An Investigation of Undergraduate Preservice EFL Teachers' CEFR Awareness Levels

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Abstract: Teachers are the system's agency of practice. As a result, any changes to this system have a direct impact on teacher education programs, which are strictly supervised by the Council of Higher Education in Turkiye in accordance with the needs of the time and global circumstances (Yelken, 2009). Since the 1997 curricular reform, there have been two more modifications to the teacher education program, which are the 2006 and 2018 programs. In many ways, the former was a first in Turkiye, including the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Following this, numerous studies were conducted to assess teachers' knowledge of the CEFR. Unfortunately, little research has been done on it for the 2018 program, which is the one currently in practice. The study attempted to fill this gap by administering a questionnaire to 108 preservice EFL (English as a foreign language) teachers at a state university in Turkiye. The findings show that participants have a moderate level of CEFR knowledge about the relationship between their program and the CEFR, as well as a high level of agreement about the general teacher characteristics acquired through a CEFR-based program. The study advises a program adjustment in this regard, encourages teacher educators to devote a portion of their lectures to instilling CEFR awareness, and encourages preservice teachers to conduct self-study on the CEFR and its principles, as foreign language instruction in Turkiye is based on them.

Keywords: CEFR, Program Development, Teacher Training and Education, English Language Teaching, Preservice Teachers

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INTRODUCTION

In education, teacher training is of prime importance since education as a system operates with the teacher being the element of change and improvement. In the context of Turkiye, the Council of Higher Education (CHE) overlooks the entirety of higher education curriculums and programs, so teacher training is not an exception. CHE is responsible for designing, developing, and regulating higher educational programs and making appropriate revisions when and where needed (Akdemir, 2013). As for K-12 education, in which the trained teachers are responsible to teach, the Ministry of National Education (MONE) is the authority for any changes, developments, or regulations. When any changes occur in the MONE curriculums, concurrently the English language teacher education programs (ELTEP) are also subject to revision.

From the Ottoman era's imperial period onwards, the Turkish educational system has seen various changes to both the curriculums in K-12 education and ELTEPs practiced within the teacher education programs of higher education. In the modern sense, three programs should come to mind when discussing the curricular changes in higher education regarding teacher education, which the current study puts into the centre, namely the 1997 reform, the 2006 ELTEP, and the 2018 ELTEP which is the current one still in practice as of now. With the 2006 ELTEP, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the related European documents like ELP (European Language Portfolio) and EPOSTL (European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages) were given a place in the program (Hişmanoğlu, 2013). Many studies were conducted with regard to the 2006 ELTEP student-teachers' CEFR awareness levels. However, little research has been conducted on the awareness of those who are subject to the current ELTEP, which has been in practice since 2018. Therefore, with the purpose of filling this gap, the study aims to investigate the levels of CEFR awareness of the preservice EFL teachers studying at a state university in Turkiye to reveal their agreement levels on the relation between ELTEP and the CEFR as well as the general teacher characteristics that can be acquired through a CEFR-based program.

Research Questions

In line with the study's aim, two research questions have been formulated.

1. What are the levels of CEFR awareness of the preservice EFL teachers?

   1.1. What are the preservice EFL teachers' agreement levels on the relation between ELTEP and the CEFR?

   1.2. What are the preservice EFL teachers' agreement levels on the general teacher characteristics acquired via a CEFR program?

2. By what factors are the preservice EFL teachers' CEFR awareness levels affected?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Curricular Changes in Turkiye

To address the requirements and changes of the current time, the teacher training programs in Turkiye are in strategically strict regulation and development (Hişmanoğlu, 2013; Yelken, 2009). In other words, insofar as possible, the governmental organizations that supervise changes within the Turkish educational system have always been in pursuit of keeping the curriculums updated, and any modifications to this system, either within or internationally, directly affect the process, so an immediate change is seen thereafter in the teacher education programs as well. A milestone in this sense of change within the Turkish context was the 1997 reform, with which the teacher training curriculum was reconstructed to incorporate a communicative approach alongside a constructivist viewpoint to foster basic communicational skills in language learners (Kırkgöz, 2005). This was the first time in Turkiye when a communicative approach had been embraced in the ELTEP to meet the requirements of the English language teaching program of MONE, which had been based on the communicative approach to teaching English.

After nearly half a decade when the 1997 ELTEP had been put into practice, the Council of Europe (COE), an international organization of which Turkiye is a member state, published what can be called a guideline for learning, teaching, and assessing languages, which was the Common European Framework of Reference in 2001 (COE, 2001). Although the CEFR was published in 2001, it did not emerge out of anywhere. There had been a variant body of linguistic and social studies prior thereto, conducted by the Language Policy Division of COE with the purpose of promoting a pluricultural and a plurilingual society unified under the flag of the European Union (Arıkan, 2015; COE, 2001).

