

INSIGHTS FROM STUDENTS AND GRADUATES INTO
THE MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAM IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING
AT MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

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EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY**

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

INSIGHTS FROM STUDENTS AND GRADUATES INTO THE MASTER OF ARTS PROGRAM IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AT MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

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Graduate education, as a stepping-stone to academia, has become prominent due to the rising demand of students and the growing number of institutions offering graduate programs for both domestic and international students. However, graduate programs are not constantly examined from the viewpoints of students and graduates to identify potential issues that need to be improved in the program. Therefore, it is essential to determine students' motivations for pursuing graduate education while including their perspectives on the program components, the challenges they face and their needs during the study period, as well as their suggestions on the enhancement of master's degree programs. The literature on graduate studies is less enlightening than the research on undergraduate studies. Even it has presented little for graduate programs in English Language Teaching (ELT). The primary goal of this sequential mixed-methods study was to provide fundamental implications for Master of Arts (MA) programs in ELT by exploring the perceptions of 42 participants who were 27 graduates of the ELT MA program at Middle East Technical University (METU) and 15 master's students at their thesis writing period concerning the program components,

and the thesis writing process. Utilizing a questionnaire and in-depth interviews as data collection methods, the findings of this study revealed the perceptions of the students and graduates on the program components, the strengths and weaknesses of the ELT MA program at METU from the standpoint of the students and graduates, the challenges they have faced during the program and their suggestions for the improvement of the ELT MA program.

Keywords: higher education, graduate programs in ELT, master's degree, graduate students, thesis writing



ÖZ

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ İNGİLİZ DİLİ ÖĞRETİMİ YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMINA İLİŞKİN ÖĞRENCİ VE MEZUNLARIN GÖRÜŞLERİ

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Akademik hayatın temel yapı taşı olan lisansüstü eğitim, artan öğrenci talepleri ve hem ulusal hem de uluslararası öğrencilere lisansüstü programlar sunan kurumların sayısının artmasıyla günümüzde daha da kritik hale gelmiştir. Ancak bu programlar, olası sorunları tespit etmek ve programlarda iyileştirilebilecek noktaları belirlemek için düzenli olarak değerlendirilmemektedir. Bu nedenle, mezunların ve yüksek lisans öğrencilerinin programa ilişkin görüşlerinin, programın eksik ve zayıf yönlerin tespiti açısından önemli bir yeri vardır. Öğrencilerin lisansüstü eğitim alma nedenleri, öğrenim sürecinde karşılaştıkları zorluklar ve bu süreçteki ihtiyaçları ortaya konularak öğrenci ve mezunların yüksek lisans programlarının iyileştirilmesine yönelik algılarının belirlenmesi ayrıca önem arz etmektedir. Lisansüstü çalışmalarla ilgili literatür, lisans çalışmalarıyla ilgili araştırmalar kadar zengin değildir. Hatta İngiliz Dili Öğretimi (ELT) alanındaki araştırmalar lisansüstü programlar için daha da kısıtlıdır. Bu nedenle, bu sıralı karma yöntem çalışmasının amacı, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi'nde ELT Yüksek Lisans programının mezunları ile şu anda tez döneminde olan öğrencilerden oluşan 42 katılımcının algılarını kapsamlı bir şekilde araştırarak ELT Yüksek Lisans (MA) programları için temel çıkarımlar sunmaktır. Bu çalışma,

veri toplama aracı olarak bir anket ve derinlemesine görüşmeler ile, ODTÜ'deki ELT Yüksek Lisans programının güçlü ve zayıf yönlerini mezun ve yüksek lisans öğrencilerinin gözünden açığa çıkarmıştır. Ayrıca, program süresince öğrencilerin yaşadıkları zorluklar ve bunların iyileştirilmesine yönelik öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: yükseköğretim, ELT’de lisansüstü eğitim, yüksek lisans derecesi, lisansüstü öğrenciler, tez yazma



*To all teachers,
in particular to our Head Teacher who has taught us a lot...*

“The biggest battle is the war against ignorance.”

Mustafa Kemal ATATÜRK

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALES	Academic Staff and Graduate Education Entrance Examination in Türkiye
ARWU	Academic Ranking of World Universities
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
CIPP	Context, Input, Product and Process Model of Evaluation
CoHE	Council of Higher Education in Türkiye
CWTS	Centre for Science and Technology Studies at Leiden University of the Netherlands
EIL	English as an International Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
MA	Master of Arts
METU	Middle East Technical University
PhD	Philosophy of Doctorate
QS	Quacquarelli Symonds
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
THE	Times Higher Education
URAP	University Ranking by Academic Performance

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose and the research questions, and the significance of the study are presented.

1.2. Background of the Study

Education is one of the universal fundamental human rights which is enshrined in the constitution by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). It entails any education, from primary education to professional training opportunities for every individual in the world. The right to education is fundamental because all over the earth both societies and individuals can benefit from the right to education to develop themselves socially, economically, and humanely. Likewise, education is one of the critical elements to leveling the inequalities and maintaining peace throughout the world. It can even be perceived as a building or stepping-stone for other fundamental human rights. Even though millions of people are still deprived of education, meeting humanitarian needs such as receiving an education is more accessible and attainable today, thanks to the advancing technology and the opportunities of the 21st century. Therefore, people have gone to school to receive any type and level of education since the very beginning of their lives. Higher education is also accessible to all based on individual capacity (United Nations, 1948).

Higher education, also called third-level or tertiary education, is the education beyond the high school or secondary level which leads to an academic degree. After completing undergraduate coursework and earning a bachelor's degree, graduate education, also known as post-graduate education, is a component of the higher

education system and entails teaching, research, and study all in one. Having a master's or doctorate (doctoral) degree is a necessary component for receiving academic titles. Students should indeed obtain a bachelor's degree as a prerequisite for master's studies in order to continue their education, and there are also predefined extra criteria, such as a minimum CGPA, a proof of language score, and a minimum ALES score, an admission exam score, etc. (Yazar, 2020).

Master programs serve as the foundation for post-graduate study and are obviously necessary for training academics and scientists. As a result, they play a strategic role in a country's socioeconomic development and catching up with technical and scientific developments. The transmission and immigration of information inside the domestic legal system might be characterized as the role of scientists as mediators.

One of the most significant academic desired outcomes of national programs on scientific growth is post-graduate education. The overarching function of post-graduate education is to strengthen the human capabilities for knowledge production and utilization and otherwise problem-solving competencies (Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010). Due to this reason, in order to maintain pace with the recent scientific advances both in national and international settings, the quality of post-graduate education is crucial (Alhas, 2006). In some countries in the world, such as the United States and England, their conspicuous investment in higher education and research made them centering homes for advanced education throughout history at different times with regard to their scholarship opportunities and alluring students and scholars to get their advanced degrees (LaPidus, 1989).

Besides, it has become abundantly clear that the human civilization of the 21st century has entered what is known as the "Age of Communication" recently because of the rapid increase in the number and frequency of international connections (Wallace, 1991). Therefore, English has rapidly become the global language for communication in accordance with business, scientific, and industrial research. It has also become the international language for scholarly research and publication, and it is the medium of instruction at a majority of academic institutions located in several countries across the world (Flowerdew & Peacock, 2001). English has become a primary way for people to communicate as a result of the fact that it has started to be used as a Lingua

Franca across the globe by people who are originally from different nations and who require interaction for the purposes of education, business, academic research, politics, or social reasons. Accordingly, approaches to teaching and learning English has changed and enhanced. As a direct outcome of the present dynamics of globalization's spread, the teaching and learning of English have become an essential component of curriculum design worldwide. Also, in Türkiye, this circumstance necessitated the recruitment of competent English teachers with a solid academic background. Due to the continuously growing need, English language teacher education programs have been improved, English Language Teaching (ELT) programs have been established in newly founded universities, and the number of ELT programs has multiplied in the country.

With such a considerable emphasis on the accomplishments of foreign language teacher education programs and their contribution to the preparation of experienced and qualified language instructors, learning and teaching English has gained widespread recognition worldwide. The effectiveness of language education programs plays a significant role in keeping pace with international advancements, as foreign language skills are undoubtedly vital in almost any research area, including such as education, industry, medicine, technology, or science. Since high quality and effectiveness are required in programs, there should be a control mechanism to achieve the needed quality. There are possible ways of doing it, for example, systematic evaluation is one method for achieving the needed quality in existing language education programs (Öztürk, 2015).

Teacher education is one of the areas that receive the greatest attention in the field of language teaching. In point of fact, program evaluation is considered among the most crucial aspects of these educational programs that are intended to prepare language instructors. Not only has it been determined whether or not the curriculum that has been included in the program is successful in utilizing program evaluation, but also the effectiveness of the teaching programs has been bolstered, and the outcomes for both the students and the institution have been improved by means of evaluating the current program (Küçükoğlu, 2015). The primary objective of program evaluation is to develop methods that will make the program more efficient. Such in-depth studies of program evaluation might, in fact, be helpful in defining the strengths and weakness

of the program components, as well as determining the needs of language development and goals of the student teachers who are participating in these programs.

There are more studies (Arıkan, 2015; Arslan, 2012; Gürsoy et al., 2017) in the Turkish ELT context that implied that there was an urgent requirement for improvements in teacher education, and curriculum, language teaching materials, and instructional methods in various study levels. However, in the Turkish context, many studies are looking into post-graduate education in Türkiye from many perspectives (Ahlas 2006; Arslan & Kara 2010; Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010; Ünal & İlter 2010). Nevertheless, the ELT departments in post-graduate level are not particularly relevant to these studies.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The existing literature does not provide much about the investigation of the important elements of Master of Arts (MA) programs in ELT, such as teaching strategies, courses, and other program components, through the eyes of the stakeholders such as graduates, students, and professors. Therefore, it is possible to draw the conclusion that the programs, especially at the post-graduate level, have not been investigated by looking at the program components, including thesis writing, especially from the viewpoint of the students, as well as the graduates in the Turkish context. Since program evaluation is essential for improving the weak points of the program, any necessary changes, alterations, or exclusions can be decided upon in light of the program evaluation results based on the perceptions of the students and graduates.

Öztürk and Mede (2017) drew attention to the necessity of conducting evaluative studies of graduate programs in the ELT field because these programs have been significant in the sense of teacher education and raising candidates for the future English language teacher, educators and professors to service more successfully in many fields. Therefore, stakeholders' perceptions of a program are also contributing factors to the assessment and improvement of the program context.

Graduates of the MA programs, who have already finished the program, and the students, who have been studying are the significant source of evaluation as the members of the stakeholders.

The evaluation of ongoing programs using in-depth research analysis and the identification of areas that require improvement play a significant role in the academic curriculum. To our knowledge, there are no substantial studies that evaluate the English language curriculum at the graduate level. Even though post-graduate education has been the subject of numerous research in Türkiye, MA programs have not been investigated that much. Similarly, there are not many evaluative studies of MA programs in ELT. In the Turkish context, there are some studies which are evaluating specific programs (Kanatlar, 1996; Tezel, 2006). One of the most extensive evaluation studies was carried out by Kırmızı (2011), who investigated the ELT MA programs in Türkiye.

1.4. Purpose of this Study and Research Questions

In the present study, the viewpoints of the students and graduates towards the MA ELT program for their study period on the program components such as description, content, instruction, atmosphere, assessment, including thesis writing, as well as their needs as graduate students, are aimed to be explored. The primary rationale behind investigating the perceptions of the students and graduates towards the department is to be able to make some suggestions for the improvement of the program because, according to the statistics revealed by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE), it can be said that each year fewer students than registered ones are getting graduated from the ELT MA program not only at METU but the nationwide. In addition to that, some graduate students tend to quit school, especially during the thesis period. Therefore, the study aims to contribute to the literature on the graduates' and master's students' expectations of MA programs so that positive implications and improvements could be applied to the graduate programs.

This study is designed as a sequential mixed method study due to the METU's performance as a research university which is a universally acknowledged position and stayed as one of the top-ranking universities in Türkiye, so collecting and analyzing the perceptions of both students and graduates towards the department components and thesis writing requires more extensive and in-depth investigation. The mixed-methods design allows the researchers to depend on more powerful and substantial evidence than a single method alone (Yin, 2018).

The four main research questions with sub-questions aimed to be investigated in this study are presented below:

- 1) What are the reasons that motivate the students and graduates of the Master of Arts (MA) program in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Middle East Technical University (METU) to pursue their master's studies and to enroll in the MA program in ELT at METU?
 - a. Is there any significant difference between the reasons of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU to pursue their master's studies and to enroll in the MA program in ELT at METU?
- 2) How do the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU evaluate the program with respect to the program components, thesis writing and supervisory process?
 - a. Is there any significant difference between the opinions of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU on the evaluation of the program with respect to the program components, thesis writing and supervisory process?
- 3) What are the challenges and experiences of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU during their thesis writing period along with the supervisory process?
 - a. How do the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU view the contribution of the program courses to their research skills for their thesis writing?
- 4) What are the suggestions of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU for the improvement of the program components, thesis writing and supervisory process?

1.5. Significance of the Study

Educational programs are constantly changing, and it is essential to look into the programs from the viewpoint of the students and graduates to find out whether these changes are suitable for them or not, as well as to determine the weak points along with the strong ones of any program. Therefore, the present study aims to investigate the MA program in ELT at METU from the eyes of the students and graduates and reveal their opinions on the program components because the analysis of the needs of students, their expectations from master's studies, and their perceptions on the program components make contributions to identify emerging problems related to the graduate program, the university, supervising process and to discover possible ways to resolve the detected problems according to the insights gained from the students and graduates. That is why the present study has more focus on the problems and challenges that students and graduates have faced during their studies in order to reveal the problematic issues in the graduate program by investigating the program components from the viewpoints of students and graduates.

There is a lack of studies extensively investigating the ELT master programs and their components in Türkiye, such as program content, instruction, departmental and advisor support, as well as program facilities. Seeing it is intended to determine the aspects of the program and whether the needs of master's students have been fulfilled effectively by the MA program in terms of the courses and research skills in this study. This study is intended to be conducted with the students and graduates of the METU ELT MA program because it is one of the first-rate universities in Türkiye. It also has a clear majority of successful and promising students within. There have not been recent studies directly investigating the ELT MA program of METU, so this study is expected to contribute to the ELT research, especially for the post-graduate education level.

Besides, holding an MA degree (with thesis) in the ELT field is announced as compulsory by CoHe for language teachers who are planning to work as instructors at Turkish universities starting from the year 2019, which makes the ELT MA programs at the Turkish universities as more competitive and demanding. Even though holding an MA degree for English language teachers on the ELT is vital for many reasons,

including the recruitment process in Türkiye, it may be difficult for some students to be able to finish their graduate education on time because of the reasons occurring during their study period, and eventually, some students choose or have to leave the school without getting a master's degree.

Ekoç (2019) affirms the problematic situations in their study regarding post-graduate education, which describes the difficulties that master and doctorate students face during their studies, particularly in the thesis writing component of the program. The study also revealed that graduate students' completion rates were sometimes meager and took longer than expected after managing several shortcomings concerning the research and supervisory processes. The attempts to enhance the quality of the programs after taking into account the results of the study are favorably valuable because the quality of the graduate studies affects the quality of the university as well as the quality of the society in a sequencing way (Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010).

Consequently, policymakers, administrators of the departments, lecturers, supervisors, and advisors could benefit from the results of this study, which might also help raise awareness about the drop-out intentions of master's students who have to leave the school before getting their degrees by gathering the information.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher aims to inform the reader about the existing literature from a broader perspective to support the study's intelligibility and facilitate understanding of the concepts associated with the aims of the research questions. Therefore, this chapter is presented in two sections. The first part is to present the theoretical framework of the study, and the second is to present the relevant literature on the core subjects of this study. The existing literature has been presented under the themes such as the English language, ELT in Türkiye, English language teacher education, higher education, program evaluation in graduate education, and thesis writing.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

The present research is a descriptive study collecting the participants' opinions of how they evaluate the MA program they have studied based on their own perceptions and experiences during their study period. This study aims to investigate the graduate program from the viewpoint of students and graduates by analyzing their thoughts on the program components. In that sense, it is aimed to explore and reveal the ideas of the participants on the graduate program they have studied; therefore, this study is not an evaluation study in itself. However, it has some characteristics of program evaluation processes, which is why the program evaluation concept for educational institutions is formed as the theoretical framework for this study.

In order to clarify the framework on which the study is based, the definition of evaluation, program evaluation in education, and evaluation models in education are

presented. According to Scriven (1967), one of the goals of evaluation is to do routine checks on the efficiency of the educational organization and, as a result, to identify the areas in which the program may use some changes and enhancements.

2.2.1. The Definition of Program Evaluation

Evaluation dates back to the 18th century when the state first required exterior investigators to evaluate public services, including jails, schools, healthcare facilities, and orphanages (Stufflebeam, Madaus & Kellaghan, 2000). Evaluation as a concept having both formal and informal meanings is at the core of the issues in daily life. Therefore it is likely that most people are already familiar with it. Even though evaluation is primarily based on the problems arising in regular life, it should be separated from its informal meaning to get a deeper understanding of the formal explanation of it (Mertens & Wilson, 2019). Indeed, there are some differences between the everyday use of the word and what is meant by “program evaluation” in many scientific fields, as well as this study. Trochim (1998) underlines the differences by defining the program evaluation as a formal methodological way of providing scientific data about the program, product, and performance for the decision-making process, also involving the opinions of stakeholders. In this respect, this study is an evaluation study that involves the perceptions of the students and graduates who are the stakeholders of a program.

From a broader perspective, the term “evaluation” refers to the methodical and systematic gathering of information to improve the capability of decision-making (Gredler, 1996). It is also closely related to the words such as worth, merit, and value and is defined by those words in the literature (Davidson, 2015; Fournier, 2015; Scriven, 1967). There are many other definitions used for evaluation by many scholars (Fournier, 2005; House, 1993; Patton, 2008; Shadish, 1998).

The terminology for program evaluation is varied, and other types of program evaluation are mentioned in previous research (Owen, 2007). In the most basic way, evaluation could be interpreted under two main characteristics: formative (questioning the process) or summative (questioning the end product of the program), but it is also possible that evaluations could be both formative and summative at the same time. In the context of evaluation, it is crucial to understand the more specialized terminology

that has specific meanings in the field to have a better understanding. Furthermore, the literature shows that other program evaluation studies only look at the program from the stakeholders' perspectives. In that case, it could be the focus on the perceptions of the students, graduates, administrators, and faculty members separately or all of them. In the present study, the perceptions of the students and the graduates are investigated.

2.2.2. Program Evaluation in Education

Evaluation in education evolved from a habit of testing to assess students' achievement during a period of objective specification and measurement to identify whether objectives had been accomplished (Mertens, 2014). To effectively control targeted quality levels of educational outcomes and standards, to keep educational service providers responsible, and to foster continuing progress in education are the three key motivations for developing or improving provisions for performance measurement in education (Scheerens, Glas & Thomas, 2005). Walberg and Haertel (1990) define evaluation in education as a thorough analysis of any innovation or system created to enhance or improve students' opportunities for education. Academic institutions, organizations, supervisor support, or policies constitute a few examples. School curricula or educational programs may target a specific subject area, an individual learning difficulty, or a particular age group; they may also address challenging issues, such as the likelihood of dropouts.

Furthermore, a program may be administered in a single school or in all schools, as well as in multiple locations within a state or in multiple states. A policy, a syllabus, educational materials, or a program can be reviewed during any process step. As demonstrated by the example of first aid, previous versions of a lesson or program were reviewed to retrieve information to improve the instruction (Gredler, 1996).

In the field of education, program evaluation refers to a systematic investigation that is carried out to maximize information to decision-makers and/or organizations interested in a specific program, policy, or other involvement. There are guideline questions depending on the earlier articles in evaluation research (Cooley & Bickel, 1986; Cronbach et al., 1980; Shephard & Smith, 1985), which are directed by questions in order to guide the program evaluation.

The evaluation was initially envisioned by Ralph W. Tyler as extremely important for curriculum development to understand the impact the program has on fulfilling its set objectives (Gredler, 1996). The evaluation in education also serves as the backbone for recognizing the curriculum's strengths and weaknesses, which is followed by replanning, implementation, and evaluation.

2.2.3. Models of Program Evaluation in Education

Most of the evaluation models in the literature are not like the mathematical models to test given theories. Instead, they are evaluation models which are typically based on the author's idealized perspective on the fundamental principles and organizational structure of evaluation activity. In this way, they serve as a framework for guidelines, which are utilized in order to arrive at explanations and conclusions that may be justified (Stufflebeam et al., 2000). The models put forward by many scholars in the field, if required, could be combined to utilize different elements in the models for evaluation. Therefore, there is no need for evaluators to base their studies only upon one model or work as a solitary obligation. Each method, evaluation approach, or model of program evaluation provides certain advantages that, when combined, can shed light on a variety of features of an existing program

2.2.3.1. Tyler's Rationale for Evaluation

Ralph W. Tyler brought a new approach to evaluation, which is the investigation of educational programs or curricula as distinct entities with linked outcomes. Then, he established three broad guidelines for evaluating curricula. First, he distinguished between measuring and assessment operations. Measurement is quantitatively evaluating a particular attribute, trait, or feature. On the other hand, evaluation comprises all the activities utilized to create valuable insights about a curriculum or program. In other words, evaluation frequently incorporates measurement, but the two terms are not interchangeable. Second, human behavior is often too complicated to describe appropriately or assess with a single phrase or dimension (Smith & Tyler, 1942). In other words, paper-and-pencil examinations do not capture the entirety of human behavior. Teachers' observations of students and conversations with students or parents are other valuable tools. In addition, a student's collection of written ideas or paintings created in an art class may prove their talent and potential interest in a

subject. Likewise, the quantity of library books checked out by students is an adequate indicator of their habit of reading (Tyler, 1950).

2.2.3.2. The CIPP Model

The model was put forward by Daniel L. Stufflebeam in 1960s, and its fundamental ideas are context, input, process, and product evaluation, which creates the acronym CIPP by the initials of the model's core concepts. Program and project staff, policy boards, directors, school administrators, teaching staff, university administration staff, healthcare professionals, military officers, evaluation professionals, and many others could utilize the CIPP model while evaluating any type of program which is specific to their needs. The approach is designed to be implemented in internal evaluations carried out by organizations, self-evaluations carried out by particular service suppliers, and external evaluations carried out by independent sources in accordance with the agreement. (Stufflebeam, 2000). Context evaluations assess needs, problems, and opportunities as the foundation for setting goals and priorities and determining the significance of outcomes. Input evaluations are used to plan programs and allocate resources by assessing alternative approaches to meeting needs. Process evaluations examine how plans are carried out in order to guide activities and, later, to better clarify outcomes. Product evaluations identify intended and unintended consequences in order to maintain the process on track and determine effectiveness.

2.2.3.3. Utilization-Focused Program Evaluation

Utilization-focused evaluation model by Patton (2008) does not favor any of the evaluation models, techniques, theories, or even uses. Instead, it is a strategy for assisting the primary intended users in choosing the most suitable material, model, techniques, theories, and applications for their specific set of circumstances. The interactive process that takes place between the evaluator and the main intended users is directed by situational responsiveness. Any sort of assessment goal (formative, summative, or developmental), any kind of data (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed), any kind of design (such as naturalistic or experimental), and any kind of emphasis can be included in a utilization-focused evaluation. It is a procedure for decision-making regarding these issues in partnership with a pre-identified group of primary users who are centered on the evaluation's best purposes.

2.2.4. Program Evaluation in Language Education

Several evaluation models are utilized in education to conduct systematic analyses of curricula and programs. Some major types of program evaluation offered by McNamara (2006) are the process-based evaluation to reveal how a program works, the goals-based review to assess whether pre-determined goals and objectives are met, and outcomes-based evaluation to analyze the ultimate results of a program.

When it comes to finding out the reasons behind doing program evaluation, it can be said that it is a pretty meaningful activity in the education field to address problems in the matter of student learning, the effectiveness of a teaching method, determining the weaknesses of any program which is helpful to decide whether to continue to implementation of the program or not (Doğan, 1997; Marsh & Willis, 2003; Oliva, 2009). To put it another way, program evaluation helps researchers understand the strengths and weaknesses and the appropriateness of the program by gathering the necessary evidence. Because of this reason, the quality of the program could be improved through program evaluation, which is a vital element for program development (Tyler, 1972).

Program evaluation has been on the carpet of language education and applied linguistics since their first arrival in 1960 to test the effectiveness of language teaching programs. For the program evaluation, there are some quality assurance measures: course satisfaction surveys, student satisfaction scales, large-scale research studies, etc., that will assist in improving programs and make it easier for the program's stakeholders to understand effectiveness (Kiely, 2019). Program evaluation tries to decide whether the program helps participants learn and how effectively it achieves that (Snow, 2005).

Correspondingly, Peacock (2009) introduced an evaluation framework for EFL teacher training programs. He conducted his study to evaluate the 4-year pre-service language teacher education program in Hong Kong. He aimed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program with also attention to the students' needs to find some policies for the development of the program. Peacock's approach is one of the novel approaches to program evaluation in language education and applied linguistics. Also,

in the Turkish context, program evaluation studies are using Peacock's Evaluation framework (Coskun & Daloglu, 2010; Salihoğlu, 2012).

Evaluation studies are growing in the language teaching field. Since language learning and language teaching are dynamic concepts, it can be said that program evaluation is not something that educators and educational policymakers could abandon. Trinity College London Certificate in TESOL was evaluated by Kiely and Askham (2012) to perceive the intensive pre-service program's impact on teacher learning, mainly focusing on understanding the work experience of the language teachers who were graduates of the program. While developing comprehensive programs, indeed, students' needs should be considered in many aspects because the success of language teacher education programs is mainly dependent on the efficient and comprehensive program.

However, Karakaş (2012) found many inaccurate factors immediately fixed in his evaluative study. Therefore, it is crucial to find out problems via evaluative studies and apply solutions accordingly. Another essential thing in program evaluation studies is investigating student views towards the program. Demirbolat (2005) asked for the opinions and statements of the students about the curriculum and their expectations from the master's program and to what extent the lecturers in her study met those expectations by using semi-structured interview forms.

Özüdoğru (2018) made a large-scale content analysis in her study to uncover research studies on curriculum evaluation in foreign language education between 2005-2016 from different aspects. Master's thesis and articles were mainly published ones on the subject. Studies are primarily centered on evaluating preparatory school programs, language courses, and elementary schools. On the other hand, the evaluation of post-graduate degrees like master's and doctorate, distance language teaching programs, and secondary school programs was overlooked because there were very few studies.

In the same way, in their review article, Aydınli and Ortaçtepe (2018) investigated research areas in applied linguistics and English language teaching between 2010-2016. There is substantial curriculum development and evaluation research, which may be counted as the natural outcome of Türkiye's swiftly changing national curricula. There is an acute need to figure out the implementation of the changes and

the requirement to find ways to manage such changes, transformations, and transitions. The researchers stated that the studies on curriculum evaluation are a good indicator of the awareness of the continuous need for program evaluation and collecting information from the stakeholders about their perceptions of the department. They also honestly criticized such studies because they are not relevant to the outside of the country and non-Turkish audiences. Therefore, it should also be mentioned how the suggestions could be implemented for non-Turkish.

In 2006, there was a top-down curriculum change in English language departments in Türkiye. Uztosun and Troudi (2015) investigated this sudden change from the viewpoints of lecturers. The study found that since the change process was top-down and not transparent, for lecturers, it was difficult to form a positive attitude toward the curriculum change. According to the lecturers, this kind of curriculum change requires the involvement of the stakeholders. Their ideas should be asked beforehand. Also, they should be informed about the criteria of the designers of the new curriculum and about the people who are involved in the process; such things help incorporate transparency into the process. However, it seems that the teacher training programs' decisions have their roots in political decisions (Nergis, 2011).

In conclusion, conducting program evaluation studies regularly is of vital importance to enhance the quality of education for students and lecturers and contribute to the academic literature in the field.

2.3. The English Language

Thanks to faster and more proficient forms of transport and communication, which have enabled a greater flow of people and the interchange of a larger quantity of information and goods, the entire world is seen to be more economically and culturally globalized than ever before (Mufwene, 2010). The era we live in challenges individuals to find various ways to interact with people from different nations because the world has been changing each second, and intercommunication is a must. The easiest way to interact with people in multinational, international environments in a globalized world is to use "language" as a means of communication. The common language platform which comes to our mind first and foremost is the English language.

However, there has been an ongoing debate on the variety of Englishes worldwide and the standard and correct one for a long time and still (Kachru, 1991; Quirk, 1990). As Kachru emphasized in his article (1984) that each variant of English must be viewed within its particular historical, political, sociolinguistic, and literary settings. It is utterly irrelevant to native English speakers in Great Britain, the United States, or anywhere else in the world how the English language evolves globally. Native speakers of English are entirely impotent in the situation and have no authority to interfere or pronounce judgment in any way; because English is such a widely used language around the globe, no single nation can legitimately claim ownership of the language. Establishing such control of the language would necessarily put an end to its development, which would consequently lower its standing on the international stage. The fact that native English speakers can use their language to communicate with people all over the world is a source of great pride and fulfillment for them. Nevertheless, the essential argument is that it is only considered international far as it is not in their own language. It is not a possession that they rent out to third parties while keeping freehold ownership of the asset. It is legitimately owned by other people (Widdowson, 1994).

Moreover, when interactions and intercommunications between nations are considered, English is the sole language that can be defined as the first truly global language (Crystal, 2012). Multiple causes, including trade, culture, religion, and migration, contributed to the rapid global expansion of English (Selvi, 2016). It has a crucial function as a language due to the undeniable influence it has on the aforementioned aspects. Unquestionably, knowing a language is crucial for maintaining productive dialogues between individuals. The term 'English as an International Language (EIL)' or 'English as a Lingua Franca' refers to the fact that English is currently viewed as the most effective language for intercultural communication (Kılıçkaya, 2009).

While English is viewed as the path to modernization and Westernization, its rapid spread has been perceived as a threat to the purity and prestige of Turkish, resulting in unfavorable attitudes and legislative decisions. However, Türkiye has recently swung towards the West in an effort to join the European Union. Therefore, a succession of radical reform movements has begun in education, indicating a paradigm shift towards

ecology by giving numerous foreign languages as opposed to dissemination. (Uysal et al., 2007). Since English has a critical role as a global language, there has been much focus on learning and teaching English. Most ELT teacher trainers admit the international role of the English language, and they also believe that increasing recognition of English will carry on (Yıldırım & Okan, 2007).

Changes in pedagogy and ideology are required in order for English Language Teaching techniques to be adapted to the new paradigm in which English is an international language. As a consequence of this, ELT professionals working in frontline positions are tasked with taking the initiative to drive change while simultaneously combating their own preconceived notions of English language teaching and learning (Caine, 2008).

The number of people who speak English who are not native speakers is greater than the number of people who speak English who are native speakers. This global dissemination necessitates not only a transformation in our perception of English but also a shift in the ELT methodology that is now being utilized. To gain an understanding of the implications for English Language Teaching (ELT), one must first investigate the nature of the English diaspora and the reasons that led to its subsequent dominance throughout the world. One must then re-examine traditional assumptions, which are held by both teachers and students (Caine, 2008).

2.4. English Language Teaching in Türkiye

The world has rapid change each day thanks to global interaction; however, it is still quite difficult to imagine a school without teachers despite technological advancements. Teachers are still needed to be the number one agents of the schools. Like the world we live in, language and language teaching are also dynamic. English language teachers should keep up with the latest developments and trends in the field, which requires them to consistently develop themselves and their teaching skills. Thus, it can be said that the training and education of English language teachers are not over immediately after they finish their formal education. Successful foreign language teaching is highly dependent on the preparation of teachers. According to research findings (Kırkgöz, 2006; 2007a), there will always be a disconnect between policy

rhetoric and classroom reality in the absence of many professionally competent and well-trained teachers.

To begin with, the motives leading students to become teachers should be examined to get a deeper understanding before looking into graduate studies. Aksu et al. (2010) scrutinized the future teachers' profiles from various teaching departments, and the study revealed that most of the students chose their departments voluntarily to become a teacher. Additionally, there were also extrinsic factors to choose such as flexible working hours, holiday periods, and job security as incentives to prefer teaching as a profession. Intrinsic motivations to become a teacher are more of an issue than extrinsic motivation factors to choose teaching as a profession (Erten, 2014; 2015). Similar reasons were disclosed in Topkaya and Uztosun's study (2012) that the selection of a teaching career was not a fallback career contrary to the public opinion that teaching is a poor choice; instead, it was voluntarily chosen.

The primary motives behind choosing teaching as a career are a need for qualified teachers in the educational system, educating the next generation, and the love of teaching (Çakmak & Kayabaşı, 2017). Teaching is to help people to discover their learning potential; that is, their own way of learning, so teachers should show students how to find their own ways in their professional and daily lives (Canbay & Beceren, 2012). As in all branches of teaching, the role of a language teacher is critical to motivating students to reach the goals of the courses.

2.5. English Language Teacher Education

Teachers' reasons and motives for being teachers appear to be vital for teacher educators to contribute new dynamics to the profession of teaching and to influence their career progression, commitment, engagement, and quality of teaching. (Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010; Mansfield, Wosnitza, & Beltman, 2012; Richardson & Watt, 2005; Salı, 2013; Subaşı, 2010). There has been a lot of interest in why people decide to become teachers in recent years, and a number of studies have been undertaken to learn more about why pre-service and in-service teachers enroll in teacher training programs (Salı, 2013).

The majority of ELT trainees' career decisions were influenced by sociocultural factors, according to the present study. The predominance of sociocultural factors may be explained by the collectivist nature of Turkish society, in which the desires and aspirations of the individual are subordinate to those of families and society (Sali, 2013). In addition, it can be said that teachers who choose the teaching profession for intrinsic and altruistic reasons have higher teaching motivation and work efficiently (Sinclair, 2008). In this case, it can be deduced that the attitudes of the teacher candidates who have an altruistic and intrinsic motivation to the teaching profession are more favorable than those who have extrinsic motivation (Kılıç, 2022).

In Türkiye, pre-service teacher education is offered by the faculties of education of the universities, and it has been standardized by Council of Higher Education (CoHE). In the curriculum of the program, both theoretical (methodology, etc.) and practical courses (practice teaching) are available (Demir-Ayaz et al., 2019). Seferoğlu (2006) confirmed that the practical part of the curriculum is helpful for student-teachers because they are happy to experience different teachers, classes, and school settings which makes it possible for them to familiarize themselves as prospective teachers.

From the international perspective, English language teachers need to be globally competent. Therefore, teacher training programs should review their curriculum to provide experiences and adequate knowledge of practicing global competence for future teachers because it is the faculties that are in charge of training the next generation (Altan, 2017). Nevertheless, Demir-Ayaz et al. (2019) presented the dissatisfaction of the participants due to the insufficient amounts of training, not having qualified trainers, and poorly designed programs lacking the needs analysis. Following the pre-service education of language teachers, they need to get in-service education for their professional development. Considering the quality of undergraduate education, the importance of in-service training for teachers is undeniable and should be planned by professionals after analyzing the needs of teachers (Gültekin & Çubukçu, 2008).

Teacher education programs should give opportunities for language teachers to comprehend and investigate language as both a linguistic system and a social practice, with substantial diversity between sociolinguistic contexts. Teachers can investigate

bilingual/multilingual and multimodal pedagogies, such as digital storytelling, and gain experience in teaching for transfer across languages, modes, and registers if they establish this knowledge. As language learners adopt a broader array of identities from which to acquire English, there is a greater chance that power relations in both local and global contexts will be more equal, and educational prospects will be more promising (Norton, 2017).

