



## **Social Justice Matters: Representation of Diversity in an EFL Initial Teacher Education Program**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In today's multicultural and globalized world, diversity, as a necessary component of human existence, plays a critical role in society. Therefore, promoting equity and embracing diversity in the field of education is crucial to provide equal opportunities for all learners by respecting and accepting their identities. Paying attention to the significant role of teacher education programs in the preparation of teacher candidates, we aimed to investigate the representation of diversity through the lens of social justice in the current EFL initial teacher education program implemented as a standardized program in departments of English language and teaching at state universities of Türkiye. With this purpose in mind, the courses provided in the program were evaluated with respect to diversity issues. To this end, the course descriptions and goals were inductively analysed from the perspectives of social justice. The findings revealed the existence of diversity issues in both compulsory and elective courses to some extent regarding three knowledge-based domains i.e., content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and general culture. Based on the analysis of the program and relevant literature, some implications and suggestions were proposed for teacher educators and program designers for a more diversity-sensitive and social justice-oriented teacher education.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Are we educating just teacher candidates having great awareness of diversity, equity, and inclusion in teaching of English to every student of the class in both local and global context? This paramount question has become the focus and main concern of several studies with the goal of exploring the traces of social justice addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the related literature, recently. In the same vein, the idea of educating future teachers for social justice (Cochran-Smith, 2010; Cochran-Smith et al., 2009), and for increasingly diverse teaching contexts (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Keehn & Martinez, 2006) has become widely accepted in the related literature. In this sense, advocating the crucial role of teaching and teacher education for social justice on enhancing equal life and education opportunities to all students viewed as agents of change for a diverse democratic and just society, Cochran-Smith (2010) proposed a three-

dimensional theory of teacher education for social justice and reconceptualized justice theory with the following land-marking statements:

In contemporary political philosophy, then, the question really is not whether to theorize justice as a matter of distribution or as one of recognition. Rather the question is how to conceptualize the relationship between the notion of distributive justice that is central to modern liberal democracies, on one hand, and, on the other hand, contemporary struggles for the recognition of social groups based on culture, race, gender, religion, nationality, language, sexual orientation, and ability/disability – in short, in relation to the politics of identity and difference (p. 452).

Consistent with these “social justice” theoretical perspectives, our intention was to pinpoint the necessity of the recognition of different social identities and diversity in both social and educational contexts for a more just teacher education. More specifically, questioning how to prepare teacher candidates to teach to and for diversity theorizing justice as a matter of recognition was essential to figure out. In this sense, Zeichner and Flessner (2009) asserted the way of addressing social justice issues in teacher education programs as well as enhancing teaching practices with equal outcomes can contribute to the preparation of teacher candidates for teaching in diverse classroom contexts. Furthermore, Mills and Ballantyne (2016, p. 263), in their systematic review of research on social justice and teacher education, proclaimed “an understanding of beliefs of preservice teachers and/or teacher educators, with limited exploration into what programs that prepare preservice teachers to engage with student diversity in socially just ways might look like in practice”. In a similar vein, Lunn Brownlee et al. (2019) claim that even though initial teacher education programs have been evaluated and reviewed repeatedly in the relevant literature, the issue of how these programs address and respond to diversity has gained little attention. In this regard, it is of great importance to analyse the initial teacher education programs in relation to diversity, equity, and social justice.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

In this multicultural globalized democratic world, it becomes apparent that diversity, as an inevitable part of human life, builds and enriches a society. As Reid and Sriprakash (2012, p. 18) states, “ diversity is now with us, it is not out there”. That is, the need to recognize, respect and embrace diversity has received considerable attention. In this sense, to enhance democracy, equity, and social justice in a society, the quality of teacher education in terms of preparing teacher candidates to cater for all students has received great attention in recent years. Proposing the fact that teachers face a variety of challenges to access and teach all students regardless of their differences; therefore, teacher education programs must prepare teachers to overcome those possible challenges in teaching diverse settings, Valentiin (2006, p. 196) claims,

Interestingly, many preservice teachers enter teacher education programs with very limited-if any-first hand experiences with diversity. It is through their teacher education programs that preservice teachers have an

opportunity to develop a greater understanding of diversity, as well as to share in various learning experiences that foster the awareness of diversity and diversity issues.