Turkiye has been attempting to minimize the discrepancies between the Turkish higher education programs and their counterparts in Europe in terms of length, content, and standards (Yelken, 2009). Among the many requirements of European Union full membership, the status of which the country strives to attain, educational requirements constitute a principal element. Concurrently, the emergence of the CEFR in 2001 called for a new curricular change in Turkiye, which gave rise to the 2006 ELTEP, in which the CEFR was mentioned and suggested to be taught within the scope of a course called ELT Methodology I (CHE, 2007). Following the curricular change, many studies took place to evaluate its effectiveness from the aspect of preservice and/or in-service teachers' awareness with regards to CEFR or the related European documents (e.g., Arıkan, 2015; Bergil & Sarıçoban, 2017; Çağatay & Gürocak, 2016; Güneş & Altıner, 2017; Yakışık & Gürocak, 2018). All of these mentioned studies have a general common point, which is the fact that most of their participants show low, if not average, levels of awareness or knowledge about the CEFR or the related European documents, such as the ELP or the EPOSTL, all of which are important means of

instructional principles and tools for language teachers' professional development. This may indicate a discrepancy between theory, practice, and training in that although a few teachers know about the CEFR, they have no idea how important it is or what bases it provides for their practices.

Lastly, the most recent change in MONE and CHE curriculums took place in the year 2018, since then the current ELTEP has been in practice. According to CHE (2018a), there were several rationales for change that interests the current study as well, listed as but not limited to: (i) recent changes in the K-12 curriculums by MONE, (ii) inconsistency of weekly class hours, course credits and European Credit Transfer System across the universities, (iii) re-publication of General Teacher Characteristics by the MONE in 2017, (iv) qualification and accreditation studies conducted in faculties of education, (v) and establishing concordance with the Bologna Process within the European Higher Education Area. When the CEFR and other related European documents are considered, the second and fifth items are especially important about the current ELTEP's reason for existence. In line with this, although some studies have been conducted about teacher educators' beliefs about the new program ever since (Çetin et al., 2021; Öztürk & Aydın, 2019; Ulubey & Başaran, 2019), there is no sufficient research on the CEFR awareness and knowledge of the preservice teachers despite its abundance for the previous ELTEP. As a result, the 2018 curricular change cannot be effectively evaluated in terms of the CEFR principles and inducing an awareness of the CEFR in preservice teachers as of now.

The CEFR in Language Teaching

As aforementioned, the CEFR is a publication of COE, of which the Turkish Republic is also a member state. The CEFR did not emerge out of anywhere in the year 2001. There has been a series of ongoing commitments from the 1970s on by the Language Policy Division of COE, so the CEFR is not only a baseline for learning, assessing, or teaching any language but also an internationally joint product which focuses on promoting collaboration, coordination, multilingualism, and multiculturalism amongst its audiences (COE, 2001; North, 2020). Therefore, the document cannot be simply defined as a book of guidelines for educational stakeholders. In addition, as listed by COE (2001), other major focuses of the CEFR include (i) improving the quality of learning, teaching, and assessment, (ii) ensuring transparency and comparability in testing, (iii) structuring and inquiring about the content of language curriculums as well as producing can-do statements in line with the age, personal interests, and needs of the learners, (iv) and instrumenting teaching materials and textbooks.

The CEFR can be regarded as an educational tool that broadens the perspectives of stakeholders through its modern views of the processes of language learning and teaching. In the essence of the CEFR lies a socio-cognitive approach to pedagogy that places the learner at the centre as social agents who take on actions that are not necessarily language-related to accomplish these with the effective utilisation of language skills incorporating the competencies of communication, interaction, mediation,

and reception (Çağatay & Gürocak, 2016; Tosun & Glover, 2020). This approach to pedagogy has been named as an action-oriented approach, in which the learner is an active user of the target language, and learning is a process that occurs while accomplishing a set of tasks collaboratively with the other users of the language within the given circumstances and the learners' field of action (COE, 2001). See Figure 1 for an easier, more in-depth understanding of the action-oriented approach. In simple terms, the utilisation of tasks, socialisation, and cognitive linguistic skills are at the centre of the action-oriented approach. When tasks are mentioned, task-based language teaching (TBLT) may come to mind, which is informed by the communicative approach. However, the action-oriented approach and TBLT are dissimilar both in the core features and classroom implementation as they differ in the utilisation of tasks. In TBLT which is based on communicative approach, tasks are used to attain learning objectives, whereas, in action-oriented approach, learning is performed to do the action-oriented tasks (Acar, 2019). Therefore, a completely opposite relation is present here.
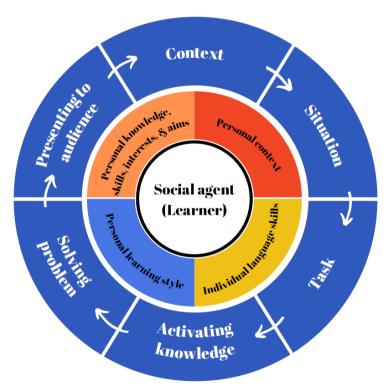

Figure 1. Action-oriented approach of the CEFR

Note. The figure is adapted from Fischer's (2020) figure of the action-oriented approach.