Teacher education and teacher training, ongoing professional development for educators, are widely recognized as essential components of successful pedagogical approaches (Çiçek-Başaran, 2020). Target language competence is another concern that comes into play during the non-native English-speaking teacher education process. English language proficiency of nonnative teachers is crucial, as Kamhi-Stein (2005) emphasizes by analyzing pertinent findings in the literature. Target language competency is revealed as a motivational and confidence-building aspect for instructors and is believed to be an important component of professionalism. However, target language competence is just considered one aspect of professionalism, therefore high levels of English proficiency do not necessarily correspond to successful second language instruction (Kamhi-Stein, 2005).

Especially in Türkiye, it is difficult for language teachers to put policy issues into practice due to the effect of textbooks, teaching methods, and curricula that are determined by the policymakers, which affect the quality of English language education in Türkiye (Sarıçoban, 2012). For a long time, a foreign language means the English language in the Turkish context. Since Türkiye is an expanding circle in which the English language is only used in professional domains, language teachers have difficulty teaching students because it is tough to teach and learn English in that situation. However, the need for English and English language teachers will never come to a close (Özmen et al., 2016). On the account that the demand for English language teachers will never stop, undergraduate ELT programs to train English teachers and graduate programs to train academics who will be the lecturers of the ELT programs will maintain their existence in the future.

2.6. Higher Education

In contemporary society, universities and colleges are being pushed to give their students high-quality training and support. This is because they are one of the most important places for human and workforce development and socio-economic growth. (Asmalı & Çelik, 2021). Higher education is a significant gate for many students around the world for better life conditions. Due to the significance of this gate in letting only the qualified ones go through, countries decide their own ways of admitting students to higher education institutions depending on their student population, number of higher education institutions, and some extra institutional criteria.

One of the other radical transformations in the higher education system in Türkiye is the "Research-Oriented Mission Differentiation Program," which has been carried out by the Council of Higher Education under the "Mission Differentiation and Specialization in Higher Education Program." It was officially announced by the President at the Opening Ceremony of the 2017-2018 Academic Year that 11 universities and five candidate research universities were determined according to the criteria such as the number of attributions, universities' encouragement for the interdisciplinary studies, national and international support, conducting national and international projects, and the performances of universities. Each year, the reports regarding the performances of research universities are shared with the community. According to their performances, some universities may lose their qualification as research universities, and candidate research universities may become research universities. In that sense, there is a dynamic movement upwards and downwards in the list. Research universities is an old term dating back to the 1800s. Humboldt brought the idea of research universities forward in his memorandum that universities must be based on three principles: the unity of research and teaching, freedom of teaching, and academic self-governance (Boulton & Lucas, 2011).

Türkiye has also made significant reforms to the higher education programs, including foreign language education systems, especially in founding universities which have English medium instruction. However, it is still debated because of the problems that English medium instruction has caused: superficial learning, growing away from the learners' own culture and language and losing self-confidence to be proficient in the

English language to follow academic text (Kırkgöz, 2007). Likewise, the ELT students and graduates might have difficulties similarly shared with L2 learners while expressing themselves in English, which is a foreign language for the majority of their education period, as well as writing their thesis, even though most of them are proficient in English.

2.6.1. The Need for Graduate Education in ELT

Further education for teachers is not a new topic, but the focus on teacher education has emerged again with the concepts of action research, reflection, and team teaching. Teachers need to renew their knowledge and professional skills because the basis of teaching is constantly changing and due to the fact that everything that language teachers should know cannot be provided at once during their pre-service education (Richards & Farrell, 2012).

There is always an internal and external force for teachers to keep their teaching knowledge up-to-date, especially on the topics such as curriculum trends, SLA, and assessment. The most significant source to update their information is the school and the classroom. The general growth of teachers in order to develop their understanding of in terms of teaching and themselves as teachers is fulfilled professional development activities aiming a long-term effect on teachers and facilitating teacher skills (Richards & Farrell, 2012). The characteristics of foreign language teachers are not limited to being well-trained in the field. However, they should also be professionally competent to balance the reality of their classrooms and policy rhetoric.

The initial aim of the graduate programs is to supply higher education institutions with trained academics and researchers and, as a result of this, to establish academic infrastructure (Ünal & İltar, 2010). Therefore, it is also essential to identify the institutional effectiveness, problems, and difficulties during the study period as well as strengths and weaknesses of these post-graduate ELT programs from the stakeholders' perceptions to gain insight about the department components, also to determine inconveniences of any part of the program not only to clear up potential problems but also to formulate preventive strategies for the designated problems.

For a long time, teachers in educational institutions are expected to find their own ways to involve themselves actively in professional development activities. Especially the action research, when it is applied collaboratively, addresses the needs of teachers in classrooms as a professional development way (Burbank & Kauchak, 2003). In order to improve education, high-quality professional development is one of the main essential parts of each educational institution. The policymakers also recognize that the thing that makes the school a better place is teachers and administrators working within the school, not the school itself. Therefore, these activities and programs for teacher professional development are planned for a change in teachers' classroom practices, learning outcomes of students, and their beliefs and attitudes (Guskey, 2002). Professional development not only affects for the beliefs and attitudes of students but also contributes to teachers' knowledge and thinking so that they can analyze their own and others' practices more critically, which will be resulted in the improvement of school-wide practices and the learning process of students (Williams, 2011).

Moreover, there has been a growing trend among teachers to conduct academic studies resulted in degree qualification. In the study of Williams (2005), teachers stated that their academic studies had a crucial role in their professional development. Academic study for a degree qualification was a powerful source for the various professional development activity for the teachers. Even though academic studies make real changes in teachers' practice and fundamental contribution to teachers' professional learning, it has often been overlooked in the literature (Williams, 2005). It is also mentioned in another study of Williams (2011) that despite the lack of studies reporting the importance of post-graduate education for teachers, formal academic studies leading a degree qualification have an immense potential for a thriving professional learning environment for both novice and experienced teachers.

2.6.2. Graduate Programs in ELT

The master level qualification was seen as only improving teachers' knowledge and skills formerly. However, today there is more focus on the teachers who are involved in the practitioner research as a part of both master's and doctorate programs in England (Bailey & Sorensen, 2013). In the courses of post-graduate programs,

teachers necessarily are engaged in the research process in two broad orientations: academic perspective aiming at the development of academic skills and abilities and professional development stance, according to Reis-Jorge (2007). Which brings us to the importance of research in the academic field; it is defined as 'trying to find answers to questions in simple terms. Researchers need to be systematic in order to reach reliable results. Therefore, in a scientific sense, it can be described as the organized, systematic research to find answers to our questions. (Dörnyei, 2007). Another research by Borg (2009) showed that teacher research is an important issue; however, it is a minority activity due to many reasons for teachers, like terrible working conditions in his international sample. There are also additional obstacles for them to be actively engaged in research practice which are attitudinal, conceptual, and procedural that teachers may not have the necessary knowledge and practical skills for high-quality research, which is why there are not so many teachers do not want to conduct research or reading (Borg, 2009).

Furthermore, some teachers think that time spent on professional development activities is time wasted, particularly when they are obliged to. Thus, it is fundamental to keep teachers motivated toward professional development because if they are motivated then the success comes out of these activities. Consequently, teachers need organizational, emotional, practical and intellectual support for engaging in productive teacher research (Borg, 2009; Guskey,2000).

Post-graduate education is the most developed component of tertiary level education, covering master's and doctorate studies. It is a systematic and advanced level in higher education that includes sholarly research and applied studies finalized in different academic degrees (Karaman & Bakircı, 2010). In some countries, teaching is a master level profession that requires a degree to practice at school, so there is an ongoing debate about moving teaching to an all-masters profession in many countries around the world (Kowalczyk-Waledziak et al., 2017). Accordingly, teachers may face the challenge of improving the required skills and qualifications for their classrooms and practices. New recruitment processes put into force by the governments may trigger teachers to get a degree.

On the other hand, in the academic literature, teachers' perspectives towards the governments' ambition for transforming teaching into a master's level profession are often neglected. Thomas (2016) addressed this gap in her research by emphasizing teacher perceptions along with the perceptions of the higher education institutions with a comparative example from Finnish teachers. In the study, favorable ideas of teachers regarding the benefits of master level teaching profession came into sight, and among the benefits these can be counted: professional development, probability of promotion, academic development, knowledge updating for teachers, leading to more advanced placement. As a result, all respondents in her study were on the side of the master level teaching profession in England and thought that it would give advantages to teachers, schools and students, meaning all educational components overall (Thomas, 2016). In consequence, the reasons for teachers to get a master's degree vary from moving into better professional positions for themselves to becoming more effective teachers. Studies have shown us that teachers are in favor of undertaking a master's degree, and it will positively affect teachers' knowledge, skills, and their practices (Tucker, 2013).

Stapleton and Shao (2018) stated that having a master's degree in ELT is accepted as one of the primary professional development resources for teachers, as Tavakoli and Hasrati (2015) do in their research. Accordingly, graduate education contributes to the necessary academic knowledge, skills, and attitudes regarding students' research and development process in line with academic criteria. They also pointed out that students take advantage of graduate education not only academically but also culturally, economically, and psychosocial-wise. (Liu & Morgan, 2015; Meng et al., 2017). Similarly, another study carried out by de Mejía (2016) discussed the benefits of MA programs on EFL teachers' professional lives with regards to developing the sense of *empowerment* and *the voice* (Freire, 1970) of teachers, including their attitudes such as dedication to work, reflective practices and respect for both colleagues and students.

The choices of students for the subject and destination for the post-graduate education are also resulted from finding jobs more manageable, reasonable income expectations, academic reputations of the institutions, and quality of the faculty apart from personal interests of students. Teachers also state that post-graduate education provides new opportunities, as well as a professional network for teachers. The primary motivation

for choosing a master's program is to obtain more profound knowledge in the field (Liu & Morgan, 2015).

2.6.3. Graduate Education in Türkiye

In the light of the constant demand for English teachers, Özmen et al. (2016) addressed in their study that for the English taught at the university level, including preparatory programs of some faculties and undergraduate programs as a compulsory course, the universities seriously require proficient and qualified teachers. Due to this demand for language teachers, they should keep pace with the latest developments in the language teaching field, which has resulted in pressure on the ELT programs, especially graduate-level programs which educate prospective teachers for tertiary level. Furthermore, new ELT programs which are set up lately are looking for teachers holding doctorate degrees to teach prospective English teachers.

Post-graduate studies not only educate lecturers for universities but also create opportunities, including employment for highly paid positions in business fields. Most of the students prefer graduate studies for an academic career in Türkiye (Aydemir & Çam, 2015), but the students' choices for master's programs in the ELT department go further than a career in academia. Self-development, professional development, having a prestigious profession, intercultural development, tracking the latest tendencies in the ELT world, and even just for the sake of having an MA degree are among the students' choices to continue master's degree (Arı et al., 2005). Similarly, Demirci (2021) pointed out that students in her study aimed to attend an MA program for professional development and to have prestigious jobs. In the same vein, the choice factors among the students and graduates who decide to continue MA studies in the ELT programs may differ from person to person. In addition, each graduate student has their own motives to pursue education after graduating with a bachelor's.

Kırmızı & Sarıçoban's study (2013) demonstrated that among the reasons to follow to continue further academic studies which lead to doctorate degrees, to improve their skills and knowledge in language teaching, to develop themselves intellectually, which is the most critical factor in deciding to choose MA programs. Among the student choices of continuing their education after getting a bachelor's degree are MA students' willingness to continue their academic studies after their master's degree and their

desire to improve language teaching skills and development of knowledge in the field. The quality of the instructors of the program is another factor affecting the choice of graduate programs (Keşli-Dollar et al., 2014; Kırmızı & Sarıçoban, 2013).

Unfortunately, as Tekneci (2016) reported, in the other developed countries with the same population as Türkiye, the number of graduates from master's and doctorate studies is higher compared to our country. Therefore, urgent measures need to be taken to increase the number of doctorate students and lower the dropout rates in post-graduate education (Tekneci, 2016). Concordantly, in Toprak and Taşğın's study (2017), it is pointed out that teachers are keeping themselves away from getting an academic degree due to the dynamic and backbreaking nature of post-graduate studies. Furthermore, it is seen as a financial burden for themselves. The other reasons that are mentioned in the study as a reason for teachers to decide against master's or doctorate studies are a financial burden, a convergence of the course schedule and the work schedule, not being eligible for the entry requirements of programs, and not having enough knowledge to conduct academic studies, etc.

2.7. Program Evaluation of the Graduate Education in ELT

Overall, studies in the Turkish context investigating the ELT programs (Yavuz & Zehir-Topkaya, 2013; Zehir-Topkaya & Küçük, 2010; Coşkun & Daloğlu, 2010; Karataş & Fer, 2009) mainly focused on the curriculum and curriculum changes of the ELT programs. Nevertheless, investigation studies into the post-graduate ELT program components are very inadequate compared to the studies dwelling on the undergraduate programs. Kırmızı (2011) focused in their doctoral dissertation on the evaluation of MA ELT programs in Türkiye. In another study, Kanatlar (1996) measured the success of the MA TEFL program at Bilkent University. Küçükoğlu (2015) analyzed the PhD programs in Türkiye.

2.8. Thesis Writing

Thesis writing is the requirement for the master's or doctoral degree students to obtain their degrees after successfully completing it. A thesis is one of the most notable pieces of work of graduate students in their own academic life (Hyland, 2004). Besides, it is the first time for most of the graduate students to write a text of this length by using

their deep disciplinary knowledge and academic language in a systematic way. Moreover, the number of graduate students has been growing considerably, especially in English medium universities, which necessitates the writing ability to produce numerous kinds of academic papers for students.

One of the most apparent reasons for graduate study to drop out is the thesis writing process. It is a process full of obstacles for graduate students (Toth, 2005). Casanave (2008) stated that graduate students also need to handle a lot of interdisciplinary practices even if they are familiar with the subject. That's why many challenges and hardships might fail in completing the thesis on time. Each step in the thesis writing process should be planned carefully, starting from the beginning; there needs to be a clearly defined topic first, then narrowing it down to an appropriate scope.

Nevertheless, students often strive in this point (Rempel, 2010). Choosing an appropriate research topic is so vital that it may even fail to complete the degree if it becomes unmanageable, whether the subject is too narrow or too broad (O'Clair, 2013). In Sadeghi and Khajepasha's study (2015), it is emphasized that the most intimidating part of graduate education is thesis writing.

McKinley (2019), a PhD program director and supervisor of loads of projects in ELT, explored that a familiar topic leads to success for students. The general idea of academic writing could make people think that academic language never changes or varies. However, English academic writing is subject to change due to many users of L2 English, and writers are also challenged with native fluency. In contrast to Westhuizen's study (2015), research is one of the least enjoyable components according to graduate students because of the characteristics of thesis writing; for example, anxiety of research is a time-consuming activity. Overall, master's degree students are more anxious than doctorate students (Merç, 2016).

Merç (2016) also mentions that programs should bear in mind the social and emotional health of graduate students and prioritize their well-being because post-graduate students need support from their supervisors and instructors to finish the thesis part of the program successfully, especially for the problems that students face during the process of conducting research. Scholarly publication is another issue for graduate students that they need to be supported (Lathif et al., 2021)

Ekoç (2019) successfully put forward that there are many students who lack the necessary training in academic writing even before they start writing their thesis. Since the activity itself is a daunting process, the students' commitment is essential. In that case, supervisors have far-reaching duties for the success of graduate programs because the supervision process can both make it easier for students or ruin the whole procedure. Immediate actions should be taken to improve the post-graduate experience, including supervisory means should be evaluated in Türkiye.



CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The main aim of this chapter is to specify in detail the purpose and research questions of the study, research design, setting of the study, participants, data collection instruments, procedures for data collection and analysis, and the assumptions of the study.

3.2. Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this research is to present the perspectives of the program students and graduates regarding the METU ELT MA program components for their study period based on their experiences and perceptions of how they evaluate the MA program in ELT at METU through their own eyes, which also involves their challenges during thesis writing period. The primary reason for doing this further investigation into the evaluations of students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU is to be able to provide some recommendations and suggestions for the improvement of the program. To this respect, this study also has an objective to make a contribution to the existing body of literature about the program evaluation, especially in the ELT field. Likewise, the perceptions of the students and graduates of the ELT MA program that they have been studying or studied are significant input for the positive implications and advancements which can be applied into the similar contexts.

The four main research questions with sub-questions aimed to be investigated in this study are presented below:

- 1) What are the reasons that motivate the students and graduates of the Master of Arts (MA) program in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Middle East

Technical University (METU) to pursue their master's studies and to enroll in the MA program in ELT at METU?

- a. Is there any significant difference between the reasons of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU to pursue their master's studies and to enroll in the MA program in ELT at METU?
- 2) How do the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU evaluate the program with respect to the program components, thesis writing and supervisory process?
- a. Is there any significant difference between the opinions of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU on the evaluation of the program with respect to the program components, thesis writing and supervisory process?
- 3) What are the challenges and experiences of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU during their thesis writing period along with the supervisory process?
- a. How do the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU view the contribution of the program courses to their research skills for their thesis writing?
- 4) What are the suggestions of students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU for the improvement of the program components, thesis writing and supervisory process?

3.3. Research Design

This research, which aimed to investigate program components such as description, content, instruction, atmosphere, and assessment including the thesis writing period and supervisory process of the MA program in ELT at METU based on the perceptions of the students and graduates on the evaluation of the program they have studied, was carried out as a sequential mixed method study because that particular research design

allows for a more in-depth comprehension of the phenomena being investigated than a single research method study does (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Instead of relying solely on one method, the researchers can rely on stronger and more meaningful data owing to the mixed-methods design (Yin, 2018). Mixed-method studies are defined as the third path (Gorard & Taylor, 2004), movement (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003), paradigm (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) in the literature, there are many definitions to it. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner (2007) worked together to come up with a common definition for the mixed methods research constructed upon the several different definitions for the mixed methods by many mixed method researchers. After their elaborative analysis of the definitions, they came up with a general definition below:

Mixed methods research is the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration. (Johnson et.al., 2007, p.123)

On the other hand, Cresswell and Plano Clark (2018) presented the four main characteristics of mixed method research which was seen sufficient to representation. While conducting mixed method, the researcher:

- meticulously gathers and analyzes both qualitative and quantitative data,
- combines (integrates or mixes) the two types of data and their findings,
- organizes these procedures into particular research designs that highlight the rationale and procedures for carrying out the research, and
- encapsulates the above practises within theory and philosophy. (p.59)

It is preferable to use mixed method studies when a study's research questions are more complex since mixed-methods studies strengthen the study while overcoming the design's weaknesses by integrating qualitative and quantitative research. Mixed-method studies can give additional advantages for the research as *triangulation* which means the utilization of more than one method to examine the same dimension of a research, *complementarity* which enables the researcher to acquire a deeper comprehension of the research problem and to elucidate the given results of the research (Hesse-Biber, 2010). They also allow to gain a better understanding by

encountering quantitative numeric data and the words of the qualitative data of the complicated phenomena (Dörnyei, 2007).

It is important for researchers to be consciously aware of the philosophical standpoints they bring to their research because all studies have a philosophical foundation inside. Both the methodology and the objectives of studies are strongly affected by these philosophical assumptions. Crotty (1998) brought forward that developing a proposal or a study design requires four primary components which constitute a framework about how these philosophies compromised with the mixed method research. This framework is presented below in *Figure 3.1*.

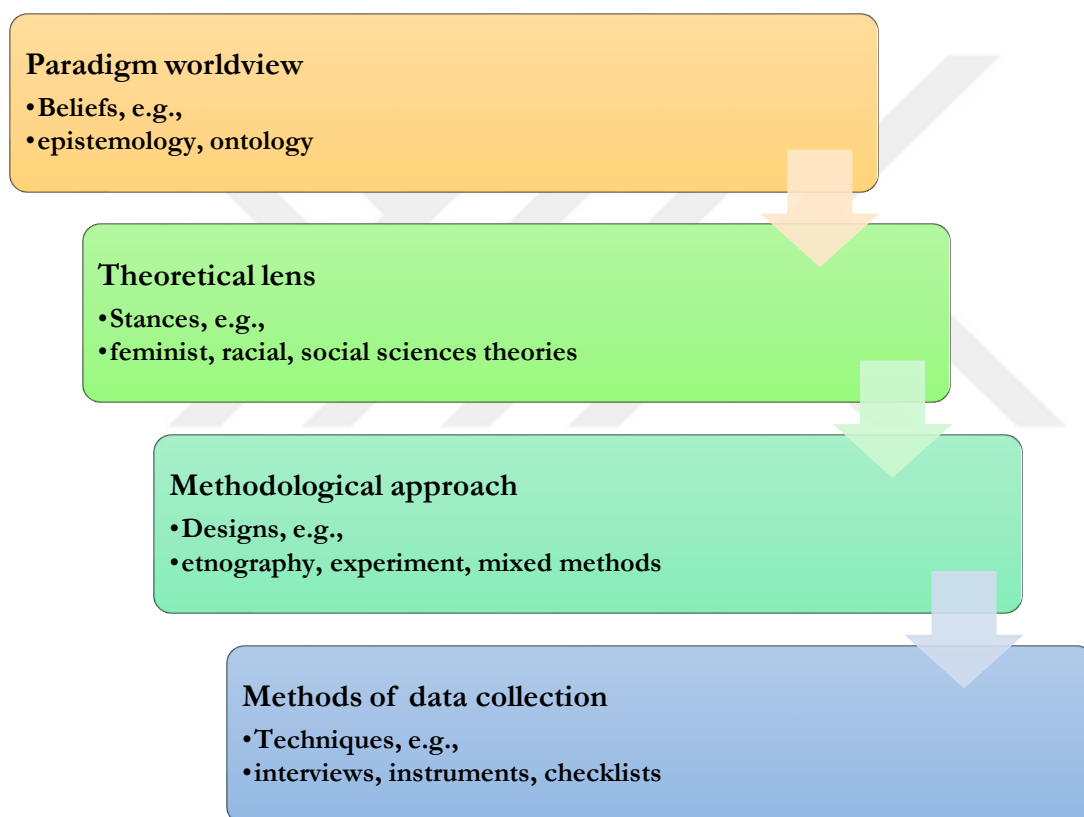


Figure 3.1. *Crotty's Four Levels for Designing Research*

The research questions, the data collection instruments employed, and the data analysis methods are shown in Table 3.1. and detailed under the following headings in this chapter.

Table 3.1. *Illustration of Research Questions, Instrument, Method, Analysis for this Study*

	Research Questions	Instrument	Method	Analysis
RQ1	What are the reasons that motivate the students and graduates of the Master of Arts (MA) program in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Middle East Technical University (METU) to pursue their master's studies and to enroll in the MA program in ELT at METU?	5-Point-Likert Questionnaire	Quantitative	Descriptive Statistics
		Open – Ended Questions Semi-structured Interview	Qualitative	Thematic Approach
(a)	Is there any significant difference between the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU reasons to pursue their master's studies and to enroll in the MA program in ELT at METU?	5-Point-Likert Questionnaire	Quantitative	Mann Whitney U Test
RQ2	How do the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU evaluate the program with respect to program components, thesis writing and supervisory process?	5-Point-Likert Questionnaire	Quantitative	Descriptive Statistics
		Open – Ended Questions Semi-structured Interview	Qualitative	Thematic Approach
(a)	Is there any significant difference between the opinions of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU on the evaluation of the program with respect to the program components, thesis writing and supervisory process?	5-Point-Likert Questionnaire	Quantitative	Mann Whitney U Test
RQ3	What are the challenges and experiences of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU during their thesis writing period along with the supervisory process?	Open – Ended Questions Semi-structured Interview	Qualitative	Thematic Approach
(a)	How do the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU view the contribution of the program courses to their research skills for their thesis writing?	5-Point-Likert Questionnaire	Quantitative	Descriptive Statistics
		Semi-structured Interview	Qualitative	Thematic Approach
RQ4	What are the suggestions of students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU for the improvement of the program components, thesis writing and supervisory process?	Open – Ended Questions Semi-structured Interview	Qualitative	Thematic Approach

Priority is often given to the quantitative approach in the sequential design since it appears first in the process and frequently forms the main component of the mixed-methods data collection process. The second stage of the investigation includes the more condensed qualitative component. However, a researcher may prioritize qualitative data collection and analysis (or both) depending on the study aims, the range of quantitative and qualitative research questions, and the specific design of each phase (Morgan, 1998).

Nevertheless, mixed methods design is challenging to implement despite its usefulness and simplicity. Researchers who decide to undertake a sequential mixed-methods study must take some methodological considerations into account. These concerns include the importance or weight assigned to collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data, their order, and the stage(s) in the process of research at which the quantitative and qualitative stages are associated and the findings are integrated (Cresswell et al., 2003).

It should be noted that there is not a single researcher or research issue that can be solved with the use of mixed methods. It is also important to note that the use of this method does not lessen the worth of doing research that is solely quantitative or qualitative. It does, however, require researchers to have specific skills, time, and resources for exhaustive data collection and analysis, as well as the ability to train others who may be less familiar with the fundamental notions of mixed methods research (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

To summarize, every researcher has their own assumptions, beliefs, and concerns for their studies; therefore, it merely depends on the researchers themselves to decide the “right” way of reaching answers sought for the questions that wanted to be discovered.

As Walton et al. (2020) underlined the importance of this situation by their own personal experiences:

When investigating complex social phenomena, there is no well-paved methodological expressway to understanding. As Lewis’s ever-forking road implies, the researcher builds her own road even as she is traveling on it, guided by her philosophical assumptions, past experiences, and the example of past travelers. Each journey will be as unique as the individual(s) traveling and, while well-informed methodological

decisions are key to creating reliable and trustworthy conclusions, researchers will find there are few dichotomous choices on the way and that the journey is limited only by their own assumptions and understandings. (p.452)

3.4. Research Setting

3.4.1. Middle East Technical University

Middle East Technical University (METU) was selected for this study because it is highly regarded as one of Türkiye's best academic institutions as a research university by both national and international measures of academic excellence. It has received high rankings in the annually published report of the Times Higher Education (THE), Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), CWTS Leiden Ranking, and the National University Ranking by Academic Performance (URAP), all of which are recognized by the Council for Higher Education (CoHe). On this wise, the findings of this study might throw light on the viewpoints of the students and graduates who have been studying or studied before at one of the leading universities. Besides, further investigating this institution might provide an exemplary model for raising awareness of the need for the evaluation of the other ELT MA programs in Türkiye and other countries in the world.

3.4.2. MA Program in ELT at METU

The department of ELT at METU has been raising English language teachers since the 1980s, and it is even one of the first departments offering graduate education in that field. In this study, the perceptions of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU were investigated through the sequential mixed method study.

Students who enroll in the Master of Arts in English Language Teaching program are provided with a foundation in both the theoretical and applied aspects of the profession, as well as an introduction to significant theoretical and methodological topics in language learning/acquisition and teaching. The objective of the program is to provide graduates with skills necessary for doing field research in both qualitative and quantitative research in the field of English Language Teaching and Learning (Middle East Technical University, 2022a).

The graduates of this program are expected to have theoretical and applied understanding of contemporary methodologies, methods, and strategies connected to the acquisition of English as a second/foreign language and applied linguistics for the comparative analysis of languages and civilizations. They are able to appraise novel ideas, applications, and instruments; perform preliminary research; and provide recommendations for new instructional programs, procedures, assessment practices, language teaching methods, and approaches. Graduates are expected to conduct research studies from a scientific perspective to meet educational and empirical needs in national and international contexts with the goal of making contributions to the field, all while synthesizing, critically assessing, and improving theoretical and practical findings on contemporary research (Middle East Technical University, 2022a).

The graduates of the MA program in ELT can find work in a variety of academic settings at both the national and international levels as instructors, teachers, language experts, and research assistants (Middle East Technical University, 2022a).

3.4.3. Courses of the MA Program

Graduation from the MA program in ELT at METU is upon the successful completion of the compulsory and elective courses within two years at the latest with a satisfactory grade, followed by the thesis defense. The course period at the MA program in ELT at METU usually lasts four semesters for seven courses in total (2 compulsory and 5 elective courses), and there are additional three non-credit courses, so the required course load for each student in the program is 7 courses plus 3 non-credit courses.

The courses give insights into major theoretical and methodological issues in language learning/acquisition and teaching. Additionally, students can take courses that have linguistics or English literature-based components. Courses of the MA program in ELT at METU are presented under three headings according to their types as must courses, elective courses and non-credit courses. Additionally, all of the courses are explained in a more detailed way with their descriptions (see Appendix F) based on the Academic Catalog of METU (Middle East Technical University, 2022b).

3.4.3.1. Must (Compulsory) Courses

In total, there are three different must courses in the program. Two of which are the research courses: Quantitative Research Methods and Qualitative Research Methods. As valid starting from 2020-2021 Fall Semester of METU's Academic Calendar, students need to take only two of the must courses. The must course named Second Language Acquisition is compulsory for all MA students. They can select either "Qualitative Research" or "Quantitative Research" as their second must course. Course codes and names of the must courses are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. *Must Courses of MA Program in ELT at METU*

Course Code	Course Name
ELT 506	Second Language Acquisition (Must for Every MA Student)
ELT 554	Quantitative Research Methods and Ethics in Language Research
ELT 555	Qualitative Research: Theory and Methods

However, graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU between the years 2017-2022 who participated in this study, was not affected by this change which is either ELT 554 or ELT 555 as the must course. All of the graduates who participated in this research have taken all of the three courses above.

3.4.3.2. Elective Courses

There are 22 different elective courses of the MA program in ELT at METU offers for the students. The MA program offers courses in ELT, linguistics, literature and culture, research. Students are free to take any of them as long as the schedule is suitable for them. Additionally, the students might take elective courses from the other departments such as Educational Sciences, Cognitive Sciences. Table 3.3. illustrates the elective courses of the MA program in ELT at METU.

Table 3.3. *Elective Courses of the MA Program in ELT at METU*

Course Code	Course Name
ELT 507	Curriculum Development for English for Specific Purposes
ELT 508	Research Methods in Applied Linguistics

Table 3.3. cont'd

ELT 509	Literature in the Teaching of English
ELT 513	Linguistics for English Language Teaching
ELT 517	Materials Evaluation & Development in ELT
ELT 518	English Language Testing
ELT 520	English-Turkish Contrastive Analysis
ELT 521	Cultural Aspects of Language Teaching
ELT 522	Lexical Semantics
ELT 523	Using Corpora for Language Research
ELT 525	Approaches, Methods & Techniques in ELT I
ELT 526	Approaches, Methods & Techniques in ELT II
ELT 528	Instructional Technology in English Language Teaching
ELT 529	Brain Based Language Learning and Teaching
ELT 530	Modern Theory of Grammar
ELT 531	Cognitive Linguistics
ELT 532	Effective Communication Skills and Neuro-Linguistic Programming for Teachers
ELT 541	Language Acquisition
ELT 542	Bilingualism and Bilingual Education
ELT 551	Pragmatics of Spoken Interaction
ELT 552	Critical Pedagogy and Language Education
ELT 561	Linguistics and Formal Languages

These elective courses might be subject to change according to the suggestions of the professors in the department. However, the Table 3.3. represents the latest course information list that all of the participants in this study took their courses from above. Even though there are 22 different elective courses in the Academic Catalog of METU that the MA program offers, there have been only 10 different elective courses offered for the students since 2018-2019 Fall Academic Calendar at METU. The list of offered courses for each year starting from 2018-2022 is presented in the Appendix G.

3.4.3.3. Non-Credit Courses

For master's students, a thesis advisor should be chosen by the end of the first semester for the MA thesis (before the beginning of the second semester). After the assignment

of thesis advisor, two of non-credit courses below (Master's Thesis and Special Studies) should be taken each term until the end of the thesis period. On the other hand, Seminar in ELT should be taken only once after the assignment of the thesis advisor. This course is actually designed to familiarize the master's students on their research areas before they start working on their MA thesis. It is like a preparation course for the master's thesis process.

Table 3.4. *Non-Credit Courses of MA Program in ELT at METU*

Course Code	Course Name
ELT 590	Seminar in ELT
ELT 599	Master's Thesis
ELT 801-850	Special Studies

In brief, students who started their MA studies before the 2020-2021 Fall Semester are required to take 3 required courses (ELT 506, 554, and 555), 4 elective courses, and 3 non-credit courses. Students who started their MA in the 2020-2021 Fall Semester are expected to take 2 required courses (ELT 506 and either ELT 554 or ELT 555), 5 elective courses, and 3 non-credit courses.

3.5. Sampling and Participants

For the field of social and behavioral sciences, Teddlie and Yu (2007) identified four different sampling processes. These procedures are known as probability, purposive, convenience, and mixed methods sampling strategies. In the present research, which makes use of a sequential mixed methods design, there are two separate components for both quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. Participants in this study were be selected by purposive sampling method with the strategy to achieve representativeness of a sample of a broader group (Teddlie & Yu, 2007) because they are a specific group of individuals who are/were studying at METU ELT department for their master's degree. If the objective of the study is not to generalize to a population but rather to establish understanding of a phenomenon, individuals, or circumstances, then the researcher will purposefully select individuals, groups, and

settings for this phase that will enhance deeper understandings of the insights into the main concern of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007).

There are two groups of participants in this study who are the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU. The first group is the graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU in the last five years (between 2017-2022, after the declaration of METU as a research university). Another reason for choosing participants who are in the last five years of their graduation date is to collect more reliable and current data about the program because in the evaluation studies, it is significant to depend on the most up-to-date information. Otherwise, the data collected from the participants could be meaningless for improving the program. The second group is the master's students who are currently enrolled in the MA program in ELT at METU. However, to be able to attend this study, students needed to have finished their course workload, so in their thesis writing process.

In the population regarding the METU ELT MA program, there were 47 graduates of the METU ELT MA program in the last five years (2017-2022), while there were only 28 master's students who were at their thesis writing stages at the time of this research was conducted. The number of total participants who attended the quantitative phase of this study is 42, including both the students and graduates of the program. Participation in this study had to be only on a voluntary basis with the consent of each individual (see Appendix B). The call for participants in this study was made through personal connections, social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp groups), and e-mails directly sent to the graduates. Participants in the qualitative study had already joined in the quantitative research. More detailed information about the participants in this study is presented under the following headings of this section.

3.5.1. Participants in the Quantitative Study

The quantitative data was collected through an official online survey platform of METU open to the use of both graduate students and METU personnel, which is called *METU Survey Service* using Limesurvey Software in this study (Middle East Technical University, 2022). In total, 42 participants gave complete answers to the questionnaire (See Figure 3.2.).

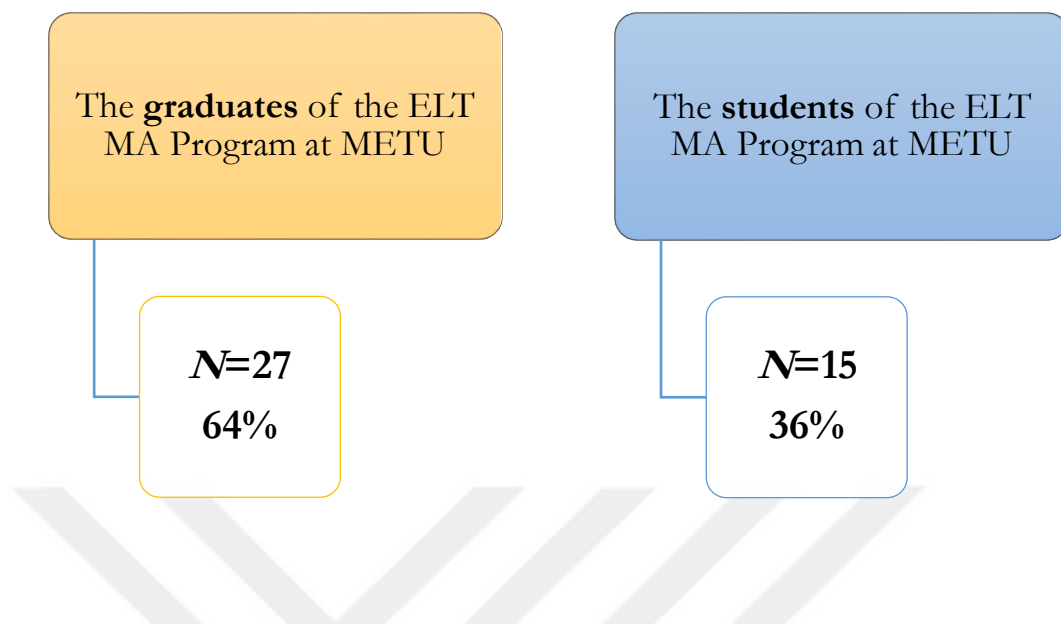


Figure 3.2. *Participants in the Quantitative Study*

Out of 42 participants who attended in the quantitative study, 27 of them were graduates which constituted the 64% of the participants, while 15 of them were students at their thesis period representing 36% of the attendees.

