

# Unveiling the Art of Language Instruction: Insights and Recommendations from ELT Teacher Trainers

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Article information	Abstract
<p><b>Article history:</b> Received: 30 Dec 2023 Accepted: 19 Dec 2025 Available online: 23 Dec 2025</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Effective teachers English Language Teaching (ELT) Perceptions Teacher education</p>	<p>Defining the qualities of an effective language teacher has long posed challenges. This study aimed to explore English language teacher trainers' perspectives on what makes a good language teacher and whether current training programs adequately cultivate those attributes. An online open-ended survey was administered to teacher trainers in ELT departments across Turkey to elicit their views. Results revealed predominant themes regarding desired knowledge, skills, and characteristics. Trainers emphasized methodological expertise, competence in teaching language skills, and motivational abilities as key traits. The metaphors they used also conceptualized effective teachers as guides, resources, and leaders. However, most participants expressed doubts that the latest teacher education curriculum sufficiently developed the abilities and 21st-century skills needed for today's classrooms. While incremental progress was noted, a prevailing sentiment held gaps persist between ideals and practice. The findings also offer insights to inform policies and curriculum design, highlighting areas of focus to better equip language teaching candidates. Exploring trainer viewpoints also gives voice to a critical stakeholder group whose experiences can shape the path ahead for teacher development in the Turkish context. However, the study is limited by its focus on a specific context (Turkey) and the perspectives of a particular group (teacher trainers). Future research could explore perspectives from other stakeholders, such as pre-service and in-service teachers, as well as across different cultural and educational contexts, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of effective language teacher qualities and teacher education programs.</p>

## INTRODUCTION

Teachers have served as the core mechanism of education for centuries. Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating the learning process, which creates a distinction between effective and ineffective teachers (White & Burke, 1993). While the specific traits that define a good teacher have been difficult to precisely outline, research suggests that the characteristics of effective versus ineffective teachers are quite distinct (Weimer, 1993). The roots of teacher effectiveness

can be traced back to their initial teacher training. As Grossman (1990) found in a case study of six English teachers, pedagogical knowledge gained from teacher education contributes substantially to teachers' capacity to improve student-learning outcomes. Although clear definitions have proven vague, the research indicates that effective teachers possess certain distinct qualities and benefit strongly from formal pedagogical preparation.

Teaching is said to be a complex and multifaceted continuum, with teachers as one of the most crucial components. When teachers overlook learners' needs and perspectives, the learning environment can become demotivating, which transforms the classroom into a mere physical setting (Baytur & Razi, 2015). Therefore, deeply exploring the qualities of effective teachers and developing high-quality English teacher preparation programs are vital. Regarding teachers-in-training, emphasizing professional development programs is also key to enhancing the teaching process itself (Abu-Rahmah, 2007). The qualities of good language teachers must be thoroughly understood, and teacher education curricula continuously improved, to create motivational learning experiences that meet all students' needs. Especially, in the Turkish context, several studies have identified perceived weaknesses in English language teacher training programs, such as a lack of practical training, limited cultural relevance, and a disconnect between the curriculum and the skills required for effective teaching (e.g., Ersoy & Karakaş, 2023; Karakaş, 2012; Yaman, 2018). However, there is a need for further exploration of these gaps from the perspectives of those directly involved in teacher education, to better understand the specific areas requiring improvement and to inform potential curricular reforms or policy changes.

In the extant literature, numerous previous studies have examined perspectives on effective language teachers, gathering views from EFL students, pre-service teachers, and in-service teachers (e.g., Çakmak & Gündüz, 2018; Göksel & Söylemez, 2018; Stronge et al., 2011). While these studies provide valuable insights into perceptions of effective language teachers, there is a need to critically analyse how the current study addresses potential gaps or contradictions in the existing literature. Specifically, this study aims to elicit metaphorical conceptualizations of effective language teachers from teacher trainers, an area that has received limited attention in previous research. Additionally, by exploring teacher trainers' perspectives on the adequacy of current teacher education programs, this study seeks to identify potential gaps or areas for improvement in the teacher training process, an issue that has not been extensively examined, particularly within the Turkish context.

Additionally, the previous studies have largely utilized quantitative surveys with closed-ended questions, providing limited insights. Further clarification is needed from experts in the field through more expansive data collection. Moreover, tracing the educational background of effective teachers can provide enhanced understanding. Thus, there remains a need to gather more in-depth insights from experts in the field, particularly those directly involved in teacher education programs. Additionally, the specific contribution of teacher training programs in cultivating effective teaching qualities has not been extensively examined. By eliciting perspectives from teacher trainers, this study can provide valuable insights into potential gaps or areas for improvement in the teacher training process, specifically within the Turkish context. Understanding the viewpoints of this critical stakeholder group is crucial for informing efforts

to align teacher education curricula with the desired competencies and skills needed for effective language instruction.

In this regard, exploring teacher trainers' perspectives on the adequacy of current teacher education programs is directly relevant to the overarching aim of understanding what makes an effective language teacher and how to cultivate those qualities. Teacher education curricula play a crucial role in shaping the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of prospective teachers (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Grossman, 1990). By examining whether trainers believe that the existing programs sufficiently prepare students to become effective teachers, this study can identify potential gaps or areas for improvement in the teacher training process. This insight is valuable for informing policies and curriculum design to better align teacher education with the desired qualities and competencies needed for effective language instruction. Additionally, trainers' views on the strengths and weaknesses of current programs can reveal their priorities and beliefs about the essential components of effective teacher preparation. Thus, exploring teacher trainers' perspectives on the adequacy of current teacher education programs provides a complementary perspective to teacher trainers' perceptions of effective English language teachers and the characteristics of effective English teachers, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the qualities of effective teachers and the role of teacher education in fostering those qualities.

The findings of this study can further contribute to the ongoing discourse on English teacher identity and professionalism, particularly in relation to the native/non-native speaker dichotomy that has long been a contentious issue in the field (Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Selvi, 2014). Traditionally, native speaker status has been valorised, with the assumption that native-like fluency and proficiency are essential qualities for effective English language teaching (Phillipson, 1992). However, this view has been challenged by scholars who argue that pedagogical expertise, teaching methodologies, and the ability to understand and cater to learners' needs are more crucial than native-like competence (Canagarajah, 1999; Moussu & Llurda, 2008). The emphasis placed by the teacher trainers in this study on qualities such as knowledge and usage of methodologies and teaching language skills, rather than native-like fluency, aligns with this shift towards a more inclusive and competency-based perspective on English teacher professionalism (Selvi, 2014). By highlighting these priorities, the study contributes to the ongoing efforts to redefine English teacher identity beyond the native/non-native binary and towards a more holistic understanding of effective language teaching.