Lastly, several research studies on the CEFR exist that can be mentioned to further strengthen the theoretical framework and rationale for the current study. In the literature, most recent studies' findings indicate that the preservice and/or in-service EFL teachers lack sufficient knowledge about the CEFR, most of them have no idea as to how a CEFR-based program helps them gain teacher characteristics or better their classroom practices, and interestingly, those who know or believe that a CEFR-based program is beneficiary in language teaching do not actually practice it in reality

(Çağatay & Gürocak, 2016; Güneş & Altıner, 2017; Tosun & Glover, 2020; Yakışık & Gürocak, 2018). So, there is a high discrepancy between theory and practice if not a lack thereof. Contrasting this, only a little research has positive results, one of which is Hişmanoğlu's (2013) study where the participants show a great deal of understanding of the CEFR and other relevant European documents in addition to believing their importance in teaching a language; furthermore, they have high levels of agreement with regards to general teacher characteristics that can be gained from a CEFR-based program. In the end, though, the fact that roughly all these studies are done when the 2006 ELTEP was in practice should be noted to highlight the importance of the current study in filling the gap in the literature.

METHOD

Research Design

Being a conceptual replication of Hişmanoğlu's (2013) study, the present study follows a quantitative approach as in the original one with a survey research design. A conceptual replication is a type of study that aims to test the same essential hypothesis or idea the original study does, but in a conceptual replication, measured variables, research design and type, and the participant population might be different from those of its original study (Crandall & Sherman, 2016). The first differing part of this research is the study's participants. Although one might think that the population is the same due to both the present study and the one that replicates are aimed at investigating the preservice teachers' awareness levels, the preservice teachers' programs of training are different. In Hişmanoğlu's study, the participants are subject to the 2006 ELTEP, whereas those in this study are subject to the most recent one, which has been in practice since 2018. The second difference is the addition of another research question, which seeks to determine which factors affect the participants' CEFR awareness levels.

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted at the Department of English Language Teaching in a Turkish state university's faculty of education. The sampling of the study was random and done with 46 male and 62 female ($N = 108$) preservice EFL teachers, the ages of whom ranged from 18 to 28, averaging 21 years old. See Table 1 for detailed participant information that includes the factors mentioned as independent variables in the findings section, which are the distributions of gender, grade, and age groups.

Table 1 Demographical information of the participants

Grade		Age Groups			
		18-20 ($n = 35$)	21-23 ($n = 66$)	24+ ($n = 7$)	Total
First Year	Male	8	0	0	8
	Female	7	1	0	8
Second Year	Male	8	3	0	11
	Female	3	5	0	8
Third Year	Male	2	13	2	17
	Female	7	12	2	21
Fourth Year	Male	0	9	1	10
	Female	0	23	2	25

Instrument

Quantitative data will be collected through an adapted version of the questionnaire used in Hişmanoğlu's (2013) study (see Appendix), which is also an adapted version of the one developed by Kır (2011) for her doctoral dissertation. Consisting of two subscales, which respectively can be divided into "agreement of the ELTEP and the CEFR" and "general teacher characteristics gained via a CEFR-based program", the tool includes 31 items and is constructed with a five-point Likert-type scale. The reliability of the internal consistency of subscale items and the entire questionnaire was calculated with Cronbach's alpha coefficients. The whole questionnaire was found to be highly reliable (31 items, $\alpha = .92$). Likewise, the subscales were also highly reliable with the first subscale having 11 items ($\alpha = .91$) and the second one having 20 items ($\alpha = .91$). As for validity, Kır (2011) states in her work that the questionnaire items were based on EPOSTL's can-do statements, and pilot studies were conducted, which concurs content validity.

Data Collection and Analysis

As for data collection, after getting the necessary permission from the faculty of education of the university, the researcher contacted the teacher educators who would allow the conduction of the questionnaire in their classes. Then, throughout a week's period, the questionnaire was handed out to 120 students of all four grades. The remaining number of participant data was 108 after eliminating the outliers to assume a normal distribution.