Demographic information of the participants in the quantitative study is presented in this section thoroughly and summarized in the Table 3.5.

Table 3.5. *Demographic Characteristics of the Participants*

<i>Characteristics of the Participants</i>		<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Age	24-26 years	11	26
	27-29 years	21	50
	30-36 years	10	24
Profession	Instructor	20	48
	English Teacher	7	17
	English Tutor at a Language School	1	2
	Others	2	5

Table 3.5. cont'd

	Research Assistant	5	11
	Not working	7	17
Teaching Experience	1-3 years	10	24
	4-6 years	21	50
	7-9 years	6	14
	10-13 years	2	5
	No experience	3	7
Teaching Experience During the MA Studies	Yes	38	73
	No	4	27
Teaching Experience Before the MA Studies	Yes	28	67
	No	14	33

Also, in the questionnaire the participants (graduates) were asked the question whether they were continuing their PhD Studies. Figure 3.4. represents the graduates in the present study who were pursuing PhD studies and who were not.

Among 27 graduates, 17 of them were pursuing their doctoral studies at the time of the study (see Figure 3.3.).

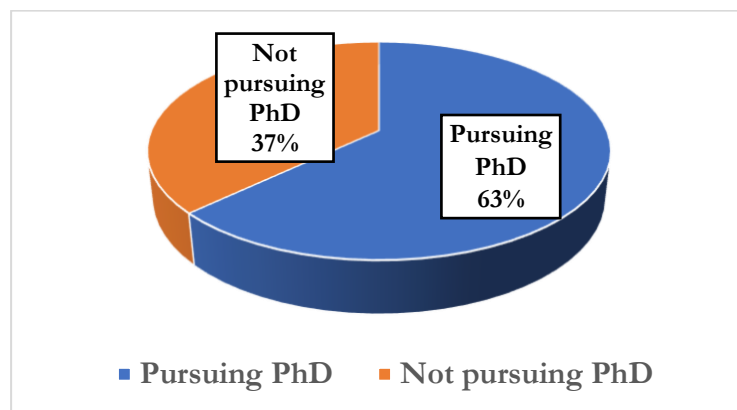


Figure 3.3. Graduates that Pursuing their PhD Studies

In addition, the ages of the participants were differentiated between 24 (the youngest) and 36 (the oldest), the half of the participants ($n=21$) were aged between 26-29 (see Figure 3.4.).

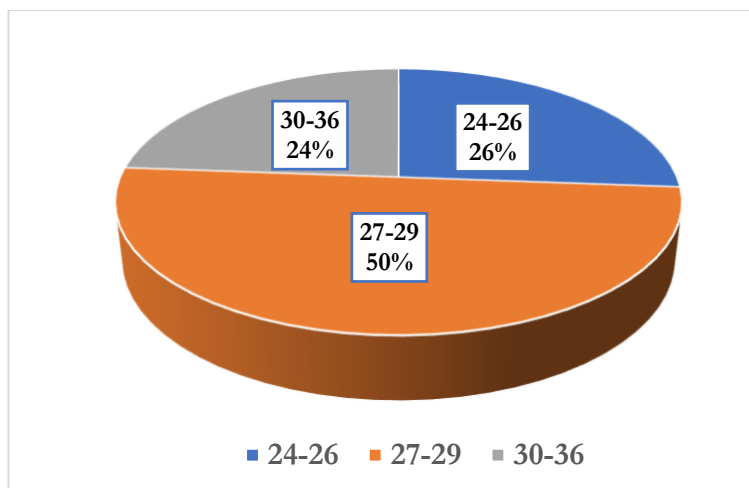


Figure 3.4. *The Age Range of the Participants in the Study*

Table 3.5 represents the professions of the participants in the Quantitative Study.

Table 3.5. *Participants' Professions in the Quantitative Study*

<i>Professions</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
English language teacher at a public school (MoNe Schools).	3	7
English language teacher at a private or foundation school.	4	10
English language instructor at a public university.	10	24
English language instructor at a foundation university.	10	24
English language tutor at a language school.	1	2
Research Assistant	5	11
Not working	7	17
Other positions (Corporate English teacher and exchange programs advisor)	2	5

Except 7 participants, the others were working at different positions. Almost half of the participants were English language instructors either at a public or foundation university.

In the demographic information part of the questionnaire, the participants were asked about their teaching experiences. Table 3.6 summarizes the ranges of the years of teaching experiences as well as the number of participants.

Table 3.6. *Years of Teaching Experience of the Participants*

<i>Years of Teaching Experience</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1-3 Years	10	24
4-6 Years	21	50
7-9 Years	6	14
10-13 Years	2	5
No Experience	3	7

The years of teaching experience of the participants were differentiated between 13 years (at most) and no experience in teaching. The numbers and percentages showing the years of professional experience in teaching of the participants are shown in Table 3.6. The participants had teaching experience in different stages from kindergarten to university levels. Most of the participants had a preparatory school experience ($n=26$), and the others had experience in kindergarten/young learners ($n=7$), elementary school ($n=14$), high school ($n=11$), ELT department ($n=5$), modern languages department ($n=10$) for different proficiency levels from beginner to advanced.

The participants' departments of their undergraduate degrees are shown in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7. *Departments of the Participants' Undergraduate Degree*

<i>Departments for Undergraduate Degree</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
ELT	40	24
Translation and Interpretation	1	50

Table 3.7. *cont'd*

American Literature	1	14
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As seen from the table, most of the participants ($n=40$) had ELT as an undergraduate degree, whereas there was only one participant who had Translation and Interpretation and one participant had a degree in American Literature.

The participants also were asked about the universities for their undergraduate degree. Universities, number and percentages are shown in Table 3.8. below.

Table 3.8. *Universities of the Participants' Undergraduate Degree*

Universities	Number	Percentage
METU (Ankara)	32	76
Boğaziçi University (İstanbul)	5	13
Hacettepe University (Ankara)	2	5
Samsun 19 Mayıs University (Samsun)	1	2
Anadolu University (Eskişehir)	1	2
İstanbul University (İstanbul)	1	2

The participants in this study had their undergraduate degrees from different universities. Most of the participants were graduates of METU ($n=32$), but there were other participants who were graduated from Boğaziçi University ($n=5$), Hacettepe University ($n=2$), Samsun 19 Mayıs University ($n=1$), Anadolu University ($n=1$) and İstanbul University ($n=1$).

3.5.2. Participants in the Qualitative Study

In the last section of the quantitative phase of the study, the participants were asked whether they would like to join in the 45-60 minutes long interview as a follow-up study. The volunteer participants were asked for their contact numbers or e-mails in the questionnaire. After the quantitative phase of the study had finished, contact numbers and e-mails were collected to reach out to the participants. In total, 16 participants among the 42 participants who are both graduates and students

volunteered to participate in the qualitative phase of the study. However, the researcher aimed to reach 12 participants for the qualitative phase of the study in order to be able to manage the qualitative data. Therefore, interviews were conducted with 12 participants (6 graduates and 6 students) who were chosen by purposeful sampling method. The participants were selected subjectively by the researcher according to their attitudes towards the ELT MA program at METU; that is, 2 participants had a positive attitude, 2 participants had a negative attitude, and 2 participants were somewhere in the middle, for each group (students and graduates). These participants were determined based on their answers in the quantitative phase of the study, including open-ended questions. Then, they were invited to the interviews. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant with the intent of keeping their identities confidential. There is no other specific information that can reveal their credentials in this study. Table 3.9 shows below the detailed demographic data of the participants who attended this study's qualitative phase.

Table 3.9. *Demographic Information of the Participants in the Qualitative Study*

<i>Pseudonyms</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Educational Background</i>	<i>University</i>	<i>Teaching Experience</i>
Ada	26	student	BA in ELT	METU	4 years
Bulut	27	student	BA in ELT	METU	6 years
Burcu	26	student	BA in ELT	Hacettepe University	4 years
Ege	25	student	BA in ELT	METU	1 year
Melisa	29	student	BA in ELT	METU	7 years
Tuna	30	student	BA in ELT	METU	7 years
Batu	28	graduate	BA in ELT	METU	No experience
Evrin	28	graduate	BA in ELT	METU	4 years
Pelin	29	graduate	BA in ELT	Boğaziçi University	4 years
Serhan	28	graduate	BA in ELT	METU	6 years

Table 3.9. cont'd

Tomris	29	graduate	BA in Translation and Interpretation	Hacettepe University	2 years
Yonca	27	graduate	BA in ELT	METU	3 years

3.6. Data Collection Instruments

This mixed methods study comprised two separate stages which the different instruments were used in order to increase the reliability of the research and data collection process. A questionnaire was used in the first part of the study's quantitative phase to collect numerical data, and individual interviews were conducted in the second half of the study's qualitative phase. Additional information about the instruments are provided in the following section.

3.6.1. Questionnaire

Questionnaire: The questionnaire which was utilized in this study is adapted from the previous research in the literature (Kırmızı, 2011; Küçükoğlu, 2015; Lavelle & Bushrow, 2007) to collect information about the perceptions of the current master's students who have finished their course period at the METU ELT MA program and the graduates of the program in the last five years (from 2017 to 2022) on the department from various aspects including program description, content, instruction atmosphere, assessment and thesis-writing and supervisory process. Permission to utilize and adapt the questionnaire items into the current study was got via e-mail from the authors of the parts in the questionnaire. The questionnaire used in this study consists of seven parts which are explained below:

Part I. Demographic Information: This part was prepared to collect the demographic information of the participants, which included questions and items about their age, Profession, years of teaching experience, and information on the participants' undergraduate degrees.

Part II. Reasons for Enrolling in the Master's Degree Program: In order to collect the opinions and motivations of starting master's studies of the participants 16 items were presented for the participants to rate them according to their importance levels.

Part III. METU ELT MA Program Courses: In this part, the participants were asked to rate the MA courses (22 courses including must courses and elective courses offered in the program) in the ELT program at METU according to their contribution levels for their thesis writing.

Part IV. Program Components: There were 24 items aimed at collecting the opinions of the students and graduates on program description, content, instruction, atmosphere and assessment.

Part V. Thesis-Writing and Supervisory Process: This part was designed to investigate how participants evaluate their thesis writing and supervisory process during their MA studies. In total, there were 8 items.

Part VI. Overall Evaluation: There were 6 items designed as to gain insights from the participants about the overall evaluation of the MA program at METU.

Part VII. Open-Ended Questions: In order to reach more data and give some floor to participants so that they could share their ideas freely on the program aspects, 5 different questions were asked to the participants on program components, as well as the thesis writing process.

3.6.1.1. Pilot Study

The instruments in the present study, which were designed to answer the research questions was piloted in order to pre-test the materials before conducting the main study. The reason for piloting is also to increase the reliability and validity of the instruments used in this research, as well as the feasibility of the tools for this study and further research. Conducting pilot studies is important in almost every research field because well-designed and well-conducted pilot studies help the researchers with more precise research procedures and likely outcomes of the study. For this reason, reporting pilot studies by the researchers is critical because it leads to actual improvements in the research process and the study design (Johanson & Brooks, 2010); (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Piloting new or modified instruments is essential to make sure the instructions and tasks are clear, the instrument is reliable, and the test tasks measure the intended construct or ability. Derrick (2015) presented the overview of the instrument reporting process in second language research.

Nevertheless, the piloting of the instruments was not frequently described in the studies. To ensure transparency which is necessary for research synthesis and is a crucial indicator of study quality. Finally, the findings of second language research are frequently used to shape educational policies and put forward second language thoughts. For this reason alone, the field as a whole should seek uniformity of what should be deemed minimal transparency quality criteria (Derrick, 2015).

In the extensive literature, the sample size for pilot studies varies from 12 to above 30 (Browne, 1995; Julious, 2005). If the goal is a preliminary survey or scale development, a good minimum recommendation is 30 representative participants from the demographic of interest (Johanson & Brooks, 2010). For the piloting of the instruments of this study, 30 participants were pre-determined as enough sample size with the aim of testing the materials and their meaningfulness. Since the pilot study should be conducted with the same procedures and similar context as the original one, the MA program in ELT at another research university, which was also one of the top-ranked universities in Türkiye was chosen as the case. Participants of the pilot study were both the students and graduates who were writing their thesis as intended for the actual study. The initial questionnaire (see Appendix C) was designed and transferred into the official online survey platform of METU, which is named *METU Survey Service*. Personal connections, emails, and social media posts were used to reach out to the participants for the piloting.

In total, 41 participants joined the pilot study. However, 10 participants left the survey in the middle without submitting data to the software, and their data left missing in the survey service. Therefore, the analysis was made according to the data of 31 participants. Among the participants, 17 were a graduate of the MA program, while there were 14 master's students writing their thesis.

Several demographic information of the participants in the pilot study is presented below with the help of tables and figures. Figure 3.5. below represents the age range of the participants in the pilot study.

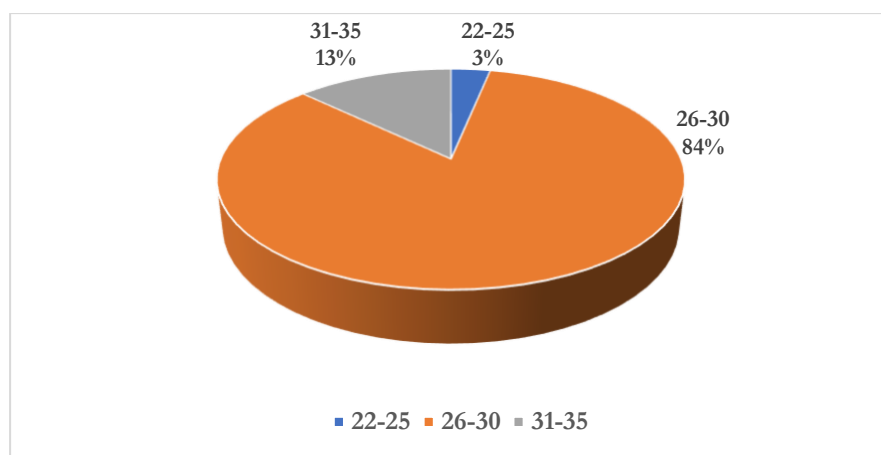


Figure 3.5. *The Age Range of the Participants in the Pilot Study*

Most of the participants were aged between 26 and 30 ($n=26$), whereas there was only 1 participant between the age 22 and 25. The number of participants whose ages between 31 and 35 was 4. (see Figure 3.5.)

The participants were asked about their professions in the pilot study as well. Table 3.10. represents the professions of the participants in the pilot study.

Table 3.10. *The Professions of the Participants in the Pilot Study*

<i>Professions</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
English language instructor at a foundation university.	8	25
English language instructor at a public university.	17	54
English language teacher at a private or foundation school.	1	3
English language teacher at a public school (MoNe Schools).	2	6
If your job is not listed above, please specify in the box.	2	6
Not working right now.	1	3

Except for one participant, all of them were working as English teachers, instructors or research assistants (see Table 3.10).

The teaching experiences of the participants are shown below in Figure 3.6.

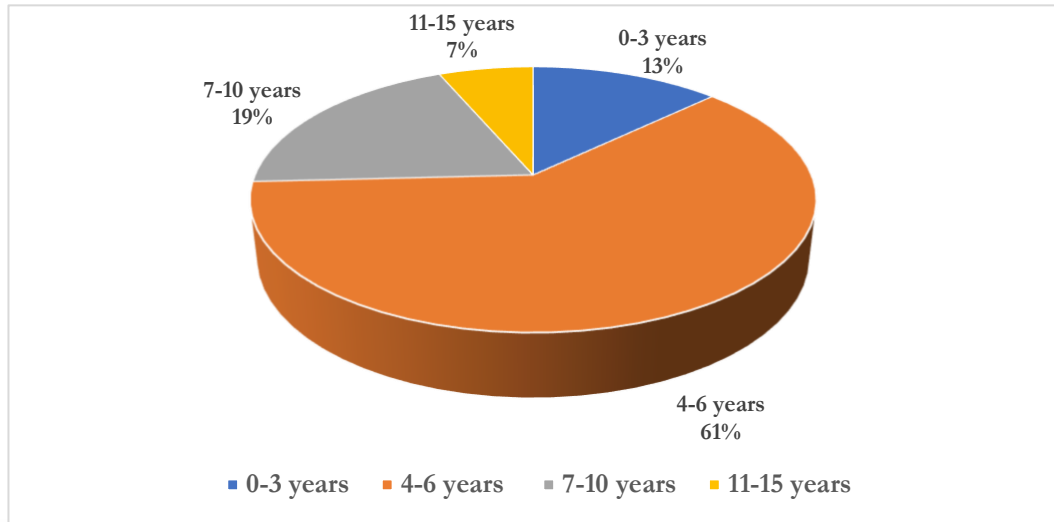


Figure 3.6. *Years of Teaching Experiences of the Participants in the Pilot Study*

While %80 ($n=28$) of the participants were working at university level institutions such as preparatory schools, ELT department, modern languages department; the others were working at high school ($n=1$) and primary school ($n=2$).

The researcher also got feedback from the participants about the questionnaire and for the parts that might be unclear for them. Many of the participants complained about the length of the questionnaire, which could be a reason for the loss of 10 participants while filling the questionnaire. Besides, not to cause any problematic situations in the real study, the researcher also asked the opinions of the experts in the field from four different universities (Bilkent University, Gazi University, Middle East Technical University and Artvin Çoruh University) and various departments (ELT, Educational Sciences, and Measurement and Evaluation). According to the expert opinions, major changes were made to the questionnaire for the items and questions. After getting comprehensive feedbacks from seven professors, the items that were omitted and modified are explained below.

Part I: Age and year of experience was directly asked to participants instead of asking age range. After the analysis, age range was created by the researcher. Another question was added asking whether the graduates pursue their PhD studies or not.

Part II: “Other(s)” section was added as a short text box for both scales in case there are other reasons which were not specified in the items.

Part IV: 20 items from the Program Components part were decided to be omitted to simplify the questionnaire with the help of the experts. Most of these items were found not corresponding to the objectives of the MA program in ELT at METU and some of them were repeating themselves or already asked in another item, so had overlapping meaning. Items that were omitted from Part IV. Program Components according to the expert opinions are shown below in Table 3.11.

Table 3.11. *Omitted Items from the Part IV. Program Components*

Item Number	Statement
2	The program fulfills my needs.
3	Faculty members treat with respect to master students in my program.
4	The relationship between faculty and graduate students in the program is good.
7	Interaction between the department and related disciplines or programs on the campus is satisfactory.
8	There are tensions in the faculty which affect students.
9	The program gives me adequate training in teaching skills.
13	The program gives me adequate training for the needs of the Turkish context.
15	The program has good linkage between different courses.
18	The program encourages me to be a reflective teacher.
19	The department promotes intellectual development.
23	The institution offers sufficient computer and Internet support.
24	Specialized facilities, such as laboratories or studios, and equipment needed for teaching are satisfactory.
25	The faculty is/was helpful for the MA ELT program students.
26	The program is providing me with excellent preparation for my future professional work.
27	The department actively helps graduates of master’s program find appropriate employment.
29	The program head is/was in cooperation with the faculty administration.

Table 3.11. cont'd

36	In the end of the course, getting higher grades from the courses is difficult.
38	I believe, final projects in the master's courses are challenging.
39	Master's students can get appropriate feedbacks in the courses by the lecturers.
40	Overall, I am happy with the assessment techniques in the courses.

Part V: From the Thesis Writing and Supervising Process part, 8 items were opted out from the questionnaire with the help of the expert opinions due to the similar reasons mentioned above. Items that were omitted from Part V. Thesis Writing and Supervising Process according to the expert opinions are shown below in Table 3.12.

Table 3.12. Omitted Items from the Part V. Thesis Writing and Supervisory Process

<i>Item Number</i>	<i>Statement</i>
1	I worry/worried about how much time my thesis will take.
3	I put a lot of myself into my thesis writing.
5	I tend/tended to spend a long time thinking about my duties of the thesis before beginning.
6	Writing an academic paper or thesis is/was like a journey.
8	I worry/worried so much about my writing that it prevents me from getting started.
13	I am/was satisfied with the amount of time I spend with my supervisor.
14	I am/was satisfied with the quality of time I spend with my supervisor.
15	I am/was satisfied with my supervisor the support they gives/gave me.

Part VI: 5 items were omitted from the Overall Evaluation part because they were found as not corresponding to the objectives of the study and the program and 4 new items added from the objectives of the MA program in ELT at METU. Items that were omitted from Part VI. Overall Evaluation are shown below in Table 3.13.

Table 3.13. *Omitted Items from the Part VI. Overall Evaluation*

<i>Item Number</i>	<i>Statement</i>
1	I believe what I have learned in this program will be valuable for my future.
2	The program has increased my ability of self-evaluation.
3	By the end of this program, I feel/felt competent enough to do research on the ELT.
5	The variety of the courses opened in the program meets the needs of the graduate students.
6	The total number of credits that graduate students should take during the course period is enough for the program.

Part VII: Open-Ended Questions, the first question asking the strengths and weaknesses of the program were separated into two questions because it was identified in the pilot study that the majority of the participants wrote their comments on either strengths or weaknesses. Not to cause any missing data in the real study, the strengths and weaknesses of the program were asked to the participants in two dividual questions.

Apart from the omitted items, there were other modifications to some items in each part to clarify the items which were seen confusing by the participants and the experts. Modified version of the questionnaire which was employed in the main study was presented in the Appendix D.

In order to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, Streiner (2003) noted that Cronbach's alpha is the most commonly employed reliability measure. Based on the scores and classifications provided by Streiner (2003), concerns regarding the reliability of the questionnaire used in the present study were minimized, as $\alpha > 0.9$ indicates *excellent* internal consistency and $0.7 < \alpha < 0.9$ indicates *good* internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha, also known as the coefficient alpha, was computed with the IBM SPSS software in order to calculate the extent to which the items in the questionnaire could be relied upon. Johnson and Christensen (2019) defines Cronbach's Alpha as “a formula that offers an estimate of the reliability of a homogeneous test or an estimate of the reliability of each dimension in a

multidimensional test." and the test is said to have internal consistency if the value of Cronbach's alpha is .70 or higher, especially in the field of education (Johnson & Christensen, 2020, p.479). Therefore, reliability of the scale was calculated by SPSS Software, and were found reliable before and after the omission of the items. Table 3.13 shows the reliability statistics for the scale before the omission of the items.

Table 3.13. *Reliability Statistics for the Scale in the Pilot Study*

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.942	73

On the other hand, even after the item deletion, the scale seemed reliable according to the results of the reliability test. It can be seen in the Table 3.14.

Table 3.14. *Reliability Statistics for the Scale After the Omission of the Items*

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.923	30

As it is seen from the reasons explained earlier, thanks to the pilot study, possible problematic situations that could emerge in the real study were ironed out. Piloting the instruments helped to recognize the potential problems and risks related to the research procedure so that the researcher could solve them before conducting the main research.

3.6.2. Semi-structured Interview

Semi-Structured Interview: Interview questions (Appendix E) are collected and adapted from the previous research in the literature (Celen & Akcan, 2016; Ekoç, 2019). Just like the questionnaire, permission to use the interview questions was got from the authors of these studies. However, there were not any questions directly taken from the studies mentioned above. All of the questions were revised and paraphrased. The other questions in the interview were prepared by the researcher relying on the literature and examined by the experts. The questions in the interview section are

divided into three parts. The first part aimed to create an ice-breaker environment with the participants, to talk about personal information and general reasons for choosing to pursue master's studies in the ELT field. The second part aimed to understand participants' overall ideas on their evaluations of the MA program in ELT at METU. Finally, the third part of the interview aimed to investigate the perceptions and experiences of the students and graduates of the METU ELT MA program regarding the thesis writing process. On the other hand, because the interview was designed as semi-structured, some of the questions might not be asked, or some of the questions might be omitted during the interview according to the participants' answers.

3.7. Procedures

3.7.1. Data Collection for Quantitative Study

After getting the necessary permissions and ethics approval, questionnaire items and interview questions were revised according to the pilot study results. When the final version of the questionnaire and interview questions were prepared, the data were collected through an online questionnaire designed via *METU Survey Service*. The call for participants in this study was made through personal connections, social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp groups), and e-mails directly sent to the graduates. Participants in the qualitative study had already joined the quantitative research.

3.7.2. Data Collection for Qualitative Study

Following this, the semi-structured in-depth interview aimed to be held in face-to-face meetings with the participants; however, some participants were not available at the time of the data collection. Therefore, the online conference platform, which is Zoom, in this study was utilized when face-to-face meetings were not possible. Initially, in-depth interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes to 75 minutes individually. The face-to-face interviews were audio recorded, while Zoom interviews were video recorded. All the interviews were conducted in Turkish, which was each participant's first language (L1). The main reason for conducting interviews in Turkish was to make participants feel more relaxed in their mother tongue, so the researcher aimed to get a deeper understanding of the participants during the interview. There was no

international student as a participant, which was an expected situation because the number of international students at the METU ELT MA program was too low. If so, the interviews would be conducted in English.

Before the start of the interviews, it was made absolutely clear to the interviewees that their participation in the interviews would be entirely voluntary and that the information they provided would be kept strictly confidential and used solely for this scientific research. The interviews were conducted as face-to-face meetings, and also for the participants who could not attend in-person sessions at the time they were being held due to their personal or work-related schedules, interviews were conducted through Zoom meetings. The researcher also ensured the participants that video recordings in Zoom would not be used for any part of this research and not shared with any other people and strictly encrypted in the computer. After the voice recordings, all videos were deleted by the researcher not to violate the confidentiality of the participants

3.8. Data Analysis

Since this is a sequential mixed method study design that provides the researcher with rich data set as both narrative and numerical data, each type of data was analyzed separately first. Then, all the data were integrated to reach more meaningful findings to understand the research questions.

3.8.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

Several descriptive analyses were performed in order to address the research questions. The quantitative data were analyzed using the IBM SPSS (28) program. First, it was verified whether the data had been submitted correctly and whether there were any missing values. The demographics and the questionnaire of the individuals were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis first because this study has a mixed-methods approach. Since the participants of this study violate the normal distribution assumption of the statistical tests, in order to test the differences between groups, a non-parametrical Mann-Whitney U Test was conducted in the IBM SPSS (28) program, which allows the comparison of the means of different groups which are not normally distributed.

3.8.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected from the interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated into English. To construct validity, transcribed data were sent to the participants for member checking to ensure the study's trustworthiness and reliability of the data. Then, all the data were organized and analyzed into themes and codes with the help of qualitative data analysis techniques open and axial coding by the researcher. Qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA was also utilized for the organization of the transcribed data during the coding process. In this mixed-method case study, there was a meta-analysis phase of the results in which the two data sets were interpreted. Therefore, mixing or integration occurred after the results were presented separately (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2009).

3.9. Assumptions of the Study

The following statements below are the assumptions of this study:

- To guarantee the research's validity and reliability, quantitative and qualitative data were collected through a questionnaire and interviews.
- In both the quantitative and the qualitative phases, it was believed that the participants rated the items in the questionnaire in an honest manner and answered the questions in the interview sincerely by taking into account their real-life experiences.
- In light of the population of the METU ELT MA program graduates (2017-2022) and current master's students where the research was conducted, the number of participants was appropriate to adequately represent the community ($n=42$) because more than half of the population took part in the quantitative study. In contrast, almost twenty percent of the population ($n=12$) attended the interview phase of this study which was also found sufficient for qualitative research.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

Prior to the beginning of the study, an application had been submitted to the Human Subjects Ethics Committee of Middle East Technical University. The research was carried out after obtaining of permission (Appendix A), and there is no objection to

conductconducting research from the committee. For the quantitative phase of the study, all of the participants were required to read the consent form (Appendix B) to be able to participate in the research. In the form, there is also some basic information about the study before any participants were allowed to participate in the procedure. ConsentThe consent form also included information about the objectives of the research, as well as the entitlements and responsibilities of the volunteers who agreed to participate in this study. However, like the questionnaire, participants' consent was collected through the online METU Survey Service. Participants were expected to click the item to indicate that they agreed to participate in this study with their full consent. For the qualitative phase of the study, participants who had already voluntarily shared their mobile numbers and e-mails to attendwith attending the 45-minute-interview phase of this research were chosen from the questionnaire. Some participants agreed to join face-to-face interviews; in that case, only voice-recording consent of the participants was taken. For the other participants, online interviews were conducted, and participants were reminded that the interviews would be video-recorded. The interviews were conducted right after obtaining the participants' consent. In the course of data analysis procedures, personal details (contact information, names and other personal information) were omitted from the primary data. Participants' identities and names were substituted with pseudonyms, and any relevant data that may jeopardize their confidentiality was excluded from the research.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this research is to collect data about the perceptions of the students and graduates on the evaluation of the MA program in ELT at METU. The statistical results of the gathered quantitative data and an analysis of the qualitative data are presented in this chapter. Additionally, the chapter highlights some research results drawn from the data. Within the context of the four research questions, the results of both the qualitative and quantitative analyses of the data will be classified into four primary groups and analyzed according to those groups:

(1) the reasons that motivate the graduates and current master's students of the MA program in ELT at METU to pursue their master's studies and to enroll in the MA program in ELT at METU, as well as the differences between the students and graduates,

(2) how the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU evaluate the program with respect to program components (program description, content, instruction, atmosphere, and assessment) along with the thesis writing and supervisory process, and the differences between the graduates' and master's students' opinions on the evaluations of the program, with additional aim into investigating the strengths and weaknesses of the ELT MA program at METU and also the suggestions of the graduates and current master's students of the MA program in ELT at METU for the improvement of the program and,

(3) the perceptions and experiences of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU during their thesis writing period along with the supervisory process,

also their perceptions on the contribution of the program courses to their research skills for their thesis writing,

(4) suggestions of the students and graduates for improving the MA program in ELT at METU.

After analyzing the quantitative data collected through a questionnaire, the semi-structured interviews were analyzed as qualitative data to produce in-depth explanations of the quantitative findings.

4.2. Results in Relation to the Reasons that Motivate the Students and Graduates to Pursue Master's Studies and to Enroll in the ELT MA Program at METU

Research Question 1: What are the reasons that motivate the students and graduates of the Master of Arts (MA) program in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Middle East Technical University (METU) to pursue their master's studies and to enroll in the METU ELT MA program?

This research mainly describes how the students and graduates evaluate the MA program in ELT at METU from their own viewpoint. However, it is also essential to know their motives behind pursuing master's degree studies to understand their point of view in a better way towards the program. The factors that might shape expectations so that the students and graduates could evaluate the program accordingly. It is the rationale behind asking the first research question before directly moving into the evaluation questions, which might provide a robust framework for the analysis and a general overview of the participants' understandings while enrolling in the master's studies.

Quantitative and qualitative findings related to this research question are detailed under this heading.

4.2.1. Quantitative Results for the Research Question 1

There was a part in the questionnaire including two groups of items in the form of a 5-point-likert scale investigating reasons for enrolling in the master's degree program. The first item group aimed to investigate general reasons to pursue master's studies

with 8 items, and the other one was to gather the opinions of the participants for their choice of METU with 8 items. Utilizing descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, numbers, and percentages for each item on the Likert Scale, the students' and graduates' choices on the items for reasons to pursue master's degree and their reason to enroll in the ELT MA program at METU. Descriptive statistics of two item groups are presented in Table 4.1 and 4.2 in the following pages.

Table 4.1. *Descriptive Statistics of the Reasons for Pursuing in the Master's Studies*

Item	Not Important at all		Not Important		Undecided		Important		Highly Important		Mean	Standard Deviation
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
1 To have a PhD degree.	5	11.9	4	9.5	2	4.8	15	35.7	16	38.1	3.79	1.371
2 To pursue an academic career.	0	0.0	1	2.4	7	16.7	12	28.6	22	52.4	4.31	.841
3 To become more professional in teaching.	4	9.5	5	11.9	10	23.8	9	21.4	14	33.3	3.57	1.328
4 To meet the criteria for recruitment at public or foundation universities as an instructor.	10	23.8	1	2.4	5	11.9	7	16.7	19	45.2	3.57	1.640
5 To earn a higher salary.	6	14.3	10	23.8	7	16.7	12	28.6	7	16.7	3.10	1.340
6 To widen the current professional knowledge in the ELT field.	3	7.1	6	14.3	7	16.7	11	26.2	15	35.7	3.69	1.297

Table 4.1. cont'd

7	Merely to get a master's degree.	12	28.6	12	28.6	10	23.8	6	14.3	2	4.8	2.38	1.188
8	Other(s)												

These eight items above except for the one which was a short answer text box represented different reasons for the participants according to the importance levels for students and graduates to pursue master's studies. Item 8 was added in order to give freedom to the participants to write their own reasons apart from the chosen ones because there might be other personal reasons to pursue master's degree.

As seen from the table above, the mean scores of the reasons ranged between 2.38 and 4.31. Item 2, stating the reason *to pursue an academic career* has the highest mean score ($M=4.31$, $SD=.841$) with the most frequency as 22 participants (52.4% of total) found it highly important. The second highest mean score indicating another important reason for the participants is the item 1 *to have a PhD degree* ($M=3.79$, $SD=1.371$), which is followed by the item 6 *to widen the current professional knowledge in the ELT field* ($M=3.69$, $SD=1.297$).

On the other hand, the item 7, *merely to get a master's degree* has the lowest mean score among the reasons ($M=2.38$, $SD=1.188$). The 28% of the participants found it "not important" reason to enroll in master's studies, also the other 28% of the participants found it *not important at all*. It can be understood that, merely to have master's degree is not an important reason to enroll in the master's studies for more than half of the students and graduates in this study. It seems that most of the participants have some specific goals to pursue master's studies other than just to get a degree. The second lowest mean score is hold by item 5, *to earn a higher salary* ($M=3.10$, $SD=1.340$). However, the standard deviation of the item is respectively higher. Considering the 16.8% chose it as a highly important reason and the 28.6% chose the item as important, it is an important reason for the 45% of the participants.

Item 8, *Other(s)* was kept as an open-ended short answer text box. There were other reasons emerged according to the answers of the participants. One participant ($n=1$) stated that *to postpone military service* is also a reason to enroll in the program, but not an important reason. Two other participants ($n=2$) mentioned *learning new skills, especially research skills such as research design, making experiments and data analysis*.

Table 4.2. introduces the descriptive statistics of the reasons for enrolling in the ELT MA program at METU according to the answers of the participants.