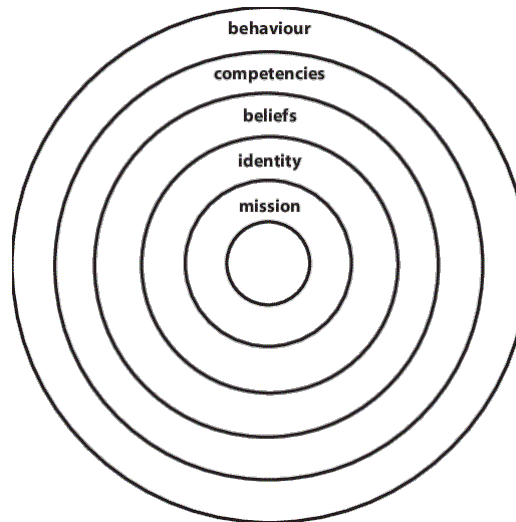
## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section mainly discusses the concept of a good language teacher and educational institutions that are responsible for raising one. The aim here is to review the literature related to this specific area.

### **Conceptualizations and competencies in effective teacher preparation**

Perspectives on what constitutes a "good" teacher vary among researchers. Kounin (1970) defined a good teacher as one who handles inappropriate student behaviours, competes

effectively, and paces the curriculum appropriately. Stronge et al. (2011) used the term ‘effective teachers’ for those who receive positive supervisor feedback and have successful students. Additionally, Korthagen (2004) presented the onion model, originally based on Bateson’s model (Dilts, 1990), which delineated core indirect qualities involved in effective teaching. Researchers have conceptualized good teaching in different ways, from managing behaviours to eliciting positive outcomes, while models identify underlying competencies.



**Figure 1** The onion: A model of levels of change (Korthagen, 2004)

The onion model aims to examine the factors affecting, creating, and underlying a teacher’s performance. However, some researchers have questioned the reliability, practicality and validity of identified competencies (Hyland, 1994). Additionally, Grossman (1990) stated that beyond subject matter knowledge, teachers greatly benefit from pedagogical knowledge to improve student learning. Some researchers have focused on visible teacher competencies, while others have emphasized underlying competencies. Both visible skills and inherent qualities are widely acknowledged as crucial components of effective teaching. While models identified competencies, researchers have debated their precise measurement and validity. But pedagogical knowledge is consistently seen as key in conjunction with content mastery.

Furthermore, Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005) believed that “teaching teachers is the most demanding kind of professional preparation” (p. 441), noting that teacher educators must constantly model practices, create impactful learning experiences, support the process, and assess thoughtfully. Over the years, evolving student needs have required teachers and teacher educators to adapt and reflect, raising awareness about teacher education and gaps in meeting needs accordingly.

Regarding international teaching programs, Darling-Hammond (2006) analysed promising programs and concluded that effective teacher preparation systems combine theory and practice. She advocated for competitive salaries, linking coursework to fostering good teaching practices, and basing teacher evaluations on standards connected to student learning.

In a related book review, Comeaux (1991) summarized Grossman's (1990) seminal question: "Does teacher education make a difference?" (p. 379). Comeaux (1991) noted Grossman's finding that beyond subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge equips teachers to improve student learning. This suggests that pedagogy-focused and subject-specific courses in teacher education play a major role in developing effective teachers. As such, the education of teachers appears rather critical.

### **Evolving trends in language teacher education**

Foreign language teacher training remains an evolving field, despite longstanding teacher education programs. Crandall (2000) outlined four main shifts from past to present approaches. Firstly, a transition from transmission models to constructivist approaches actively engages teachers in applying knowledge versus passive learning. Secondly, programs often fail to address changing classroom needs; collaboration among trainers, in-service, preservice, novice and experienced teachers is needed to develop relevant skills. Thirdly, reflecting on teaching is critical for growth. Fourthly, professional development is a lifelong, iterative process requiring ongoing evaluation and learning.

While previous research explored perspectives on effective language teachers, the specific contribution of teacher training programs has remained relatively unexamined. It is unclear whether high-performing graduates translate to effective teaching or if current curricula provide sufficient competencies. Further research is warranted on how teacher education curricula, particularly pedagogy-focused courses, equip graduates with the skills for quality teaching. The role of training programs in producing effective language teachers merits deeper investigation.

### **English language teaching in Turkey**

The first teachers' school in Turkey was opened in 1948 under the name of 'Darülmüallimin' and is considered the official start of teacher education (Aydın, 2007). In the following years, two educational sciences institutes, Gazi Institute in Ankara and Capa Institute in Istanbul, were established under the name of foreign language teaching departments. This was a crucial step in Turkish history as it was the first time (Güneş, 2009). After the academic year 1978–1979, they were renamed as Higher Teacher Training Schools and opened programs that were 4 years long (Aydın, 2007). Öztürk (2005) stated that after the 1980s, some changes were made in teacher education to increase the quality of language teachers graduating as the current curricula did not quite prepare language teacher candidates for the profession as a modern teacher. The curriculum was newly designed as the results highlighted the gap between syllabus rhetoric and classroom practice (Kırkgöz, 2017). Furthermore, in 2005, a curriculum renewal occurred by national English language teachers in the field with the supervision of Higher Education Institution (HEI). The renewed education program aimed to raise teachers to internalize the fact that education is a life-long process which emphasizes teaching communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, interpersonal and lifelong learning skills (Kırkgöz, 2017). The programs were structured as 50% subject-matter knowledge, 30% pedagogical knowledge and 20% knowledge that covered general culture. Moreover, a directive was signed by the

Ministry of National Education and HEI in 2008 to establish a respectable relationship between two essential institutes in teacher education.

Language education programs in Turkey require periodic adjustments to meet the needs of the changing global world. The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) and the British Council (Özen et al., 2013) conducted research on higher education and concluded that a comprehensive and retainable program is needed to enhance the in-service teacher-training program. This program should raise language teachers who are motivated and use English as a communication tool.