As for data analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Firstly, all the data's normality distributions and the participants' frequency of answers for each item on the belief questionnaire were reported. Secondly, with the aim of revealing the independent group variables' impact on the CEFR awareness of the preservice teachers, several inferential statistics were used to answer the second research question. To reveal gender's influence on the awareness levels, for one, independent samples t-test was used. Depending on the distribution, an independent-samples t-test is computed in studies where two experimental conditions exist with dissimilar participants assigned to each of them (Field, 2009). Other remaining two factors were the participants' year of study and their

age groups, and to measure their significant impacts, if any, on the awareness levels of the participants, a one-way multivariate analysis of variances (MANOVA) was used. MANOVA is used to test if the means of two or more dependent variables are significantly different from one another (Salcedo & McCormick, 2020).

FINDINGS

In order to conduct each statistical analysis abovementioned, several assumptions had to be met. As to conduct the t-test, random sampling, normal distribution, adequate sample size, and equality of variances had to be assumed, and for MANOVA, multivariate normality was to be additionally assumed. The assumptions of random sampling and adequate sampling size were already met. As for normality, all variables showed normal distribution according to the ± 2 intervals of skewness and kurtosis values proposed by George and Mallery (2010) as seen in Table 2. Multivariate normality was assumed by calculating Mahalanobis distances and computing their significance to the Chi-Square value with 3 degrees of freedom in line with Field's (2009) instructions. As a result, Mahalanobis distances ranged from 0.19 to 6.33 ($M = 1.84$, $SD = 1.49$), and their statistical significances to the Chi-Square degree of freedom value ranged from a p value of .10 to .98 ($M = 0.65$, $SD = 0.25$). Homogeneity of variances was also assumed for each test. Therefore, all the necessary assumptions were met for the analyses.

Table 2 Normality distributions of the data

Data	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Value	*SE*	*Value*	*SE*
Gender	-0.30	0.23	-1.94	0.46
Age Groups	0.46	0.23	-0.42	0.46
P. Agreement of ELTEP and the CEFR	-0.63	0.23	-0.09	0.46
C. General teacher characteristics gained via a CEFR-based program	-0.49	0.23	0.78	0.46

Note. The letters P and C denote the subscales' item categorisations for the ease of the reader.

The CEFR Awareness Levels

To address the first research question, descriptive statistics were used. As for the first sub-question, Table 3 exhibits the participants' reported answers. The results indicate that only slightly more than half of the preservice EFL teachers know about the CEFR (P1, 58.3%), and less than half of them read about it (P2, 47.2%). The majority of the preservice teachers have insufficient knowledge with regards to the CEFR (P4, 64.9%) although nearly half of them are reported to have taken a course about it (P3, 49.1%). Adding to this point, informal discourse between the researcher and the participant students of third and fourth grades revealed that the course they took was English Language Teaching Programs, a second-year spring term course. On the other hand, the participants' beliefs regarding the practices of their teacher educators and ELTEP they are subject to in terms of their relatedness to the CEFR principles are generally on the neutral side (P5, P6, P7, and P9).

However, the preservice teachers are aware of the importance of a CEFR-based program in training English teachers (P11, 64.9%), and they deem it highly necessary to consider the content of the CEFR in ELTEP (P10, 73.1%).

As for the second sub-question, focusing on the preservice EFL teachers' agreement levels on the general teacher characteristics acquired via a CEFR-based program, Table 4 displays the reported answers. Even though the CEFR knowledge of the preservice EFL teachers is slightly more than half, interestingly, the results for the second sub-question represent a prominent level of agreement amongst the participants with an average of 79.9% total agreement, the top three being the items of C2 (98.1%), C7 (93.5%), and C14 (87.1%).

Table 3 Agreement levels on the relation between ELTEP and the CEFR

Items of the First Subscale	SD f (%)	D f (%)	N f (%)	A f (%)	SA f (%)
P1. I know about the CEFR.	23(21.3)	14(13)	8(7.4)	35(32.4)	28(25.9)
P2. I read the CEFR.	31(28.7)	14(13)	12(11.1)	27(25)	24(22.2)
P3. I took a course / got education concerning the CEFR or the CEFR related subjects.	29(26.9)	14(13)	12(11.1)	24(22.2)	29(26.9)
P4. I have sufficient amount of knowledge with respect to the CEFR.	22(20.4)	19(17.6)	29(26.9)	25(23.1)	13(12)
P5. The CEFR has impact on the coursebooks used for teaching English in the department.	12(11.1)	4(3.7)	34(31.5)	29(26.9)	29(26.9)
P6. The CEFR has impact on the tests used in our department.	11(10.2)	7(6.5)	38(35.2)	35(32.4)	17(15.7)
P7. The CEFR has impact on language teaching techniques used in the department.	11(10.2)	5(4.6)	33(30.6)	37(34.3)	22(20.4)
P8. Our lecturers reflect the CEFR specific characteristics in the contents of their courses.	14(13)	11(10.2)	43(39.8)	29(26.9)	11(10.2)
P9. The teaching program practiced in our institution is a CEFR specific English language teacher training model.	9(8.3)	11(10.2)	50(46.3)	30(27.8)	8(7.4)
P10. It is necessary that the content of the CEFR be taken into account in English language teacher education program.	6(5.6)	2(1.9)	21(19.4)	36(33.3)	43(39.8)
P11. It is necessary that the CEFR and the ELP be incorporated into English language teacher education curriculum as obligatory or elective courses.	6(5.6)	2(1.9)	30(27.8)	41(38)	29(26.9)

Note. SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree. Bold frequencies denote the most chosen items.