Table 4.2. *Descriptive Statistics of the Reasons for Enrolling in the ELT MA Program at METU*

Item	Not Important at all		Not Important		Undecided		Important		Highly Important		Mean	Standard Deviation
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
9 The reputation of METU	0	0.0	4	9.5	2	4.8	7	16.7	29	69.0	4.45	.968
10 Program design (course variety, instruction etc.) and success	1	2.4	0	0.0	7	16.7	17	40.5	17	40.5	4.17	.881
11 Prospects of employment	3	7.1	2	4.8	5	11.9	11	26.2	21	50.0	4.07	1.218
12 Competencies/ research areas of academics in the faculty	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.4	17	50.5	24	57.1	4.55	.550
13 Academic environment in the faculty	1	2.4	1	2.4	8	19.0	10	23.8	22	52.4	4.21	1.001

Table 4.2. cont'd

14	University/ faculty network	1	2.4	9	21.4	4	9.5	8	19.0	20	47.6	3.88	1.292
15	METU campus facilities	5	11.9	2	4.8	3	7.1	15	35.7	17	40.5	3.88	1.329
16	Other(s)												

The mean scores of the reasons for enrolling in the ELT MA program at METU, indicated in the table, for the participants ranged between 3.88 and 4.55. Each of the items in the list is respectively important for the participants. The highest mean score is hold by the item 12, *competencies/research areas of academics in the faculty* ($M=4.55$, $SD= .550$). It seems that it is an important factor for choosing METU as their MA program according to each participant except for the one ($n=1$) who is *undecided* among the others. The second highest mean score is hold by item 1 *the reputation of METU* ($M=4.45$, $SD= .968$). The 69% of the participants thinks that the reputation of METU is highly important factor for their choice of the university. The lowest mean score is shared by two items which are Item 14 *university/faculty network* ($M=3.88$, $SD=1.292$) and Item 15, *METU campus facilities* ($M=3.88$, $SD= 1.329$).

Like the previous item group, this group also included short answer text box. Additional two reasons emerged when the answers of the four participants were examined. One reason is the *familiarity of the institution* stated by two participants ($n=2$) as from their BA studies METU was like a home for them and the environment, campus, faculty were more familiar than anywhere else. Another reason is *having a chance to work on linguistics* ($n=2$) because ELT MA program at METU offers many courses in linguistics field, and there are many opportunities work with faculty members whose academic research interests overlap with the ones who wants to study linguistics.

4.2.1.1. Quantitative Results for the Research Question 1a

Research Question 1a: Is there any significant difference between the reasons of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU to pursue their master's studies and to enroll in the MA program in ELT at METU?

This research question aimed to find out whether there is a significant difference between the reasons for both pursuing master's studies and choosing the ELT MA program at METU. The Table 4.3. shows the means and standard deviations of the reasons for pursuing MA studies separately for the students and graduates.

Table 4.3. *Means and Standard Deviations of the Reasons for Pursuing MA Studies Among the Students and Graduates*

	Item	Graduates		Master's Students	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	To have a PhD degree.	3.81	1.415	3.73	1.335
2	To pursue an academic career.	4.30	.823	4.33	.900
3	To become more professional in teaching.	3.63	1.748	3.47	1.187
4	To meet the criteria for recruitment at public or foundation universities as an instructor. *	3.15	1.412	4.33	1.113
5	To earn a higher salary.	3.07	1.369	3.13	1.246
6	To widen the current professional knowledge in the ELT field.	3.48	1.121	4.07	1.100
7	Merely to get a master's degree.	2.44	1.130	2.27	1.335

**the significant difference between the groups.*

In order to find out the differences between two groups which have non-normal distribution, non-parametrical Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to determine whether there is a significant difference in the reasons that motivate students and graduates to pursue master's degree. The results of the Mann-Whitney test indicated that *to meet the criteria for recruitment at public or foundation universities as an instructor* more important for the current master's students ($Mdn=5$) than the graduates ($Mdn=3$) of the MA program in ELT at METU, $U=128.5$, $p=0.039$.

In order to see group differences, the table 4.4. presents the means and standard deviations for the items representing their reasons of choosing METU for their MA studies below.

Table 4.4. *Means and Standard Deviations of the Graduates' and Master's Students' Reasons for Choosing METU for their ELT MA Studies*

	Item	Graduates		Master's Students	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
9	The reputation of METU	4.26	1.130	4.80	.414
10	Program design (course variety, instruction etc.) and success	4.19	.921	4.13	.834
11	Prospects of employment	3.85	1.379	4.47	.743
12	Competencies/research areas of academics in the faculty	4.56	.577	4.53	.516
13	Academic environment in the faculty	4.11	1.013	4.40	.986
14	University/faculty network*	3.63	1.305	4.33	1.175
15	METU campus facilities	3.63	1.497	4.33	.816

Table 4.4. cont'd

**the significant difference between the groups.*

Another Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to determine whether there is a significant difference in the reasons of the students and graduates to enroll in the MA program in ELT at METU. The results of the Mann-Whitney test indicated that *university/faculty network* is more important for master's students ($Mdn=5$) than the graduates ($Mdn=4$) of the MA program in ELT at METU, $U=130.5$, $p=0.041$.

In 2019, CoHe laid having a master's degree down as a condition to be able to become an instructor at either foundation or public universities in Türkiye. Then, this decision was brought into force in 2020. In this study, most of the master's students who were in their thesis writing periods entered the program either in 2019 or 2020. This significant difference in the item 4 "to meet the criteria for recruitment at public or foundation universities as an instructor" as an important reason between the students and graduates might be appeared due to the decision of CoHe. On the other hand, there is a significant difference between the students and graduates on the item 14, which might be resulted from the same decision of CoHE and concerns of the current master's students to find a job as an instructor with the help of university and faculty network. However, this idea needs further investigation among the current master's students.

4.2.2. Qualitative Results for the Research Question 1

For the research question 1, which aims to investigate the reasons that motivate students and graduates to pursue master's studies and to enroll the MA program in ELT at METU. During the interview, participants were asked why they chose to pursue master's studies and what the reasons were behind their choices of METU ELT MA program. According to the answers of the participants, the themes came forward are shown in the Table 4.5.

Table 4.5. *Themes and Frequencies of the Reasons of Pursuing Master's Studies and the Choice of METU*

	<i>Themes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
<i>Reasons of Pursuing Master's Studies</i>	- Academic career	9
	- Finding employment	6
	(Obligation to become an instructor)	
	- Postponing the military service	1
<i>Reasons of the Choice of METU</i>	- Familiarity of the institution	8
	- Prestigious university	7
	- Liberal environment	4
	- Research interests of the faculty	2
	- Chance to study on Linguistics	2
	- Campus location	2
	- Research focused program	1

The most frequent reason to pursue master's studies appeared during the interview was *academic career*. Out of 12 participants, 9 participants (graduates $n=5$, students $n=4$) mentioned their primary reason to enroll in master's program is to follow academic path in their lives. It could be said that most of the participants had academic thoughts before enrolling in the master's degree program since their previous education years starting from different levels.

In other words, since my undergraduate years, I have always dreamed of getting a master's degree, then getting a doctorate degree and being in this business in one way or another, as I said, it was not because of my desire to get a job or anything, but it was all about my academic thoughts.

(Melisa, 29, student)

It was one thing that I had planned since the high school years, you know, to continue academically, the first stage is the master's degree. I chose it because I thought it would all add more to me in the field of

research than the master's degree diploma itself, so I can say that the main reason behind, it is the first step in my academic progress.

(Burcu, 26, student)

The master's degree is the first step of becoming an academician and start to teach at a university level. That's why participants need to get a master's degree first. One participant mentioned that in order to fulfil their desire to teach at a university level:

The reason why I want to start a master's degree was actually my desire to pursue academic career and to teach at the university on the subject I am working on in the future, because the only way to do this is to have completed the master's degree and then the doctorate, that is, because the master's degree is the first stage of achieving this goal.

(Batu, 28, graduate)

I didn't apply to this program to become a better teacher, but I started to be a better researcher, maybe a better academician, and METU ELT MA program enabled it for us with the courses that we have taken.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

Besides the academic destination goals, the participants also felt uneasy about *getting employed* ($n=6$) because CoHe brought the necessity to have master's degree to be employed as a lecturer or instructor at foundation and public universities.

My expectation was actually, instead of doing doctorate directly and solely embarking on an academic career, I actually wanted to finish my master's degree and get a job as an instructor at a university, so this was my main goal because the new master's degree requirement was introduced, unless it was completed, I cannot work at any university as a permanent staff. To overcome this barrier, and also to have more option after getting a master's degree.

(Ege, 25, student)

Considering both of the groups as students and graduates, while four students had concerns for finding employment due to the obligation of master's degree ($n=4$), only the two graduates had concerns for that ($n=2$). Additionally, two of the participants

($n=2$) had no academic interests at all, the main concern for them was the obligation to become an instructor in order to teach at a university:

I had to do a master's degree because I was working part-time and you know, I had to take full time, but there is a requirement for getting full time job which is a master's degree, that's the reason.

(Bulut, 28, student)

I thought that rather than just being a teacher, what can I do? I can do a master's degree and here is the possibility of being a lecturer or instructor when I finish the master's degree, which is very attractive. I think one of the biggest reasons is the choice of master's degree is that. (...) frankly, and the main reason is to have a full-time job as an instructor.

(Yonca, 27, graduate)

Finally, one participant ($n=1$) mentioned the reason of *postponing the compulsory military service* besides the other reasons:

In the beginning, military service was my only concern to take master's degree, frankly speaking. To postpone my compulsory military service. Also, I could not find a job at my own will, and another reason of it was like adding a value to myself a little bit more. To be honest, I didn't have such lofty academic goals, so when I was taking courses in the first years of both undergraduate and graduate school, I did not focus on such things in the academic sense as to develop myself or to pay attention to the courses.

(Tuna, 30, student)

On the other hand, METU offers the participants many reasons from being a prestigious university to its location to be chosen for master's degree according to the answers collected during the interviews.

Most of the participants ($n=8$) mentioned *the familiarity of the institution* was important for them as their BA degrees also from METU. They liked the campus environment so much that they could not break the connections with the institution they were strongly connected to. As three participants gave examples below from their personal connections to METU:

The reason for my stay at METU is, of course, primarily because it is METU, so I did not want to grow away from the environment I am used to since my undergraduate degree is also from METU.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

Since I got a BA degree from METU, I could anticipate the quality of the education I would receive in the ELT MA program, and also, I knew that master's level of education at METU could satisfy me, so I wanted to apply to the program, in fact, I went my own way here.

(Ege, 25, student)

I have emotional bonds with METU because it feels like it is the second home for me, I love the campus environment very much. I could not drift away from home...

(Ada, 26, student)

Seven of the participants ($n=7$) stated that they took the national and international *prestige of METU* into account while they were making a choice for the university for their master's studies. As seen from the excerpts of two participants:

METU is the best option in Ankara among the graduate programs in English Language Teaching programs in my opinion, so I did not apply to another program. I directly went for METU.

(Yonca, 27, graduate)

METU is already a successful university, although I think that there are many areas that need to be improved in all of our programs, I still think that METU is much better than the other universities in Türkiye and more successful than other areas of the other universities because I think METU is far better than all.

(Ada, 26, student)

Another aspect of METU mentioned by the participants ($n=4$) is *the liberal environment* of the university:

I also love that there is an environment of freedom at METU, I think. Also, it is academically free, especially, in our department based on my previous experiences. For example, I wanted to work on some topics

that are both like critical and political maybe. It could be more possible and easier at METU.

(Yonca, 27, graduate)

It is such a world that you are not feeling as if you are living in that city, it is like completely a different world, it gives you a way that you are able to do many things that I cannot do in Ankara, but they make it all possible in the campus to speak of freedom.

(Melisa, 29, student)

There were three participants who did not get their BA degrees from METU. They mentioned other reasons for choosing METU such as *research focused program* (n=1) and *campus location* (n=2). One participant compared METU to the university for their undergraduate degree and told:

I applied because as a graduate of another university, I chose METU because I thought that METU would all add more value to me in the field of research, as well as in the field I wanted to progress academically, so I can say that it is the first step in my academic progress rather than the diploma because it is more research oriented.

(Burcu, 26, student)

Two other participants mentioned the *location of METU* for their choice. During the interview, one participant said that they had to move to Ankara from Istanbul and wondered the METU's environment as an outsider, and also it was a good choice for them because it is in Ankara. Another participant stated the importance of the location by saying:

In fact, it was actually a personal thing because I wanted to be a student in Ankara again, after my undergraduate years, that's why location is also important reason for me.

(Tomris, 29, graduate)

In conclusion, the answer for the first research question emerging from both quantitative and qualitative data collected by the instruments showed parallelism between two types of data. The highest mean score for the choice of pursuing master's degree was hold by Item 2 *to pursue an academic career*. In the interviews, each

participant also stated their *academic concerns* among the reasons of starting master's studies. On the other hand, the highest mean score for the choice of pursuing master's degree at METU was held by the Item 9, *the reputation of METU*. More than half of the participants also stated in the interviews their choice were also based on *the prestige and reputation of the university*. However, there were another common reason emerged during the analysis of the qualitative data, which was the *familiarity of the institution*, which were not included in the questionnaire items.

4.3. Results in Relation to the Opinions of the Students and Graduates on the Evaluation of the ELT MA Program at METU

Research Question 2: How do the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU evaluate the program with respect to the program components (program description, content, instruction, atmosphere, and assessment) along with thesis writing and supervisory process?

This question aimed to investigate opinions of the students and graduates on the evaluation of the MA program in ELT at METU. The perspectives of students and graduates on the program constitute the buildings blocks for this study.

According to the results of the questionnaire and the data gathered from the interviews, the insights from the participants on the program evaluation are presented. Quantitative and qualitative findings related to this research question detailed under this heading.

4.3.1. Quantitative Results for the Research Question 2

In the questionnaire, there were items in five groups directed to the program components which were program description, content, instruction, atmosphere, and assessment including thesis writing and supervisory process components. Each component of the program was analyzed separately under eight subheadings including overall evaluation.

Program Description

The first one was the program description section of the questionnaire, which was presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6. *Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Opinions on the Program Description*

	Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	Standard Deviation
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
1	There are qualified professors lecturing at METU ELT program.	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	7.1	15	35.7	24	57.1	4.50	.634
2	The program introduces major theoretical and methodological issues in language learning/acquisition and teaching.	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	14.3	21	50.0	15	35.7	4.21	.682
3	The number of support and office members (including research assistants) in the department is enough.	0	0.0	10	23.8	13	31.0	12	28.6	7	16.7	3.38	1.035
4	The program encourages taking courses from the related disciplines.	3	7.1	9	21.4	5	11.9	14	33.3	11	26.2	3.50	1.293
5	The program encourages students for its international exchange opportunities.	5	11.9	15	35.7	12	28.6	3	7.1	7	16.7	2.81	1.254
6	The program prepares students to be good researchers in the field of ELT.	0	0.0	5	11.9	10	23.8	8	19.0	19	45.2	3.98	1.093

There were six items in the questionnaire directed to collect the opinions of the students and graduates on the program description. The mean scores of the items in program description part ranged between 2.81 and 4.50.

The highest mean score is hold by the Item 1, which is *there are qualified professors lecturing at METU ELT program* ($M=4.50$, $SD=.634$). Out of 42 participants, 24 participants chose *strongly agree* with this item, which consists 57.1% of the total participants. Also, 15 participants which consists 35.7% of the participants *agree* with the item. Only 7.1% of participants 3 participants who chose *Neutral*, there are no participants who *disagree* or *strongly disagree* with the item. Item 2, *The program introduces major theoretical and methodological issues in language learning/acquisition and teaching* followed the first item as holding the second highest mean score ($M=4.21$, $SD=.682$), while having no participant choosing *strongly disagree* or *disagree*. 50% of the participants ($n=21$) agreed with the item, whereas 35.7% of the participants *strongly agreed*.

Item 5, *the program encourages students for its international exchange opportunities* is holding the lowest mean score among the items ($M=2.81$, $SD=1.254$). 5 participants *strongly disagreed* with the item, while 15 participants only *disagreed*. 28.6% of the participants stayed their position as *neutral*. There were 3 participants *agreed* with the item, and 7 participants *strongly agreed* with it.

Program Content

The second program component investigated was the program content. Table 4.7. describes the means and standard deviations of the items including the frequencies.

Table 4.7. Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Opinions on the Program Content

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	Standard Deviation
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
7 The program content is relevant	0	0.0	10	23.8	6	14.3	14	33.3	12	28.6	3.67	1.141

Table 4.7. cont'd

	to my needs as a language teacher/instructor or a researcher.												
8	The program is up-to-date.	0	0.0	6	14.3	9	21.4	13	31.0	14	33.3	3.83	1.057
9	The program gives me adequate training for the needs of Turkish context.	0	0.0	6	14.3	17	40.5	10	23.8	9	21.4	3.52	.994
10	The program puts emphasis on the balance between theory and practice.	1	2.4	11	26.2	11	26.2	7	16.7	12	28.6	3.43	1.233

For the program content evaluation, there were four items collecting the opinions of the participants. The mean scores of the items ranged between 3.43 and 3.83. Item 8, *the program is up-to-date* is holding the highest mean score ($M=3.83$, $SD=1.057$). Out of 42 participants, 14 participants *strongly agreed* with the item, while 13 participants *agreed*. However, 14.3% of the participants ($n=6$) *disagreed* with this item, while 21.4% of the participants stayed *neutral*. Item 7, *the program content is relevant to my needs as a language teacher/instructor or a researcher*, followed the Item 8 ($M=3.67$, $SD=1.141$) which had the 28.6% of the participants *strongly agree* and 33.3% of the participants *agree*.

The lowest mean score is hold by the Item 10, *the program puts emphasis on the balance between theory and practice*. 12 participants consisting 28.6% of the total *strongly agreed* with the item, whereas 16.7% of the participants *agreed* with the item. 26.2% chose the *neutral*, and another 26.2% of the participants *disagreed* with the item.

Item 9, *The program gives me adequate training for the needs of Turkish context* ($M=3.52$ and $SD=.884$) followed the Item 10.

Program Instruction

The third program component investigated through the questionnaire was the program instruction. Table 4.8. presents the descriptive statistics of the participants opinions on the program instruction.

Table 4.8. *Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Opinions on the Program Instruction*

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	Standard Deviation
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
11 The quality of instruction (teaching materials used, teaching methods, faculty member's teaching strategy) in my courses is good.	0	0.0	2	4.8	11	26.2	17	40.5	12	28.6	3.93	.867
12 The program balances teacher-centered and student-centered learning in its course.	0	0.0	2	4.8	15	35.7	15	35.7	10	23.8	3.79	.871
13 The program equips with the necessary instructional technologies and other resources.	0	0.0	6	14.3	10	23.8	15	35.7	11	26.2	3.74	1.014

Table 4.8. cont'd

14	The program utilizes the online teaching platforms whenever it is necessary.	0	0.0	8	19.0	3	7.1	16	38.1	15	35.7	3.90	1.100
15	Technology is integrated effectively in the courses.	0	0.0	8	19.0	10	23.8	12	28.6	12	28.6	3.67	1.097
16	Master's students could get appropriate feedbacks in the courses by the lecturers.	4	9.5	8	19.0	9	21.4	10	23.8	11	26.2	3.38	1.324

There were six items in order to specifically investigate program instruction. The mean scores of the items directed to the program instruction ranged between 3.38 and 3.93. The highest mean score is hold by the Item 11, *quality of instruction (teaching materials used, teaching methods, faculty member's teaching strategy) in my courses is good.* ($M=3.93$, $SD=.867$). It is followed by the Item 14, *the program utilizes the online teaching platforms whenever it is necessary* ($M=3.90$, $SD=1.100$), then Item 12, *the program balances teacher-centered and student-centered learning in its course* ($M=3.79$, $SD=.871$). After that Item 13, *the program equips with the necessary instructional technologies and other resources* ($M=3.74$, $SD=1.014$), Item 15, *technology is integrated effectively in the courses* ($M=3.67$, $SD=1.097$) and Item 16, *master's students could get appropriate feedbacks in the courses by the lecturers* ($M=3.38$, $SD=1.324$) followed.

Program Atmosphere

The other component was the program atmosphere, Table 4.9. presents the descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations and frequencies) of the opinions of participants on the program atmosphere.

Table 4.9. *Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Opinions on the Program Atmosphere*

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	Standard Deviation
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
17 The department has a humane environment characterized by mutual respect by students and professors.	0	0.0	7	16.7	3	7.1	10	23.8	22	52.4	4.12	1.131
18 Master's students tend to help and support each other to meet the academic demands of the department.	1	2.4	1	2.4	10	23.8	12	28.6	18	42.9	4.07	.997
19 There is respectful communication between faculty and master's students regarding student needs, concerns, and suggestions.	2	4.8	1	2.4	11	26.2	12	28.6	16	38.1	3.93	1.091

Three items (Item 17, 18 and 19) were about the program atmosphere which aimed at investigating the relationship between the students and faculty, as well as the relationship among students. The mean scores of the items ranged between 3.93 and 4.17. Item 17, *the department has a humane environment characterized by mutual respect by students and professors* ($M=4.12$, $SD=1.131$) has the highest mean score. 52.4% of the participants *strongly agreed* with this item. Item 18, *master's students tend to help and support each other to meet the academic demands of the department*

($M=4.07$, $SD=.997$) followed Item 17, and 42.9% of the participants *strongly agreed* with this item. Then it is followed by the Item 19, *there is respectful communication between faculty and master's students regarding student needs, concerns, and suggestions* ($M=3.93$, $SD=1.091$). It seems that most of the students and graduates *strongly agree* and *agree* with the items, therefore it can be inferred that there is a peaceful environment in the program respectively.

Program Assessment

Assessment was another program component which was investigated through the eyes of the students and graduates. Table 4.10. presents the means, standard deviations and frequencies of the items in the program assessment.

Table 4.10. *Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Opinions on the Program Assessment*

	Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	Standard Deviation
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
20	Program uses different means of assessment which are appropriate for the developmental level of master's students.	0	0.0	1	2.4	7	16.7	18	42.9	16	38.1	4.17	.794
21	Assessment techniques in the courses are in parallel with the course contents.	1	2.4	1	2.4	6	14.3	17	40.5	17	40.5	4.14	.926
22	The means of assessment in the courses is	0	0.0	0	0.0	10	23.8	16	38.1	16	38.1	4.14	.783

Table 4.10. cont'd

	equitable and appropriate.												
23	The grading in the courses is fair for each student.	3	7.1	5	11.9	4	9.5	16	38.1	14	33.3	3.79	1.240
24	Essays, research papers, presentations are relevant for the course assessment.	0	0.0	1	2.4	8	19.0	15	35.7	18	42.9	4.19	.833

There were five items for the program assessment, and mean scores of the items ranged between 4.19 and 3.79. The highest mean score is hold by Item 24, *essays, research papers, presentations are relevant for the course assessment* ($M=4.19$, $SD= .833$), which is followed by Item 20, *program uses different means of assessment which are appropriate for the developmental level of master's students* ($M=4.17$, $SD=.794$). After that, Item 22, *the means of assessment in the courses is equitable and appropriate* ($M=4.14$, $SD= .783$) and Item 21 *assessment techniques in the courses are in parallel with the course contents* ($M=4.14$, $SD=.926$) comes which shared the same mean score together. The lowest mean score is hold by Item 23, *the grading in the courses is fair for each student.* ($M=3.79$, $SD=1.240$)

Thesis-Writing Process

Since this study aimed to investigate the program from the viewpoints of the students and graduates of the ELT MA program at METU, thesis writing component was also important in graduate studies. Table 4.11. presents the descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations and frequencies) of the items on the thesis writing process.

Table 4.11. *Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Opinions on the Thesis Writing Process*

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	Standard Deviation
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
1 I am familiar with the components of a research paper or thesis components thanks to program courses.	1	2.4	2	4.8	5	11.9	16	38.1	18	42.9	4.14	.977
2 Writing assignments and research studies in graduate courses are always learning experiences for thesis writing.	0	0.0	3	7.1	6	14.3	18	42.9	15	35.7	4.07	.894
3 I need special encouragement and support from the faculty as well as my supervisor during my thesis writing.	5	11.9	4	9.5	6	14.3	12	28.6	15	35.7	3.67	1.373

There were three items total with this aim. The mean scores of the items ranged between 4.14 and 3.67. Item 1 has the highest mean score ($M=4.14$, $SD=.977$) among the items. Out of 42 participants, 18 of them consisting 42.9% of the participants *strongly agree* with the item 1. On the other hand, Item 3, *I need special encouragement and support from the faculty as well as my supervisor during my thesis writing* showed the lowest mean score ($M= 3.67$, $SD=1.373$). Item 2, *Writing assignments and research studies in graduate courses are always learning experiences*

for thesis writing. ($M=4.07$, $SD= .894$) stayed in the middle with 15 participants strongly agree with the item, whereas 18 participants agree.

Supervisory Process

Finally, the supervisory process in the program is another aspect which is also important component in the graduate programs. Table 4.12. presents the descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations and frequencies) of the items on the supervisory process below.

Table 4.12. *Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Opinions on the Supervisory Process*

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	Standard Deviation
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
4 In this program, the role of the supervisor is well-defined and consistent for each student in the program.	2	4.8	12	28.6	12	28.6	6	14.3	10	23.8	3.24	1.246
5 My supervisor is accessible anytime.	4	9.5	3	7.1	8	19.0	8	19.0	19	45.2	3.83	1.342
6 My supervisor plays a significant role in my development throughout the thesis writing process.	1	2.4	8	19.0	3	7.1	10	23.8	20	47.6	3.95	1.248

Table 4.12. *cont'd*

7	I maintain a healthy and/or productive relationship with my supervisor.	1	2.4	3	7.1	7	16.7	8	19.0	23	54.8	4.17	1.102
8	I am receiving ongoing feedback regarding my thesis progress from my supervisor.	2	4.8	7	16.7	7	16.7	9	21.4	17	40.5	3.76	1.284

There were five items which had a goal to find out the graduates' and master's students' opinions on the supervisory process. The mean score of the items ranged between 4.17 and 3.24. The highest mean score is hold by the Item 7 *I maintain a healthy and/or productive relationship with my supervisor* ($M=4.17$, $SD= 1.102$) followed by Item 6 *my supervisor plays a significant role in my development throughout the thesis writing process* ($M=3.95$, $SD= 1.248$), Item 5 *my supervisor is accessible anytime* ($M=3.83$, $SD=1.342$); Item 8, *I am receiving ongoing feedback regarding my thesis progress from my supervisor* ($M=3.76$, $SD= 1.284$). Finally, the lowest mean score is hold by Item 4, *in this program, the role of the supervisor is well-defined and consistent for each student in the program* ($M=3.24$, $SD= 1.246$).

Overall Evaluation

After collecting opinions of the participants, overall evaluation part was added into the questionnaire in order to collect overall ideas of the students and graduates on the program.

The Table 4.13. presents the descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations and frequencies) of the participants on the overall evaluation of the program.

Table 4.13. *Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Opinions on the Overall Evaluation on the Program*

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	Standard Deviation
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
1 By the end of this program, I can successfully evaluate existing instructional programs, procedures, assessment practices, language teaching methods and techniques.	4	9.5	0	0.0	15	35.7	12	28.6	11	26.2	3.62	1.168
2 I am aware of the theoretical and applied knowledge about contemporary approaches, methods and techniques related to the acquisition of English as a second/foreign language.	2	4.8	1	2.4	9	21.4	15	35.7	15	35.7	3.95	1.058
3 By the end of this program, I feel that I will be able to carry out research in the ELT field.	1	2.4	1	2.4	8	19.0	12	28.6	20	47.6	4.17	.986
4 The program achieved its objectives and goals.	0	0.0	1	2.4	11	26.2	18	42.9	12	28.6	3.98	.811

Table 4.13. *cont'd*

	I would recommend my												
5	program to prospective students.	1	2.4	0	0.0	11	26.2	13	31.0	17	40.5	4.07	.947

The final part of the questionnaire consisted of five items focused on the overall evaluation of the program. Among the five items, Item 3 *by the end of this program, I feel that I will be able to carry out research in the ELT field.* has the highest mean score ($M=4.17$, $SD=.986$). 47.6% of the participants *strongly agree* with this statement. It is followed by the Item 4, *the program achieved its objectives and goals* ($M=3.98$, $SD=.811$); Item 5, *I would recommend my program to prospective students* ($M=4.07$, $SD=.947$); Item 4, *the program achieved its objectives and goals.* ($M=3.98$, $SD=.811$), Item 2, *I am aware of the theoretical and applied knowledge about contemporary approaches, methods and techniques related to the acquisition of English as a second/foreign language* ($M=3.95$, $SD=1.058$) and Item 1, *By the end of this program, I can successfully evaluate existing instructional programs, procedures, assessment practices, language teaching methods and techniques* ($M=3.62$, $SD=1.168$).

4.3.1.1. Quantitative Results for the Research Question 2a

Research Question 2a: Is there any significant difference between the opinions of the graduates and current master's students of the MA program in ELT at METU on the evaluation of the program with respect to the program components, thesis writing and supervisory process?

This research question aimed to find out whether there is a significant difference between the opinions of the graduates and current master's students of the MA program in ELT at METU on the evaluation of the program with respect to the program components, thesis writing and supervisory process.

In order to find out the differences between two groups which have non-normal distribution, non-parametrical Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to determine

whether there is a significant difference between the opinions of students and graduates on the evaluation of the ELT MA program with respect to program components. After carrying out many statistical Mann-Whitney U test, it was found that there are no significant differences between the students and graduates' opinions on the program components (program description, program content, program instruction, program atmosphere, program assessment, and supervisory process).

Table 4.14. below shows the means and standard deviations of the students and graduates on the evaluation of thesis writing process.

Table 4.14. *Means and Standard Deviations of the Students and Graduates on the Evaluation of Thesis Writing Process*

		Graduates		Master's Students	
	Item	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	I am familiar with the components of a research paper or thesis components thanks to program courses.	4.19	1.075	4.07	.799
2	Writing assignments and research studies in graduate courses are always learning experiences for thesis writing.	4.04	.808	4.13	1.060
3	I need special encouragement and support from the faculty as well as my supervisor during my thesis writing. *	3.26	1.430	4.40	.910

**the significant difference between the groups.*

However, it was seen that the master's students ($Mdn=5$) need *more special encouragement and support from the faculty as well as their supervisor during thesis writing* than the graduates ($Mdn=4$), $U=104$, $p=0.006$. Again, this might be resulted from the real situations of master's students who were struggling with their thesis at the time of this study conducted.

The significant difference in Item 3, *I need special encouragement and support from the faculty as well as my supervisor during my thesis writing* between the students and graduates might be resulted from the fact that master's students were still in the thesis writing process and still struggling themselves to write their thesis, whereas the graduates had no concern for their thesis at the time of the study.

Another Mann-Whitney U test conducted to see differences between the groups on the overall evaluation of the MA program in ELT at METU.

Table 4.15. presents the differences between the students and graduates of the mean scores and standard divisions of the overall evaluation items.

Table 4.15. *Means and Standard Deviations of the Students and Graduates on the Overall Evaluation*

	Item	Graduates		Master's Students	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	By the end of this program, I can successfully evaluate existing instructional programs, procedures, assessment practices, language teaching methods and techniques.	3.44	1.311	3.93	.799
2	I am aware of the theoretical and applied knowledge about contemporary approaches, methods and techniques related to the acquisition of English as a second/foreign language. *	3.70	1.171	4.40	.632
3	By the end of this program, I feel that I will be able to carry out research in the ELT field. *	3.93	1.072	4.60	.632
4	The program achieved its objectives and goals.	3.93	.874	4.07	.704

Table 4.15. *cont'd*

5	I would recommend my program to prospective students.	3.93	.997	4.33	.816
*the significant difference between the groups.					

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test indicated that the master' students ($Mdn=4$) are more *aware of the theoretical and applied knowledge about contemporary approaches, methods and techniques related to the acquisition of English as a second/foreign language* than graduates ($Mdn=4$), $U=132$, $p=.05$. Also, the master's students ($Mdn=5$) are more *feeling that I will be able to carry out research in the ELT field* than graduates ($Mdn=4$), $U=127.5$ $p=.54$.

The difference between the students and graduates on the Item 2 and Item 3, might be resulted from the master's student's current knowledge in the ELT field thanks to the courses in the program. In addition, graduates, if they do not pursue their PhD studies, might be became distanced from conducting research.

4.3.2. Qualitative Results for the Research Question 2

For the research question 2, which aims to investigate the opinions of the students and graduates on the evaluation of the MA program in ELT at METU with respect to program components (program description, content, instruction, atmosphere, and assessment) along with thesis writing and supervisory process qualitative results are presented under this title.

During the interview, participants were asked several questions on the program components to collect in-depth responses to be analyzed. According to the answers of the participants, the themes came forward are shown in the Table 4.16.

Table 4.16. *Themes and Frequencies on the Evaluation of the ELT MA Program by the Students and Graduates*

<i>Program Components</i>	<i>Themes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
<i>Description</i>	Training qualified academic personnel and researchers	12
	Unbalance between theory and practice	7
<i>Content</i>	Course variety	10
	Quantitative versus Qualitative crisis	9
	Linguistics or ELT	8
	Out of date syllabus	5
<i>Instruction</i>	Qualified professors	12
	Too student-oriented program	6
	Lack of professors' engagement in courses	3
	Lack of technology integration	1
<i>Atmosphere</i>	Humane environment	7
	Competitive environment	5
	A counsel of perfection of professors	4
	Inadequate academic unity and motivation	3
<i>Assessment</i>	Lack of feedback	10
	Fair grading	8
	Workload density	4
<i>Other</i>	Inconvenience of the weekly course schedule	5
	Technical deficiencies in classrooms	4

After the analysis of the collected data from the interviews, many themes emerged about the program components from the perspectives of the graduates and masters' students.

Program Description

Considering the program description, qualitative findings strongly supported quantitative results of this study. Two main themes emerged on the program description and outcomes.

The first theme *training qualified academic personnel and researchers* is the main objective of the program according to the participants. Every participant ($n=12$) who attended to the interviews thought that the MA program in ELT at METU is *raising the researchers rather than more qualified teachers*. Most of the participants attended the MA program in ELT with the goals of becoming academicians later, therefore this research-oriented point of view of the MA program in ELT at METU did not discomfort the participants. They consistently compared themselves with the other graduate students at the other universities in Türkiye, and respectively they stated that they feel really confident in conducting research, they are also positive about the work have they produced while doing research. Excerpts from three participants are presented below:

I think this program aims to train academic staff, and this goal has really obtained, because there are my friends graduated from METU who are still pursuing their academic studies, working in certain prestigious universities, and conducting successful academic research not only in Türkiye but also all over the world. So, the program has achieved its mission in that sense.

(Serhan, 28, graduate)

In other words, the program has academic concerns while raising its students as if you need to do academic research and publications in the future, it seems that it is not very important to raise more qualified teachers, I do not say that there is no relevance with it, but I think the program is directed to train academicians.

(Melisa, 29, student)

As I understand it, the goal of the program has never been to train more qualified teachers. This understanding is true for METU ELT MA program, our professors say that “if you want to be a better teacher in terms of perspective, then go work and gain experience or there are certificate programs, you can be a better teacher with these, but here we teach you to be a better researcher”.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

Two other participants stated that they felt the difference themselves because the ELT program gave them strong research skills:

In the field of research, I can say that, when I compare it with other universities and my friends who are doing their master's, I definitely think that I have learned better how to do quantitative and qualitative research, so I think that METU has taught me these things through very difficult stages.

(Burcu, 26, student)

I think that the graduates of this program produce more tangible stuff than the graduates of other universities, because what I've heard from most universities is theses that are completed perfunctorily but this is not the case for METU.