### **The 2018 language teacher education program**

The English Language Teaching (ELT) program in Turkey has an approved and obligatory program during the educational process, while optional courses, materials, course books, and exams are also used (Karakaş, 2012; Yavuz & Zehir Topkaya, 2013). Revised developments in 1998 and 2006 led researchers in the relevant fields to question teacher education programs (e.g., Dereobalı & Ünver, 2009; Karakaş, 2012; Karakaş & Yavuz, 2018). As a result, it was found that the existing programs needed assessment and evaluation (Yavuz & Zehir Topkaya, 2013). In 2018, the Council of Higher Education in Turkey updated the ELT undergraduate course content to be used in the 2019–2020 academic year. While the number of lessons has increased, the number of course credits and lesson hours has decreased. Additionally, most practical lessons have been turned into theoretical lessons, which can be seen as a weakness. The problem of training foreign language teachers in Turkey is also not perfect. Although there have been many attempts to improve the quality of teacher education in Turkey (Grossman et al., 2010), this reestablishment is still ongoing (Grossman & Sands, 2008). One of the major problems is that the foreign language education program in Turkey does not have a well-thought-out philosophical foundation. In light of these statements, Nergis (2011) argued that foreign language teaching programs can be developed to better meet the needs of teachers by working together more efficiently. Nergis (2011) also added that in-service education and training programs can be made more reliable by informing them with academic information and teacher recruitment.

The ELT undergraduate course content in Turkey has undergone some changes in recent years, but there are still some areas that need improvement. One of the biggest challenges is the lack of a well-thought-out philosophical foundation for the program (Karakaş, 2012). Additionally, the conversion of most practical lessons to theoretical lessons is a weakness. To address these problems, it is important to work together to develop foreign language teaching programs that are more aligned with the needs of teachers and students. It is also important to provide in-service education and training programs that are informed with academic information and teacher recruitment.

### **Metaphors as a lens into teachers' professional characteristics**

Educators, especially in the field of English language teaching, have recognized the importance of metaphors as theoretical, cultural, and linguistic tools for thinking, speaking, and behaving



(e.g., Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Seferoğlu et al., 2009). Metaphors benefit language learning in many ways. They can promote learners' linguistic development by involving creative thinking approaches that differ from traditional classroom activities (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Metaphors can also help learners to give deeper responses and to think about things that they find difficult to put into words literally.

In recent years, the use of metaphors has gained increasing importance in exploring teachers' professional beliefs and identities (Alger, 2009; Erickson & Pinnegar, 2017; Patchen & Crawford, 2011; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011). Metaphors provide a lens through which researchers can understand how teachers conceptualize and experience various aspects of their profession (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) contend, metaphors are not merely linguistic devices but reflections of foundational patterns in how individuals understand events and make decisions.

The role of metaphors in teacher education has been extensively studied, with researchers identifying various functions they serve, including blueprints of professional thinking, archetypes of professional identity, pedagogical devices, mediums for reflection, evaluation tools, research tools, curriculum theories, mental models, instruments of discovery, and springboards for change (Saban, 2006). Metaphors provide a cogent venue for researchers to probe into teachers' beliefs, pedagogical implications, and the relevance of metaphors to professional identity construction (Saban, 2006). Moreover, Richardson (1996) argued that beliefs and actions have a strong connection and influence each other. For this reason, eliciting metaphors from teachers can help researchers understand their conscious and subconscious thoughts and behaviours, which reflect their teaching. In other words, the similes and images that represent metaphors are not only simple reflections of the unconscious mind, but they also play a crucial role in influencing teachers' in-class behaviours (Seferoğlu et al., 2009). Finally, Berliner (1990) argued that every metaphor used to describe teaching, a learning environment, and learning itself creates an understanding of how we consider our field. This understanding can have a positive impact on educational programs, helping them to improve and go beyond their current state.

In the context of this study, metaphors offer a window into how teacher trainers conceptualize the qualities and characteristics of effective English language teachers. By eliciting and analysing metaphors, researchers can gain insights into the underlying beliefs, values, and identities that shape these conceptualizations (Alsup, 2006; Chen, 2003; Oxford et al., 1998). The metaphors employed by teacher trainers can reveal their orientations towards language teaching, whether focused on social order, cultural transmission, learner-centred growth, social reform, or other perspectives (Oxford et al., 1998).

### **Previous studies on the perceived 'Good Teachers'**

Numerous studies have explored the qualities of effective teachers and teacher preparation. For instance, Young and Shaw (1999) found that students emphasize teacher skills like motivating learners, communicating effectively, and showing concern. Walker (2008) identified desired traits like creativity, compassion, and admitting mistakes. Arıkan et al. (2008) reported

that Turkish students expect native fluency, grammar knowledge, and an enthusiastic style. Çelik et al. (2013) highlighted fairness, reducing anxiety, passion, pronunciation teaching, L1 explanations, and writing skills among Turkish undergraduates. Across contexts, interpersonal abilities, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, and learner-centeredness have emerged as key themes (Arıkan et al., 2008; Çelik et al., 2013; Walker, 2008; Young & Shaw, 1999). While findings vary, robust teacher education is widely seen as complementing effective instructional practices. Further synthesis of student and teacher perspectives on quality teaching could inform preparation programs. It is thus important to acknowledge that perceptions of what constitutes an effective or quality teacher can be influenced by contextual factors, such as the culture of the local teaching environment and the broader sociocultural context. The qualities and characteristics valued in teachers may vary across different educational settings, reflecting the unique cultural norms, expectations, and pedagogical traditions of those contexts.

Furthermore, the increasing globalization of English as an international language has potential implications for perceptions of quality English teachers. As English becomes a lingua franca used for cross-cultural communication, the expectations and requirements for English teachers may extend beyond merely imparting linguistic knowledge and skills. Effective English teachers in today's globalized world may need to cultivate intercultural competence, promote global citizenship, and prepare learners to navigate diverse cultural contexts (Baker, 2022; Canagarajah, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2012). The perception of what makes a quality English teacher could be influenced by the need to develop learners' communicative abilities for global interactions and their understanding of diverse cultural perspectives. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the potential impact of contextual factors, such as local teaching cultures and the broader implications of globalization, when exploring perceptions of effective or quality English teachers. These factors may shape the expectations, priorities, and characteristics valued in English language teachers across different educational contexts.