Table 4 Agreement levels on the general teacher characteristics acquired via a CEFR program

Items of the Second Subscale	SD f (%)	D f (%)	N f (%)	A f (%)	SA f (%)
C1. I can understand the contents of European documents (e.g., the CEFR, the ELP) and I can adapt them to my teaching when I start the teaching profession.	6(5.6)	7(6.5)	30(27.8)	48(44.4)	17(15.7)
C2. I can understand the personal, intellectual, and cultural value of knowing other languages.	0(0)	1(0.9)	1(0.9)	36(33.3)	70(64.8)
C3. I can choose and design different activities for developing and practicing different listening strategies.	0(0)	4(3.7)	11(10.2)	54(50)	39(36.1)
C4. I can choose and design different activities which can help students to be aware of characteristics specific to the spoken language and to speculate on those characteristics.	0(0)	3(2.8)	14(13)	57(52.8)	34(31.5)
C5. Based on the purpose of reading, I can design different activities so that students can develop and practice different reading strategies.	0(0)	3(2.8)	12(11.1)	57(52.8)	36(33.3)
C6. I can evaluate and choose meaningful writing activities so as to help students to be aware of different text types (letter, report, etc.) and to use appropriate language.	0(0)	4(3.7)	15(13.9)	59(54.6)	30(27.8)
C7. I can choose and evaluate tasks that can help students to use new words in spoken and written communication.	0(0)	0(0)	7(6.5)	58(53.7)	43(39.8)
C8. I can choose and evaluate activities that raise students' intercultural awareness.	0(0)	3(2.8)	16(14.8)	56(51.9)	33(30.6)
C9. I can choose suitable activities and "ICT" materials for students, and I can use them in the classroom.	5(4.6)	6(5.6)	31(28.7)	41(38)	25(23.1)
C10. I can balance and diversify the activities so that they can contain different competencies and skills.	0(0)	2(1.9)	13(12)	50(46.3)	43(39.8)
C11. I can balance and diversify the activities to take into account students' individual learning styles.	0(0)	3(2.8)	30(27.8)	46(42.6)	29(26.9)
C12. I can engage students in lesson planning.	1(0.9)	5(4.6)	20(18.5)	53(49.1)	29(26.9)
C13. I can be flexible when practicing the lesson plan, and I take into account students' interests during the lesson.	1(0.9)	3(2.8)	11(10.2)	38(35.2)	55(50.9)
C14. I can relate what I teach to students' prior knowledge and their language experiences.	0(0)	0(0)	14(13)	53(49.1)	41(38)
C15. I can help students to develop suitable learning strategies.	0(0)	2(1.9)	21(19.4)	54(50)	31(28.7)
C16. I can evaluate and choose different activities that can help students to reflect the existent knowledge and capabilities.	0(0)	4(3.7)	10(9.3)	59(54.6)	35(32.4)
C17. I can choose and evaluate tasks that can help students to develop specific language learning and work strategies and reflect these specific language learning and work strategies.	0(0)	4(3.7)	25(23.1)	53(49.1)	26(24.1)
C18. I can support my students concerning the selection of activities and tasks based on their individual needs and interests.	1(0.9)	1(0.9)	22(20.4)	46(42.6)	38(35.2)
C19. I can plan and organize an interdisciplinary project work by myself or by cooperating with other teachers.	3(2.8)	6(5.6)	22(20.4)	49(45.4)	28(25.9)
C20. I can structure and plan a portfolio work.	2(1.9)	7(6.5)	23(21.3)	45(41.7)	31(28.7)

Note. SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree. Bold frequencies denote the most chosen items.

Factors Affecting the CEFR Awareness Levels

With the aim of revealing which factors had an impact on the CEFR awareness levels of the preservice EFL teachers, two inferential analyses were conducted. The first one was independent samples t-test to see if participant gender held any significance. According to the results of the t-test given in Table 5, gender did have a statistically significant impact on the participants' CEFR levels. The participants' beliefs regarding both the agreement of ELTEP and the CEFR ($p < .05$) and the characteristics gained via a CEFR-based program ($p < .05$) had been influenced by their gender with a medium effect size of $d = 0.63$.