(Tuna, 30, student)

Although all of the students and graduates were aware of the line of vision of the MA program in ELT at METU, several participants ($n=7$) have complained about the teaching perspective of the program, in other words *the unbalance between theory and practice*. Most of the participants thought that the program did not care about the practice part of the teaching, they just read books, articles and so on. However, the participants also wanted to see substantial support from the program for their teaching practice because a clear majority of the students in the department were working either as a teacher or an instructor. Since they loved teaching profession, they wanted to add value to their teaching skills raised from the master's program. There are three excerpts from the participants who mentioned that characteristics of the MA program below:

Our department is especially trying to train researchers and, there is a perception that if you become better researcher, this will affect positively on your teaching hopefully, but I think it is not quite right, so every good researcher does not have to be a good teacher in my opinion.

(Ege, 25, student)

As the program's name suggests it is English Language Teaching, but it is completely focusing on training the academician, so this program does not really support the teaching perspective in any way. This may be a plus for some, but in my opinion for should put more emphasis on teaching point.

(Ada, 26, student)

The program seems generally trying to train academicians and constantly approaches you as if you are going to be a scientist, and constantly expects you to create a scientific product such as paper or something, yet we never discuss this especially in master's degree, how can we teach this subject matter except for in one or two lessons; that is, even in the lessons that “how to be a better teacher” need to be discussed, we are dealing with the theoretical part of the issues. Therefore, it should be more practice oriented.

(Melisa, 29, student)

In the quantitative results of the program description, the highest mean score was on the program has *there are qualified professors lecturing at METU ELT program*. This result was also supported by the qualitative results. It did not emerge as a theme on the program description, but it was stated under the program instruction, each participant ($n=12$) stated that the faculty members at METU ELT program were highly qualified professors, they got nice academic works and known nationwide in the ELT field.

Program Content

In terms of the program content, most of the participants were aware of what kind of opportunities and were waiting for them during their MA studies. *Course variety* was the theme mostly mentioned. Several participants mentioned that they already checked the course lists of the program and decided the courses that they would take as their courses. From ELT to even literature, the program had loads of courses in its curriculum which allowed the students who wanted to work on linguistics field even to graduate from the program without taking any ELT courses thanks to the electives.

In fact, my main goal was something that I should take a course in my field of interest and start to learn such a very advanced level of topics which could make me “woow”. That is, I expected that the courses should surprise me and also be something more than what I have learned in the undergraduate years. I had such an expectation. So here I can learn what I want from the field of my own interest and such a high level which could also improve myself in terms of teaching.

(Yonca, 27, graduate)

When we compare it with the ELT programs of other universities, I see that there is a variety of courses. I have not seen a course like critical pedagogy in the other programs. Most of my friends were saying how

nice it is, when I talk with my friends at the workplace, and they wish they had courses like in our program in their graduate school.

(Melisa, 29, student)

Nevertheless, some of the master's students and graduates that thought the *course variety* was not sufficient for them because the program kept opening the same courses each semester, which could lead undesirable feelings on some of the students as seen from the three excerpts from the participants below:

I find the elective courses very shallow and superficial. The courses are repeated in a way that there are usually no interesting topics that could open such different horizons for us.

(Bulut, 27, student)

On the website of the program, I saw the elective courses offered and I planned before going to the classes "I can take this course maybe I can work in this field" (...) but when I started to the program, there is no such thing and most of the courses on the list were not available, there were already two compulsory courses and one elective course was opened, and in its totality, it is always the same electives go around and around.

(Tuna, 30, student)

In fact, when you look at the table of the curriculum, there are beautiful courses selected from various fields, so people wish I could take it, (...) in fact, we do not have access to all of the courses in that list.

(Ege, 25, student)

Another participant also stated that the program and the offered courses should respond the needs of the graduate students because everyone wrote their intention letters before applying into the program by saying:

I wanted to see the courses offered in ELT program which are designed and opened according to the needs of the master's students because everyone writes their topic of interests while applying to that program. Therefore, what these master's students want should be considered in terms of the course variety, what the local need is should definitely be taken into account.

(Yonca, 27, graduate)

Numerous participants also said that they found the separation of qualitative and quantitative research courses as not a good change since master's students could take either one of the research courses as their must course as of 2020-2021. Several participants ($n=6$) mentioned the importance of taking both research courses, after that stated that they were not satisfied while they were taking both courses as must courses, but they also expressed that they understood better the significance of being able to understand and conduct both research design as the future researchers:

It is ridiculous to separate must courses as either qual or quan. If we are going to be researchers, we must learn both ways of research and we must learn them very well. Thanks to the professors who offers the courses for us, we could learn in a detailed and well-designed way. At least we have an idea how to conduct both methodologies.

(Bulut, 27, student)

I am one of those who believe that both should be taken compulsorily, although the points qualitative and will not be useful and probably will not be useful after this for me, (...), it is very important to know what they do in this area how qualitative research in education is done and how it is done.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

I think it is necessary to be able to see and understand how such people do some research, and in order to understand the studies carried out in that field from that point of view, you need to learn at least the basic information for both methods.

(Batu, 28, graduate)

On the other hand, there were other participants ($n=3$), respectively a few ones, said that it was a good choice for them to be able to choose between the qual or quan courses as affirmed by the one:

Everyone has to take must courses but it is very nice to be allowed to choose between quantitative and qualitative because I know which method I will use in the thesis writing period.

(Ege, 25, student)

In addition to *the separation crisis of the research courses*, there was another crisis which was *Linguistics versus ELT*. Even though the program is ELT program, there were also many graduate students to study in linguistics field. It was because of the courses in linguistics that ELT program offered for the graduate students since there were numerous faculty members whose research interest in Linguistics. One participant who studied linguistics found this situation very satisfying for themselves, and stated that:

You know, although the name of the program is English Language Teaching, no one has imposed on me like “you are going to obtain a degree of ELT then you must take these ELT courses”, which is a positive thing for me. METU ELT master's program offered us the opportunity to work in two fields both ELT and Linguistics, so if I have decided to study at another university, I would have only had to apply to the linguistics program, but by staying at METU, I could have taken courses both on the ELT and linguistics, but I did not have to take any courses on the ELT field during the course period.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

On the other hand, there were a lot of participants who wanted to study in the ELT field, they kept complaining about this *Linguistics versus ELT* issue because they thought that there were not very nice courses to take during the course period as four of the participants stated:

Linguistics, ok.. I understand that it is very necessary for ELT field, yes we also need to know how the language processes in our brains but we are already getting quite a bit of this throughout undergraduate years, so I think that there are too many linguistics courses. Also there are many students who are interested in linguistics as well as professors in the field of Linguistics. However, if this program named as English Language Teaching, master's program should be a little balanced in terms of linguistics courses. It is not effective for me because I cannot find ELT courses to take, I have to take imperiously some linguistics courses out of my interest.

(Melisa, 29, student)

If the name of the program is English Language Teaching, so linguistics should not cover almost the half of the curriculum. There should be

more focus on teaching aspect for the ones who wants to improve themselves as language teachers.

(Ege, 25, student)

I actually applied for teacher training aspect to this program, but when I entered the program I saw that it was not that related to English Language Teaching (...) there was a compulsory course which is linguistics based, it does not have any integration with education so when it happens, it demoralized me a little bit even in my first semester (...) therefore, maybe, elective courses needs to be increased in number because there are too many linguistics based courses, there must be other pedagogical courses offered for grad students such as critical pedagogy.

(Pelin, 29, graduate)

It was a bit seemed as if linguistics courses were weighted in the program, if one course was offered in the ELT field, two courses were offered in linguistics, I had that feeling throughout the course period.

(Tomris, 29, graduate)

However, two participants stated a complaint about the same issue for the ones who wanted to study linguistics in the MA program in ELT at METU, which could be thought as a reasonable concern because it was the program that accepted those students into the program, so it should have responded to their needs as well:

More linguistics courses should be offered for the students who wants to study linguistics because I think they need to consider this when accepting these students into the program and you know that, (...) they need to tell the students who want to study in linguistics that “you will have such difficulties”, in advance. I knew more or less the difficulties I would experience, but there may be some other people who come without knowing it and get disappointed after all.

(Batu, 28, graduate)

During the interview, we told them our intentions clearly. If they accept us in the program, which I am not the only one, so this is how there are a lot of people continuing in linguistics track, therefore they should open sufficiently various courses for the students who wants to study in linguistics field, so you know, the course periods when I took my courses always had to be different from other people because the

courses I wanted to take were not opened or I couldn't find courses that are suitable for me because I was following the linguistics field.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

Apart from the *Linguistics versus ELT*, there were other issues raised by students. For example, participants stated that the syllabus in the courses was not different than the old ones in their undergraduate years. Therefore, most of the participants ($n=5$) thought that in the courses there were *out of date syllabus* in the courses with the oldy articles and readings. They also suggested that the syllabus should be designed in a responsive way to the contemporary needs of the teachers and instructors:

There were some courses which had repetitive content, for example, in the graduate program, the must course we took was not really different from course we took in the undergraduate program, was it really necessary then taking this course as must course? It should add some different things for students, in that case it is a drawback of the syllabus in the course.

(Serhan, 28, graduate)

In a course that I took from the same instructor in both the bachelor's and master's degree, so there was no difference between two courses in the bachelor's and master's degree, even the same slides were used and I was a little disappointed because I thought that what we took in the bachelor's degree was a step or an introduction and I hoped that it would go one step further in the master's degree, this did not happen. Since it is exactly the same as the course I took in the undergraduate program, that course needs to be improved and updated in terms of content, so I say when I take that course during undergrad years, I say 2014 or something, for example, we are now in 2022, the same materials cannot be used because this is a master's program in the field you need to be constantly following more current articles.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

ELT is one of the most dynamic areas in the world, maybe there is such dynamism and mobility that is not in any educational department, so it is very interesting for me, for example, I would like to see much more what people are working on right now, the courses that are offered for us are still working with the old-fashioned content.

(Yonca, 27, graduate)

Besides the common idea on the *out-of-date syllabus* in the courses of the MA program in ELT at METU, one participant mentioned professors' aspect for the reason of *unchanged*, they stated that there might be other reasons to keep professors away from the course content, such as any kind of discouragement or processual events:

Groundling subjects are still taught as courses like thousand years ago, because of such unchanged program and content, professors are also discouraged to change or cannot know what to do, or maybe it is the department does not allow such changes.

(Bulut, 27, student)

The results of the qualitative data indicated that every participant thought that there were many courses offered for them which was really good thing for the participants. However, they also thought that they were not content with that the program could not offer somehow the courses in the course catalog. Moreover, the participants mentioned the new approach of the separation of the research courses as must courses. The quantitative data on program content showed the highest mean score was hold by the item *the program is up-to-date* ($M=3.83$). However, in the qualitative data, many participants ($n=5$) mentioned that the course syllabi were not updated regularly.

Program Instruction

Each participant ($n=12$) expressed that the MA program in ELT at METU had *highly qualified professors* for almost each course offered to the MA students. It seemed that participants tried to get information about the faculty members before enrolling in the program, also followed the professors' academic works in the field. Four excerpts from the interviews are presented below:

I think our professors are really qualified because they are the ones, when we look at their CVs, they all have graduated from very good universities, they have very nice academic works and so on, so I think they are really qualified.

(Ada, 26, student)

I think METU ELT MA program is one of the best programs in this field in Türkiye, and of course this is not a success by itself, that is being better than them is a separate thing, and you know I think that there are such good professors in our department that direct the department,

when I see them I feel very lucky to have taken such courses from most of them.

(Yonca, 27, graduate)

ELT is a very good program, but besides that, it allows you to work with good professors in the field and to benefit from their knowledge, I can say this as these positive aspects and when you finish this program, in the end you really feel the thing that you have accomplished something.

(Tomris, 29, graduate)

For example, here in terms of professors, and when I look at the professors and their careers with their background, most of them studied abroad and they are still actively publishing nice academic works, I think the quality of education is still good compared to other universities.

(Burcu, 26, student)

Then, they also stated that sometimes it was disappointment to take courses from these highly qualified professors in such a dull way of instruction. For example, preparing themselves for a presentation of a weekly subject of the course should not be the work of students because a group of students came together and taught each other the subject matter, sometimes there should be interference of the professors to talk to the students or discuss the subject matter deeply with them. That is why, a great deal of participants discussed the instruction component of the program as *too student-centered* for master's level as seen from three excerpts from the participants:

I can say that in some courses, I think that I could not benefit from the professors, as I said, I think that there is a self-improvement perception which puts loads of burden for students. It is also a burden to present the whole subject in a week, because the courses are over rich in terms of content and master's students cannot know all the issues in the subject matter on their own. Even if the professor is very good in the field, so I do not think we can take advantage of it very well.

(Burcu, 26, student)

We were making presentations as students, you know, we did this in the master's degree, I wish that it was not a presentation, but a

discussion leading, but the professors could not even fully define what the discussion leading was, so this turned into boring presentations that gave summaries of the book.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

In most of the courses, one group of people is responsible for teaching to the others or “leading the discussion” the weekly subject of this course. But I am asking, is it enough for the master's students to do it? Because I remember a lot of things, for example, yes, the professor intervenes, when necessary, directs or something. However, we kept a lot of question marks in our head after the lesson because even the “discussion leaders” did not understand the subject matter themselves.

(Yonca, 27, graduate)

On the other hand, there was only one participant took this characteristic of the MA program which was being *too student-centered* as an advantage on their personal development because the program allowed them to hear their own voices as future researchers or academics:

We often had to give presentations and I think this is very important in an academic career, because many people are afraid of to present in front of people, and by giving a lot of presentations in that group, we are actually developing our own presentation skills, and of course I'm sure I'll see the benefit of that in the future.

(Ege, 25, student)

Some other participants mentioned that professors did not engage in the lecture because all the work is done by the students of this course. However, they wanted to see the *professors' engagement in the courses* because the participants thought the professors in the program as role models in the academia, as well as being a part of such a good university, which was a reason for disappointment in the courses for some of the participants:

You read on your own, you argue on your own! I want what a professor should actually give you, that is, you want them to talk about their own experiences or to give you small footnotes, but usually they do not do it in the courses and I think that kind of lessons are very inadequate for the development of the master's students. Absolutely, and definitely the teachers should include themselves in the lessons, so my biggest criticism is that. They do not teach us a lesson or something, that is, I can sit with my friends and go over that lesson in the same way, then I

think why I am here. Then the course is not the teacher's lesson, it is learned by on our own, so I think that is very important thing needs to be changed.

(Pelin, 29, graduate)

At the beginning each semester we need to form groups for presentations on the randomly chosen topic (...) it seems a little strange that the teacher does not go over the subject one more time, or does not interrupt in any case. The only information is given by the students, and it was like we only know what the students know.

(Bulut, 27, student)

Finally, some participants looked the program instruction from a different perspective and mentioned its *technology integration* part apart from the presentations. Since the program and professors could make use of loads of things from technology at that era, they gave an example:

There are coding lessons for primary school children in schools, but the only thing that our program understand from the technology is just “presentation”, in that case courses should be fully integrated with technology because we live in that era.

(Tuna, 30, student)

In the program instruction, quantitative results showed that *the quality of instruction in the courses is good*. However, the participants in the qualitative data revealed some conflicts about this issue by stating that the only instruction method used in the courses was boring presentations and the professors did not engage with the courses during the lecture.

Program Atmosphere

In terms of program atmosphere, several voices arose on the relationships between students and professors, as well as among the students. Both positive and negative aspects of the relationships in the program were mentioned during the interviews. Actually, this might be related to the personal characteristics of the students and professors. However, this could cause a fundamental effect on the program atmosphere. Themes emerged during the interviews on program atmosphere are *humane environment, lack of collaboration, a counsel of perfection, inadequate*

academic unity and motivation including negative attitudes for students in terms of the relationship between the students and professors, among professors and among students.

Many participants ($n=8$) thought that there was a *peaceful environment and positive relationship with students and professors*. The professors were there when the students had in need of something, or some problems in their minds. However, this characteristic is also might be indicator or personal characteristics of the individuals. In any case, the positive perspectives could be inferred from three excerpts from the participants:

I did not take lessons from many different teachers, but still all of the teachers I met had a positive attitude towards me personally, I think that I can get answers to my questions when I need it. As an example, I had to take a course out of my interest for certain reasons and my professor also knew it, despite it was not my interest they did not act in a biased way. Even they gave importance to my ideas at class. I feel that I could get an answer my needs whenever I need in general from the professors in that respect.

(Serhan, 28, graduate)

Professors put more value to the ideas of the graduate students and accept them more as an individual or adult comparing to my undergraduate years, this is maybe because we are getting older or at the moment we are now working as a teacher. Therefore, I think that professors are much more respectful to us, see us as their colleagues. I have seen this positive change for some of our professors.

(Melisa, 29, student)

I can't say that I had any problem with the professors, so there was nothing that had a negative effect on the process for me, you know, at the point of communication with the professors, when we want to talk to them also when we need them, I felt as if they were approaching to us like they actually take it seriously more than our undergraduate years. They were seeing us as their colleagues, you know, it was actually nice for some teachers to make that value felt by all of us.

(Ada, 26, student)

On the other hand, the relationships between the professors and students are mentioned with the examples. Some had negative experiences while communicating with a professor or trying to reach them out as seen in three excerpts of from different participants below:

In terms of atmosphere, especially in the master's degree in the department, I have actually been exposed to humiliation from a professor that I never have experienced throughout my entire education life, that is, middle school, high school or something. Therefore, I will not interpret the program atmosphere as positive (...).

(Yonca, 27, graduate)

If we come to the communication with the teachers, the worst thing is, it is really really really bad. Professors definitely see themselves at the top of the world. They are the busiest people in the entire planet. (...) I did Erasmus in Germany; I could communicate with all of the professors very easily and I could not establish this at METU which makes me sad. The communication with the teachers is almost zero for me. They don't return to the e-mails, and you are trying to catch them up after the lesson, they keep telling you that "I don't have time, I have class". But they forgot something, we are not students anymore, most of us are teachers and I also come from my workplace. Some of my friends even travel between the cities and finally come to these classes. Professors need to spare some time for their students, but they are the busiest people in the world.

(Burcu, 26, student)

Academic environments, so you should not be too close or too far away, so unfortunately, there is usually a clash of ideas in the academic environment, therefore it is better to keep ourselves in a balanced position. But I cannot say that it is such a pleasant environment and also, I cannot say that I enjoy it very much.

(Pelin, 29, graduate)

When it comes to the relationship among students, both positive and negative aspects in the program emerged during the interview. Sometimes there were students helpful for the other all the time. Nevertheless, most of the time there was a *competitive environment* among students which created negative sense of feelings about the relationship among students as seen from the four excerpts from the interviews:

There were limited number of people in the program that were trying to help each other or let's say for their close circle of friends, on the

other hand, everyone behaved too individualistically and never saw people in need around them. Let me say that it is more competitive atmosphere in the graduate school, and I was quite surprised by this because it was the opposite thing I expected before.

(Yonca, 27, graduate)

I am a student had BA from different university than METU. So, the socialization was always more difficult for me to be accepted by the others in the graduate courses. I remember, when I first came to the class, I had one of my old friends from the same university, we were two people only. When there was a need to form groups for courses, noone asked us or invited us to their groups because they did not communicate with us.

(Burcu, 26, student)

Students sometimes saw the others as competitors, and this happened very unnecessarily at the master's level. In the end, it is everyone's own developmental journey therefore it seemed a little ridiculous to me that some people had some worries about being better or one step further than the others.

(Batu, 28, graduate)

Another theme emerged in relation to the program atmosphere is *a counsel of perfection*, reported by several participants ($n=4$) because, according to them, the professors seemed in a mood that they always waited the unique perfect work from the students which created stress and anxiety among the graduate students because they felt that professors' expectations were not realistic because they were only master's level students. There are some excerpts from the participants on that counsel of perfectionism attitude of the professors:

Failing a course, for example, seems something is very strange and a thing that cannot be forgiven for a graduate student of METU ELT program. However, we need to question that whether the program gives the strong infrastructure for all of the courses and for all students adequately, then making mistakes could not be forgiven. So how come can some professors have perfectionist expectations from grad students?

(Yonca, 27, graduate)

We are all human beings after all, there may be some things that we do not know. There is nothing wrong to say that, in fact in cases where we do not know professors should think leading the process. It is necessary to get help and no need to be perfectionists in that sense.

(Serhan, 28, graduate)

I was afraid of asking any question, but actually I was afraid of that perfectionism and high expectations, also professors seem intimidating sometimes. Therefore, I wonder whether they like my work or question or not.

(Tuna, 30, student)

I think professors have really high expectations from students, that is a good thing of course, but sometimes this can make the students feel a sense of fear and failure, so maybe it can also make them worry about whether they can meet these expectations or not.

(Tomris, 29, graduate)

Along with these, some participants ($n=3$) stated that *academic unity and motivation* was important during graduate studies because they thought that as graduate students they needed to organize such events like conferences, workshops, panels etc., and they should have learned to work together, publish together or so in their MA studies; however, it was not seen even among the professors as being role models as for the graduate students, one participant stated:

Collaboration does not hurt anyway in the academy, we need to learn this, and the professors need to be a role model for us, but when I look back at the department, I don't see any professors doing business with each other.(...)Our final papers for example, those subjects, those ideas and they were just left behind, in this process I had the opportunity to compare with the programs of other universities, unfortunately, our department is in this respect, in terms of motivating this academic union or pushing the students to go one step forward, I think it is failing.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

Similarly, *inadequate academic unity and motivation* was mentioned by another participant in that aspect among students:

I think there is a very disturbing way of grouping among students who are close to such professors who aim to be assistants or so, and they organize such events that others never know because they did not inform you properly. For example, I learn whether there is an event or so on the last day of the event, that is, in the morning of that day the e-mail comes to you so arbitrarily.

(Bulut, 28, student)

Both qualitative and quantitative studies revealed that there was a *humane environment* at METU. However, in the qualitative data, the negative aspects of the program atmosphere emerged especially in the relationship between professors and students.

Assessment

To begin with, the assessment techniques used in the MA program were found more than enough by the participants because in the courses there was not just one thing to evaluate students' progress like an exam rather generally the tasks were given in a progressively such as reflection or response papers, research projects, article analysis etc. as it was also the item, *program uses different means of assessment which are appropriate for the developmental level of master's students* holding the highest mean score in the quantitative analysis of the program assessment.

Another issue arose by several participants ($n=10$) was *lack of feedback* for the means of assessment, for example, research papers, reflections, and so on. The participants were not sure about what they did right and what they did wrong while preparing these assignments. Therefore, these things turned out to be a time waste just to collect points for the course without giving the graduate students any progress because of the lack of feedback problem. Excerpts from four participants are taken as an exemplar of their thoughts on the lack of feedback problem of the program:

But the worst thing is really the attitude of professors. I felt myself absolutely helpless to get feedback while chasing the teacher, and this damaged my self-confidence as a student. During undergraduate years, I was really confident in this matter. However, in graduate studies when you run after so many teachers to get feedback and eventually you can't reach one person, it feels really feckless and weak...

(Burcu, 26, student)

For every lesson, we were writing a research paper you know. The final paper I believed that should be publishable or should be presented at a conference or so, but the professors definitely did not give feedback anyway, the paper was always left to the last minute of the last week, so we were doing “some” thing but when I look back now, I see it as such wasted labor time.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

We write reflections all the time, but we cannot get feedback for them. As long as we can get feedback, they are actually effective. If not, it can only make us feel like a task that we are doing, so there is no meaning in it.

(Tomris, 29, graduate)

We write loads of assignments to deliver for a course but I remember that feedback was not given for those assignments. I will still say it but I have heard this similar criticism from other friends. For example, so you upload a thing to the professors (...), we deserve a feedback afterall. (...) I can say that the lack of feedback in the process is a problem a lot in this program, so some things are actually go wrong because of that.

(Ada, 26, student)

Fairness of the grading came into sight during the interviews. Several participants ($n=5$) thought the grading in the courses was fair and same for everybody who were taking the course, while there were the other participants ($n=3$) who thought that there were such unfair approaches sometimes. As an example, two excerpts taken from the interviews one from the positive participant and the other from the participant who thought negatively in the fairness matter:

I noticed that, if some professors know you from the undergraduate years, your work does not matter too much even you submit very bad paper you can pass a course with AA. I think they look at the name a lot they look at who you are so much, so I am not sure about justice.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

I do not see any problem in terms of assessment and evaluation, I think it is very fair and teachers behave fairly if there is a point lost, I think there is an explanation of all by the professors. Rubric is given all the

time. I did not have any negative experience about the fairness of the grading means.

(Ada, 26, student)

Even though there were several participants thought that there should not be any grade concerns of the professors in the graduate level because the grades in the end was an important component of the diploma when they needed to apply PhD studies or so, one participant thought that full credits were given to everybody unnecessarily which created unfairness for students in their opinion:

Sometimes grading is not realistic because full points could be earned easily from some courses, and I think that I did not deserve it so I saw it myself that's why I find it nonrealistic.

(Ege, 25, student)

Another point of view is on *grading* of the assignments during the assessment process. Many participants considered that the assessment should not be for the grading, but for the process of improving the graduate students. Therefore, there was no point in the distribution of the assignments to make students pass the course by making them get a grade with unnecessary workload according to the participants:

Mostly, we collect points from homeworks, but these things should not happen in the master's degree at all because I mean if I want to pass that course, I am there for a purpose I can do it on my own without the need of homework, so this master's degree is not a thing like 12 years of elementary school. Everyone has to go at work anyway and we come for a purpose, but professors just give us homework and oblige us to do some things for a grade. I think it's funny.

(Melisa, 29, student)

There have been open book exams, for example, especially in the research class, which was really good because the purpose should not be something that testing the graduate student, or even if it is an exam, it should include the purpose of teaching, I think so, rather than the test.

(Bulut, 27, student)

Besides, the assessment means sometimes might be seen as a burden for the master's student because they were individuals that had to work as teachers, who had really

busy schedule for most of the time, and they were individuals who were trying to get master's degree despite all of the obstacles in their personal lives. In that sense, the assessment means were like another obstacle to be able to pass the courses in the MA program at METU for some of the participants ($n=3$) because research projects on their own and independently a hard work to conduct in such a short time in the courses. Below, two excerpts are shown to express the participants thoughts on the *workload density*:

In one course, you write a research proposal, you take the exam, you make a presentation, and you do research at the end, it is too much! So at least one part of it should be divided into more comfortable parts, that's a bit of a problem in my opinion.

(Pelin, 29, graduate)

A constant challenge, there is constant responsibilities, always something to do for the courses. It makes me feel like "oh my god, I do not know how to do it". Yes, honestly my anxiety has been triggered by the program.

(Tuna, 30, student)

4.1.1.1. Other Themes Emerged on the Program Components

There were two other themes came out from the interviews about the program components which are not under the pre-determined categories: *inconvenience of the weekly course schedule* and *technical deficiencies in classrooms*.

1. Inconvenience of the weekly course schedule

The term *schedule* is used here for the definition to the academic program given in a specific timetable for graduate students a semester or year. The participants touched upon several points on the schedule which needed to be considered by the professors and administers of the program. Considering the fact that many graduate students were working individuals as a teacher and instructor at the same time their graduate studies, they also could get only one day off from work for their graduate studies. However, in that they, the courses they wanted to take might not be offered and so, they had to take another course instead of having taken a course on their interests. Three participants reported on that issue:

For some courses I always said it's not my interest, but I will have to take some of the courses because I've taken the other offered courses before or the course schedule is not suitable for me for another course. I think there shouldn't be such things like taking lessons compulsorily in a graduate level.

(Yonca, 27, graduate)

Sometimes we had to take courses because the program usually distributes the courses into two days. There are personal and professional situations such as permission from the workplace, so these courses did not provide much due to these restrictions. I mean just because a course was offered that day, you have to take courses compulsorily even if you do not want to, it's got you back because the course can make you fall into repetition.

(Serhan, 28, graduate)

The courses are usually offered in 2 or 3 days. There is a course I want to take one day, and the next day there is another course you want to take, but I cannot take both of them because you cannot get permission from school for two days, that's why I had to take courses reluctantly and, in that case, compulsorily.

(Ege, 25, student)

Another participant had similar experiences as well as the problems with the schedule of the courses. It was also the case for the must courses that was offered in one semester only. Therefore, the participant mentioned the importance that offering must courses in both semesters could be helpful for the graduate students which might result problematic situations at their workplaces. They said:

Especially must courses need to be offered in two semesters, it is not an undergraduate level, when the courses are offered only one semester this puts students in a really bad situation because you can only take that course once a year. There are many people coming out of Ankara, therefore schedule should be designed according to the needs of the students not only the academics.

(Ada, 26, student)

In addition, one participant suggested that especially the master's program could make use of online platforms for the lessons because professors and students unfortunately experienced the use of technology during Covid-19 outbreak very well that they could

integrate it permanently in their schedule, it would also be a solution the students who were commuting for the classes by stating:

Online courses can actually be used very practically and very effectively during the master's course period so that everyone from coming from the other cities could easily attend lessons, or 6-7 weeks may be face-to-face, and the other half may be followed online.

(Ege, 25, student)

2. Technical Deficiencies in Classrooms

There were some technical deficiencies in the MA program at METU came out of participants ($n=4$). These problems were all related to the technical capacity of the department building. In the MA ELT program at METU, must courses were offered for both master's and doctorate students at the same time and at the same class. However, when two groups were combined, there could be such a crowded classrooms that might be obstacle for the natural learning environment for the students. Since the must courses were seen as the basis for research, one participant stated the discomfort of the situation:

Even in the research course which is so important for us there were almost maybe more, 30 of us in only one lesson, we sat at the back and tried to see what was going on there, it was like a village school to be honest... Also, the professor kept saying I did not want to give this course that many people; then, you are the responsible one who needs to change it! If you don't want to give this lesson to 30 people, I don't know, maybe you should divide it into two. Even though there are so many teachers, it is still not enough to offer a course, but it is such a shame! We are coming into the class computers do not work, we will take the exam but computers do not work! METU is such a university that technology supported but I think it was a very funny event in the same way.

(Burcu, 26, student)

Classroom design was another concern for the participants because it felt like a traditional classroom even in the master's level. One participant stated that:

The master's degree is expected to be a little more discussion-oriented so that everyone can participate in the lesson, but our classrooms are like the lecture hall in which everyone can sit in a row unfortunately. There are a few main rooms that we could organize U shaped seating

plan. I believe that it seriously affects the flow of the course in terms of productiveness and performance.

(Serhan, 28, graduate)

Computer lab found insufficient for the master's students to have must courses all together with the doctorate students. An idea of cooperation with the other departments was offered by a participant to solve the problem in the program, as well as to give an opportunity to follow the trends in the research field:

If necessary, I think that the department should cooperate with the statistics department and start to follow R statistics instead of dealing with SPSS. (...) unfortunately, time passes very quickly, here the trends are changing, we should not stay behind in following these trends because of technical deficiencies.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

4.4. Results in Relation to the Challenges and Experiences of the Students and Graduates of the ELT MA program at METU on Their Thesis Writing Period

Research Question 3: What are the perceptions and experiences of the graduates and current master's students of the MA program in ELT at METU during their thesis writing period along with the supervisory process?

This question aimed at investigating the perceptions and experiences of the students and graduates on their thesis writing period along with the supervisory process. To answer this research question, qualitative data from the interviews were utilized, and participants were asked many questions about thesis writing and supervisory process during the interview.

4.4.1. Qualitative Results for the Research Question 3

According to the answers of the participants, the themes came forward after qualitative data analysis are shown in the Table 4.17.

Table 4.17. *Themes and Frequencies of Perceptions and Experiences on Thesis Writing and Supervisory Process*

	<i>Themes</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
<i>Thesis Writing Process</i>	Thesis101	9
	Work-life balance	5
	Being all at sea	7
	Difficulty of data collection	6
<i>Supervisory Process</i>	Accessibility	6
	Power distance	3
	Lack of communication	4
	Guidance	3

Thesis Writing Process

On the thesis writing process, four main themes emerged from the interview data. These were *Thesis101*, *work-life balance*, *being all at sea*, and *data collection*. Every participant was frustrated from the thesis writing process in the program. They found it was a highly demanding job to conduct. For the theme *thesis101*, as the name suggested, participants needed an introduction to how to write a thesis course or seminar. The biggest problem was for them they did not know how to write thesis so most of the participants wished there was a course for them to teach themselves thesis sections and detailed analysis of this sections so that they could understand better the process. Therefore, many participants suggested that there should be a course like *Introduction to Master's Thesis* or *Thesis101* as seen from the excerpts of the participants:

For example, I had a lot of difficulty in writing, I had a lot of difficulty in making literature review, for example, I understood that they taught me the method in the lessons, but they did not teach me how to write and how to use the language in the thesis. Also, I wanted to be taught what the certain stages are, you know, this is very incomplete, in this sense the program did not meet my expectation. We do not know how to write a thesis.

(Burcu, 26, student)

I still do not know, yes, how to write a thesis. I have experienced this thing a lot of times I sat at the table I did not know what to do at that moment for example, do I need to sit down and open my computer right now? Do I need to open a word file? so on...

(Tuna, 30, student)

Biggest challenge for the participants ($n=6$) in thesis writing process was *data collection* procedure because it was really difficult to convince people to attend their studies as participants. Some participants felt helpless while trying to reach out the participants during data collection:

One of the biggest problems for me was the inaccessibility and the scarcity of people in the data collection process, in fact, I tried much to reach out people to accept participating in my study, but the result was unanswered calls and e-mails... I felt a little helpless in the process of collecting data I think this is the biggest problem I have experienced.

(Yonca, 27, graduate)

Another difficult aspect of the thesis writing process to *balance between the academic work and life* for several participants ($n=5$). Graduate students had other responsibilities all the time because they were individuals who needed to earn money for a living. Our country was not the one that supported each graduate student, even if it did so it would never be enough for the academic condition of the country, and it was never possible to keep *academic work-life balance*. Therefore, one participant stated that:

Your all day passes at work, when you come home in the evening you are already very tired you know that you need to read articles or so, (...) I do not know that it would be that difficult. If I started graduate studies again, definitely I would choose not to work and focus only my academic responsibilities. However, we had to work in that country and scholarship opportunities would never be enough.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

One participant also stated that professors could encourage their own students in the classes to join as a participant for the studies of graduate students because it would be really helpful for them. In the MA program in ELT at METU, there were some professors encouraging their undergraduate students to attend that kind of studies but sometimes even advisors did not care:

I would like all the professors who offer courses to encourage their students for the research so that I can reach the students more easily, I can't say that all the teachers do not encourage it, but I can say that it is a half, but I still think that finding the suitable participants wore me out.

(Ada, 26, student)

Two of the participants also mentioned to be kept lonesome in this process, as the theme *being all at sea*, when they needed much support, guidance and counseling:

We need definitely guidance on thesis writing because we do not know at what time and what is expected from us, what level is expected from us, these things are not explained, of course, you can ask supervisors, and we are asking, but I think there should be thesis writing seminars if a course not possible to explain procedures step by step.

(Ege, 25, student)

I am writing a thesis myself right now and it was like they throw you into the sea while writing a thesis. You have to learn yourself. But one course should be added for grad students "how to write a thesis", in fact, we add a course named "Master's Thesis" but it is not a course that teaches anything on that matter.

(Melisa, 29, student)

The findings of the qualitative study supported the quantitative study in terms of the participants' *familiarity with the components of a research paper or thesis components thanks to the program courses*. Each participant in the qualitative study mentioned that research projects in the courses were very helpful for them. However, since there was lack of feedback, they did not know what they did wrong or write during these research projects, which also led them to feel the assistance from the program as an additional course on thesis writing.

Supervisory Process

Thesis supervising is an important aspect of the thesis writing. The themes that were emerged from the qualitative data are *accessibility*, *power distance*, *non-communication and guidance*. Most of the participants thought that supervisors had many roles in that process because they needed to care about their supervisees' needs during thesis writing. The *accessibility of the supervisors* was highly crucial the participants ($n=6$).