Within this frame, it is clear that diversity, equity, and social justice are valuable issues for all students, teachers and schools. Thus, teacher education for social justice is much more than the traditional monocultural education and teacher education. From a social justice-based perspective, teacher education aims to make teacher candidates and teacher educators care about the "savage inequalities that exist in schools and educates them to raise questions regarding the causes and solutions to these problems" (Guyton, 2000, p. 110). In this sense, a social justice-based teacher education program can enhance teacher candidates' awareness of injustice in their teaching contexts and equip them with knowledge, understanding, attitude, and skill of teaching all students in the class. More specifically, such a teacher education program for social justice provides teacher candidates with a transformational orientation (Guyton, 2000). However, social justice along with diversity and equity is still not placed at centre of most of the teacher education programs.

In Türkiye, initial teacher education is provided by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE). Teacher candidates are required to complete four years undergraduate program including eight semester courses with 240 ECTS in total. The program courses are determined by CoHE, indicating the implementation of a centralised teacher education system throughout the country. The current EFL initial teacher education program was revised in the academic year of 2018-2019, and it has been utilised at all departments of state universities. Thus, the question of whether the current program address or place diversity in relation to the courses is needed to answer because Türkiye is a diverse and multicultural country meaning that teachers are supposed to teach a variety of diverse student population regarding ethnicity, language, culture, immigration, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and so on. However, some studies have revealed that teacher candidates are not prepared sufficient to teach diversity (Akın, 2016; Başarır et al., 2014; Ersoy, 2013); therefore, the necessity of program revision has been stressed in the national literature (Çoban et al., 2010; Ünlü & Örtten, 2013; Yavuz & Anıl, 2010). As for the reasons and rationality behind the revision of the current program are examined, it is stated that teachers tend to face diversity such as race, religion, language, economic situation, culture, drug addiction and so on day by day in the society constantly changing in terms of social, economic, and cultural aspects, which in turn makes the teaching more challenging for teachers, educators and schools (CoHE, 2018). Thus, within this perspective, teachers are expected:

“...to be sensitive to equity, diversity, social justice and social inclusion; to be able to perform effective teaching and learning with children with different needs, expectations and abilities in heterogeneous classes consisting of students from different social, cultural backgrounds and orientations.” (CoHE, 2018, p.7)

As Bourn and Soysal (2021) advocate, in the current initial teacher education program of Türkiye, the issues of equity, diversity, and social justice seem to be supported more. However, it is critical to evaluate the program along with the courses offered to teacher candidates in respect to whether these issues are addressed or not. The goal of the current study is to determine how effectively EFL teacher education

program has integrated diversity into its curricula. To ascertain which aspects of diversity are included in courses of the program, a content analysis of course descriptions were carried out. This study offers suggestions for how a foreign language initial teacher education program can better equip teacher candidates to educate diverse student populations after assessing these outcomes. Therefore, this study was guided by the following research question “How is diversity addressed in the current EFL initial teacher education program?” through a social justice perspective.

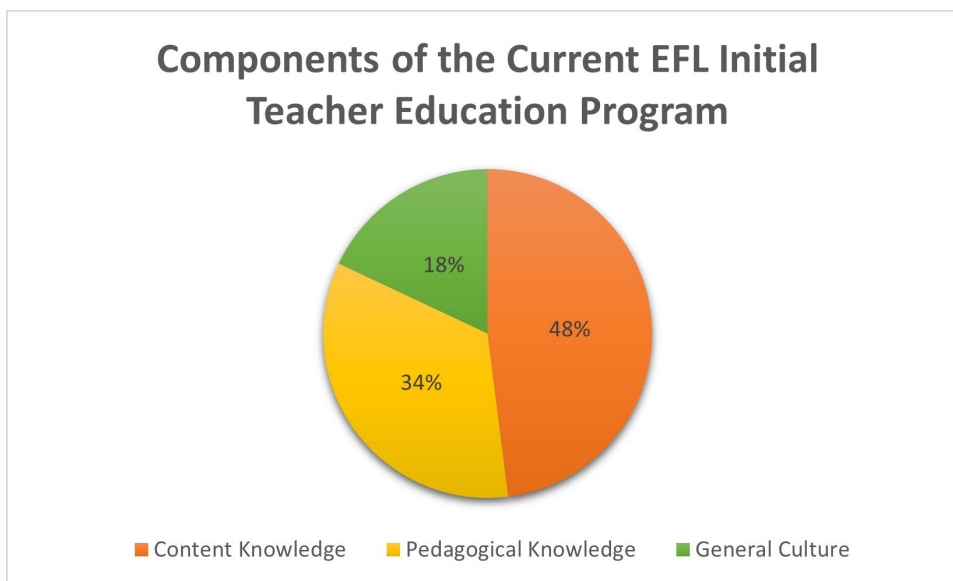
## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design, and the data were collected through document analysis. According to Yıldırım and Şimşek (2008), document analysis refers to analysing written materials related to the concept or issue under scrutiny. As the main research data, the current EFL initial teacher education program designed by the Council of Higher Education (2018) was examined. In the process of document analysis, Forster (1995)’s five steps namely accessing documents, checking the originality, interpreting the documents, data analysis, and dissemination of data were followed respectively.