Table 5 The CEFR awareness levels by gender

Variables	Male ($n = 46$)		Female ($n = 62$)		t	df	p
	M	SD	M	SD			
I. Agreement of ELTEP and the CEFR	3.02	0.91	3.58	0.87	-3.26	106	.002
II. General teacher characteristics gained via a CEFR-based program	3.94	0.44	4.19	0.48	-2.73	106	.007

The second inferential analysis conducted was one-way MANOVA, which sought to measure, if any, the statistically significant impact of the independent variables of age groups and grades on the CEFR awareness levels of the preservice EFL teachers. The score of dispersion matrices, that is Box's M, was $F(21, 1121.77) = 0.98$, $p = .49$, which indicated equality of variances. Subsequently, multivariate tests were conducted, which for the age groups, did not show a statistically significant difference with $\Lambda = .92$, $F(6, 196) = 2.09$, $p = .08$, meaning that the age groups did not have a statistically significant influence on the levels of CEFR awareness. However, the participants' grades showed statistically significant differences amongst themselves with $\Lambda = .50$, $F(6, 196) = 13.37$, $p < .001$, $\eta2 = .29$, which indicates that the change in the dependent variables was significantly affected to a degree of 29% by the participants' year of study. Thus, to examine the statistically significant difference within the grouping variable of grades, tests of between-subject effects and a Bonferroni post-hoc were computed. After these analyses, it was revealed that the participants' grades had a statistically significant impact on both their agreement levels on the relatedness of ELTEP and the CEFR ($F(3, 99) = 24.17$, $p < .001$, $\eta2 = .42$) and their agreement levels on the general teacher characteristics gained via a CEFR-based program ($F(3, 99) = 7.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta2 = .19$). Their agreement levels on the relation of ELTEP and the CEFR was much more affected with an effect degree of 42% than their beliefs about general teacher characteristics gained with a degree of 19%.

For more information regarding the MANOVA test, see Table 6 for the grades' descriptive statistics and then Table 7 for MANOVA results by grade and the direction of differences according to Bonferroni post-hoc test among the mean levels of subscales by the grade levels of the participants.

The inference from Tables 6 and 7 is that there were significant differences in an increasing trend between the first- and third-year students, first- and fourth-year students, second- and third-year students, and second- and fourth-year students with $p < .001$ for the first subscale, whereas for the second subscale, the only significant difference was between first- and fourth-year students with $p = .04$. The interpretation of the results would be that even though for the agreement levels of the preservice teachers regarding the relatedness of ELTEP and the CEFR is statistically significant across the first two and last two years considering the direction of differences, the test results for the second subscale indicated a statistically significant difference only for the first- and fourth-year students, while the rest of the grade dispersion did not significantly affect their agreement levels.

Table 6 Descriptive statistics of the grades according to awareness level means

Grades	I. Relation of ELTEP and the CEFR					II. General Teacher Characteristics Gained				
	M	*N*	*SD*	Min.	Max.	*M*	*N*	*SD*	Min.	Max.
First year (A)	2.62	16	0.55	1.82	3.73	3.87	16	0.65	2.25	4.80
Second year (B)	2.20	19	0.75	1.00	3.45	3.87	19	0.42	3.15	4.65
Third year (C)	3.67	38	0.54	2.64	4.73	4.13	38	0.47	3.30	4.95
Fourth year (D)	3.93	35	0.71	1.00	4.91	4.22	35	0.37	3.45	4.95

Table 7 MANOVA results by grade

Analysed Subscales	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*p*	Direction of differences
I. Relation of ELTEP and the CEFR	30.27	3	10.09	24.17	$< .001$	A<C, $p < .001$
Total	1296.44	108				A<D, $p < .001$
						B<C, $p < .001$
						B<D, $p < .001$
II. General teacher characteristics gained	4.47	3	1.49	7.90	$< .001$	A<D, $p = .04$
Total	1821.94	108				

Note. The letters used in the last column are linked to those in Table 6 for the ease of the reader.

DISCUSSION

The study highlighted several key points with regard to the CEFR awareness amongst the preservice EFL teachers in Turkiye. Among these key points, an important one is the fact that the preservice EFL teachers are well aware of the general teacher characteristics that can be gained via the implementation of a CEFR-based program, and thus, the participants are reported to have high self-efficacies with regard to the listed teacher proficiencies in the questionnaire, which are similar to the other studies' findings in the relevant literature (Çağatay & Gürocak, 2016; Hişmanoğlu, 2013). However, contrasting to most of the previous research and the participants' beliefs about the gainable teacher characteristics from a CEFR program, no more than half of the participants are reported to have sufficient knowledge about the CEFR, read about it, or taken a course about it. Similar findings were present in a recent study by Toşun and Glover (2020) in which participants were reported to be influenced by the CEFR-related principles in their practices, notwithstanding their little knowledge

about it. Although there seems to be an inconsistent pattern present here, the reason for this being might as well be due to the general teacher characteristics by MONE (2017), which are being taught throughout the undergraduate degree and form the basis of the current ELTEP as indicated by CHE (2018a).