Regular meetings with the supervisors are definitely very important, I think they benefit me a lot. On the other hand, supervisors are also responsible for us and they need to follow the work we do, but this process is not very healthy when meeting with them in 1 or 2 months. I think is the most important thing is the accessibility of the supervisors to keep connection between the student and thesis process.

(Serhan, 28, graduate)

Among the participants, there were some students ($n=3$) who were completely content with their relationship with the supervisors. On the other hand, there was another group kept complaining about the supervisors' indifference to their thesis work since the due to their being inaccessible many times. *Lack of communication* was another time on thesis writing process for the participants. As seen from two excerpts from different participants, they were not satisfied with the amount of time they see their supervisors:

In our program, it is a thing I find insufficient because there were meetings when the student has something to report on their supervisors. I think the supervisory process of is not only a thing when students come to professors about their thesis.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

I could reach out my supervisor only by e-mail. If I was going to ask one thing and this situation made me lose a lot of time, I could not get answered for weeks and even 1 month, that is, I had to send an e-mail for the second time. It was not effective.

(Tomris, 29, graduate)

Another issue raised by the participants ($n=3$) was *power distance* between the students and supervisors. Some professors saw themselves superior to the students and tried to achieve this by not listening to the students as stated by one participant:

There was a superiority between me and my supervisor. I felt that my idea is not very important because my professor wanted a certain topic then I worked for almost 2-3 months and finally we threw it away! This took my months again because they was like all the time “I want to do something”, “I want to include this”, “I want you to do this very seriously”, it went in the direction with their wishes all the time, which ended up with a disaster for me.

(Burcu, 26, student)

There was a participant who looked the power distance issue from the cultural perspective and told when they tried to ask something to their supervisor, they felt unnecessarily shy because of the superiority of the supervisors. As they reported below:

Maybe due to our culture, I personally am very unnecessarily timid when talking to my supervisor, if I will ask one thing, I think about it a hundred times and ask one thing or, I make the decisions myself, and also, I choose to ask my friends instead of my supervisor.

(Bulut, 27, student)

Since thesis writing was difficult process to carry on not only physically but also psychologically because students usually tended to waste themselves away psychologically. Therefore, they thought that supervisors needed to have a *guidance role* for their supervisees, as stated by three participants below:

Thesis writing is such a psychological process, this is the way we are experiencing ups and downs at work, even we reach the level of quitting so when I myself finish this program I had migraine happened to one of my friend as well. (...) it is very stressful, so I think it is very important to get counselors and students together per week in terms of keeping the student in the right track.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

Psychological load for students who are doing this for the first time so it is very challenging thing. There are supervisors who help you, but you are alone in general.

(Batu, 28, graduate)

Supervisors also support students both psychologically and mentally, they should be motivating instead of being discouraging because when this happens, everything is already very difficult then it causes demoralization, so the process becomes more difficult. Therefore, I think the academic counseling should be in a way that will support students in a psychological sense rather than just the content of the thesis.

(Ada, 26, student)

The results of the qualitative study had the contradictory aspects with the quantitative study. In the quantitative study, the Item 7 *I maintain a healthy and/or productive relationship with my supervisor* had the highest mean score, while there were about half of the participants complained about the *accessibility* and *lack of communication*.

4.4.1.1. Quantitative Results for the Research Question 3a

Research Question 3a: How do the graduates and current master's students of the MA program in ELT at METU view the contribution of the program courses to their research skills for their thesis writing?

This research question aimed to find out the contribution levels of the courses that master's students took during their course period for their thesis writing. The participants were asked to rate the courses contribution levels for their thesis writing. To answer this question, descriptive statistics were utilized. Frequencies and percentages according to the contribution levels of the courses as presented in Table 4.18. below.

Table 4.18. *Frequencies and Percentages of the Contribution Levels of the Program Courses to Thesis Writing of the Students and Graduates*

	Courses	Not contributing at all		Slightly contributing		Moderately contributing		Very contributing		Extremely contributing		Not Applicable	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	ELT 506 Second Language Acquisition	2	4.8	10	23.8	11	26.2	15	35.7	4	9.5	0	0.0
2	ELT 554 Quantitative Research Methods and Ethics in Language Research	0	0.0	3	7.1	4	9.5	11	26.2	20	47.6	4	9.5
3	ELT 555 Qualitative Research: Theory and Methods	3	7.1	8	19.0	2	4.8	7	16.7	5	52.4	0	0.0
4	ELT 507 Curriculum Dev.For Eng. For Specific Purpose	2	4.8	3	7.1	5	11.9	3	7.1	0	0.0	29	69.0
5	ELT 509 Literature in the Teaching of English	2	4.8	6	14.3	4	9.5	2	4.8	3	7.1	25	59.5
6	ELT 521 Cultural Aspects of Language Teaching	0	0.0	2	4.8	4	9.5	7	16.7	6	14.3	23	54.8
7	ELT 523 Using Corpora for Language Research	0	0.0	3	7.1	0	0.0	1	2.4	3	7.1	35	83.3
8	ELT 525 Approaches, Methods & Techniques in ELT I	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	11.9	5	11.9	3	7.1	29	69.0

Table 4.18. cont'd

9	ELT 526 Approaches, Methods & Techniques in ELT II	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	9.5	3	7.1	35	83.5
10	ELT 528 Instructional Tech. in English Language Teaching	1	2.4	2	4.8	5	11.9	1	2.4	9	21.4	24	57.1
11	ELT 542 Bilingualism and Bilingual Education	0	0.0	3	7.1	5	11.9	0	0.0	2	4.8	32	76.2
12	ELT 551 Pragmatics of Spoken Interaction	0	0.0	1	2.4	1	2.4	4	9.5	3	7.1	33	78.6
13	ELT 552 Critical Pedagogy and Language Education	1	2.4	1	2.4	2	4.8	6	14.3	5	11.9	27	64.3

There are three must courses in the MA program, and two of them are research courses. It seems that most of the participants made use of these research courses during their thesis writing.

For the *ELT 554 Quantitative Research Methods and Ethics in Language Research* course, 47% of the participants out of 42 thought that this course had extremely contributed, while 26.2% thought it very contributing.

For the other research course *ELT 555 Qualitative Research: Theory and Methods* 52.4% of the participants thought that it had extremely contributed on their thesis writing, while 16.7% thought that it was very contributing. However, students and graduates did not favor the course *ELT 506 Second Language Acquisition* as their must course for the thesis writing process. 9.5% of the participants thought that it had extremely contributing factor, while 23.8% thought it was slightly contributing course for their thesis.

Among the elective courses in the Table 4.18. above, the three courses were mostly favored by the graduates and participants for the contribution to their thesis writing were:

- ELT 521 Cultural Aspects of Language Teaching
- ELT 528 Instructional Tech. in English Language Teaching
- ELT 552 Critical Pedagogy and Language Education

The courses that were not taken by the students and graduates in their course period are shown in Table 4.19. below.

Table 4.19. *Courses Not Taken by Any Participants of this Study*

1	ELT 513 Linguistics for English Language Teaching
2	ELT 517 Materials Evaluation & Develop.in ELT
3	ELT 518 English Language Testing
4	ELT 520 English-Turkish Contrastive Analysis
5	ELT 522 Lexical Semantics
6	ELT 530 Modern Theory of Grammar
7	ELT 531 Cognitive Linguistics
8	ELT 541 Language Acquisition

4.4.1.2. Qualitative Results for the Research Question 3a

In order to understand the contribution levels of the courses offered in the ELT MA program at METU on the participants' thesis writing, the participants were asked about the courses that they had taken during their course period.

Each participant ($n=12$) stated that must courses which are ELT 554 Quantitative Research Methods and ELT 555 Qualitative Research Theory and Ethics were very helpful for the thesis writing process of the participants. Also, most of the participants ($n=8$) thought that the research projects as an assignment tool in the courses were kind of small-scale thesis which helped them a lot during thesis period.

When you think of them, as lessons, how much did they contribute to my thesis writing, that is, as I just said, I think that we have improved our writing thanks to the final assignments in the courses because we have tried and did this writing job too much, therefore, I did not have much difficulty in writing, I trusted what I wrote because I knew it, as I wrote this grammar as well as fluency and organization of the things I understand that in that respect courses has really affected. However, I have to do extra work in this kind of data analysis, I would say.

(Batu, 28, graduate)

For the elective courses, participants stated that they did not see direct effect of the elective courses on their thesis writing but the experiences of writing research projects were helpful for their thesis studies. Two of the participants ($n=2$) mentioned another aspect of the elective courses on thesis writing: *finding the thesis topic*.

I decided on the thesis topic thanks to the one seminar during a day in our lesson, in fact, the topic was not so certain and clear in my mind, but thanks to that course, thanks to the guest of that week, I said “okay, I want to study this, I want to work on this subject” which is the most important contribution for me, to reveal my interest in the courses. We wrote research projects which has also contributed to the thesis writing but the most important contribution is the various subjects in the courses. So, it helped me find my interest in that, so I think thanks to the lessons, they had prepared me to write a thesis.

(Ege, 25, student)

The results of both quantitative and qualitative data revealed that *the research courses* were very helpful for the participants thesis writing. On the other hand, the elective courses which had the highest mean scores among others were also mentioned in the qualitative phase of the study. The elective courses were helpful especially for *finding the research topic for the thesis*.

4.5. Results in Relation to the Suggestions of Students and Graduates for the Improvement of the Program Components, Thesis Writing and Supervisory Process

Research Question 4: What are the suggestions of students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU for the improvement of the program components, thesis writing and supervisory process?

By this research question, it is aimed to reveal the thoughts of students and graduates on the components of the program, thesis writing and supervisory process that needs improvement according to the participants. Since they are one of the stakeholders of the program their thoughts for the program components are critical.

To answer this question, it was asked to participants what their suggestions were for the things needed improvement in the program in both open-ended questionnaire and interview. Qualitative results of the questionnaire and interview are presented below.

4.5.1. Qualitative Results for the Research Question 4

According to the results of the open-ended questionnaire, suggestions of the participants were categorized and summarized under four main recommendations of the participants:

- Primary focus should be language teaching, therefore there should be more balance between linguistics and ELT courses.
- More practical and trend topics need to be included in the courses.
- Students in the program have lack of knowledge about how to write a thesis that is why they need an additional support or a course.
- As against the workload in the courses, there is lack of feedback from the professors for the assignments.

Interview results of the suggestions of the students and graduates for the program also supported the main recommendations in the questionnaire, as well as the other findings which were presented in the former sections where the results of the opinions of the students and graduates about the program components were presented in this chapter.

From the participants perspective, there seemed to be a clash between linguistics and ELT courses. Most participants stated that they have started to the program for its ELT components but inside the program things got changed. In addition, most of the students in the program were working as teachers or instructors in educational institutions, so there was also a need for practical and pedagogical courses which would help them in the real classroom context because it was important for them to

see their own professional development after graduate studies. As one participant stated:

As I said, elective courses based on more practical and up-to-date topics can be offered with the practices part of teaching.... because so if you can directly experience the teaching it makes you like fish out of the water. However, we have a great department with very qualified instructors, so I think our professors should think more on this issue from teaching point of view. course contents and processes and new course types should be changed

(Ada, 26, student)

Since master's students did not have any experience of writing a thesis, or an academic product like thesis, they wanted to see the support of program, professors, and supervisors academically for their biggest burden in the graduate studies. Most of the participants stated that they were not told or shown how to write a thesis, what the sections are in the thesis, what to include in the chapters as one participant expressed:

Master's student is coming to this field for the first time, already does not know how to write thesis maybe they do not know the writing itself. (...) but nothing was told to me how to write my thesis, I need to ask the professor if I need to do this or that, I need to add it like this and that. I think thesis writing course can be offered for example this is really very important so how to write the thesis because the thesis is not a thing that can be written in such a way. You need to know how the structure is designed at least, so a course for thesis would really useful.

(Pelin, 29, graduate)

In addition to a thesis course or seminar which would be offered by the program, social activities or psychosocial support from the supervisors could make the thesis writing stage easier for the graduate students like a graduate said:

In the master's thesis process, I think about stressful and difficult processes for everyone. I think for these things there should be extra support from the department (...) like social events or something you know. I don't know if there was any, maybe it was not visible enough, but I did not see it.

(Yonca, 27, graduate)

Most of the students of METU ELT MA program were teachers, or working people, and there were participants needed to travel intercity to be able to attend courses. Since the program offered courses online during the pandemic period, it could still make use of it to make it easier for students attending courses from different cities by online courses or blended learning. One participant pointed out:

We have seen that during the online education period due to Covid-19, online courses can actually be used very practically and very effectively during the master's course period so that everyone from coming from the other cities could easily attend lessons, or 6-7 weeks may be face-to-face, and the other half may be followed online. It makes easier for the students who are coming from other cities for the courses. For example, if there was not something like Covid-19, I would not have followed courses. Online courses also are very effective in that sense, it is very bad that we escaped immediately pandemic was over.

(Ege, 25, student)

The students in the program might have different background for their undergraduate degree or not be used to the system of METU. Some official procedures may be difficult to follow for students even though these are the things that students are responsible themselves. However, graduate education is not like the undergraduate education, there are many things that students need to do such as choosing a thesis supervisor. These necessities may differ from university to university, so it could be nice for the students of METU ELT MA program if the program offers guidance during their studies as one participant highlighted:

For new coming students there is not such frequently asked questions etc. which would help them to answer which semester they need to do this and that, or what they need to do here, when they need to choose the thesis supervisor etc. to understand how the process will work in the program. Therefore, there should be more guiding activities for students.

(Tomris, 29, graduate)

The department needs to offer more academic activities or encourage their students to attend some academic conferences etc. Students have lack of knowledge throughout their graduate studies about academic publishing issues even though they have been writing a research paper for almost each course. Organizing these activities creates a unity and collaboration among students and professors in the program, that is why the

department should think about to be actively involved in academic initiatives together with students. One participant mentioned that in their interview:

The department can organize a thing like a seminar series which is only open to master's and doctoral students. Different professors can also be invited from inside the country, you know that such things will create unity between students because when you see it only in class, you can only create a common thing about your problems in the course other (...) So now you already know that there is Zoom application you can reach even all parts of the world, you don't need to invite people to Türkiye anymore, so to get better in the program, in my opinion, to improve means to increase the cooperation between people, students and professors even more.

(Evrin, 28, graduate)

Each participant in this study stated that the department has very qualified professors which was one of the criteria for choosing METU for their graduate studies. On the other hand, they also stated that they wanted to take advantage of that powerful academic staff during their studies including thesis writing stage. It was a bit of disappointment that students could not utilize the academic knowledge of the professors because they were not engaged in the courses or did not offer proper feedback for the assignments as two excerpts gave an example of the recommendation of giving feedback for students both in the courses and thesis writing period:

There should definitely be feedback hours of professors when we can reach them out, also there should definitely be frequent communication between students and professors. Students also should evaluate their advisors, you know, (...) thesis supervisors should academically encourage students for seminars, conferences so that what you do in graduate studies, you have a result or effect in the academy. I think thesis supervising is not a thing that only reading thesis and saying correct this word, so I think most of them do it that way, unfortunately.

(Burcu, 26, student)

Our department and professors should think that feedback is maybe a little lacking in the program, even in almost all courses, we can ask professors in the lessons of course but also written feedback may be better in terms of evaluation and assessment, also for improving ourselves academically.

(Serhan, 28, graduate)

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the discussion of the results in line with the research questions as well as the literature and the previous studies are given.

5.2. Summary of the Results

This research which was designed as a sequential mixed method study involved the participation of the graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU who were graduated in the last five years as 2017-2022, and also the master's students who were in the thesis writing period at the time of the study. Initially, the main purpose of this study was to evaluate the METU ELT MA program; however, this was not an evaluation study but the descriptive one that presented the ideas of the participants who were asked to evaluate the METU ELT MA program through their own perspectives as students and graduates, also one of the stakeholders of the program. The opinions of both students and graduates on the program description, content, instruction, atmosphere, assessment of the ELT MA program at METU. There was another focus of this study which was inseparable aspect of the graduate education: thesis writing and supervisory process. With these aims behind, the researcher tried to look at the graduate program, the MA program in ELT at METU, by integrating the whole components of the program. More focus was put into the challenges and problems that students and graduates faced because this study had aims to improve the program components. Since this study had complex phenomena to investigate, the best method decided to be used as the main research design was mixed method study (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). To reach in-depth understanding of the research questions, quantitative and qualitative results were presented and integrated during the

analysis. In this study, quantitative data was collected through an online questionnaire with the participation of 15 master's students and 27 graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU, which was constituted 42 participants in total. With the voluntary participants who were also attended in the quantitative phase of this study and selected by using purposeful sampling method according to their stance (positive, negative and neutral) towards the ELT MA program at METU, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 6 graduates and 6 students, which formed 12 participants for the qualitative data collection part of this study.

The quantitative study revealed that among the reasons of most of the participants in this study behind the decision to pursue master's studies *to pursue an academic career* had the highest mean score which was followed by *to have a PhD degree*. As it is understood, most of the participants had academic concerns primarily. In the interview phase of this study, it was also stated by most of the participants that the motives behind pursuing the master's degree.

About the program components, the quantitative study results showed students thought that *there are qualified professors lecturing at METU ELT program*, which was also justified in the interviews. The program content questionnaire was also revealed that *the program is up-to-date*, as thought by the participants while holding the highest mean score among the other items in the program component section. In classrooms or during lecture hours, the participants believed that they have got good quality education, while they thought *the quality of instruction (teaching materials used, teaching methods, faculty member's teaching strategy) in the courses is good*. Even though there were some problems which could also be personal related issues about the relationship among people in the department, *the department has a humane environment characterized by mutual respect by students and professors*. Each course offered for the students in the department brings different responsibilities for students because there are different types of assignments for them to finish and they thought that they were all necessary and relevant by giving the highest mean score to the item *essays, research papers, presentations are relevant for the course assessment*. Students also were well aware of the thesis components thanks to the research paper assignments in the courses. The highest mean score in the thesis writing questionnaire it the item, *I am familiar with the components of a research paper or thesis components*

thanks to program courses. Participants of the quantitative study stated that *I maintain a healthy and/or productive relationship with my supervisor* while leaving the highest mean score for this item in the questionnaire. The participants overall believed that they were going to be good researchers because of the academic perspective of the department, so the highest mean score went for the item, *by the end of this program, I feel that I will be able to carry out research in the ELT field.* Considering the opinions of the participants on the evaluation of the MA program in ELT at METU, the quantitative study results did not reveal such problematic situations about the program components such as outcomes, instruction, assessment atmosphere and so on. The general idea coming from the quantitative data showed that the ELT MA program at METU is a successful program and most of the students think positively in that sense.

However, the fields that need to be improved were found in the qualitative study regarding the program, which showed the importance of the mixed method research design especially in the program evaluation studies. The problematic situations according to the qualitative data was discussed under the following title.

5.2.1. Discrepancy between the Quantitative and Qualitative Results

As it was stated before, the quantitative results of some of the items in the questionnaire had discrepancy between the results in the qualitative phase of this study. These differences did not seem in each component but in the program content, program instruction, thesis-writing and supervisory process. The qualitative data showed the complete opposite of the quantitative data in this study.

The first difference was on the item that *the program is up-to-date.* It was the item that holding the highest mean score in the questionnaire. The majority of participants ($n=5$) believed that the courses' outdated curricula included dated readings and articles. They also recommended that the syllabus be developed in a way that is relevant to the demands of the teachers and instructors today.

The second difference was on the item *the quality of instruction (teaching materials used, teaching methods, faculty member's teaching strategy) in the courses is good.* Whereas most of the students thought that they got good quality of training from the professors who were also highly qualified, the instruction in the courses was not

appreciated that much by the participants because of the dull presentations and professors' not engagement in the lectures.

The third difference was on the item that *I am familiar with the components of a research paper or a thesis*. In the qualitative phase, the participants also stated that they were familiar with the components of a research paper or thesis. However, they added further details and that revealed there was a huge problem of how to write a thesis even though they were familiar with the components.

Finally, the fourth difference was found on the item that *I maintain healthy and productive relationship with my supervisor*. This item could be resulted from the personal relationship between the students and supervisors. However, the participants in the qualitative phase expressed that they did not experience a productive relationship with their supervisors and complained about the process accordingly.

5.2.2. Strengths and Weaknesses of the MA Program in ELT at METU

According to data collected from the students and graduates as both qualitatively and quantitatively, the summarized strengths and weaknesses of the MA program in ELT at METU from the participants' perspective is presented below in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. *Strengths and Weaknesses of the MA Program in ELT at METU*

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
• Variety of courses from different fields such as literature and linguistics • Qualified academic staff • Research focused program • Humane environment • Research paper as assignment • Supportive professors	• High expectations from students • Lack of collaboration • Lack of feedback in the courses • Crowded classrooms in must courses • Workload for students • Inconvenient class hours and days • Lack of technology integration

Table 5.1. cont'd

- Limited and same courses each semester
-

5.2.3. Overall Suggestions for the Improvement of ELT MA Program at METU

Based on the data received from the participants in both quantitative and qualitative phase of this study, the overall characteristics of the MA program that students and graduates would like to have are presented in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2. *Ideal Characteristics of the MA Program in ELT*

Program Description

- MA program should focus on teaching perspective while being research based and having academic concerns.
 - There needs to be more interdisciplinary understanding.
-

Program Content

- Current developments in the field should be integrated in the course syllabus with the latest trends by keeping up with technological advancements.
 - The courses should also address the pedagogical needs of teachers/instructors.
 - Theory and practice should be balanced. ELT program needs to have teaching dimension.
 - There should be more variety of courses from the related disciplines.
 - The program has research-based understanding, that is why research courses should not be separated as one must course either qualitative and quantitative.
 - Linguistics courses should be balanced in the program.
-

Table 5.2. *cont'd*

Program Instruction

- The program should balance the student-centered instruction and professor centered instruction in the courses.
 - Technology needs to be actively involved in the instructional process.
 - Instead of presentations, ‘real’ discussion leadings should be organized.
 - Qualified academic personnel should actively be involved in the lecturing.
-

Program Atmosphere

- Friendly relationship should be formed among the students, faculty members, also between the students and faculty members.
 - Professors should be more supportive for the students.
 - Activities, conferences should be organized to strengthen communication skills.
-

Program Assessment

- Different means of assessment is necessary, but there should be balance in workload for students.
 - Professors should be realistic about their expectations from students as well as the assignments they asked for students.
 - Appropriate materials need to be used for the assessment.
 - Grading should not be the concern of the students or professors.
 - Feedback is necessary for all assignments.
(If the staff is not available for face-to-face meetings, online feedback option should be taken into consideration.)
-

Apart from the program components, the ideal characteristics of thesis writing and supervisory component of the MA program based on the quantitative and qualitative data is presented below in table 5.3.

Table 5.3. *Ideal Characteristics of Thesis Writing and Supervising Components*

<i>Thesis Writing</i>	<i>Supervisory Process</i>
• Writing assignments should be taken into seriously. • Especially master's students need special assistance before and during thesis writing period. • Supportive activities and more guidance should be provided for the students.	• Supervisors needs to be accessible easily for the students in thesis writing period. • There should be regular meetings in which the progress is discussed in a detailed way. • Supervisors should provide constant feedback for their supervisees.

5.2.4. Researcher's Perspective

The researcher was also a student of the MA program in ELT at METU at the time of this study was conducted, but they did not intervene in any of the sections of this study not to spoil the results. Since all of the results were presented, it had better to include the researcher's perspective as an insider in the program.

The researcher had an undergraduate degree from METU FLE department, so the faculty members and physical conditions of the program were familiar before their beginning to the master's studies. The similar kind of minute characteristics of the background information of the participants in this could have affected the way they think about the program. Firstly, while applying to the master's program, the researcher had no professional concern resulted from the obligation to have master's degree or so. They simply wanted to follow the PhD degree, and this was the first path on the way. The reason for the choice of METU was mainly because of familiarity of the institution beforehand, and the reputation of the university.

According to the researcher's point of view, the suggestions that can be taken into consideration are listed below:

- There are highly qualified professors in the faculty. However, students cannot see or utilize the “qualification” of the professors in the courses during MA studies because each week a group of students have a presentation. Professors usually do not interrupt or comment effectively during the lecture or later. Therefore, apart from the traditional way of presentation of students, new perspective of discussion leading can be brought into the classrooms.
- More social and academic events can be organized by the department together with the students in order to create collaborative environment, and to facilitate the communication between students and faculty members, also to make the graduate students acclimatize with the academic organizations and events.
- There are research paper assignments for almost each course in the program. However, in the end, students feel like those research papers run into the ground, even they do not have any feedback for them. Therefore, the department can organize an event at the end of a semester with graduate students in which students can present their findings of the research papers that they have prepared as course assignment in a more formal and academic way so that graduate students become more familiar with the settings like academic conferences.
- Thesis101 course is definitely needed because most of the students do not know what to do while they are trying to write their thesis. Research courses cannot cover all the parts of thesis, that is why additional measures can be taken for the students to create more reliable and successful thesis.

According to all points mentioned above and regarding the research questions of this study, the results of this research were also discussed under following four headings: the reasons for pursuing MA studies, program evaluation in ELT, thesis writing and supervisory process.

5.3. Reasons for Pursuing MA Studies

Every student or graduate has different motives from earning more money to academic concerns, behind their choices of doing master’s degree as triggered by their intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Arceño, 2018). According to the study carried out by Jung and Li (2020), based on their prior experiences, the students' motivations and attitudes

about getting a master's degree differed. Most recent graduates considered the degree as a tool to increase their competitiveness in the job market, even if they were unsure of what occupations or careers they would follow after earning the degree. They generally believed that the master's degree would enhance their credentials on the job market, based primarily on the reputation of the university they attended. This study showed parallelism with the Jung and Li's study (2020) in terms of enhancing credential because the participants who were master's students at the time of data collection highly expressed their basis motivation on pursuing master's degree to be able to find a job as an instructor at Turkish universities because there is an obligation to have at least a master's degree in order to be able to be recruited at higher education institution.

Additionally, the study also showed that students with a master's degree faced a vast array of employment opportunities and career paths. According to the results of the interviews, a significant number of students entered their programs without a complete knowledge of what they would be taught. They just applied to a variety of programs across schools and specializations and waited to hear which program would accept them. Then, they made a final decision based on timing, cost, and institutional prestige, as opposed to their intellectual objectives. Some students even admitted that the material in their master's program did not correspond to what they expected to learn. Even though the participants in this study seemed more academic research-oriented reasons to pursue, the number of students or graduates who applied to the program just to be able to get a better job by utilizing the prestigious name of the university could not be deniable.

The participants in this study insistently mentioned the fact that METU has a strong research culture and even in the master's degree level some students thought that there were high expectations of the professors could be thought as a PhD level in the other universities. This aspect also confirmed by another study done in Korea by Jung and Lee (2019), the programs in Korea which are most prevalent in major research universities, have a tendency to adhere to very traditional forms of graduate education and put an emphasis on research-oriented courses that are frequently combined with PhD curriculum. Except for professional graduate school programs, where students might begin a master's program, all students are entitled to enroll in PhD courses and

are evaluated using the same standards. They take part in the same research initiatives and activities as PhD students.

In the field of education, when it comes to the reasons of teachers who want to pursue the master's studies, it is found in the Vural and Başaran's study (2021) that the educators who have earned a master's degree listed the following as motivations for furthering their education: self-improvement, advancement in one's academic career, advancement in one's profession, and a desire for greater depth of knowledge in one's subject. The outcomes of this study are applicable to this circumstance. Additionally, it was determined that the benefits of a master's education are important in motivating instructors to pursue a graduate degree. Of these benefits, contributing to the profession and personal growth stood out the most. This circumstance perfectly fits the master's degree goal of personal growth of the participants of this research as it is similarly explained in the other studies for teachers' professional development (Berkant & Baysal, 2017; Bertram et al., 2013; Burgaz & Koçak, 2015).

There have been a few studies done in Türkiye that investigate into the MA Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) or ELT programs. In one study, Kırmızı and Sarıçoban (2013) identified the career goals of MA ELT program participants as well as the driving forces behind their decision to enroll in the program and the departments to which they should apply. According to the answer to the first research question, it can be inferred that most of the participants enrolled voluntarily in the ELT MA program at METU because they had a general interest in research and start a career as an academic at the institution. The vast majority of students enrolled in MA programs have aspirations of going on to complete their doctoral degrees and developing their skills in the area of teaching foreign languages, just as the people who took part in this research. One more thing that is consistent is that students place a significant amount of importance on the credentials of the professors when selecting a program to enroll in. This is due to the fact that many of the people who participated in this research agreed that it is essential for professors to have exceptional credentials and qualifications (Kırmızı & Sarıçoban, 2013). The results of this study are comparable to those of Kırmızı (2011) and Küçüköğlü (2015) as well, who also investigated the factors behind the participants' aims to pursue master's degrees.

On the other hand, students chose METU because of its reputation and the competency of the faculty members in the MA program in ELT. These findings have parallels with the study of Papageorgiou et al., (2018) indicating that when it comes to enrolling students, the reputation of a university is of the utmost significance. The popularity of the program as well as the qualifications of the faculty members all play a part in the students' final decisions for choosing their institutions for master's degree. There is some evidence that settings of a higher quality do influence the universities that students choose to attend (Price et al., 2003), which can also explain the reasons why participants chose or love the campus facilities of METU.

5.4. Program Evaluation in ELT

Evaluation of a program is a crucial component for curriculum improvement. In light of the program evaluation's findings, any appropriate adjustments, modifications, or exclusions are determined. Despite the fact that numerous studies examine post-graduate education in Türkiye from a variety of angles (Karaman & Bakırcı, 2010; Arslan & Kara, 2010; Ahlas, 2006; Ünal & İlter, 2010), the ELT departments are not particularly pertinent to these research. The curriculum models and other significant aspects of Master of Arts in English Language Teaching (MA ELT) programs, such as teaching practices, program content, and courses, have not been fully investigated.

Due to the fact that evaluative studies provide information on the current status of the researched area, it is essential for decision-makers to get data from the program in order to take future action. Peacock (2009) emphasizes the paucity of studies evaluating teacher education programs. In fact, to the best of our knowledge, evaluations of an ongoing post-graduate programs such as MA or PhD level in the Turkish setting that provide particular information have not yet been done except for a couple of dissertations (Ağan, 2020; Çıtak, 2021; Gül, 2019; Kırmızı, 2011; Küçüköğlu, 2015).

The evaluations of MA programs in English Language Teaching that have been done thus far have focused on course content, outcomes, and the assistance provided by teaching staff and personal mentors. For instance, Kanatlar (1996) assesses if the program's aims and objectives have been reached. His research includes document analysis, questionnaires, and interviews with both students and program

administrators. The purpose of the study was to determine whether the courses addressed the needs of the students, whether the course materials and other resources were adequate, and to what extent the program altered the participants' professional lives. The findings of Kanatlar's study revealed that the program caused language teachers to become more conscious of their students' demands in their professional lives. In addition, the program and accompanying materials met the requirements of the attendees. However, it cannot be said that the findings of this study revealed practical solutions for their teaching as the participants of this study needed classroom-based qualifications as the example in Burton and Goodman's study (2011).

In addition, the content of the course is quite significant, and most of the time, students want to follow pedagogical modules that will assist them with their professional requirements because of being individuals working as teachers and instructors. It is possible that educational institutions that do not already provide a variety of these courses could think about starting to do so (Copland et al., 2017). The participant expected that the courses would be more practice oriented which could be helpful for their teaching practices.

The strengths of the MA program in ELT that are most widely mentioned include the highly trained and hospitable instructors, assignments that are both practical and research-oriented, and the ability to put theory into practice which are also in parallel with a graduate program evaluation study by Keşli-Dollar et al., (2014).

In order to improve the quality of education, it has been concluded that teacher training programs need to be examined frequently. Students want to expand their knowledge and skills in language teaching. Another similarity is that students' choice of program is heavily influenced by the quality of the instructors (Keşli-Dollar et al., 2014; Kırmızı & Sarıçoban, 2013) just like the participants' choice in the present study. Another commonality is that the competences of the professors have a significant impact on the program that students choose because in the eyes of the several participants of this study, professors with excellent credentials in a program and qualifications are crucial. Their study also revealed that the research component is regarded as being the most significant part of an MA ELT program. The second is a component of the ELT technique. The third component is linguistics, and the fourth is educational sciences.

However, in this study, the linguistics component of the program was found important by the participants because the MA program at METU has strong linguistics bases including many faculty members inside, and even there are many students who wants to study in linguistics despite the fact that the program is on ELT.

5.5. Thesis-Writing

Thesis writing was one of the most challenging issues besides being a graduate student at METU ELT MA program. Moreover, it was the first time for the majority of graduate students to write a paper of this length utilizing their extensive subject-matter expertise and academic language in a methodical manner for the participants. As Lehnen (2021) indicated in their study that students have a lot of needs that aren't being met during thesis writing, like getting hard-to-find materials and figuring out how to use special collections. They also need help staying organized and writing for publication. All of these are needed to be good at a job, but they aren't always taught in school. This shows that librarian-led workshops are still useful even at the highest levels of graduate study, especially those that involve collaboration between faculty, make it easier for students to talk to each other, and teach professional skills that aren't covered in the standard curriculum. For example, many students do not know how archives are set up and could benefit from workshops that teach them how to find relevant archives, know what to expect, and use digital tools to keep track of what they find. Even if they are familiar with the subject, graduate students still need to manage a number of interdisciplinary activities, according to Casanave (2008). Due to these difficulties, it may be difficult to finish the thesis by the deadline. Beginning with a well-defined topic and then condensing it to an appropriate scope, each stage in the thesis writing process needs to be meticulously prepared. In this study, the participants also mentioned that most of the time got to leaving their thesis behind because of the psychological burden of it. As it is stated in the Sadeghi and Khajepasha's study (2015), the participants of this study also emphasized that the most intimidating part of graduate education is thesis writing.

The social and emotional wellbeing of graduate students should be prioritized by programs, according to Merç (2016), who also makes the point that post-graduate students need support from their supervisors and teachers to successfully complete the

thesis portion of their programs, particularly for the challenges they encounter when conducting research. Another issue that graduate students need support for is scholarly publication (Lathif et al., 2021). All of these ideas confirmed by almost each of the participants in this study.

The participants in this study stated that they did not Even before the graduate students begin their thesis writing, Ekoç (2019) convincingly argued that many students lack the requisite training in academic writing. The pupils' dedication is crucial because the activity itself is a challenging task.

Also, academic writing is a very important skill in the graduate education process, it is discovered that master's students need to have an additional support or a course before writing their thesis (Ağan, 2020). As similar, almost each participant in this study complained that they did not know how to write their thesis.

5.6. Supervisory Process

Graduate students need support during master's or doctoral studies, but there is not adequate focus on the students' needs and expectations for their research or thesis. In that situation, supervising becomes an important part of the graduate studies (Ward & Dixon, 2014). The findings of this study on the roles of supervision can be summarized as the accessibility, guidance and counseling, supporting as well as constant feedback for the students who are dissertating. The supervision process may either make graduate programs simpler for students or damage them entirely, supervisors have significant responsibilities for their programs' success as stated in Ekoç's study (2019). To enhance the post-graduate experience, immediate action must be made, and supervision methods in Türkiye must be assessed based on the students' perceptions (Ekoç, 2019).

In addition, it is also stated in the other studies, the university supervisors were essential in providing teachers who were working on a dissertation or thesis with emotional and intellectual assistance (Black & Bonner, 2011; Dixon & Ward, 2015). Academic counseling and students' interactions with faculty members are another area that requires attention. In previous investigations, it was discovered that foreign students reported dissatisfaction with the amount of time they were able to spend with

professors and the scant support they had received from professors when formulating post graduate research proposals (Harmon, 2003; Kennedy et al., 2000; Kyvik et al., 1999).



CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter the conclusion, implications for practice, limitations of this study and suggestions for further research are presented.