### Research Data

Turkish Council of Higher Education designed and started to implement a unified and standardized national program in the academic year of 2018-2019 for EFL initial teacher education program comprising of three core components namely *content knowledge*, *pedagogical knowledge*, and *general culture*, which include a variety of electives in addition to compulsory ones for each component. The distribution of the courses to each domain was indicated in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1.** Components of the Current EFL Initial Teacher Education Curriculum

As seen in the figure above, content knowledge-based courses form the fundamental of the program with the highest percentage (48%). Then, in the second place, pedagogical knowledge-based courses come with 34%, and the courses related to general culture has the lowest percentage structuring 18% of the current EFL initial teacher education program in Türkiye.

### Data Analysis

Before starting the document analysis, firstly the current EFL initial teacher education program was accessed from the official website of the Council of Higher Education to ensure the originality of the document. Second, the course structure of the four-year undergraduate program provided for preparation of future EFL teachers was examined. In the further step, the compulsory courses were figured out in respect to type i.e., compulsory, or elective, knowledgebase, and course descriptions. Using the prerequisites for undergraduate courses of the related program, all electives and compulsory courses were compiled (n=.103). From this list, both compulsory courses (n=50) and elective courses (n=53) were coded for further analysis within the purpose of the study. For a deeper analysis, the content of each course description was examined attentively to identify how diversity is addressed, and what aspects are delineated in the current teacher education program. The qualitative data were analysed through content analysis.

## FINDINGS

As regards to the purpose of the study, all information of the program was obtained from the official website of the Turkish Council of Higher Education, and courses offered to teacher candidates within the scope of EFL initial teacher education program were delineated in detail regarding year of study.

In the first year, EFL teacher candidates take purely compulsory courses related to each domain namely content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and general culture. More specifically, language skills-based courses such as listening,

speaking, reading and writing in addition to general cultural and educational courses. During the first year of study, teacher candidates are required to take 60 credit courses in total, indicating 30 credits for each term of academic year. In this sense, Table 1 represents course details related to first year.

**Table 1.** Courses Offered in the First Year of the Current EFL Initial Teacher Education Program

<b>1st Year (Fall Semester)</b>			
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Type of Course</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
PK	Introduction to Education	Compulsory	3
PK	Educational Sociology	Compulsory	3
GC	Principles of Atatürk and History of Modern Türkiye 1	Compulsory	3
GC	Foreign Language 1	Compulsory	3
GC	Turkish Language 1	Compulsory	5
PK	Information Technology	Compulsory	5
CK	Reading Skills 1	Compulsory	2
CK	Writing Skills 1	Compulsory	2
CK	Listening and Pronunciation 1	Compulsory	2
CK	Oral Communication Skills 1	Compulsory	2
		Total	30
<b>1st Year (Spring Semester)</b>			
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Type of Course</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
PK	Psychology of Education	Compulsory	3
PK	Philosophy of Education	Compulsory	3
GC	Principles of Atatürk and History of Modern Türkiye 2	Compulsory	3
GC	Foreign Language 2	Compulsory	3
GC	Turkish Language 2	Compulsory	5
CK	Reading Skills 2	Compulsory	2
CK	Writing Skills 2	Compulsory	3
CK	Listening and Pronunciation 2	Compulsory	3
CK	Oral Communication Skills 2	Compulsory	3
CK	Structure of English	Compulsory	2
		Total	30
		Annual Total	60