Additional studies reinforce similar themes around effective language teaching. To illustrate, Yılmaz (2018) interviewed Turkish teachers, finding that they emphasized pedagogical knowledge, strong teaching skills, evaluation abilities, ongoing professional development, and positive personal qualities as key traits. Göksel and Söylemez (2018) surveyed Turkish pre-service teachers, highlighting personality factors, professional competence, teaching abilities, and socio-emotional skills. Metaphor analysis by Seferoğlu et al. (2009) with Turkish teachers conceptualized effective educators as democratic guides, knowledge-builders, and cultural bridges. Çetin Köroğlu and Ekici (2016) found that Turkish teacher candidates viewed teaching as linking cultures. Reviews of English language teaching programs in Turkey revealed perceived weaknesses in practical training and cultural relevance, too (e.g., Ersoy & Karakaş, 2023; Karakaş, 2012; Karakaş & Yavuz, 2018).

Synthesizing across these studies, effective language instruction draws on multifaceted competencies spanning from core beliefs to practical instructional skills. Individual teachers' backgrounds, identities, and school contexts shape behaviours and enactment of knowledge in classrooms. While higher education impacts beliefs and builds capabilities, teaching practices still manifest differently based on contextual factors. No definitive universal profile exists that characterizes quality teaching. However, key attributes have emerged consistently



across settings, offering insights to strengthen teacher preparation programs. Developing knowledge, pedagogies, cultural understanding, teaching skills, collaborative abilities, leadership, and reflective practices appears vital. Ongoing research across diverse samples can further refine recommendations for educational policies and curricula to support professional excellence.

However, it is important to note at this juncture that while this study explores perspectives on desirable qualities of effective teachers, these qualities should not be viewed as fixed or universally applicable traits. Teacher identity and professionalism are dynamic constructs shaped by the complex interplay of various factors, including the classroom environment, institutional culture, and broader sociocultural contexts. The findings from this study reflect the perspectives and experiences of the particular group of teacher trainers within the Turkish context, and the identified qualities should be interpreted as suggested guidelines or benchmarks rather than rigid or essentialist definitions.

The preceding discussion highlights the ongoing challenges and diverse perspectives in conceptualizing the qualities of effective language teachers, directly linking to the first research objective of this study, i.e., to explore how Turkish teacher trainers conceptualize the characteristics of effective English language teachers. While previous studies have gathered insights from students, pre-service teachers, and in-service teachers, there is a need to understand the viewpoints of teacher trainers, who play a crucial role in shaping the knowledge and skills of prospective language teachers.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study aimed to explore perceptions of effective language teachers and the adequacy of current teacher training programs in Turkey. Thus, the study employed a qualitative research design, specifically an exploratory approach, to gain in-depth insights into the perspectives of teacher trainers regarding effective language teachers and teacher education programs. The use of an open-ended survey allowed participants to provide rich, detailed responses, aligning with the exploratory nature of the study's objectives. Teacher trainers from Turkish universities voluntarily participated, completing an online open-ended questionnaire during the 2021–2022 academic year. The research rationale, design, and participant rights were outlined in the survey. Over 12 weeks, qualitative content analysis methodology gathered insights. The survey began with age and gender questions, then prompted detailed perspectives on good language teacher qualities. Participants provided varied responses on their views.

In this study, answers to the following research questions were sought:

- 1) What characteristics do effective teachers have according to Turkish teacher trainers in ELT?
- 2) How do Turkish teacher trainers in ELT conceptualize the term 'effective English language teacher' through metaphors?
- 3) Do they think the current language teacher education program is fit for training effective language teachers?

Simple random sampling was used to recruit participants from ELT departments across Turkey. The researchers obtained a list of all ELT departments in Turkish universities and assigned each department a random number. Using a random number generator, departments were selected for inclusion in the study until the desired sample size was achieved. This random selection process aimed to ensure a diverse and representative sample of teacher trainers from various institutions across the country. The sample, in total, comprised 51 teacher trainers from over 25 universities, including 21 females (40%) and 30 males (60%), ranging in age from 28–59 years with 3–30 years of university teaching experience. Participants included 30% Assistant Professors, 23% Lecturers, 18% Research Assistants, 13% Full Professors, and 9% Associate Professors.

The open-ended survey was administered online through a secure platform, i.e., Google Docs, and participants were informed about the study's objectives and their rights, including the option to withdraw at any time. To encourage rich and detailed responses, the researchers emphasized the importance of providing honest and thoughtful perspectives. Additionally, the open-ended nature of the questions allowed participants to express their views without constraints, contributing to the depth and credibility of the data collected. The survey consisted of two sections, i.e., initial age and gender questions, followed by open-ended items related to the research questions.

**Table 1**  
**Research questions by questionnaire items**

Research questions	Questions in the open-ended questionnaire
1. What characteristics do effective teachers have according to Turkish teacher trainers in ELT?	Q1 Please explain what really makes a good language teacher in your view.
2. How do Turkish teacher trainers in ELT conceptualize the term 'effective English language teacher' through metaphors?	Q2 Please complete the following sentence: A good language teacher is like a(n)..... because s/he.....
3. Do they think the current language teacher education program is fit for training effective language teachers?	Q3 Do you think the new teacher education program helps you to train 'good language teachers'? Why or why not?

Questionnaire responses underwent qualitative content analysis following Dörnyei's (2007) procedures. First, data were transcribed into Word files by survey item. Next, responses were pre-coded, fully coded, and organized into themes. Similar responses were combined into categories after a careful review of the relationships between ideas. Codes were aggregated around significant themes. The process involved pre-coding, coding, developing ideas, and deriving conclusions. The content analysis followed an inductive approach, where codes and themes were derived from the data itself rather than imposing pre-existing categories. The analysis focused on identifying recurring patterns, similarities, and differences in the participants' responses to capture the underlying meanings and perspectives. Specifically, the researchers carefully read through the responses multiple times, making notes and assigning initial codes to meaningful segments of text that captured key ideas or concepts. These initial codes were then compared and consolidated into broader categories or themes that reflected the overarching meanings and insights emerging from the data. Throughout this process, the researchers engaged in an iterative process of constant comparison, revising and refining the

codes and themes as new insights emerged from the data. Particular attention was given to the specific language and phrasing used by participants to ensure the codes and themes accurately captured their intended meanings and perspectives.

For the metaphor elicitation and analysis (RQ2), the researchers first identified all metaphors used by participants to describe effective language teachers. These metaphors were then coded and categorized based on Oxford's (2001) framework of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire teacher types. For example, the metaphor "a good language teacher is like a king" was coded as an autocratic teacher type, while "a good language teacher is like a river" was coded as a democratic/participatory teacher type under the sub-category of "teacher as resource person". This systematic coding and categorization process allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the metaphorical conceptualizations employed by the participants.

