

(Lütfen bu formu doldurup imzalıktan sonra veri toplayan kişiye veriniz.)

(İlerleyen aşamalarda gerçekleştirilecek görüşmelere katılmaya gönüllüyseniz, lütfen iletişim bilgilerinizi paylaşınız.)

Katılımcı Ad ve Soyadı:
İmza:
Tarih:

Appendix B - ELT Undergraduate Curriculum Prior to the 2024–2025 Revision

EĞİTİM FAKÜLTESİ 2022-2023 ÖĞRETİM YILI YABANCI DİLLER EĞİTİMİ BÖLÜMÜ İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLİĞİ PROGRAMI

DERS PROGRAMI

I. YARIYIL			II. YARIYIL		
İNÖ151	Dinleme, Sesletim ve Not Alma	3+0 5,0	İNÖ148	Akademik Okuma	3+0 5,0
İNÖ147	Okuma Becerileri	3+0 5,0	İNÖ154	Sözlü İletişim	3+0 5,0
İNÖ153	Konuşma Becerileri	3+0 5,0	İNÖ152	Akademik Yazma	3+0 5,0
İNÖ149	Yazma Becerileri	3+0 5,0	İNÖ156	İngilizcenin Yapısı	3+0 5,0
ÖMB109	Eğitim Bilimine Giriş	3+0 4,0	ÖMB116	Eğitim Psikolojisi	3+0 4,0
	Yabancı Dil Dersleri	- 4,0		Yabancı Dil Dersleri	- 4,0
TAR165	Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi I	2+0 2,0	TAR166	Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi II	2+0 2,0
		30,0			30,0
III. YARIYIL			IV. YARIYIL		
İNÖ227	İngiliz Dili Öğretiminde Yaklaşımlar ve Yöntemler	3+0 5,0	İNÖ262	İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Yöntemleri I	3+0 5,0
İNÖ229	İngiliz Edebiyatına Giriş	3+0 5,0	İNÖ234	Dilbilime Giriş	3+0 5,0
ÖMB213	Öğretim İlke ve Yöntemleri	3+0 4,0	ÖMB220	Öğretim Teknolojileri ve Materyal Tasarımı	3+0 4,0
ÖMB221	Kapsayıcı Eğitim ve Özel Gereksinimli Bireyler	3+0 4,0	ARY216	Eğitimde Araştırma Yöntemleri	3+0 4,0
TÜR125	Türk Dili I	2+0 2,0	TÜR126	Türk Dili II	2+0 2,0
	Mesleki Seçmeli Dersler	- 10,0		Mesleki Seçmeli Dersler	- 10,0
		30,0			30,0
V. YARIYIL			VI. YARIYIL		
İNÖ363	İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Yöntemleri II	3+0 5,0	İNÖ330	Çocuklara Yabancı Dil Öğretimi	2+2 5,0
İNÖ361	Dil Edinimi	3+0 5,0	İNÖ364	İngiliz Dili Öğretimi Yöntemleri III	3+0 5,0
ÖMB321	Eğitim Yönetimi	3+0 4,0	ÖMB322	Program Geliştirme	3+0 4,0
ÖMB323	Eğitimde Ölçme ve Değerlendirme	3+0 4,0	ÖMB324	Sınıf Yönetimi	3+0 4,0
	Seçmeli Dersler	2+0 2,0		Seçmeli Dersler	- 2,0
	Mesleki Seçmeli Dersler	- 10,0		Mesleki Seçmeli Dersler	- 10,0
		30,0			30,0
VII. YARIYIL			VIII. YARIYIL		
İNÖ429	Öğretmenlik Uygulaması I	2+6 12,0	İNÖ430	Öğretmenlik Uygulaması II	2+6 12,0
İNÖ431	İngilizce Öğretiminde Yansıtıcı Öğretme I	2+1 4,0	İNÖ432	İngilizce Öğretiminde Yansıtıcı Öğretme II	2+1 4,0
İNÖ433	İngilizce Öğretiminde Materyal Geliştirme ve Teknoloji Kullanımı	3+0 5,0	İNÖ420	İngilizce Öğretiminde Sınav Hazırlama ve Değerlendirme	3+0 5,0
ÖMB421	Okullarda Rehberlik	3+0 4,0	ÖMB414	Bireyselleştirilmiş Eğitim Programları	3+0 4,0
	Mesleki Seçmeli Dersler	- 5,0		Mesleki Seçmeli Dersler	- 5,0
		30,0			30,0

Appendix C - Ethics Committee Approval Statement

Evrak Kayıt Tarihi: 12.02.2025

Protokol No: 852794

Tarih: 28.02.2025



ANADOLU ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL VE BEŞERÎ BİLİMLER BİLİMSEL ARAŞTIRMA VE YAYIN ETİĞİ KURULU
KARAR BELGESİ

ÇALIŞMANIN TÜRÜ:	Yüksek Lisans Tez Çalışması
KONU:	Eğitim Bilimleri
BAŞLIK:	Türkiye'de Çocuklara İngilizce Öğretiminde Hizmet Öncesi İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Hazırlık Durumları Üzerine Bir Karma Yöntem Çalışması
PROJE/TEZ YÜRÜTÜCÜSÜ:	Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Dilek ÜNÜGÜR ÇALIŞKAN
TEZ YAZARI:	Burcu ZENGİN
ALT KOMİSYON GÖRÜŞÜ:	-
KARAR:	Olumlu

Appendix D – Quantitative Data Collection Instrument

Demographic Information	
1. Name and Surname:	
2. Age	
3. Gender	☐ Female ☐ Male
4. Current GPA	