In the second year, teacher candidates introduce with electives of each domain as well as starts taking more theoretical courses related to content knowledge in their discipline. Course details of second year are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Courses Offered in the Second Year of the Current EFL Initial Teacher Education Program

<b>2nd Year (Fall Semester)</b>			
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Type of Course</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
PK	Instructional Technologies	Compulsory	3
PK	Introduction Principles and Methods	Compulsory	3
PK	PK Elective 1 (see Table 5)	Elective	4

GC	GC Elective 1 (see Table 6)	Elective	3
CK	CK Elective 1 (see Table 7)	Elective	4
CK	Approaches in Teaching and Learning English	Compulsory	3
CK	English Literature 1	Compulsory	4
CK	Linguistics 1	Compulsory	3
CK	Critical Reading and Writing	Compulsory	3
		Total	30

### 2nd Year (Spring Semester)

Domain	Course Title	Type of Course	ECTS
PK	History of Turkish Education	Compulsory	3
PK	Research Methods in Education	Compulsory	3
PK	PK Elective 1 (see Table 5)	Elective	4
GC	GC Elective 1 (see Table 6)	Elective	3
CK	CK Elective 1 (see Table 7)	Elective	4
CK	English Language Programs	Compulsory	3
CK	English Literature 2	Compulsory	4
CK	Linguistics 2	Compulsory	3
CK	Language Acquisition	Compulsory	3
		Total	30
		Annual Total	60

Third year courses, specifically, provide teacher candidates with the opportunity of putting theories that they learn into practice. In this regard, as indicated in table 3, course details offered to third-year students are as follows:

**Table 3.** Courses Offered in the Third Year of the Current EFL Initial Teacher Education Program

3rd Year (Fall Semester)			
Domain	Course Title	Type of Course	ECTS
PK	Classroom Management	Compulsory	3
PK	Morality and Ethics in Education	Compulsory	3
PK	PK Elective 1 (see Table 5)	Elective	4
GC	GC Elective 1 (see Table 6)	Elective	3
CK	CK Elective 1 (see Table 7)	Elective	4
CK	Teaching English to Young Learners 1	Compulsory	5
CK	Teaching Language Skills 1	Compulsory	5
CK	Language and Literature Teaching 1	Compulsory	3
		Total	30
3rd Year (Spring Semester)			
Domain	Course Title	Type of Course	ECTS
PK	Turkish Educational System and School Management	Compulsory	3
PK	Assessment and Evaluation in Education	Compulsory	3
PK	PK Elective 1 (see Table 5)	Elective	4

GC	GC Elective 1 (see Table 6)	Elective	3
CK	CK Elective 1 (see Table 7)	Elective	4
CK	Teaching English to Young Learners 2	Compulsory	5
CK	Teaching Language Skills 2	Compulsory	5
CK	Language and Literature Teaching 2	Compulsory	3
		Total	30
		Annual Total	60

In the final year of the program, teacher candidates are required to complete their teaching practices at state practicum schools which are determined with the collaboration of the department staff and National Ministry of Education. Apart from this, they also go on taking both compulsory and elective courses related to content and pedagogical knowledgebases. Table 4 delineates course details of fourth year of the program.

**Table 4.** Courses Offered in the Fourth Year of the Current EFL Initial Teacher Education Program

<b>4th Year (Fall Semester)</b>			
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Type of Course</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
GC	Community Service Applications	Compulsory	3
PK	Teaching Practice 1	Compulsory	10
PK	Special Education and Inclusion	Compulsory	3
PK	PK Elective 1 (see Table 5)	Elective	4
CK	CK Elective 1 (see Table 7)	Elective	3
CK	Developing Course Content in Teaching English Language	Compulsory	3
CK	Translation	Compulsory	4
		Total	30
<b>4th Year (Spring Semester)</b>			
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>Type of Course</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
PK	Teaching Practice 2	Compulsory	15
PK	Guidance at Schools	Compulsory	3
PK	PK Elective 1 (see Table 5)	Elective	4
CK	CK Elective 1 (see Table 7)	Elective	4
CK	Test Preparation and Assessment in English Language Teaching	Compulsory	4
		Total	30
		Annual Total	60

Based on the overall descriptive analysis presented above, the 240 credits of academic work and successful completion of the practicum are the requirements for a bachelor's degree in the field of foreign language teacher education in Türkiye. As stated before, teacher candidates start taking elective courses from the second year to the final year. In this sense, the current EFL teacher education program offers a variety of electives in each domain namely PK, GC, and CK. Course details of electives related to each domain are given in tables below respectively.