We should also note that while this study employed a primarily qualitative approach through open-ended survey responses and content analysis, frequency counts were used to complement the qualitative data and provide an overall picture of the predominant themes and characteristics mentioned by participants. The frequency counts served as a descriptive tool to identify the most commonly cited elements, rather than for quantitative statistical analysis. This mixed approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives, combining the rich, detailed insights from the qualitative data with an overview of the relative emphases placed on different characteristics of effective teachers. The qualitative content analysis remained the primary mode of analysis, with the frequency counts serving as a supplementary technique to capture the overall patterns in the data.

## FINDINGS

### The characteristics of effective teachers according to teacher trainers in ELT

The analysis of the data revealed that the most prominent category was personal qualities and traits (37.8%), followed by professional skills (33.5%). Pedagogy-specific knowledge accounted for 16.8% of the responses, while 12.4% mentioned classroom behaviour. The frequency count for RQ1 was 209 (Table 2). The most cited feature was knowledge and usage of teaching methodologies, followed by fluency and accuracy in speaking. Additionally, frequently mentioned were teaching grammar in a prescriptive manner, knowledge of teaching skills, understanding of psychology, and proficiency in multiple languages. In regards to the importance of pedagogical knowledge and methodology, several participants offered the following perspectives:

**T14:** First, a good language teacher must *be competent*. They must *have sufficient knowledge about the subject matter* but knowing subject-matter very well is not enough to be a good language teacher. A good language teacher must *also have teaching and communication skills* which will help them to understand learners better. Second, a good language teacher must *be aware of the differences among learners*. Each individual has different characteristics, learning styles and learning experiences.

**T25:** A good language teacher *listens and pays attention to the students' needs* in order to *adapt the teaching style and methodology* so that the majority can understand the information presented. Someone who can *identify with the students* and how they learn will be more personable and can *engage with the students more successfully* as students will be more willing to listen and pay attention to the teacher...

Table 2 presents the frequency distribution of responses to the first research question concerning pedagogy-specific knowledge.

**Table 2**  
**Pedagogy-Specific knowledge**

Items	%	f
1. Knowledge and usage of methodologies	6.7%	14
2. Knowledge of teaching four skills (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking)	4.8%	10
3. Fluent and accurate speaking in the target language	3.3%	7
4. Knowledge of Psychology	1 %	2
5. Teaching grammar adequately (descriptive rather than prescriptive)	0.5%	1
6. Capable of several languages	0.5%	1
Total	16.8	35

Additionally, Table 3 presents the distribution of responses regarding personal qualities and traits of effective language teachers, which accounted for 37.3% of the total statements collected. Thirty distinct features emerged from the data, including patience, positivity, open-mindedness, capacity to motivate and be motivated, empathy, approachability, sense of humour, ability to manage burnout, preparedness, supportiveness without judgement, honesty, fairness, trustworthiness, consistency, friendliness, energy, tolerance, flexibility, strong communication skills, kindness, inspirational nature, responsibility, affection, love, hard work, enthusiasm, devotion, confidence, multitasking, and understanding.

A few trainers elaborated on some personal qualities and traits as follows:

**T25:** Another important characteristic should be *non-judgmental* as people of all ages don't enjoy being criticized for mistakes and errors. The teacher should support and assist in correcting mistakes, not emphasizing them.

**T5:** *Being positive* (a smiling face but a real one)

**T11:** *Those who equip learners with communication skills in the easiest way* by taking their needs into account and by motivating them.

**T14:** Third, a good language teacher must be patient. They must be aware of the fact that some learners learn faster than others. Fourth, a good language teacher must be aware of the fact that *there are different methods and techniques to apply*. Fifth, a good language teacher must *be aware of the needs and interests of learners*. Sixth, a good language teacher must *be open to learning from others*. Finally, a good language teacher must *be a good researcher*.

The summary of the answers given to the first question regarding personal qualities and traits is presented in the following table.

**Table 3**  
**Personal qualities and personal traits**

Items	Percentage	Frequency
1. Motivated and motivating	4 %	8
2. Shows empathy	2.5 %	5
3. Open-minded	1.9 %	4
4. Patient	1.9 %	4
5. Well-equipped	1.9%	4
6. Friendly	1.9%	4
7. Sense of humour	1.9%	4
8. Affectionate	1.9%	4
9. Good communicator	1.9%	4
10. Other qualities*	18 %	37
Total	37.8 %	78

*\*Adaptable / Flexible, Fair / Impartial, Organized, Punctual, Collaborative (works well with colleagues/parents), Supportive / Encouraging, Assessment literate (skilled in grading/testing), Tech-savvy / Digitally proficient, Resilient, Approachable / Accessible, Consistent, Ethical / Honest, Resourceful (manages with limited resources), Self-confident, Leader / Leadership skills, Facilitator (guides rather than dictates), Diagnostician (identifies learning gaps), Articulate / Clear, Objective, Diplomatic / Tactful and Dedicated / Committed*

Furthermore, Table 4 presents the categorization of features related to the professional skills of effective language teachers, which accounted for 33% of the total statements for RQ1. These professional skills included reflecting on learning, integrating the four language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, conducting research, utilizing 21st century abilities, providing enjoyable and engaging lessons, innovating, applying humanistic perspectives, adapting and updating teaching styles and strategies, managing the classroom, being well-prepared, making sound decisions, thinking critically, understanding English as a *Lingua Franca*, working autonomously, demonstrating cultural awareness, and embracing innovation. In other words, the lecturers' perspectives on the skills that characterize good language teachers centred on this range of professional competencies and attributes.

**T8:** A good teacher should be *the one who adopts a humanistic perspective all through his/her personal and work life. He/she should be reachable and open to communication, and changes and should have a thirst for learning and transmitting what is learned.*

**T31:** *Has and uses 21st-century skills, autonomous, reflective, "learning" -centred, socially responsible (integrates global issues as content/theme to the lessons), works on his/her professional development continuously, has good content and pedagogical knowledge in addition to the teaching skills, fluent in using L2, ELF aware, hard-working, devoted, enthusiastic, has skills to develop activities and materials when necessary (students' needs, curriculum, inadequacies of the coursebook ...), researcher (should be able to do action research to improve the areas that need development)*

The summary of the answers given to the first question regarding professional skills is presented below according to the frequency ratio.