Another key point is that most of the preservice teachers agree that ELTEP should incorporate the CEFR. However, considering the percentage of those who took a course that mentioned the CEFR, the current ELTEP has a lacking point on the matter, which is the same issue with the 2006 ELTEP according to Güneş and Altıner (2017). In line with this, the last point to underline, therefore, is the 2018 ELTEP's effectiveness. The term effectiveness can amount to several meanings, which would go beyond the scope of the current study, but it should be mentioned that the 2018 ELTEP and the general student profile it creates have been severely criticized by Turkish teacher education scholars due to its lack of content, length, and impact when compared to the ones that preceded it (Köksal & Ulum, 2019; Öztürk & Aydın, 2019). Even though much evaluative research has been done on the previous ELTEP (Yavuz & Topkaya Zehir, 2013; Yurtsever Bodur & Arıkan, 2017) and likewise on the topic of CEFR awareness of those subject to the former program with little to no positive findings (e.g., Çağatay & Gürocak, 2016; Güneş & Altıner, 2017; Yakışık & Gürocak, 2018), the fact that the current ELTEP still has lacking points in these regards unreservedly shows that the scholarly research on such issues do not resonate with the educational policymakers in Turkiye.

The questionnaire's results were also tested with inferential statistics to see if the participants' demographical information had any significant impact on their agreement levels. As a reminder for the reader, these independent grouping variables were gender, grade, and age groups. Similar studies that aimed to measure the preservice or in-service teachers' awareness about CEFR or related European documents mostly did not have such inferential analyses, so there is no sufficient research to compare these findings with the literature. However, some inferences can be made. Firstly, the fact that the first two years of study and the last two years of study differed significantly in terms of CEFR awareness levels may indicate that at this particular state university, from the second grade onwards, there is a course that allocates some of its parts to the CEFR, which could be English Language Teaching Programs according to the informal discourse between the researcher and the participants. When CHE's (2018b) ELTEP is considered, it would only be logical to give place to the CEFR in that course since the current English language teaching programs' approach, content, skills they aim to cultivate, and the outcomes by grade, etc., which parallels the CEFR principles (COE, 2001), are suggested to be taught by CHE in this particular course. Secondly, the fact that the participants' gender had a statistically significant effect on their awareness levels can be explained by fewer number of male participants or the lack of an uneven dispersion across the grouping variables, which call for the limitational statements of the study, given in-depth below.

Limitations and Recommendations

Without proper limitational statements, a study "may cause less informed consumers of research" (Price & Murnan, 2004, p. 67), which might potentially undermine the progress of the literature. The study's design, for one, could have been a mixed method, where the survey data would be supported with qualitative tools such as a semi-structured interview to be conducted with the preservice teachers or their teacher educators for further investigation of their understanding of the CEFR. Lastly, since the participant choosing was random, there might have been an unbalanced number of participant dispersion amongst the independent grouping variables.

In line with what is abovementioned, some suggestions can be made for further research on the topic. The researcher highly suggests the use of a mixed method with interviews to be conducted in addition to the survey data. Furthermore, the study may even be designed as a longitudinal one that expands from the start of the spring term through the end of it with the aim of fetching more reliable results related to the 2018 ELTEP's effectiveness about the CEFR awareness inducement in the preservice EFL teachers. Finally, yet again, the participant choosing should be more balanced in terms of grouping variables like age, grade, and gender for a more reliable prediction of the dependent variables while conducting inferential analyses.

CONCLUSION

The main topics of research for this study were EFL teacher training and the CEFR. The primary element of the research was to investigate the undergraduate EFL preservice teachers' CEFR awareness levels, who are studying at a Turkish state university. To this end, two research questions were formulated in the study, which respectively sought to descriptively analyse the preservice EFL teachers' awareness levels and to reveal which independent grouping factors had an impact on them with the conduction of inferential analyses. Findings of these indicated a moderate, if not inadequate, knowledge of the CEFR with a contrastingly high degree of agreement on the teacher characteristics gained via a CEFR-based program, which denotes that even though the preservice teachers' practices are in line with the CEFR principles, they do not realize them on a conscious level. Furthermore, the program seems to train the preservice teachers to be practitioners only, rather than educating them to be mindfully performing their profession when the discrepancy between the participants' knowledge and practices regarding the CEFR principles is taken into consideration. In other words, they lack awareness. However, this is not the case for every participant, for the higher the year of study is, the more aware the preservice teacher gets with respect to the CEFR. Nevertheless, this situation is not enough to justify the study's presumption of CEFR awareness among the participants. Therefore, it would not be farfetched from the truth that the current ELTEP is inefficient in cultivating CEFR awareness in the preservice teachers.