**Table 5.** Pedagogical Knowledge Electives Offered the Current EFL Initial Teacher Education Program

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
PK	Child Psychology	4
PK	Anthropology of Education	4
PK	Drama in Education	4
PK	Curriculum Development in Education	4
PK	Character and Values Education	4
PK	Comparative Education	4
PK	Museum Education	4
PK	Out-of-School Learning Environments	4
PK	Open and Distance Education	4
PK	Education History	4
PK	Critical and Analytical Thinking	4
PK	Education of Hospitalized Children	4
PK	Micro Teaching	4
PK	Learning Difficulty	4
PK	Individualization and Adaptation of Teaching	4
PK	Preparing Project in Education	4
PK	Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder	4
PK	Education Law	4
PK	Extracurricular Activities in Education	4
PK	Sustainable Development and Education	4
PK	Inclusive Education	4
PK	Adult Education and Lifelong Learning	4

As indicated in table 5, the current program offers 22 elective course choices to teacher candidates in the domain of pedagogical knowledge. On the other hand, 18 electives in total are provided in relation to general culture, which is given in table 6 below.

**Table 6.** General Culture Electives Offered the Current EFL Initial Teacher Education Program

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Course Title</b>	<b>ECTS</b>
GC	Addiction and Addiction Control	3
GC	Nutrition and Health	3
GC	History and Philosophy of Science	3
GC	Ethics in Science and Research	3
GC	Economics and Entrepreneurship	3
GC	Traditional Turkish Handicrafts	3
GC	Education of Human Rights and Democracy	3
GC	Human Relations and Communication	3
GC	Career Planning and Development	3
GC	Culture and Language	3
GC	Media Literacy	3
GC	Professional English	3

GC	Art and Aesthetics	3
GC	Turkish Folk Dances	3
GC	Turkish Sign Language	3
GC	Turkish Cultural Geography	3
GC	Turkish Music	3
GC	History of Turkish Art	3

As for content knowledgebase, 13 electives are administered to teacher candidates on voluntary base throughout the undergraduate program, and these related course details are presented in Table 7 below.

**Table 7.** Content Knowledge Electives Offered the Current EFL Initial Teacher Education Program

Domain	Course Title	ECTS
CK	Language and Society	4
CK	World Englishes and Culture	4
CK	Pragmatics and Language Teaching	4
CK	English Textbook Evaluation	4
CK	Drama in ELT	4
CK	Materials Development in English Language Teaching	4
CK	New Approaches in Teaching English Language	4
CK	Vocabulary Teaching in English	4
CK	English in Mass Communication	4
CK	Classroom-based Assessment of Learning	4
CK	Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching	4
CK	Discourse Analysis and Language Teaching	4
CK	Teaching Integrated Language Skills	4

After descriptive analysis of all courses offered in the program, course descriptions were read carefully and analysed thematically. Based on the analysis results, ten codes emerged namely: (a) individual differences, (b) linguistic diversity, (c) cultural diversity, (d) ideology, (e) social class, (f) religion, (g) multicultural education, (h) social justice, (i) immigration, and (j) students with special educational needs (SPED). In this sense, a total of 12 content knowledge courses were identified as the ones that diversity and diversity related issues are stressed in the descriptions were presented in Table 8 below.

**Table 8.** Content Knowledge Courses by Diversity Issues

Name of the Course	Codes
Language Acquisition	individual differences; SPED
Teaching English to Young Learners 1	individual differences; SPED
Teaching English to Young Learners 2	individual differences; SPED
Teaching English Language Skills 1	individual differences
Teaching English Language Skills 2	individual differences
Language Literature and Teaching 1	linguistic diversity; cultural

Language Literature and Teaching 2	diversity; ideology linguistic diversity; cultural diversity; ideology
Course Content Development in English Language Teaching	ideology; individual differences; cultural diversity
Language and Society	linguistic diversity; cultural diversity; social class
World Englishes and Culture	linguistic diversity; cultural diversity
New Approaches in Teaching English Language	cultural diversity; individual differences
Sociolinguistics and Language Teaching	social class; linguistic diversity; cultural diversity

As revealed in the table above, in the current EFL initial teacher education program, the analysis of the description of the 8 compulsory courses delivered to second, third, and fourth-year teacher candidates show the indicators of diversity issues i.e., individual differences, cultural diversity, linguistic diversity, ethnicity, ideology, social class, and SPED.