**Table 4**  
**Professional skills**

Items	%	f
1. Updates himself/herself on teaching styles and strategies	7.1%	15
2. 21 <sup>st</sup> century skills	4.4%	9
3. Reflecting learnings	3.9%	8
4. Researches	3.4%	7
5. Well-prepared	3 %	6
6. Innovative	2.6%	5
7. Autonomous	1.4%	3
8. Eclectic, blending four skills (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking)	1.4%	3
9. Provides enjoyable, fun and interesting lessons	1.4%	3
10. Classroom management	0.9%	2
11. Makes good decisions	0.9%	2
12. Thinks critically	0.9%	2
13. ELF aware	0.9%	2
14. Cultural awareness	0.9%	2
15. Uses humanistic perspectives	0.4%	1
Total	33.5%	70

Additionally, Table 5 presents the categorization of features related to classroom behaviour, which accounted for 12.4% of the total statements ( $f = 26$ ). As shown in the table, the most frequently reported behaviour was analysing students' needs and interests (3.3%), followed by constantly monitoring the learning process (2.5%).

Moderate frequencies were observed for encouraging research, fostering autonomous learning, and emphasizing global citizenship, each accounting for 1.5% of responses. The least frequently mentioned behaviours included building rapport (0.9%), adhering to principles (such as punctuality), time management, and showing different perspectives (0.4% each).

**Table 5**  
**Classroom behaviour**

Items	%	f
1. Analysis students' needs and interests	3.3%	7
2. Constantly monitoring	2.5%	5
3. Encourages to research (think and reflect)	1.5%	3
4. Fosters autonomous learning	1.5%	3
5. Emphasizes being a global citizen	1.5%	3
6. Builds rapport in class	0.9%	2
7. Principles (coming to lesson on time, checking students' homework etc.)	0.4%	1
8. Time management	0.4%	1
9. Shows different perspectives	0.4%	1
Total	12.4%	26



## Conceptualizations of the term ‘effective English language teacher’ through metaphors

Pertaining to RQ2, the questionnaire elicited metaphors describing the qualities of effective language teachers. In total, fifty-two metaphors were collected, some used multiple times, with one participant providing two metaphors. The metaphors were coded and categorized based on Oxford’s (2001) framework of autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire teacher types. Moreover, related metaphors were re-coded into sub-categories adapted by Seferoğlu et al. (2009) from Oxford’s (2001) framework, i.e., teacher as leader, teacher as producer, teacher as resource person, teacher as caretaker, teacher as guide, and teacher as facilitator.

Table 6 below presents the thirty-six metaphor items for a good language teacher. The autocratic teacher type accounted for 29.5% ( $n = 13$ ) and encompassed the sub-categories of teacher as leader (e.g., hero, Marxist, king) and teacher as producer (e.g., cook, artist, entertainer). The democratic/participatory teacher type represented 54.9% ( $n = 17$ ) across four sub-categories, i.e., teacher as a resource person (e.g., river, sunshine), teacher as caretaker (e.g., mother, psychologist), teacher as a guide (e.g., tour guide, candle) and teacher as facilitator (e.g., luggage carrier, Swiss knife). Finally, the laissez-faire teacher type included 15.8% ( $n = 6$ ) of the metaphors (e.g., full-time student, elastic band).

**Table 6**  
**Distribution of the metaphors used by teacher trainers**

Main category	Conceptual metaphor	Metaphors (Examples)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Autocratic teacher	Teacher as leader	King, Captain, Prophet, Hero, Marxist, Muse, Inspirer	8	15.8%
	Teacher as producer	Cook, Artist, Farmer, Entertainer, Actor/Actress, Clown	7	13.7%
Democratic/ Participatory teacher	Teacher as resource person	Sun, Sunshine, Rain, River, All-tube amp, Full moon, Candle, Tree, Explorer	10	19.6%
	Teacher as caretaker	Mother, Psychologist, Luggage carrier, Councillor	7	13.7%
	Teacher as guide	Tourist guide, Linker	8	15.8%
	Teacher as facilitator	Orchestra leader, Swiss-knife	3	5.8%
Laissez-faire teacher	(General)	Full-time student, Ant, Master keys, Elastic band, good film, Luxurious car	8	15.8%
Total			51	100.0%

In summary, the lecturer’s perspectives on the metaphorical qualities of effective language teachers were expressed in the following ways:

**T13:** A good language teacher is like *a cook* because *he analyses learners’ needs and interests, tailors a pedagogical approach, accordingly, constantly tries out new techniques and evaluates whether they work or not, and enjoys teaching when learners are having fun and learning.*

**T6:** A good language teacher is like *SUNSHINE* because she will *alleviate all the negative feelings about foreign languages, perceived characteristics of failure and prejudices about being totally incapable of learning a foreign language and practising a foreign language.* The students then will have good self-efficacy, inner motivation and internal locus of Control.

**T14:** A good language teacher is like *a tour guide* because *they help, inform and enlighten language learners* on their journey of language learning.

**T25:** A good language teacher is like *a good student* because *as former students ourselves we know and understand what works and what doesn't*, given our previous learning experiences. The one who puts in the effort, time, and commitment will see improvement, regardless of the results required.

Taken together, these metaphors highlight key teacher qualities like adaptability, student-centeredness, motivation, enlightenment, facilitation, and empathy. They presented diverse images that capture the nurturing, guiding, and supporting roles of effective teachers.

### Teacher trainers' thoughts about the current language teacher education program

The third research question examined perspectives on how Turkey's new English language teaching program aligns with the goal of educating effective language teachers. Analysis of the data revealed 15 coded items, with 3 categorized as positive views, comprising 13% of total responses. The remaining 12 items were coded as negative views, accounting for 87% of the collected responses.

Table 7 demonstrates the positive views of the English language teacher education program from the participants' point of view.

**Table 7**  
**Positive views of the English language teacher education program**

Items	Percentage
1. A new step towards autonomy	5.6%
2. Language skill-based course hours have increased	5.6%
3. Teaching practicum is taken seriously	1.8%

The data revealed conflicting perspectives regarding the number of lessons focused on language skills, with some trainers reporting an increase, while others stated the opposite. Additionally, the program was perceived as taking a new direction toward promoting autonomy, and the teaching practicum component was regarded as being taken more seriously. Therefore, there are some lecturers' positive views of the ELT program in Turkey:

**T6:** I believe it will *contribute to teacher training* because there are *so many elective courses*, they will be effective for general knowledge...

**T7:** Of course, it helps, but less than the previous one because class hours for the most critical *theoretical courses such as second language acquisition or teaching methodology have been reduced*. On the other hand, it's good that *the teaching practicum is taken more seriously nowadays*.