Several implications can be drawn from the study's results, both pedagogically and for educational policymakers. Firstly, since the current ELTEP seems to foster no specific awareness with respect to the CEFR, a powerful means of intercultural and linguistic competence in addition to being (more than) a guideline for foreign language teachers, all of which account for important elements in the field of English language teaching as well, the teacher educators should take the matter into their own hands and allocate a part of their relevant courses to the CEFR. This way, the lacking point of the current ELTEP can be compensated for by the efforts of the teacher educators. Secondly, the student-teachers of foreign language education departments are highly urged to self-study the CEFR, ELP, and EPOSTL, which are all beneficiary tools for their own professional development. Thirdly and lastly, for the educational policymakers, the researcher humbly implores the need for a revision of the current ELTEP in the light of both this study and the scholarly research present in the literature for effective training of the future teachers to be in line with the current international standards in language teaching.

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APPENDIX

The CEFR Awareness Level Questionnaire

Informed Consent

Dear students,

You are going to take this questionnaire as part of the study, titled "Investigating the CEFR Awareness of Preservice EFL Teachers: A Replication Study". The study aims to measure the awareness levels of preservice EFL teachers about the CEFR and their beliefs with regards to general teacher characteristics that can be gained through a CEFR specific program. No personal information you give will be shared publicly, and if an information is to be shared in the study report, codification or pseudonyms will be used.

If you consent to being a participant, tick here: ☐

A. Participant Information

Gender: MALE ☐ / FEMALE ☐ / OTHER ☐

Class: 1ST YEAR ☐ / 2ND YEAR ☐ / 3RD YEAR ☐ / 4TH YEAR ☐

Age: …………

B. The Questionnaire: Please choose what describes your situation the best for each listed item.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.1. I know about the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference).					
1.2. I read the CEFR.					
1.3. I took a course / got education concerning the CEFR or the CEFR related subjects.					
1.4. I have sufficient amount of knowledge with respect to the CEFR.					
1.5. The CEFR has impact on the coursebooks used for teaching English in the department.					
1.6. The CEFR has impact on the tests used in our department.					
1.7. The CEFR has impact on language teaching techniques used in the department.					
1.8. Our lecturers reflect the CEFR specific characteristics in the contents of their courses.					
1.9. The teaching program practiced in our institution is a CEFR specific English language teacher training model.					
1.10. It is necessary that the content of the CEFR be taken into account in English language teacher education program.					
1.11. It is necessary that the CEFR and the ELP (European Language Portfolio) be incorporated into English language teacher education curriculum as obligatory or elective courses.					

1

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
2.1. I can understand the contents of European documents (e.g., the CEFR, the ELP) and I can adapt them to my teaching when I start the teaching profession.					
2.2. I can understand the personal, intellectual, and cultural value of knowing other languages.					
2.3. I can choose and design different activities for developing and practicing different listening strategies.					
2.4. I can choose and design different activities which can help students to be aware of characteristics specific to the spoken language and to speculate on those characteristics.					
2.5. Based on the purpose of reading, I can design different activities so that students can develop and practice different reading strategies.					
2.6. I can evaluate and choose meaningful writing activities so as to help students to be aware of different text types (letter, report, etc.) and to use appropriate language.					
2.7. I can choose and evaluate tasks that can help students to use new words in spoken and written communication.					
2.8. I can choose and evaluate activities that raise students' intercultural awareness.					
2.9. I can choose suitable activities and "ICT" materials for students, and I can use them in the classroom.					
2.10. I can balance and diversify the activities so that they can contain different competencies and skills.					
2.11. I can balance and diversify the activities to take into account students' individual learning styles.					
2.12. I can engage students in lesson planning.					
2.13. I can be flexible when practicing the lesson plan, and I take into account students' interests during the lesson.					
2.14. I can relate what I teach to students' prior knowledge and their language experiences.					
2.15. I can help students to develop suitable learning strategies.					
2.16. I can evaluate and choose different activities that can help students to reflect the existent knowledge and capabilities.					
2.17. I can choose and evaluate tasks that can help students to develop specific language learning and work strategies and reflect these specific language learning and work strategies.					
2.18. I can support my students concerning the selection of activities and tasks based on their individual needs and interests.					
2.19. I can plan and organize an interdisciplinary project work by myself or by cooperating with other teachers.					
2.20. I can structure and plan a portfolio work.					

2