With respect to the pedagogical knowledge domain, the number of the courses involving diversity aspects were determined as 14 based on the course descriptions analysis, and the findings are indicated in Table 9.

**Table 9.** Pedagogical Knowledge Courses by Diversity Issues

<b>Name of the Course</b>	<b>Codes</b>
Educational Sociology	social class; religion; cultural diversity; ideology
Psychology of Education	individual differences
Philosophy of Education	individual differences; ideology; cultural diversity
Special Education and Inclusion	SPED
Child Psychology	SPED
Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder	SPED
Anthropology of Education	cultural diversity
Education of Hospitalized Children	SPED
Inclusive Education	linguistic diversity
Character and Values Education	individual differences; cultural diversity; religion; multicultural education
Comparative Education	individual differences; social justice
Learning Disabilities	SPED
Individualization and Adaptation of Teaching	individual differences
Sustainable Development and	immigration; social class; social justice

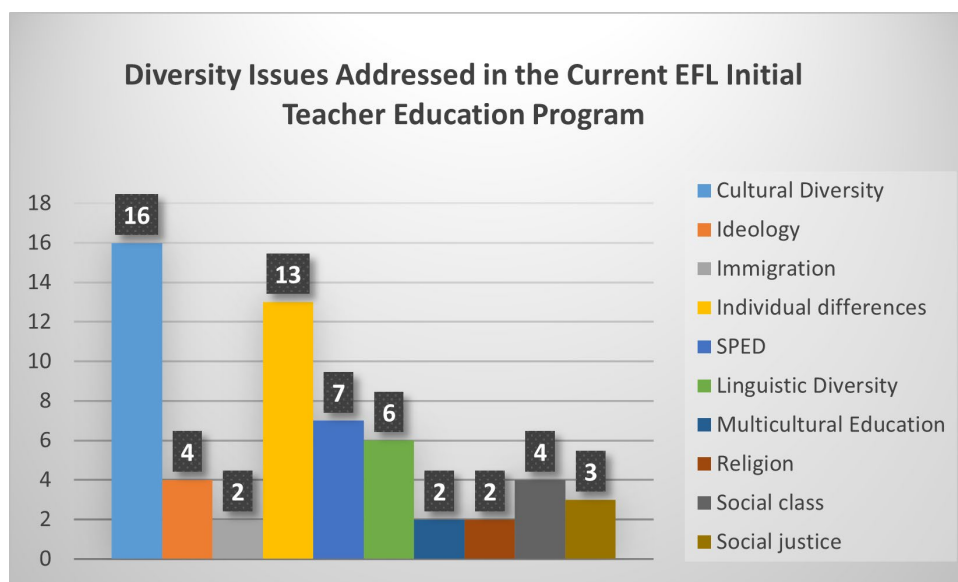
In addition to diversity aspects addressed in content knowledge courses, the following issues i.e., immigration, multicultural education, religion, and social justice were identified in the descriptions of the pedagogical courses indicated above.

As for general culture component, issues of diversity were pinpointed in 4 courses, as seen in Table 10, below.

**Table 10.** General Culture Courses by Diversity Issues

Name of the Course	Codes
Human Rights and Democracy Education	social justice
Human Relations and Communication	individual differences; cultural diversity
Culture and Language	linguistic diversity; cultural diversity; multicultural education
Turkish Cultural Geography	cultural diversity; immigration

In a similar vein, diversity was addressed with regard to gender, cultural diversity, immigration, linguistic diversity, multicultural education, and social justice in the related general culture courses of the current initial teacher education program. In this sense, to see the overall representation of diversity in the program courses, the frequencies of these diversity issues were presented in Figure 2, below.