Table 8 demonstrates the negative views about the English language teacher education program from the participants' points of view.

**Table 8**  
**Negative views of the English language teacher education program**

Items	Percentage
1. Need to integrate 21 <sup>st</sup> -century teaching the skills	24.5%
2. ELT-based courses need more hours	16.9%
3. Practice hours should increase	11.3%
4. Limited compulsory and elective courses (Literature, linguistics, methodology, etc.)	9.4%
5. Reducing the number of developments of language skills does not help	7.5%
6. Lacks being a whole	3.7%
7. Practice hours should start earlier	3.7%
8. Educational lessons bore students	1.8%
9. Reducing the number of developments of language skills does not help	1.8%
10. Lack of intercultural understanding (bilingualism, syntax, etc.)	1.8%
11. No emphasis on an introduction to psycholinguistics	1.8%
12. Does not entirely match with the examination KPSS	1.8%

The data revealed a clear hierarchy of concerns regarding the ELT program. The most predominant critique, noted by nearly a quarter of respondents (24.5%), was the failure to integrate 21st-century teaching skills. This suggests that the primary deficit is perceived in the program's modernization and relevance. Following this, structural and curricular constraints formed the second tier of negative views. Specifically, respondents called for increased hours in ELT-based courses (16.9%) and practical training (11.3%), alongside a need for a broader range of compulsory and elective courses (9.4%). In contrast, specific theoretical and contextual issues represented a marginal portion of the feedback. While some issues, such as 'lack of intercultural understanding,' 'boring lessons,' and 'mismatch with the KPSS exam,' were mentioned, these were fringe concerns, each cited by only 1.8% of the participants. Consequently, while these issues exist, they are far less systemic than the demand for skill integration and increased contact hours. Accordingly, there were some lecturers with negative views of the ELT program in Turkey, who noted that:

**T23:** The language teacher training program is *like a puzzle changing so much*. Though it is a controversial issue, in my view, it *to some extent does not serve to train good language teachers*. First, *the hours of practice courses lessened to a great extent*. Second, *the hours of educational courses bore the students*. Finally, no matter whether the program is in line with 21st-century skills, *the teachers focus on KPSS [Public Personnel Selection Examination] not the communicative competencies or the other skills*. In my view, the program should have been piloted longer and asked nationwide to the different stakeholders.

**T22:** To some extent, no it doesn't because *all the practice hours have been omitted* in the new curriculum. Thus, *all the courses have turned into lecture courses* with very limited class hours such as 2 hours a week. Consequently, we just introduce various topics or ideas, but we cannot give our students any chance to practice or experiment with them through practice.

**T29:** I do not think the new teacher education program will help us train good language teachers for several reasons. But I think the main reason is that *there are few courses in which prospective language teachers can have the chance to improve their skills such as speaking and presenting in front of the classroom*. There are *more courses in Turkish* than those in English where these teachers are expected to teach. Therefore, I believe that we will have more prospective language teachers who will lack important skills.

These quotes highlight common critiques of the teacher training program, including insufficient practical experiences, overemphasis on lectures, misalignment with skills needed for teaching, and lack of piloting and stakeholder input. The metaphors evoked, like a frequently changing puzzle (T23), convey a sense of incoherence and instability in the program's design. The quotes suggest outcomes of weaker communicative and classroom skills among trainees (T22, T29). Overall, the perspectives indicate significant gaps between the program curriculum and the desired skills and experiences needed to produce quality language teachers. Targeted improvements in practical content, stakeholder involvement, and alignment to teaching skills emerge as important considerations for better training future educators.

The findings reveal that updating one's knowledge and skills is perceived as the most important characteristic of an effective language teacher. Additionally, mastery and application of methodological knowledge are frequently emphasized. Analysing student needs and motivating learners also emerge as critical abilities. The elicited metaphors predominantly portray the effective teacher as a nurturing, enlightening force of nature (e.g., sun, tree, river), or as a guide and leader. Regarding perspectives on Turkey's ELT training program, participants expressed considerably more negative compared to positive views. The most prevalent critiques centred on the need to integrate 21st-century teaching skills and increase contact hours in ELT courses. Insufficient practicum hours and limited course offerings were also underscored as areas needing improvement. Among the positive perceptions, increased promotion of autonomy and language skill instruction were noted as strengths by some respondents.

## DISCUSSION

The questionnaire data for RQ1 yielded four categories regarding subject matter knowledge and characteristics of effective language teachers. Personal qualities and traits represented the largest category, followed by professional skills, pedagogy/content knowledge, and finally classroom behaviours. These results align with previous findings that personal attributes and skills are emphasized in conceptualizations of teacher effectiveness (Arnon & Reichel, 2007). For pedagogical knowledge, the most cited elements were teaching language skills, target language proficiency, grammar instruction competence (Brosh, 1996; Çelik et al., 2013; Kalay, 2017; Politzer & Weiss, 1971), and methodology knowledge/application, corroborating prior research (Zamani & Ahangari, 2016). Within personal traits, motivation/motivating ability and empathy emerged as highly salient, consistent with several earlier studies (Arıkan et al., 2008; Brosh, 1996; Çelik et al., 2013; Cheung, 2006). Other notable traits like humour, enthusiasm, fairness, innovation, patience, and tolerance also echoed previous findings (Arıkan et al., 2008; Çelik et al., 2013; Cheung 2006; Walker 2008). Taken together, these results suggest that

teacher educators and trainees broadly share views of effective teachers across cultural contexts. As was found in this research, for professional skills, continuously updating teaching practices (Yilmaz, 2018) and integrating 21st-century and research-based skills (Wichadee, 2010) ranked highest, further mirroring prior Turkish and international research. Synthesizing these findings, an overarching theme is that effective teachers are perceived as lifelong learners, constantly evolving and translating adaptive expertise into their pedagogical approaches. Regarding classroom behaviours, it was found in the current study that analysing student needs/interests was most prominent (Young & Shaw, 1999; Wichadee, 2010), though fewer overall behaviours were cited. In summary, the findings revealed multi-faceted conceptualizations of effective teachers encompassing knowledge, skills, traits, and behaviours — all centred on professional growth and student-responsive instruction, aligning with previous scholarly understandings (Yilmaz, 2018).