6.2. Conclusion

In this study, the views of students and graduates towards the MA ELT program for their study period, including thesis writing, as well as their needs as graduate students, were aimed to be explored. The primary rationale behind investigating the perceptions of the students and graduates towards the department was to be able to make some suggestions for the improvement of the program.

Due to the METU's performance as a research university, which is a widely acknowledged position and has maintained as one of the top-ranking universities in Türkiye, this study is designed as a sequential mixed method study. As a result, collecting and analyzing the perceptions of both students and graduates toward the department components and thesis writing requires more extensive and in-depth investigation. Instead of relying solely on one way, the researchers can rely on stronger and more meaningful data thanks to the mixed-methods design (Yin, 2018).

The four main research questions with sub-questions aimed to be investigated in this study are presented below:

- 1) What are the reasons that motivate the students and graduates of the Master of Arts (MA) program in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Middle East

Technical University (METU) to pursue their master's studies and to enroll in the MA program in ELT at METU?

- a. Is there any significant difference between the reasons of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU to pursue their master's studies and to enroll in the MA program in ELT at METU?
- 2) How do the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU evaluate the program with respect to the program components, thesis writing and supervisory process?
 - a. Is there any significant difference between the opinions of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU on the evaluation of the program with respect to the program components, thesis writing and supervisory process?
 - 3) What are the challenges and experiences of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU during their thesis writing period along with the supervisory process?
 - a. How do the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU view the contribution of the program courses to their research skills for their thesis writing?
 - 4) What are the suggestions of the students and graduates of the MA program in ELT at METU for the improvement of the program components, thesis writing and supervisory process?

According to the findings of this research questions, many issues arose and implication for practice, limitation of this study and suggestions for future work are presented below.

6.3. Implications for Practice

This is not an evaluation study, but it has similar characteristics with the evaluation studies. Evaluation on a systematic level is a very important component of not only English Language Teaching but all programs. This research will directly contribute to the program evaluation research which is highly scarce in the field of ELT especially in Turkish context. Also, it provides a clear overview of the MA program in ELT at METU, which is the one of the top ranked universities in Türkiye. However, the results of this study also might indicate similar problematic situations in the program, or the needs of the graduate students. Therefore, even if it is a study from one institution perspective, it may give insights for the other MA programs in ELT because the evaluation studies are not in a satisfying amount for the improvement of the programs especially in the graduate level programs in ELT.

Understanding the students' needs and expectations from the educational institution is important. Therefore, there is a continuing requirement for needs analysis on current educational initiatives. Even though this research was developed as an evaluation of the MA program in ELT at METU, it may also be utilized as a needs assessment instrument since it tries to uncover any problematic aspects of the program by looking at the program from the graduates' and master students' perspectives. as well as the participants' current and future needs. In general, the results of the study may provide administrators, professors, policy makers at any level with the necessary information regarding the different aspects of the program as feedback.

The findings of the current research make it abundantly evident that there is a requirement for some aspects of the ELT MA program at METU to be revised and improved. As recommended by the participants of this research, the number of courses offered in the ELT MA program should be adjusted in order to fulfill the demands of the program's current and prospective students.

In addition, some of the courses can be delivered online to give students more flexibility with their schedules. It has also been observed that individuals prefer interactive classroom opportunities in which they have the opportunity to discuss different aspects with both their other students and their professors instead of following the presentations scheduled for each week in most of the classes. Therefore,

teachers ought to take into consideration all of this information when they are preparing their lectures.

The participants of this study expressed that they would like to see more practice-oriented courses or events for their professional development as teachers or instructors. Like the undergraduate course, practice teaching could be included for the MA curriculum as well especially for the ones who have not got teaching experience before or the ones who want to improve their teaching skills in the specific scopes of ELT field under supervision. The “practice” period could be not only utilized for the teaching practice but also used as a research field while making students actively involve educational institution.

Furthermore, the findings of the study provide institutional administrators, policy makers and faculty members with valuable information that can be used to bolster the ELT MA programs. These programs are designed to develop a solid basis for educational institutions, thereby ensuring that students receive a high-quality education.

6.4. Limitations of this Study and Suggestions for Future Work

In light of the study's results and limitations, a number of recommendations were offered. The most significant limitation of the current research was that it did not include the views of the professors and other faculty members like research assistants of the MA program in ELT at METU. As a result, it was not possible to compare these perspectives to each other. Therefore, there is a definite need for another follow-up research in the future to contribute this study with other implications.

The study also was conducted with relatively small sample of the participants, even though they represented more than half of the population. More participants are needed to reach a greater framework of their understandings and perspectives on the program evaluation.

During the data collection process, Covid-19 outbreak has not been ended yet. That is why, the researcher had to use online platforms such as Zoom for the interview for some of the participants. However, thanks to the face-to-face interviews, there could be more genuine insights and sincere answers from the participants.

Despite the challenges of getting master's degree which were found in this research could give some reasons into the causes of MA education abandonment or dropouts, with an addition to the participants who did not complete the program may provide extensive insights for the program as well.

Furthermore, this study did not include the research understandings of graduates in their own teaching practices. Further research may also provide insights about the teachers' research experiences in teaching field whether they can include research activities actively in the classroom.

This study is a study which focuses on the only one program. In the future, the other programs might be evaluated in the Turkish context in a more extensive study. However, that may require more time and money to conduct such study.

In addition, other MA programs in ELT at the different universities from other countries can be included as a comparative study because this study was undertaken at a single university that predominantly adheres to a culture of research, which was a research university and one of the top-ranked universities nationwide. Future research should include many types of institutions to determine whether learning cultures and student motivations vary by institution type.

Program evaluation studies should be conducted regularly in order for the continuation of the success in any program. As well as, to detect deficiencies in the program by regularly checking the program components. Furthermore, this research could be designed as a longitudinal study with the same participants from their start to the MA studies until the end of the program.

Moreover, little is known about how getting a graduate degree impacts the professional prestige, morale, and job security of teachers, all of which may in some way have an indirect effect on student results. Therefore, practical investigations may be carried out to see how it differs to be a teacher with a master's degree and without a master's degree in the school context. To evaluate the effects of MA on teachers, longitudinal or experimental study designs could be used.

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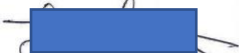
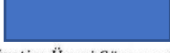
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APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER DUMLUPINAR BULVARI 06800 ÇANKAYA ANKARA/TURKEY T: +90 312 210 22 91 F: +90 312 210 79 59 ueam@metu.edu.tr www.ueam.metu.edu.tr	 ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu 20 HAZİRAN 2022	
Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)	
İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu	
Sayın Dr.Öğretim Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ Danışmanlığını yürüttüğünüz Berna DÖNER'in "An Evaluation of the Master of Arts program in English Language Teaching at Middle East Technical University: Insights from graduates and students" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay 0335-ODTÜİAEK-2022 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır. Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.	
 Prof. Dr. Mine MISIRLISOY Başkan	 Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ Üye
 Doç. Dr. İ.Semih AKÇOMAK Üye	 Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Murat Perit ÇAKIR Üye
 Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Şerife SEVİNÇ Üye	 Dr. Öğretim Üyesi A. Emre TURGUT Üye
 Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Süreyya ÖZCAN KABASAKAL Üye	

B. INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear participant,

This study is carried out by Berna DÖNER ARDAY, a master's student from the English Language Teaching department at Middle East Technical University, under the supervision of Assist.Prof.Dr. Müge GÜNDÜZ within the scope of the master's thesis. The aim of the study is to evaluate the METU ELT MA program from the perspectives of the current master's students who have finished their course period at the METU ELT MA program and the graduates of the program in the last five years (from 2017 to 2022) on the various aspects of the department such as program atmosphere, instruction, thesis-writing process. After the analysis of the gathered information, feasible implications could be made to improve the program components.

Participation in this study must be on a voluntary basis. No personal identification information is required in the questionnaire. Your answers will be strictly kept confidential and evaluated only by the researcher; the collected data will only be used for scientific purposes.

The questionnaire takes approximately 20-30 minutes to answer and does not contain any questions that may cause discomfort to the participants. However, during participation, for any reason, if you feel uncomfortable, you are free to quit at any time.

For further information about the study, you can contact the researcher, Berna DÖNER via e-mail: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED] or WhatsApp: [REDACTED]

I would like to thank you in advance for your participation in this study.

I am participating in this study totally on my own will and am aware that I can quit participating at any time I want/ I give my consent for the use of the information I provide for scientific purposes.

Name and Surname

Date

Signature

C. INITIAL QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

Dear colleagues and friends,

This questionnaire has been designed to gather your opinions on the METU ELT MA program. Please follow the instructions carefully and make your selections accordingly. Your responses to the questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. No responses will be linked to your name or personal identification. Your answers will be much appreciated.

The questionnaire consists of seven parts to collect your personal information and ideas on the reasons for enrolling in the MA program, METU ELT MA program courses, program components, thesis writing and supervision process, overall thoughts on the program, and open-ended questions about the program and study period.

Thank you for your participation and contributions to this study.

PART I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please choose the best answers of your demographic information.

1.1. Your age range:

- ☐ 22-25
- ☐ 26-30
- ☐ 31-35
- ☐ 36-40
- ☐ 41-45
- ☐ 45 and above

1.2. I have:

- ☐ graduated from the METU ELT MA program. (Please write the year of graduation.)
- ☐ finished the course period of the program.

1.3. Your current job:

- ☐ English Teacher at a public school (MoNE Schools).
- ☐ English Teacher at a private school.
- ☐ English Instructor at a public university.
- ☐ English Instructor at a private university.
- ☐ English Tutor at a Language School.
- ☐ If your job is not listed above, please specify _____.
- ☐ I work in another field than teaching. Please specify, _____
- ☐ I am not working right now.

1.4. Are you teaching now?

- ☐ Yes

☐ No

1.5. If yes, where do you teach?

- ☐ Kindergarten / Young Learners
- ☐ Primary School
- ☐ High School
- ☐ Preparatory School
- ☐ ELT Department
- ☐ Department of Modern Languages
- ☐ Translation- Interpretation
- ☐ Literature Related Departments
- ☐ Linguistics
- ☐ Other. Please specify, _____.

1.6. Years of professional experience:

- ☐ 0-3
- ☐ 4-6
- ☐ 7-10
- ☐ 11-15
- ☐ 15+

1.7. I have got an undergraduate degree from:

- ☐ METU
- ☐ Other, please specify _____.

1.8. I have got an undergraduate degree on:

- ☐ ELT
- ☐ English Literature
- ☐ Linguistics
- ☐ American Literature
- ☐ Translation and Interpretation
- ☐ Other, please specify _____.

PART II. REASONS FOR ENROLLING IN THE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

Please rank the reasons for enrolling in the master's degree program from 1 to 5 (1 =not important at all, 2=not important, 3=undecided, 4=important, 5 =highly important) according to their importance levels for you.

		Not important at all	Not important	Undecided	Important	Highly important
Item	Reasons	1	2	3	4	5
1	To pursue a PhD degree and academic career.					
2	To become more professional in teaching.					

3	To meet the criteria for recruitment at public or private universities as an instructor.					
4	To get a higher salary.					
5	To widen the current professional knowledge in the ELT field.					
6	For the sake of having a master's degree.					

Please rank the following factors for choosing the METU ELT MA program from 1 to 5 (1 =not important at all, 2=not important, 3=undecided, 4=important, 5 =highly important) according to their importance levels for you.

		Not important	Not important	Unde- cided	Importan t	Highly importan t
Item	Factors	1	2	3	4	5
7	The reputation of the university					
8	Program design and success					
9	Faculty reputation					
10	Previous personal experience with METU					
11	METU campus					

PART III. METU ELT MA PROGRAM COURSES

To what extent have the courses below contributed to your thesis writing in terms of improving research skills? Please choose from 1 to 5 according to their levels of contribution for you. (1=Not contributing at all, 2=Slightly contributing, 3=Moderately contributing, 4= Very contributing, 5= Extremely contributing)

		Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely	NA
Item	Program Courses	1	2	3	4	5	
1	ELT 506 Second Language Acquisition						
2	ELT 554 Quantitative Research Methods and Ethics in Language Research						
3	ELT 555 Qualitative Research: Theory and Methods						

4	ELT 507 Curriculum Dev.For Eng. For Specific Purpose						
5	ELT 509 Literature in the Teaching of English						
6	ELT 513 Linguistics For English Language Teaching						
7	ELT 517 Materials Evaluation & Develop.in ELT						
8	ELT 518 English Language Testing						
9	ELT 520 English-Turkish Contrastive Analysis						
10	ELT 521 Cultural Aspects of Language Teaching						
11	ELT 522 Lexical Semantics						
12	ELT 523 Using Corpora for Language Research						
13	ELT 525 Approaches, Methods & Techniques in ELT I						
14	ELT 526 Approaches, Methods & Techniques in ELT II						
15	ELT 528 Instructional Tech. in English Language Teaching						
16	ELT 530 Modern Theory of Grammar						
17	ELT 531 Cognitive Linguistics						
18	ELT 541 Language Acquisition						
19	ELT 542 Bilingualism and Bilingual Education						
20	ELT 551 Pragmatics of Spoken Interaction						
21	ELT 552 Critical Pedagogy and Language Education						

PART IV. PROGRAM COMPONENTS

In this part, you are going to give an answer to the items related to the program components including program description, content, instruction, resources, atmosphere, departmental support and assessment.

Please read the statements of the program components carefully and decide whether you agree or disagree on a five-point basis (1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree) accordingly.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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Item	Program Description	1	2	3	4	5
1	There are qualified professors lecturing at METU ELT department.					
2	The program fulfills my needs.					
3	Faculty members treat with respect to master students in my program.					
4	The relationship between faculty and graduate students in the program is good.					
5	The number of support and office members (including research assistants) in the department is enough.					
6	The program encourages taking courses from the related disciplines.					
7	Interaction between the department and related disciplines or programs on the campus is satisfactory.					
8	There are tensions in the faculty which affect students.					
Item	Program Content					
9	The program is relevant to my needs.					
10	The program is up-to-date.					
11	The program gives me adequate training in teaching skills.					
12	The program allocates sufficient time for each course.					
13	The program gives me adequate training for the needs of the Turkish context.					
Item	Program Instruction					
14	The quality of instruction in my courses is good.					
15	The program has good linkage between different courses.					
16	The program balances teacher-centered and student-centered learning in its course.					
17	The program equips with the necessary instructional technologies and other resources.					
18	The program encourages me to be a reflective teacher.					
19	The department promotes intellectual development.					
20	The program puts emphasis on the balance between theory and practice.					

21	The program prepares me to be a good researcher in the field of ELT.					
22	I receive/received valuable feedback from my professors.					
Item	Program Resources					
23	The institution offers sufficient computer and Internet support.					
24	Specialized facilities, such as laboratories or studios, and equipment needed for teaching are satisfactory.					
Item	Departmental Support					
25	The faculty is/was helpful for the MA ELT program students.					
26	The program is providing me with excellent preparation for my future professional work.					
27	The department actively helps graduates of master's program find appropriate employment.					
Item	Atmosphere in the Department					
28	The department has a humane environment characterized by mutual respect by students and professors.					
29	The program head is/was in cooperation with the faculty administration.					
30	Master's students tend to help and support each other to meet the academic demands of the department.					
31	There is good communication between faculty and master's students regarding student needs, concerns, and suggestions.					
Item	Assessment					
32	Program uses different means of assessment which are appropriate for the developmental level of master's students.					
33	Presentations, discussions, and research projects help me to learn the subject matter in a better way.					
34	The means of assessment in the courses are able to evaluate learner progress.					
35	Assessment techniques in the courses are in parallel with the course contents.					

36	In the end of the course, getting higher grades from the courses is difficult.					
38	I believe, final projects in the master's courses are challenging.					
39	Master's students can get appropriate feedbacks in the courses by the lecturers.					
40	Overall, I am happy with the assessment techniques in the courses.					

PART V. THESIS WRITING AND SUPERVISION PROCESS

Please read the statements of the thesis writing and supervising process carefully and decide whether you agree or disagree on a five-point basis (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree) accordingly.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item	Thesis Writing	1	2	3	4	5
1	I worry/worried about how much time my thesis will take.					
2	I am/was familiar with the components of a research paper or thesis components.					
3	I put a lot of myself into my thesis writing.					
4	Writing assignments and research studies in graduate courses are/were always learning experiences.					
5	I tend/tended to spend a long time thinking about my duties of the thesis before beginning.					
6	Writing an academic paper or thesis is/was like a journey.					
7	I need/needed special encouragement to do my best in thesis writing.					
8	I worry/worried so much about my writing that it prevents me from getting started.					
Item	Supervising Process					
9	The role of the supervisor is/was well-defined and consistent for each student in the program.					
10	My supervisor is/was readily available and plays a significant					

	role in my development throughout the ELT MA program.					
11	I maintain/maintained a healthy and productive relationship with my supervisor.					
12	I am/was receiving ongoing feedback regarding my thesis progress from my supervisor.					
13	I am/was satisfied with the amount of time I spend with my supervisor.					
14	I am/was satisfied with the quality of time I spend with my supervisor.					
15	I am/was satisfied with my supervisor the support they gives/gave me.					

PART VI. OVERALL THOUGHTS ON THE PROGRAM

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item	Overall Evaluation	1	2	3	4	5
1	I believe what I have learned in this program will be valuable for my future.					
2	The program has increased my ability of self-evaluation.					
3	By the end of this program, I feel/felt competent enough to do research on the ELT.					
4	By the end of this program, I feel/felt that I will be able to carry out research in my field on ELT-related studies.					
5	The variety of the courses opened in the program meets the needs of the graduate students.					
6	The total number of credits that graduate students should take during the course period is enough for the program.					
7	I would recommend my program to prospective students.					

PART VII. OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. Could you write a brief paragraph (3-10 sentences / 75-200 words) to explain your overall thoughts about the strengths and weaknesses of the METU ELT MA program?
2. How does/did the thesis writing process make you feel in general? Could you briefly (3-10 sentences / 75-200 words) describe your emotions and thoughts on the process?
3. Do you have further suggestions (3-10 sentences / 75-200 words) for the improvement of the METU ELT MA program? (Offered courses, instruction, supervising relationships, advisory programs for thesis writing, etc.)
4. Have you experienced personal or work-related issues during your thesis writing period? Could you give specific examples for the problems you encountered? (3-10 sentences / 75-200 words)
5. If you have studied at METU ELT MA program during the Covid-19 outbreak, how would you assess the effect of the pandemic on your study period (courses, assignments, thesis etc.)? (Max. 200 words)
*If you have graduated before the pandemic, you can skip this question.

D. MODIFIED QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

Dear participants,

This questionnaire has been designed to gather your opinions on the METU ELT MA program. Please follow the instructions carefully and make your selections accordingly. Your responses to the questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. No responses will be linked to your name or personal identification. Your answers will be much appreciated.

The questionnaire consists of seven parts to collect your personal information and ideas on the reasons for enrolling in the MA program, METU ELT MA program courses, program components, thesis writing and supervision process, overall thoughts on the program, and open-ended questions about the program and study period.

Thank you for your participation and contributions to this study.

PART I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please choose the best answers of your demographic information.

1.1. Your age:

1.2. Please choose if you are a graduate or a student:

- ☐ graduated from the METU ELT MA program. (Please write the year of graduation.)
- ☐ finished the course period of the METU ELT MA program.

1.3. Your current job:

- ☐ English Teacher at a public school (MoNE Schools).
- ☐ English Teacher at a private school.
- ☐ English Instructor at a public university.
- ☐ English Instructor at a foundation university.
- ☐ English Tutor at a language school.
- ☐ If your job is not listed above, please specify _____.
- ☐ I work in another field than teaching. Please specify, _____
- ☐ I am not working right now.

1.4. Which levels have you taught so far? (Please select accordingly.)

- ☐ Kindergarten / Young Learners
- ☐ Elementary School
- ☐ High School
- ☐ Preparatory School

- ☐ ELT Program
- ☐ Department of Modern Languages
- ☐ Translation- Interpretation
- ☐ Literature Related Departments
- ☐ Linguistics
- ☐ Other. Please specify, _____.

1.5. Have you been teaching before enrolling in the master's program?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

1.6. Have you been teaching during your master's studies?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

1.7. Years of professional experience:

1.8. Your university for undergraduate degree:

- ☐ Please specify the name of the university_____.

1.9. Your undergraduate degree is on:

- ☐ ELT
- ☐ English Literature
- ☐ Linguistics
- ☐ American Literature
- ☐ Translation and Interpretation
- ☐ Other, please specify_____.

1.10. Do you pursue doctoral studies? (This question is only for the graduates.

Students can select "Not Applicable".)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not Applicable

PART II. REASONS FOR ENROLLING IN THE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

Please rank the reasons for enrolling in the master's degree program from 1 to 5 (1 =not important at all, 2=not important, 3=undecided, 4=important, 5 =highly important) according to their importance levels for you.

		Not important at all	Not important	Undecided	Important	Highly important
Item	Reasons	1	2	3	4	5
1	To have a PhD degree.					
2	To pursue an academic career.					
3	To become more professional in teaching.					
4	To meet the criteria for recruitment at public or foundation universities as an instructor.					
5	To earn a higher salary.					
6	To widen the current professional knowledge in the ELT field.					
7	Merely to get a master's degree.					
8	Other(s). Please specify.					

Please rank the following factors for choosing the METU ELT MA program from 1 to 5 (1 =not important at all, 2=not important, 3=undecided, 4=important, 5 =highly important) according to their importance levels for you.

		Not important at all	Not important	Undecided	Important	Highly important
Item	Factors	1	2	3	4	5
9	The reputation of METU					
10	Program design (course variety, instruction etc.) and success					
11	Prospects of employment					
12	Competencies/research areas of academics in the faculty					
13	Academic environment in the faculty					
14	University/faculty network					
15	METU campus facilities					
16	Other(s). Please specify.					

PART III. METU ELT MA PROGRAM COURSES

To what extent have the courses below contributed to your thesis writing in terms of improving research skills? Please choose from 1 to 5 according to their levels of contribution for you. (1=Not contributing at all, 2=Slightly contributing, 3=Moderately contributing, 4= Very contributing, 5= Extremely contributing)

		Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely	Not Applicable
Item	Program Courses	1	2	3	4	5	
1	ELT 506 Second Language Acquisition						
2	ELT 554 Quantitative Research Methods and Ethics in Language Research						
3	ELT 555 Qualitative Research: Theory and Methods						
4	ELT 507 Curriculum Dev.For Eng. For Specific Purpose						
5	ELT 509 Literature in the Teaching of English						
6	ELT 513 Linguistics for English Language Teaching						
7	ELT 517 Materials Evaluation & Develop.in ELT						
8	ELT 518 English Language Testing						
9	ELT 520 English-Turkish Contrastive Analysis						
10	ELT 521 Cultural Aspects of Language Teaching						
11	ELT 522 Lexical Semantics						
12	ELT 523 Using Corpora for Language Research						
13	ELT 525 Approaches, Methods & Techniques in ELT I						
14	ELT 526 Approaches, Methods & Techniques in ELT II						
15	ELT 528 Instructional Tech. in English Language Teaching						
16	ELT 530 Modern Theory of Grammar						
17	ELT 531 Cognitive Linguistics						
18	ELT 541 Language Acquisition						
19	ELT 542 Bilingualism and Bilingual Education						

20	ELT 551 Pragmatics of Spoken Interaction						
21	ELT 552 Critical Pedagogy and Language Education						
22	Other(s)						

PART IV. PROGRAM COMPONENTS

In this part, you are going to give an answer to the items related to the program components including program description, content, instruction, resources, atmosphere, departmental support and assessment.

Please read the statements of the program components carefully and rate your level of agreement with the item on a five-point basis (1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree) accordingly.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item	Program Description	1	2	3	4	5
1	There are qualified professors lecturing at METU ELT department.					
2	The program introduces major theoretical and methodological issues in language learning/acquisition and teaching					
3	The number of support and office members (including research assistants) in the department is enough.					
4	The program encourages taking courses from the related disciplines.					
5	The program encourages students for its international exchange opportunities.					
6	The program prepares students to be good researchers in the field of ELT.					
Item	Program Content					
7	The program content is relevant to my needs as a language teacher/instructor or a researcher.					
8	The program is up-to-date.					
9	The program gives me adequate training for the needs of Turkish context.					

10	The program puts emphasis on the balance between theory and practice.					
Item	Program Instruction					
11	The quality of instruction (teaching materials used, teaching methods, faculty member's teaching strategy) in my courses is good.					
12	The program balances teacher-centered and student-centered learning in its course.					
13	The program equips with the necessary instructional technologies and other resources.					
14	The program utilizes the online teaching platforms whenever it is necessary.					
15	Technology is integrated effectively in the courses.					
16	Master's students could get appropriate feedbacks in the courses by the lecturers.					
Item	Program Atmosphere					
17	The department has a humane environment characterized by mutual respect by students and professors.					
18	Master's students tend to help and support each other to meet the academic demands of the department.					
19	There is respectful communication between faculty and master's students regarding student needs, concerns, and suggestions.					
Item	Program Assessment					
20	Program uses different means of assessment which are appropriate for the developmental level of master's students.					
21	Assessment techniques in the courses are in parallel with the course contents.					
22	The means of assessment in the courses is equitable and appropriate.					
23	The grading in the courses is fair for each student.					
24	Essays, research papers, presentations are relevant for the course assessment.					

PART V. THESIS WRITING AND SUPERVISION PROCESS

Please read the statements of the thesis writing and supervising process carefully and rate your level of agreement with the item on a five-point basis (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree) accordingly.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item	Thesis Writing	1	2	3	4	5
1	I am familiar with the components of a research paper or thesis components thanks to program courses.					
2	Writing assignments and research studies in graduate courses are always learning experiences for thesis writing.					
3	I need special encouragement and support from the faculty as well as my supervisor during my thesis writing.					
Item	Supervising Process					
4	In this program, the role of the supervisor is well-defined and consistent for each student in the program.					
5	My supervisor is accessible anytime.					
6	My supervisor plays a significant role in my development throughout the thesis writing process.					
7	I maintain a healthy and/or productive relationship with my supervisor.					
8	I am receiving ongoing feedback regarding my thesis progress from my supervisor.					

PART VI. OVERALL THOUGHTS ON THE PROGRAM

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Item	Overall Evaluation	1	2	3	4	5

1	By the end of this program, I can successfully evaluate existing instructional programs, procedures, assessment practices, language teaching methods and techniques.					
2	I am aware of the theoretical and applied knowledge about contemporary approaches, methods and techniques related to the acquisition of English as a second/foreign language.					
4	By the end of this program, I feel that I will be able to carry out research in the ELT field.					
5	The program achieved its objectives and goals.					
6	I would recommend my program to prospective students.					

PART VII. OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

1. Could you write a brief paragraph to explain your overall thoughts about the strengths of the METU ELT MA program?

2. Could you write a brief paragraph to explain your overall thoughts about the weaknesses of the METU ELT MA program?

3. Describe your emotions and thoughts on the thesis writing process.

4. Do you have further suggestions for the improvement of the METU ELT MA program? (Offered courses, instruction, supervising relationships, advisory programs for thesis writing, etc.)

5. Have you experienced personal or work-related issues during your thesis writing period?
Could you give specific examples for the problems you encountered?

6. If you have studied at METU ELT MA program during the Covid-19 outbreak, how would you assess the effect of the pandemic on your study period (courses, assignments, thesis etc.)?

*If you have graduated before the pandemic, you can skip this question.



E. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Part I. Personal Information

- Could you briefly give information about yourself?
- Why did you decide to pursue a master's degree and why METU?

Part II. Program & Outcomes

- What were your graduate goals when you first started to the program?
- What were your expectations of the program content, courses, instruction, and program atmosphere in the beginning? Have those expectations met or not?
- Do you think the courses given in the ELT MA program are satisfactory for you in terms of the variety, field, and content? Why?
- How would you evaluate the quality of instruction in those courses?
- What are your recommendations and suggestions for improving both compulsory and elective courses offered in the department?
- How would you evaluate the means of assessment and grading in the courses?
- What do you think about the program atmosphere in terms of faculty student relationship etc.?
- What professional competencies are the graduates expected to possess by the time they finish the program? Do you think the program achieved its objectives?
- In general, how would you evaluate the ELT MA program at METU? (Strengths and weaknesses)
- Do you have any suggestions for the improvement of the METU ELT MA program?

Part III. Thesis Writing and Supervision Process

- Do you think that you can/could use the knowledge you gained from the research courses and the other courses you took in the department efficiently during the thesis process? Why?

- Are/were you able to consult your advisor regularly for the meaningful feedback throughout the process?
- Overall, are/were you happy with your advisor?
- Are/were you working (as a teacher/instructor, etc.) at the same time while you are/were writing your thesis?
- What are your thoughts about being a graduate student and a teacher or working person at the same time?
- What kind of problems do/did you encounter while writing your thesis? What is/was the most challenging thing?
- Have you ever thought about quitting your thesis? If 'yes', what was the biggest reason for that?
- What kind of support should the program and supervisors provide for students who are in thesis writing period? Are there any shortcomings you have identified in this regard?
- Do you have any other comments?

**F. DESCRIPTION OF GRADUATE COURSES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE
TEACHING MA PROGRAM**

**ELT 506
SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: Surveying current research in language acquisition with special emphasis on similarities and differences between child and adult language, between native and foreign language acquisition.

**ELT 507
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR ENGLISH FOR SPE.PURPOSES**

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: Curriculum development and course design as applied to ESP; language functions, notions and speech acts; principles of functional /notional or communicative syllabus strategies and techniques; designing structural interviews and questionnaires; discourse analysis and teacher training for ESP.

**ELT 508
RESEARCH METHODS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS**

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: The course aims to provide a comprehensive introduction to the research methods and techniques used in the field of applied linguistics and to help students develop skills necessary to design and implement research in the field. The first section of the course provides a brief review of the main concepts in the area while the second part focuses on quantitative methodology and scrutinises experimental, quasi-experimental and nonexperimental research designs as well as the data collection and analyses procedures appropriate for this brand of research. The third part of the course is devoted to qualitative research designs and examines case studies, ethnographies, action research, grounded theory and phenomenology. It also walks the students through the basics of gathering and interpreting qualitative data. The course ends by discussing topics such as mixed research designs, writing the research and practicalities in applied linguistics research.

ELT 509
LITERATURE IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: Significant contributions of literature to the process and purpose of learning English as a foreign language; poetry, prose and drama in the EFL classroom; approaches to selecting texts for different levels of learners.

ELT 513
LINGUISTICS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: Contributions of linguistics to the field of foreign language teaching; current approaches to the linguistic analysis of English.

ELT 517
MATERIALS EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN ELT

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: Reviewing methods of evaluating language teaching materials and adaptation techniques and applying evaluation and adaptation criteria to materials currently employed; determining appropriate discovery procedures for developing effective language teaching materials through applied research.

ELT 518
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTING

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: Major aspects of English language testing: item analysis and interpretation of test scores; subjective and objective tests; procedures in preparing different kinds of test items appropriate for testing different language skills; practice in item writing and statistical methods.

ELT 520
ENGLISH-TURKISH CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: Introducing current approaches to contrastive analysis; comparing and contrasting English and Turkish in the areas of phonetics and phonology, syntax and semantics with special emphasis on problem areas in language teaching and learning.

ELT 521
CULTURAL ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: Providing language teachers with a basis for introducing a cultural component into their teaching; significance of culture in teaching English as a foreign language; perspectives on how language and culture interact, and on the significant distinction between understanding and participating in a foreign culture.

ELT 522
LEXICAL SEMANTICS

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: History of lexical semantics, arguments and theta-roles; lexical conceptual structures; verb classes and alternations; lexical aspects; events; unaccusativity; ergativity; linking from lexicon to syntax.

ELT 523
USING CORPORA FOR LANGUAGE RESEARCH

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (0-0)3

ECTS Credit: 6.0

Description: The course aims to investigate language using corpora. Special emphasis is given to the usage of corpora with a linguistic and cognitive science perspective. The topics include: Definition and varieties of corpora; building a corpus: sampling, representativeness, encoding and annotation; characteristics of major available corpora; necessary statistics to interpret corpus data; using corpora: corpora in psycholinguistics, syntax, semantics, discourse, etc.; using tools for corpus-based language studies. The course includes conducting research projects using available tools.

ELT 525
APPROACHES, METHODS AND TECHNIQUES IN ELT

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: Examining major approaches to, methods and techniques of English language teaching; studying linguistic and psychological theories behind them; practical applications on techniques for teaching various language skills, specifically listening and speaking.

ELT 526
APPROACHES, METHODS AND TECHNIQUES IN ELT

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: A continuation of ELT 525, practical work on English language teaching by focusing on the techniques in teaching grammar, vocabulary, reading

and writing; discussion and evaluation of applications of approaches, methods and techniques.

ELT 528

INSTRUCTIONAL TECH. IN ENG.LANG.TEACH.

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: Current developments in the use of instructional technology in language teaching; use of computers, interactive video, television and video in language teaching; approaches to the design, evaluation, development and application of English language teaching courseware by using instructional technology.

ELT 529

BRAIN-BASED LEARNING AND LANGUAGE TEACHING

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: Introducing a new paradigm, known as brain-compatible or brain-based learning, providing language teachers with research from the discipline of neuroscience, biology and psychology to design brain-compatible materials and brain-based curriculum that encompass the role of emotions, patterns, meaningfulness, enriched environments, body rhythms, attention span of the brain and rest, attitudes, stress and relaxation, learner states, trauma, multiple ways of brain-compatible assessment, music, movement, memory, retrieval of information, perception, meaning construction, cognition, nonconscious learning, motivation, creativity, nutrition and brain-gym in the language classroom.

ELT 530

MODERN THEORY OF GRAMMAR

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: This course will examine the theory of generative grammar in its minimalist version. The empirical adequacy of generative grammar as a system of mental representations is one of the main topics of investigation in the course.

ELT 531

COGNITIVE LINGUISTICS

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: The course will examine models for acquisition, processing and application of knowledge as the object of cognitive linguistics and investigate the cognitive aspects of the different branches linguistics.

ELT 532
**EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND NEURO-LINGUISTIC
PROGRAMMING FOR TEACHERS**

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: The course aims to help teachers and teacher trainers to raise their self-awareness in their academic and personal lives; to equip them with effective verbal/non-verbal communication skills and powerful NeuroLinguistic Programming principles and techniques to improve the quality of their interactions with their students, trainees and colleagues in the educational settings and in their daily lives.

ELT 541
LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: The nature of child language; universal grammar; theories and research methods in the acquisition of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics; an overview of second language acquisition.

ELT 542
BILINGUALISM AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (0-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: Issues of Bilingualism with across-disciplinary perspective. Linguistic, psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and educational aspects of bilingualism.

ELT 551
THE PRAGMATICS OF SPOKEN INTERACTION

METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3

ECTS Credit: 8.0

Description: Introduction to discourse analysis; structure of spoken interaction; socio-pragmatic constraints on interaction; speech act analysis; cross-cultural speech act analysis; interlanguage pragmatic development; coherence in spoken discourse; prosody and non-verbal communication; backchanneling; introduction to the conversation analytic approach; speech events and classroom discourse; corpus-based approaches to cross-cultural speech act and speech event analysis.