Preparedness to Teach Scale by Yıldırım and Kalman (2017)						
Items	How prepared do you feel to...	Very dissatisfied → Very satisfied				
1.	Teach the concepts, information and skills related to the field in a way that students can understand.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Understand how much students in the class have learned.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Create challenging, appropriate learning and achievement expectations for students.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Understand how students' family and cultural backgrounds will affect their learning.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Identify and focus on specific learning needs or difficulties.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Choose appropriate teaching strategies for different instructional purposes.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Choose teaching strategies to respond to student needs.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Enable students to learn both independently and in a group.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Plan the teaching process using subject area knowledge, curriculum, and student development.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Create a classroom environment that improves social development and group responsibility.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Use effective verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to guide students' learning and behaviours.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Use questions to encourage students to learn in different ways.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Encourage students to think, question and interpret different ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Help students develop self-assessment skills.	1	2	3	4	5

	How prepared do you feel to use <i>technology</i> to...	Very dissatisfied → Very satisfied				
16.	Increase the interest and learning level of the student.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Support research and analysis (via the internet).	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Assess and monitor student success.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	Communicate with others (school, province, country and worldwide).	1	2	3	4	5
20.	Improve group collaboration and teamwork.	1	2	3	4	5



Appendix E – Qualitative Data Collection Instrument

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Question-1

ENG- How prepared do you feel to teach English to young learners? Can you explain what makes you feel this way?

TR- Kendinizi küçük yaş gruplarına İngilizce öğretmeye ne kadar hazır hissediyorsunuz? Bu şekilde hissetmenize neden olan unsurları açıklayabilir misiniz?

Question-2

ENG- What specific skills or knowledge do you believe are essential for teaching young learners, and how well do you feel you have developed these?

TR- Küçük yaş gruplarına İngilizce öğretmek için hangi beceri ve bilgilere sahip olmanın önemli olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz? Bu alanlarda kendinizi ne kadar geliştirdiğinizi hissediyorsunuz?

Question-3

ENG- Which aspects of teaching English to young learners do you feel most confident in? Which areas do you need more support with?

TR- Küçük yaş gruplarına İngilizce öğretirken kendinizi en çok hangi konularda yeterli hissediyorsunuz? Daha fazla desteğe ihtiyaç duyduğunuz alanlar nelerdir?

Question-4

ENG- Have you had any practical teaching experience with young learners (e.g., practicum, private tutoring)?

4.1. If yes, how has it influenced your preparedness?

4.2. If no, do you think more practical opportunities would be beneficial?

TR- Küçük yaş gruplarına yönelik herhangi bir öğretim deneyiminiz oldu mu? (örn. staj, özel ders)

4.1. Eğer olduysa, bu deneyim öğretmeye hazır hissetmenizi nasıl etkiledi?

4.2. Eğer olmadıysa, daha pratiğe dayalı deneyimlerin faydalı olacağını düşünüyor musunuz?

Question-5

ENG- What challenges do you anticipate facing when teaching English to young learners? How prepared do you feel to overcome them?

TR- Küçük yaş gruplarına İngilizce öğretirken karşılaşılabileceğiniz zorluklar nelerdir? Bu zorlukları aşmaya ne kadar hazır hissediyorsunuz?

Question-6

ENG- How has your university education prepared you for teaching English to young learners?

6.1. Do you think it is sufficient?

6.2. If not, which aspects were insufficient, and how could they be improved?

TR- Üniversitedeki eğitiminiz sizi küçük yaş gruplarına İngilizce öğretmeye nasıl hazırladı?

6.1. Bu eğitimi yeterli buluyor musunuz?

6.2. Eğer yeterli değilse, hangi yönleri eksikti ve nasıl geliştirilebilir?

Question-7

ENG- Do you think pre-service teachers receive enough practical experience working with young learners? If not, what kind of additional practical training would be beneficial?

TR- Sizce öğretmen adayları küçük yaş gruplarıyla yeterince pratik deneyim kazanıyor mu? Eğer yeterli değilse, hangi ek pratik eğitimler faydalı olurdu?
Question-8 ENG- How do you compare your preparedness to teach English to young learners with your preparedness to teach older students? TR- Küçük yaş gruplarındaki öğrencilere İngilizce öğretme konusundaki hazır olma durumunuzu, daha büyük yaş gruplarına İngilizce öğretme konusundaki hazır olma durumunuzla nasıl karşılaştırırsınız?
Question- 9 ENG- What do you think about the role of technology in teaching English to young learners? Do you feel prepared to integrate digital tools and resources effectively into your lessons? TR- Teknolojinin küçük yaş gruplarına İngilizce öğretimdeki rolü hakkında neler düşünüyorsunuz? Dijital araçları ve kaynakları derslerinize etkili bir şekilde entegre etme konusunda kendinizi ne kadar hazırlıklı hissediyorsunuz?
Question-10 ENG- Based on your experiences, what changes or additions would you suggest for the ELT Department to better prepare teachers for teaching young learners? TR- Kendi deneyimlerinize dayanarak, İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümünün (ELT) küçük yaş gruplarına İngilizce öğretmeye yönelik öğretmenleri daha iyi hazırlaması için hangi değişiklikleri veya eklemeleri önerirsiniz?

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name and Surname : Burcu ZENGİN

Languages : English

Place and Year of Birth :

E-mail :

Education

B.A. : 2022, Eskişehir Osmangazi University, English Language
Teaching

Work Experience

2023 – 2025 : English Language Teacher,