Regarding the metaphor data for RQ2, the most frequently selected category was teacher as a resource person (19.6%) (e.g., sun, river). Following this, the data revealed an equal distribution across three distinct conceptualizations, i.e., teacher as a guide, teacher as a leader, and a laissez-faire orientation, each accounting for 15.8% of the responses. This indicates a complex set of expectations where participants equally value a nurturing facilitator (guide) and an authoritative figure (leader), while a notable portion also acknowledges a more passive role (laissez-faire). These prominent motifs mirror previous findings on teacher metaphors (Çetin Köroğlu & Ekici, 2016; Seferoğlu et al., 2009). Collectively, the results indicate that teacher educators conceptualize effective instructors as providers of developmental support akin to nature's resources, as well as directive guides and leaders along the learning journey. It is crucial to acknowledge that the qualities and characteristics identified in this study, while providing valuable insights, are not meant to promote an essentialist view of what constitutes an effective teacher. Teacher identity and professionalism are dynamic processes that are constantly negotiated and reshaped by the specific contexts in which teachers operate (Edwards & Burns, 2016). The findings from this study should be viewed as a contribution to ongoing discussions and reflections on teacher professionalism and identity construction, highlighting the importance of considering multiple perspectives, including those of teacher trainers and teachers themselves.

Additionally, the finding that teacher trainers prioritized pedagogical knowledge and teaching methodologies over native-like fluency in the target language aligns with broader shifts in perspectives on English teacher professionalism (Canagarajah, 1999; Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Selvi, 2014). Traditionally, native speaker status has been valorised, with the assumption that native-like competence is essential for effective language teaching (Phillipson, 1992). However, the current results challenge this notion, suggesting that teacher trainers place greater emphasis on equipping prospective teachers with the right tools and methodologies to cater to learners' needs, rather than prioritizing native-like fluency or appearance. This shift towards a more inclusive and competency-based view of English teacher professionalism resonates with ongoing efforts to redefine English teacher identity beyond the native/non-native dichotomy (Selvi, 2014).

Regarding RQ3, which examined perspectives on the alignment between Turkey's ELT program and effective teacher preparation, participants largely expressed negative views. Among the

few positive perceptions, increased promotion of autonomy and language skill instruction were noted. However, the most prevalent critiques centred on inadequate integration of 21st-century skills, insufficient contact hours in ELT courses, and limited practical experiences. Calls for more practicum opportunities beginning earlier in the program and expanded course offerings were also prominent. These results echo prior research highlighting similar deficiencies in Turkey's teacher training reforms (Ersoy, 2021; Ersoy & Karakaş, 2023; Karakaş, 2012; Yaman, 2018). Collectively, the findings imply that the program changes have not sufficiently addressed the core needs for developing effective teachers, especially regarding practical skill-building. As Grossman (1990) contends, scaffolded student-teacher interactions and reflective feedback are key in teacher education, which may be compromised by reduced practicum hours.

The prominent emphasis on integrating 21st-century skills further underscores a perceived mismatch between the current training curriculum and the abilities required for contemporary teaching. Scholars characterize these as a fusion of knowledge, skills, literacies, and cultural awareness enabling success in diverse contexts (Ledward & Hirata, 2011). Fandino (2013) advocates that EFL programs cultivate abilities like critical thinking, creativity, cooperation, and communication to prepare technologically adept, socially conscious teachers able to design inspiring learner-centred instruction. Thus, calls to align training with 21st-century competencies reflect beliefs that teachers must continually re-evaluate their approaches to foster adaptive, motivating, relevant learning experiences for students (Fandino, 2013; Hamilton, 1996). In summary, these findings reveal perceived gaps between the redesigned ELT curriculum and the knowledge, practical skills, and contemporary orientation participants believe are imperative for training effective teachers.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study offer important insights into teacher trainers' perspectives on the qualities of effective English language teachers and the adequacy of current teacher education programs in Turkey for developing those qualities. The results suggest certain pedagogical knowledge, skills, and personal traits are viewed as essential, including knowledge of teaching methodologies and language skills, motivation, empathy, and constantly improving one's teaching. Metaphors used by participants also indicate effective teachers are conceptualized as guides, resources, and leaders. However, many trainers expressed concerns the current program does not sufficiently emphasize 21st-century skills, practical experience, electives, and language skills needed to produce quality teachers. While a new step towards greater autonomy was noted, the predominant view seems to be there are still gaps between the program curriculum and desired outcomes. Further research on aligning teacher training with contemporary skill demands appears warranted. Overall, this study highlights areas of focus for better equipping aspiring teachers and provides insights that may inform ongoing efforts to enhance English teacher education in the Turkish context. Additionally, the study recognizes the dynamic and contextual nature of teacher identity and professionalism, and the identified qualities should be interpreted as suggested guidelines rather than fixed or universal traits.



The findings of this study offer valuable critical insights that can inform efforts to better prepare effective English language teachers. By highlighting the qualities and characteristics deemed essential by teacher trainers, such as strong methodological expertise, motivational abilities, empathy, and a commitment to continuous professional growth, the study provides a framework for designing teacher education curricula that cultivate these desired attributes. The emphasis on integrating 21st-century skills, increasing practical experiences, and expanding course offerings aligns with contemporary calls for preparing teachers to meet the evolving needs of diverse learners in a globalized world (Fandino, 2013; Kumaravadivelu, 2012).

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of bridging the perceived gap between ideals and practice in teacher education programs. The critiques raised by trainers regarding the current curriculum's limitations in developing practical skills, fostering cultural awareness, and promoting a cohesive philosophical foundation highlight areas for critical reflection and improvement. Addressing these concerns through collaborative efforts involving stakeholders such as trainers, teachers, and policymakers can strengthen the alignment between teacher education and the realities of effective language teaching in dynamic classroom environments.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the ongoing discourse on teacher professionalism and identity construction by giving voice to the perspectives of a key stakeholder group – teacher trainers. Their insights and experiences can shape the trajectory of teacher development in the Turkish context and beyond, ensuring that future generations of language teachers are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to inspire and empower learners in an increasingly interconnected world.

In conclusion, this study explored ELT teacher trainers' perspectives on the changing landscape of English language teacher training in Turkey. The findings suggest while progress has been made, there are still areas of need and disconnect between ideals and practice. Participant views on essential knowledge, skills and attributes can help guide teacher education policies and curriculum design. Their misgivings about current programs also indicate more work may be required to fully prepare teachers for 21st-century classrooms. The metaphors provided here contribute to understanding the complex dynamics underlying teacher training. By eliciting trainer viewpoints, this research also gives voice to a key stakeholder group. Their frontline experiences and goals for teacher development can meaningfully inform the path ahead.

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