ELT 554 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS IN LANGUAGE RESEARCH METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3 ECTS Credit: 8.0 Description: Focusing on the foundations of quantitative inquiry, this course aims to introduce graduate students to the design and implementation of quantitative research projects. Course participants will explore various quantitative research traditions such as designing and executing experiments, preparing and analyzing surveys and data elicitation tasks that give way to quantitative analysis.
ELT 555 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: THEORY AND METHODS METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3 ECTS Credit: 8.0 Description: Focusing on the epistemological foundations of qualitative inquiry, this course aims to introduce graduate students to the design and implementation of qualitative research projects. Course participants will explore various qualitative research traditions such as Interviewing, Case Study, Action Research, Ethnography, Narrative Inquiry, Phenomenological Studies, and Grounded Theory.
ELT 561 LINGUISTICS AND FORMAL LANGUAGES METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (3-0)3 ECTS Credit: 8.0 Description: The course aims at investigating language as a knowledge-based process. It elaborates the relationship between formal language theory and natural language and relates language theory to its computational machinery.
ELT 590 SEMINAR IN ELT METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (0-0)0 ECTS Credit: 10.0 Description: Preparation towards M.A. thesis proposal through prescribed readings; written or oral presentation of the work developed.
ELT 599 MASTER'S THESIS METU Credit (Theoretical-Laboratory hours/week): (0-0)0 ECTS Credit: 50.0
ELT 801-850 SPECIAL STUDIES

**G. ELT MA PROGRAM GRADUATE COURSE SCHEDULE EXTENDING
TO YEARS 2018-2022**

ELT Graduate Courses Offered in 2019-2020	
<i>Fall Semester</i>	<i>Spring Semester</i>
ELT 506 Second Language Acquisition (Must Course)	ELT 555 Qualitative Research: Theory and Methods (Must Course)
ELT 554 Quantitative Methods and Ethics in Language Research (Must Course)	ELT 509 Literature in the Teaching of English
ELT 552 Critical Pedagogy and Language Education	ELT 528 Instructional Technology in ELT
ELT 542 Bilingualism and Bilingual Education	ELT 551 Pragmatics of Spoken Interaction
ELT 523 Using Corpora for Language Research	

ELT Graduate Courses Offered in 2018-2019	
<i>Fall Semester</i>	<i>Spring Semester</i>
ELT 506 Second Language Acquisition (Must Course)	ELT 555 Qualitative Research: Theory and Methods (Must Course)
ELT 554 Quantitative Methods in Language Research	ELT 525 Approaches Methods and Techniques in ELT I
ELT 507 Curriculum Development for English for Specific Purposes	ELT 529 Brain-based Learning and Language Teaching
ELT 521 Cultural Aspects of Language Teaching	ELT 551 Pragmatic Aspects of Spoken Interaction

ELT 528 Instructional Technology in ELT	ELT 521 Cultural Aspects of Language Teaching
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ELT Graduate Courses Offered in 2020-2021	
<i>Fall Semester</i>	<i>Spring Semester</i>
ELT 554 Quantitative Methods and Ethics in Language Research (Must Course)	ELT 555 Qualitative Research: Theory and Methods (Must Course)
ELT 506 Second Language Acquisition (Must Course)	ELT 509 Literature in the Teaching of English
ELT 525 Approaches Methods and Techniques in ELT I	ELT 528 Instructional Technology in ELT
ELT 521 Cultural Aspects of Language Teaching	ELT 529 Brain-based Learning and Language Teaching
	ELT 552 Critical Pedagogy and Language Education

ELT Graduate Courses Offered in 2021-2022	
<i>Fall Semester</i>	<i>Spring Semester</i>
ELT 554 Quantitative Methods and Ethics in Language Research (Must Course)	ELT 555 Qualitative Research: Theory and Methods (Must Course)
ELT 506 Second Language Acquisition (Must Course)	ELT 521 Cultural Aspects of Language Teaching
ELT 507 Curriculum Development for English for Specific Purposes	ELT 528 Instructional Technology in ELT
ELT 523 Using Corpora for Language Research	ELT 542 Bilingualism and Bilingual Education
	ELT 552 Critical Pedagogy and Language Education

H. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

ORTA DOĐU TEKNİK NİVERSİTESİ İNGİLİZ DİLİ ĐRETİMİ YKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMINA İLİŐKİN ĐRENCİ VE MEZUNLARIN GRŐLERİ

GiriŐ

nc dzey veya ncl eĐitim olarak da adlandırılan yksek Đretim, lise veya orta Đretim seviyesinin tesinde akademik bir dereceye ile sonulanan eĐitimidir. Lisans eĐitimini tamamladıktan ve bir lisans derecesi kazandıktan sonra, lisansst eĐitim olarak da bilinen lisansst eĐitim, yksekĐretim sisteminin bir bileŐenidir ve Đretim, araŐtırma ve Đrenimi bir arada gerektirir. Yksek lisans veya doktora (doktora) derecesine sahip olmak, akademik unvan almak iin gerekli bir bileŐendir. Đrencilerin eĐitimlerine devam edebilmeleri iin yksek lisans eĐitiminin n koŐulu olarak gerekten bir lisans derecesi almaları gerekir ve ayrıca minimum CGPA, dil kanıtı puanı ve minimum ALES puanı, giriŐ sınavı puanı gibi nceden tanımlanmıŐ ek kriterler de vardır. (Yazar, 2020).

Yksek lisans programları, lisansst eĐitimin temeli olarak hizmet eder ve akademisyenlerin ve bilim adamlarının yetiŐtirilmesi iin aıka gereklidir. Sonu olarak hem bir lkenin sosyoekonomik kalkınmasında hem de teknik ve bilimsel geliŐmeleri yakalamasında stratejik bir rol oynamaktadır. İ hukuk sistemi iinde bilginin iletilmesi ve g, bilim adamlarının arabulucu rol olarak nitelendirilebilir.

Ulusal programların bilimsel byme konusunda akademik olarak arzu edilen en nemli ıktılarından biri de lisansst eĐitimidir. Lisansst eĐitimin kapsayıcı iŐlevi, bilgi retimi ve kullanımı iin insan yeteneklerini ve diĐer durumlarda problem zme yeterliliklerini glendirmektir (Karaman ve Bakırcı, 2010). Bu nedenle hem ulusal hem de uluslararası ortamda son bilimsel geliŐmelere ayak uydurabilmek iin

lisansüstü eğitimin kalitesi çok önemlidir (Alhas, 2006). Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve İngiltere gibi dünyadaki bazı ülkelerde, yüksek öğrenim ve araştırmaya yaptıkları göze çarpan yatırım, burs olanakları açısından tarih boyunca farklı zamanlarda ileri eğitim için evleri merkezlemelerini ve öğrencileri ve akademisyenleri ilerlemeleri için cezbetmelerini sağlamıştır (LaPidus, 1989).

Yabancı dil öğretmeni yetiştirme programlarının başarılarına ve deneyimli ve nitelikli dil eğitmenlerinin yetiştirilmesine katkılarına bu kadar önem verilmesiyle, İngilizce öğrenmek ve öğretmek dünya çapında yaygın bir kabul görmüştür. Yabancı dil becerileri eğitim, endüstri, tıp, teknoloji veya bilim gibi hemen hemen her araştırma alanında kesinlikle hayati önem taşıdığından, dil eğitimi programlarının etkinliği uluslararası gelişmelere ayak uydurmada önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Programlarda yüksek kalite ve etkinlik istendiğinden, istenilen kaliteye ulaşmak için bir kontrol mekanizması olmalıdır. Bunu yapmanın olası yolları vardır, örneğin sistematik değerlendirme, mevcut dil eğitim programlarında ihtiyaç duyulan kaliteyi elde etmenin bir yöntemidir (Öztürk, 2015).

Mevcut literatür, öğretim stratejileri, dersler ve diğer program bileşenleri gibi ELT'deki Master of Arts (MA) programlarının önemli unsurlarının mezunlar, öğrenciler ve profesörler gibi paydaşların gözünden araştırılması hakkında fazla bir şey sağlamamaktadır. Dolayısıyla tez yazımını içeren program bileşenlerine Türkiye bağlamında özellikle öğrenciler ve mezunlar açısından bakıldığında özellikle lisansüstü düzeydeki programların araştırılmadığı sonucunu çıkarmak mümkündür. Program değerlendirme, programın zayıf yönlerinin iyileştirilmesi için vazgeçilmez bir unsur olduğundan, öğrenci ve mezunların algılarına göre program değerlendirme sonuçları ışığında gerekli değişiklik, değişiklik veya istisnalara karar verilebilir.

Yüksek lisans programlarından programı bitirmiş mezunlar ve eğitim görmekte olan öğrenciler paydaşların üyeleri olarak önemli bir değerlendirme kaynağıdır. Devam eden programların derinlemesine araştırma analizleri kullanılarak değerlendirilmesi ve iyileştirilmesi gereken alanların belirlenmesi akademik müfredatta önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Bildiğimiz kadarıyla, lisansüstü düzeyde İngilizce öğretim programını değerlendiren önemli çalışmalar bulunmamaktadır. Lisansüstü eğitim Türkiye'de çok sayıda araştırmaya konu olmasına rağmen, yüksek lisans programları bu kadar

araştırılmamıştır. Benzer şekilde, ELT'deki yüksek lisans programlarını değerlendiren çok fazla çalışma yoktur. Türkiye bağlamında belirli programları değerlendiren bazı çalışmalar bulunmaktadır (Kanatlar, 1996; Tezel, 2006). En kapsamlı değerlendirme çalışmalarından biri, Türkiye'deki İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programlarını araştıran Kırmızı (2011) tarafından yapılmıştır.

Çalışmanın Amacı ve Araştırma Soruları

Bu çalışmada, öğrencilerin ve mezunların öğrenimleri süresince MA ELT programına ilişkin açıklama, içerik, öğretim, atmosfer, değerlendirme, tez yazımını içeren program bileşenlerine bakış açıları ve lisansüstü öğrencileri olarak ihtiyaçları, keşfedilmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Öğrenci ve mezunların bölüme yönelik algılarının araştırılmasındaki temel gerekçe, programın iyileştirilmesine yönelik bazı önerilerde bulunabilmektir. Sadece ODTÜ'de değil, ülke çapında ELT MA programından yılda kayıtlı öğrencilerden daha az öğrenci mezun oluyor. Buna ek olarak, lisansüstü öğrencilerin bir kısmı özellikle tez döneminde okulu bırakma eğilimindedir. Bu nedenle, çalışma, lisansüstü programlara olumlu yansımalar ve iyileştirmeler yapılabilmesi için mezunların ve yüksek lisans öğrencilerinin yüksek lisans programlarından beklentilerine ilişkin literatüre katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu çalışma, ODTÜ'nün evrensel olarak kabul görmüş ve Türkiye'nin en iyi üniversitelerinden biri olarak kalmış bir araştırma üniversitesi olarak gösterdiği performans nedeniyle sıralı karma yöntem çalışması olarak tasarlanmıştır. bölüm bileşenleri ve tez yazımı daha kapsamlı ve derinlemesine araştırma gerektirir. Karma yöntem tasarımı, araştırmacıların tek başına tek bir yöntemden daha güçlü ve önemli kanıtlara güvenmelerini sağlar (Yin, 2018).

Bu çalışmada araştırılması amaçlanan ve alt soruları olan dört temel araştırma sorusu aşağıda sunulmuştur:

1) Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi (ODTÜ) İngiliz Dili Eğitimi (İÖ) alanında Yüksek Lisans (MA) programı öğrencilerini ve mezunlarını, yüksek lisans eğitimlerini sürdürmeye ve İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programına kaydolmaya motive eden nedenler nelerdir?

a. ODTÜ ELT Yüksek Lisans programı öğrencilerinin ve mezunlarının ODTÜ ELT Yüksek Lisans programına kayıt olma ve yüksek lisans yapma nedenleri arasında anlamlı bir farklılık var mıdır?

2) ODTÜ ELT Yüksek Lisans programı öğrencileri ve mezunları programı program bileşenleri, tez yazım ve denetleme süreci açısından nasıl değerlendirmektedir?

a. ODTÜ'de İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programı öğrenci ve mezunlarının programın program bileşenleri, tez yazım ve denetim süreci açısından değerlendirilmesine ilişkin görüşleri arasında anlamlı bir farklılık var mıdır?

3) ODTÜ'de İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programı öğrencilerinin ve mezunlarının tez yazım sürecinde ve denetim sürecinde yaşadıkları zorluklar ve deneyimler nelerdir?

a. ODTÜ ELT Yüksek Lisans programı öğrencileri ve mezunları, program derslerinin tez yazımında araştırma becerilerine katkısını nasıl görmektedir?

4) ODTÜ'de İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programı öğrenci ve mezunlarının program bileşenlerinin, tez yazım ve denetim sürecinin iyileştirilmesine yönelik önerileri nelerdir?

Türkiye'de ELT yüksek lisans programlarını ve bunların bileşenlerini, program içeriği, öğretimi, bölüm ve danışman desteği ile program olanakları gibi kapsamlı bir şekilde araştıran çalışmalar yetersizdir. Buradan hareketle bu çalışmada, yüksek lisans öğrencilerinin ihtiyaçlarının yüksek lisans programı tarafından dersler ve araştırma becerileri açısından programın hangi yönleri ile etkin bir şekilde karşılanıp karşılanmadığının belirlenmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Bu araştırma, Türkiye'nin birinci sınıf üniversitelerinden biri olması ve bünyesinde açık bir şekilde başarılı ve gelecek vadeden öğrencilerin çoğunlukta olması nedeniyle ODTÜ ELT Yüksek Lisans programı öğrencileri ve mezunları ile yapılması amaçlanmıştır. ODTÜ'nün İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programını doğrudan araştıran yakın tarihli bir çalışma bulunmadığından, bu çalışmanın özellikle lisansüstü eğitim düzeyi için İngilizce Öğretimi araştırmalarına katkı sağlaması beklenmektedir.

Ayrıca, 2019 yılından itibaren Türkiye'deki üniversitelerde öğretim görevlisi olarak istihdam edilmeyi planlayan ve Türkiye'deki üniversitelerde ELT yüksek lisans programları yapan dil öğretmenlerinin ELT alanında tezli yüksek lisans derecesine sahip olmaları YÖK tarafından zorunlu olarak duyurulmaktadır. olarak daha rekabetçi ve talepkar. İngilizce öğretmenleri için İngilizce öğretmenliği alanında yüksek lisans derecesi, Türkiye'deki işe alım süreci de dahil olmak üzere birçok nedenden dolayı hayati olsa da, bazı öğrencilerin lisansüstü eğitimlerini zamanında bitirmeleri, eğitimleri sırasında ortaya çıkan nedenlerden dolayı zor olabilir ve öğrenim süresi nihayetinde bazı öğrenciler yüksek lisans derecesi alamadan okulu bırakmak zorunda kalabilir.

Yöntem

ODTÜ ELT Yüksek Lisans programının tez yazım süreci ve denetim sürecini içeren açıklama, içerik, öğretim, atmosfer ve değerlendirme gibi program bileşenlerinin öğrenci ve mezunların algılarına dayalı olarak incelenmesini amaçlayan bu araştırma, Çalıştıkları program, sıralı bir karma yöntem çalışması olarak yürütülmüştür, çünkü bu özel araştırma tasarımı, araştırılan fenomenin tek bir araştırma yöntemi çalışmasına göre daha derinlemesine anlaşılmasına olanak tanır (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). Araştırmacılar, yalnızca bir yöntemle güvenmek yerine, karma yöntem tasarımı sayesinde daha güçlü ve daha anlamlı verilere güvenebilirler (Yin, 2018). Karma yöntem çalışmaları literatürde üçüncü yol (Gorard ve Taylor, 2004), hareket (Teddle ve Tashakkori, 2003), paradigma (Johnson ve Onwuegbuzie, 2004) olarak tanımlanmaktadır, bununla ilgili birçok tanım bulunmaktadır. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie ve Turner (2007), birçok karma yöntem araştırmacısı tarafından karma yöntemler için birkaç farklı tanım üzerine inşa edilen karma yöntem araştırması için ortak bir tanım bulmak için birlikte çalıştılar.

Bununla birlikte, kullanışlılığına ve basitliğine rağmen karma yöntem tasarımının uygulanması zordur. Sıralı karma yöntemli bir çalışma yürütmeye karar veren araştırmacılar, bazı metodolojik hususları dikkate almalıdır. Bu kaygılar, nicel ve nitel verilerin toplanmasına ve analizine verilen önemi veya ağırlığı, bunların sırasını ve nicel ve nitel aşamaların ilişkilendirildiği ve bulguların bütünleştirildiği araştırma sürecindeki aşamaları içerir (Cresswell et al., 2003).

Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi (ODTÜ), hem ulusal hem de uluslararası akademik mükemmellik ölçütlerine göre bir araştırma üniversitesi olarak Türkiye'nin en iyi akademik kurumlarından biri olarak kabul edildiği için bu çalışma için seçilmiştir. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışmanın bulguları, önde gelen üniversitelerden birinde daha önce eğitim görmüş veya okumuş olan öğrenci ve mezunların bakış açılarına ışık tutabilir. Ayrıca, bu kurumun daha fazla araştırılması, Türkiye'deki ve dünyanın diğer ülkelerindeki diğer ELT yüksek lisans programlarının değerlendirilmesine duyulan ihtiyaç konusunda farkındalık yaratmak için örnek bir model sağlayabilir.

ODTÜ'de İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümü 1980'li yıllardan beri İngilizce öğretmeni yetiştirmektedir ve hatta bu alanda lisansüstü eğitim veren ilk bölümlerden biridir. Bu çalışmada, ODTÜ İngilizce Öğretmenliği Yüksek Lisans programı öğrencilerinin ve mezunlarının algıları sıralı karma yöntem çalışması ile araştırılmıştır.

İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Yüksek Lisans programına kayıt yaptıran öğrencilere, mesleğin hem teorik hem de uygulamalı yönlerinde bir temel ve ayrıca dil öğrenimi/edinimi ve öğretiminde önemli teorik ve metodolojik konulara giriş sağlanır. Programın amacı, mezunlara İngiliz Dili Öğretimi ve Öğrenimi alanında hem nitel hem de nicel araştırmalarda alan araştırması yapmak için gerekli becerileri kazandırmaktır (Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, 2022a).

ODTÜ'de İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programından mezuniyet, zorunlu ve seçmeli derslerin en geç iki yıl içinde başarılı bir notla tamamlanması ve ardından tez savunması ile gerçekleşir. ODTÜ ELT Yüksek Lisans programında ders süresi genellikle toplam yedi ders (2 zorunlu ve 5 seçmeli ders) olmak üzere dört yarıyıl sürer ve ilave üç kredisiz ders vardır, bu nedenle programdaki her öğrenci için gerekli ders yükü 7 ders artı 3 kredisiz derstir.

Kurslar, dil öğrenimi/edinimi ve öğretimindeki temel teorik ve metodolojik konular hakkında fikir verir. Ayrıca, öğrenciler dilbilim veya İngiliz edebiyatı temelli bileşenleri olan dersler alabilirler. ODTÜ ELT Yüksek Lisans programı dersleri türlerine göre zorunlu dersler, seçmeli dersler ve kredisiz dersler olmak üzere üç başlık altında sunulmaktadır. Ayrıca tüm dersler, ODTÜ Akademik Kataloğuna (Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, 2022b) dayalı olarak açıklamalarıyla (bkz. Ek F) daha detaylı bir şekilde anlatılmaktadır.

Katılımcılar

Bu çalışmada, ODTÜ'de İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programı öğrencileri ve mezunları olmak üzere iki grup katılımcı bulunmaktadır. Birinci grup, son beş yılda (ODTÜ'nün araştırma üniversitesi olarak ilan edilmesinden sonra 2017-2022 yılları arasında) ODTÜ'de İngilizce Öğretmenliği Yüksek Lisans programından mezun olanlardır. Mezuniyet tarihlerinin son beş yılında olan katılımcıların seçilmesinin bir diğer nedeni de program hakkında daha güvenilir ve güncel veriler toplamaktır çünkü değerlendirme çalışmalarında en güncel bilgilere güvenmek önemlidir, aksi halde program hakkında katılımcılardan toplanan veriler programın iyileştirilmesi için anlamsız olabilir. İkinci grup, halihazırda ODTÜ'de İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programına kayıtlı olan yüksek lisans öğrencileridir. Ancak öğrencilerin bu çalışmaya katılabilmeleri için tez yazım süreçlerinde ders yüklerini tamamlamış olmaları gerekmektedir.

Veri Toplama Araçları

Bu karma yöntem çalışması, araştırma ve veri toplama sürecinin güvenilirliğini artırmak için farklı araçların kullanıldığı iki ayrı aşamadan oluşmaktadır. Araştırmanın nicel aşamasının ilk bölümünde sayısal verilerin toplanması için anket kullanılmış, nitel aşamasının ikinci yarısında ise bireysel görüşmeler yapılmıştır.

Araştırma sorularına cevap vermek için tasarlanan bu çalışmadaki araçlar, ana çalışma yapılmadan önce materyallerin ön testini yapmak için pilot uygulama yapılmıştır. Pilot uygulamanın nedeni, bu çalışmada kullanılan araçların güvenilirliğini ve geçerliliğini ve ayrıca bu çalışma ve daha sonraki araştırmalar için araçların fizibilitesini artırmaktır.

Veri Analizi

Araştırma sorularını ele almak için çeşitli betimsel analizler yapılmıştır. Nicel veriler IBM SPSS (28) programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bu çalışma karma yöntem çalışması olduğundan, öncelikle bireylerin demografik özellikleri ve anketi tanımlayıcı istatistiksel analiz kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın katılımcıları istatistiksel testlerin normal dağılım varsayımını ihlal ettiğinden, gruplar arasındaki farkları test etmek için farklı ortalamaların karşılaştırılmasına izin veren normal dağılmayan gruplar arasında IBM SPSS (28) programında parametrik olmayan Mann-Withney U Testi yapılmıştır.

Görüşmelerden toplanan nitel veriler kelimesi kelimesine yazıya dökülmüş ve İngilizce'ye çevrilmiştir. Geçerliliği oluşturmak için, çalışmanın güvenilirliğini ve verilerin güvenilirliğini sağlamak için üye kontrolü için katılımcılara kopyalanmış veriler gönderildi. Daha sonra tüm veriler araştırmacı tarafından nitel veri analiz teknikleri açık ve eksenel kodlama yardımıyla tema ve kodlar halinde düzenlenerek analiz edilmiştir. Kodlama işlemi sırasında transkripsiyon yapılan verilerin organizasyonu için nitel veri analiz yazılımı MAXQDA kullanılmıştır. Bu karma yöntemli vaka çalışmasında, iki veri setinin yorumlandığı sonuçların bir meta-analiz aşaması vardır. Bu nedenle, sonuçlar ayrı ayrı sunulduktan sonra karıştırma veya entegrasyon meydana gelmiştir (Tashakkori ve Teddlie, 2009).

Bulgular

Dört araştırma sorusu bağlamında, verilerin hem nitel hem de nicel analizlerinin sonuçları dört ana grupta sınıflandırılacak ve bu gruplara göre analiz edilecektir:

(1) ODTÜ ELT Yüksek Lisans programı mezunlarını ve halihazırdaki yüksek lisans öğrencilerini ODTÜ ELT Yüksek Lisans programına kaydolmaya ve yüksek lisans eğitimine devam etmeye motive eden nedenler ve öğrenciler ile mezunlar arasındaki farklar,

(2) ODTÜ'de İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programı öğrencilerinin ve mezunlarının programı program bileşenleri (program tanımı, içeriği, öğretimi, atmosfer ve değerlendirme) ile tez yazım ve denetim süreci açısından nasıl değerlendirdikleri ve program bileşenleri arasındaki farklar. ODTÜ'deki İngilizce

Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programının güçlü ve zayıf yönlerinin araştırılmasına yönelik ek bir amaç ile programın değerlendirmelerine ilişkin mezun ve yüksek lisans öğrencilerinin görüşleri ve ayrıca ODTÜ'de İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programından mezun olan ve mevcut yüksek lisans öğrencilerinin Programın iyileştirilmesi ve

(3) ODTÜ'de İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programı öğrencilerinin ve mezunlarının tez yazım süreci ile denetim süreci boyunca algıları ve deneyimleri, ayrıca program derslerinin tez yazımına yönelik araştırma becerilerine katkısına ilişkin algıları,

(4) ODTÜ'de İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programının geliştirilmesine yönelik öğrenci ve mezunların önerileri.

Nicel ölçek sonuçlarında öğrencilerin büyük çoğunluğu yüksek lisans yapma sebepleri arasında öncelikli olarak akademik kariyer yapma ve doktora programına devam etme sebeplerini sıralamıştır.

Katılımcılar tarafından ODTÜ tercihi sebepleri arasından en yüksek değer ODTÜ'nün bir araştırma ve eğitim kurumu olarak akademisyenlerinin ilgi alanları ve yetkinlikleri en yüksek ortalamaya sahip ifade olmuştur.

Nitel ölçek sonuçlarında ise katılımcıların yüksek lisans eğitimine başlama sebepleri arasında en çok tekrarlanan temalar aşağıdaki gibidir:

- Akademik kariyer yapma
- İş bulma (Öğretmen olma zorunluluğu)
- Askerliğin ertelenmesi

Diğer yandan katılımcıların ODTÜ'yü tercih nedenleri ise aşağıdaki şekilde sıralanmıştır:

- Kurumun tanındıklığı
- Prestijli üniversite
- Liberal çevre
- Fakültenin araştırma ilgi alanları
- Dilbilim üzerine çalışma şansı
- Kampüs konumu
- Araştırma odaklı program

Katılımcıların ODTÜ'deki ELT yüksek lisans programına ilişkin görüşleri toplandığında program bileşenleri ile ilgili elde edilen temalar aşağıda sunulmuştur.

Program tanımı:

- Nitelikli akademik personel ve araştırmacı yetiştirmek
- Teori ve pratik arasındaki dengesizlik

Program içeriği:

- Ders çeşitliliği
- Nitel Araştırma vs. Nicel Araştırma
- Dilbilim vs. ELT
- Güncel olmayan müfredat

Program öğretimi:

- Nitelikli profesörler
- Öğrenci odaklı program
- Profesörlerin derslere katılımının olmaması
- Teknoloji entegrasyonu eksikliği

Program atmosferi:

- İnsancıl ortam
- Yetersiz akademik birlik ve motivasyon
- Mükemmeliyetçi beklentiler
- Rekabet ortamı

Programdaki değerlendirme teknikleri (assessment):

- Geri bildirim eksikliği
- İş yükü yoğunluğu
- Adaletli notlandırma

Tez yazımı:

- Tez101
- İş yaşam dengesi
- Tez yazmakla ilgili kafa karışıklığı
- Veri toplamamanın zorluğu

Tez danışmanları:

- Ulaşılabilirlik
- Güç mesafesi
- İletişim eksikliği
- Rehberlik

Daha önce de belirtildiği gibi, ankette yer alan bazı maddelerin nicel sonuçları, bu çalışmanın nitel aşamasındaki sonuçlar arasında farklılık göstermiştir. Bu farklılıklar her bileşende değil, program içeriğinde, program öğretiminde, tez yazımında ve denetim sürecinde ortaya çıkmıştır. Nitel veriler bu çalışmada nicel verilerin tam tersini göstermiştir.

İlk fark programın güncel olması ile ilgiliydi. Ankette en yüksek ortalama puana sahip olan madde olmuştur. Katılımcıların çoğunluğu (n=5) derslerin eski müfredatlarının eski okumalar ve makaleler içerdiğine inanmaktadır. Ayrıca müfredatın günümüz öğretmenlerinin ve öğretim elemanlarının taleplerine uygun şekilde geliştirilmesini tavsiye ettiler.

İkinci fark ise derslerdeki öğretimin kalitesi (kullanılan öğretim materyalleri, öğretim yöntemleri, öğretim üyesinin öğretim stratejisi) iyi olmasıdır. Öğrencilerin büyük bir kısmı, aynı zamanda yüksek nitelikli hocalardan kaliteli eğitim aldıklarını düşünürken, derslerin anlatımı, sunumların sıkıcı olması ve hocaların derslere katılmaması nedeniyle katılımcılar tarafından fazla beğenilmedi.

Üçüncü fark, bir araştırma makalesinin veya tezin bileşenlerine aşına olduğum maddede idi. Nitel aşamada, katılımcılar bir araştırma makalesi veya tezinin bileşenlerine aşına olduklarını da belirtmişlerdir. Ancak, daha fazla ayrıntı eklediler ve bu, bileşenlere aşına olmalarına rağmen bir tezin nasıl yazılacağı konusunda büyük bir sorun olduğunu ortaya çıkardı.

Son olarak dördüncü fark, yöneticimle sağlıklı ve verimli bir ilişki sürdürdüğüm maddesinde bulunmuştur. Bu madde, öğrenciler ve müfettişler arasındaki kişisel ilişkiden kaynaklanmış olabilir. Ancak nitel aşamadaki katılımcılar, amirleri ile verimli bir ilişki yaşamadıklarını ifade etmiş ve buna bağlı olarak süreçten şikâyetçi olmuşlardır.

Tartışma ve Sonuç

Bu çalışmada, öğrencilerin ve mezunların tez yazımını da içeren öğrenim süreçleri için MA ELT programına yönelik görüşleri ve lisansüstü öğrenci olarak ihtiyaçları araştırılmaya çalışılmıştır. Öğrencilerin ve mezunların bölüme yönelik algılarının araştırılmasının temel gerekçesi, programın iyileştirilmesine yönelik bazı önerilerde bulunabilmektir.

ODTÜ'nün bir araştırma üniversitesi olarak gösterdiği ve yaygın olarak kabul gören ve Türkiye'deki en iyi üniversitelerden biri olmayı sürdüren performansı nedeniyle, bu çalışma sıralı bir karma yöntem çalışması olarak tasarlanmıştır. Sonuç olarak hem öğrencilerin hem de mezunların bölüm bileşenleri ve tez yazımına yönelik algılarını toplamak ve analiz etmek daha kapsamlı ve derinlemesine araştırma gerektirmektedir. Araştırmacılar, yalnızca tek bir yola güvenmek yerine, karma yöntem tasarımı sayesinde daha güçlü ve daha anlamlı verilere güvenebilirler (Yin, 2018).

Sistematiik düzeyde değerlendirme, sadece İngiliz Dili Öğretimi'nin değil, tüm programların çok önemli bir bileşenidir. Bu araştırma, İngilizce Öğretimi alanında özellikle Türkiye bağlamında oldukça kıt olan program değerlendirme araştırmalarına doğrudan katkı sağlayacaktır. Ayrıca, Türkiye'nin en iyi üniversitelerinden biri olan ODTÜ'de ELT'deki yüksek lisans programına net bir genel bakış sağlar. Ancak bu çalışmanın sonuçları, programdaki benzer sorunlu durumları veya lisansüstü öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarını da gösterebilir. Bu nedenle, bir kurum perspektifinden bir vaka çalışması olsa bile, ELT'deki diğer yüksek lisans programları için fikir verebilir, çünkü değerlendirme çalışmaları, özellikle ELT'deki programların iyileştirilmesi için yeterli miktarda değildir.

Öğrencilerin eğitim kurumundan ihtiyaçlarını ve beklentilerini anlamak önemlidir. Bu nedenle, mevcut eğitim girişimlerine ilişkin ihtiyaç analizi için sürekli bir gereksinim vardır. Bu araştırma, ODTÜ'de İngilizce Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programının bir değerlendirmesi olarak geliştirilmiş olsa da, programın herhangi bir sorunlu yönünü mezunların ve yüksek lisans programlarının bakış açısına göre ortaya çıkarmaya çalıştığı için bir ihtiyaç değerlendirme aracı olarak da kullanılabilir. Öğrencilerin bakış açılarının yanı sıra katılımcıların mevcut ve gelecekteki ihtiyaçları da ele alınmıştır. Genel olarak, çalışmanın sonuçları yöneticilere, profesörlere, herhangi bir düzeydeki politika yapıcılara, programın farklı yönleriyle ilgili geri bildirim olarak gerekli bilgileri sağlayabilir.

Mevcut araştırmanın bulguları, ODTÜ'deki ELT Yüksek Lisans programının bazı yönlerinin revize edilmesi ve iyileştirilmesi için bir gereklilik olduğunu açıkça ortaya koymaktadır. Bu araştırmanın katılımcıları tarafından önerildiği gibi, İngilizce

Öğretimi Yüksek Lisans programında sunulan ders sayısı, programın mevcut ve aday öğrencilerinin taleplerini karşılayacak şekilde ayarlanmalıdır.

Ayrıca, öğrencilere programlarında daha fazla esneklik sağlamak için bazı kurslar çevrimiçi olarak verilebilir. Ayrıca bireylerin çoğu derste her hafta için planlanan sunumları takip etmek yerine hem diğer öğrencileri hem de hocaları ile farklı yönleri tartışma fırsatı buldukları etkileşimli sınıf olanaklarını tercih ettikleri görülmüştür. Bu nedenle öğretmenlerin derslerini hazırlarken tüm bu bilgileri dikkate almaları gerekmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın katılımcıları, öğretmen veya eğitmen olarak mesleki gelişimleri için daha fazla uygulamaya yönelik kurs veya etkinlik görmek istediklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Lisans dersi gibi uygulama öğretimi de Yüksek Lisans müfredatına özellikle daha önce öğretmenlik deneyimi olmayanlar veya İngiliz Dili Öğretimi alanının belirli alanlarında süpervizyon altında öğretmenlik becerilerini geliştirmek isteyenler için dahil edilebilir. “Uygulama” dönemi, sadece öğretmenlik uygulaması için değil, aynı zamanda öğrencilerin eğitim kurumuna aktif katılımını sağlarken bir araştırma alanı olarak da kullanılabilir.

Ayrıca, çalışmanın bulguları kurumsal yöneticilere, politika yapıcılara ve öğretim üyelerine ELT yüksek lisans programlarını desteklemek için kullanılabilecek değerli bilgiler sağlar. Bu programlar, eğitim kurumları için sağlam bir temel geliştirmek ve böylece öğrencilerin yüksek kaliteli bir eğitim almalarını sağlamak üzere tasarlanmıştır.

Öneriler

Çalışmanın sonuçları ve sınırlılıkları ışığında birtakım önerilerde bulunulmuştur. Mevcut araştırmanın en önemli sınırlılığı, ODTÜ ELT Yüksek Lisans programında öğretim üyeleri ve araştırma görevlileri gibi diğer öğretim üyelerinin görüşlerini içermemesidir. Sonuç olarak, bu bakış açılarını birbirleriyle karşılaştırmak mümkün olmadı. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmaya başka çıkarımlarla katkıda bulunmak için gelecekte başka bir takip araştırmasına kesinlikle ihtiyaç vardır.

Çalışma ayrıca, nüfusun yarısından fazlasını temsil etmelerine rağmen, nispeten küçük bir katılımcı örneği ile yürütülmüştür. Program değerlendirmesine ilişkin anlayış ve

bakış açılarının daha geniş bir çerçevesine ulaşmak için daha fazla katılımcıya ihtiyaç vardır.

Veri toplama sürecinde Covid-19 salgını henüz sona erdirilmemiştir. Bu nedenle araştırmacı, bazı katılımcılarla görüşme için Zoom gibi çevrimiçi platformları kullanmak zorunda kaldı. Ancak yüz yüze görüşmeler sayesinde katılımcılardan daha gerçekçi görüşler ve samimi cevaplar alınabilir.

Bu araştırmada bulunan yüksek lisans derecesi almanın zorluklarına rağmen, yüksek lisans eğitimini yarıda bırakma veya terk etme nedenlerine bazı nedenler verebilir, programı tamamlamayan katılımcıların yanı sıra program hakkında da kapsamlı bilgi sağlayabilir.

Ayrıca bu çalışma, mezunların kendi öğretim uygulamalarında araştırma anlayışlarına yer vermemiştir. Daha fazla araştırma yapılması, öğretmenlerin öğretim alanındaki araştırma deneyimleri hakkında, sınıfta aktif olarak araştırma etkinliklerine yer verip veremeyecekleri hakkında fikir verebilir.

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