**Figure 2.** Frequency of Diversity Issues in Courses Offered the Current EFL Initial Teacher Education Program

The overall results revealed that the most frequently addressed diversity aspect was *cultural diversity* ( $f=16$ ) in the current initial teacher education program. Secondly, *individual differences* ( $f=13$ ) were implied and this code includes differences related to

age, gender, and language proficiency level. Then, *SPED* (f= 7) issues and *linguistic diversity* (f= 6) were placed more in contrast to the dimensions of *ideology* (f= 4), *social class* (f= 4), and *social justice* (f= 3). On the other hand, the diversity issues regarding *religion* (f= 2), *multicultural education* (f= 2), and *immigration* (f= 2) were the least frequently addressed ones in the program. All in all, it can be stated that 27 courses addressing diversity were identified in total, the majority of which belonged to pedagogical knowledge with 14 courses. Furthermore, 12 content knowledge courses and purely 4 courses in the domain of general culture were determined as the ones placing aspects of diversity in the program.

## DISCUSSION

Teachers play significant roles in all students' educational experiences; therefore, education of teachers is utmost important to provide equity in the education system (Gay, 2005). Through initial teacher education, teacher candidates can enhance their awareness and understanding of diversity issues (Valentiin, 2006). From this point of view, when the current initial teacher education program courses of Türkiye were examined, the overall evaluation results revealed that diversity issues including cultural diversity, individual differences, SPED, linguistic diversity, ideology, social class, social justice, religion, multicultural education, and immigration were addressed through a social justice perspective. In line with the statements proposed in the revised initial teacher education program instruction (CoHE, 2018), the findings of this research revealed that the current program supports and gives importance to diversity, equity, and social justice in that these issues are deliniated to some extent in the course descriptions of the relevant courses determined based on the analysis. Cultural diversity was most frequently included in the required courses while multicultural education, in explicit terms, was less addressed. To illustrate, there is no a specific course related to multicultural education. In the relevant literature, some national researchers investigated teacher candidates' attitudes towards multicultural education (Arsal, 2019; Bulut & Başbay, 2014; Ersoy, 2013); however, the findings showed teacher candidates' having problems and bias with cultural differences. Similarly, in global context, some study findings revealed novice teachers' perceptions of inadequate preparation for teaching diversity in multicultural classes (Futrell et al., 2003; Valli & Rennert-Ariev, 2000). Moreover, the fact that national initial teacher education programs do not sufficiently enhance teacher candidates' sensitivity and competence in teaching students with diverse cultural backgrounds was indicated (Akın, 2016; Ersoy, 2013). Therefore, the need of providing courses on multicultural education is paramount in the preparation of future teachers in Türkiye.

Middleton (2002) uncovered the positive effect of completing a required course in relation to diversity on teacher candidates' attitudes, beliefs, and commitments of diversity. In the current program, majority of the courses addressing diversity issues are elective though there are some compulsory ones, indicating that choosing and taking those elective courses depends on teacher candidates. On the other hand, just three elective courses namely, *Comparative Education*, *Sustainable Development and Education*, *Human Rights and Democracy Education* include issues related to social justice directly and explicitly. For a more just initial teacher education and educate more just teachers, new courses can be added to the program; or social justice vision can be infused throughout the initial teacher education program with the support of teacher educators who play active roles in delivering program courses. In this sense, diversity-related course infusion to the current program can be another solution to enhance teacher candidates' readiness for teaching in diverse settings. In a similar vein, Villegas and

Lucas (2002) suggested an “infusion strategy whereby issues of diversity are addressed not only in specialized courses but throughout the entire teacher education curriculum” (pp. 20-21). Also, teacher educators’ instructional strategies are paramount in increasing the effect of such diversity-based courses on teacher candidates (Valentiin, 2006).

In addition to offering such courses as multicultural education or diversity-based courses in a social justice-oriented initial teacher education program, the effect of field experiences in real classrooms including diverse group of students regarding language, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, culture, disability and so on need to be considered. As Valentiin (2006) stressed, the opportunities of interacting with and teaching students from diverse backgrounds in the process of field experiences or teaching placements should be offered to teacher candidates. In this sense, preparing teacher candidates for diversity and culturally responsive teaching extends to embracing student diversity in teaching practice experiences by overcoming dominant, traditional, inflexible, and unjust education practices (Buckworth, 2019). Not only in theoretical phase but also in practice, all teacher candidates need to be educated and prepared for being agents of change who have the sufficient knowledge and skills to deal with diversity in their teaching contexts paying attention to equity and social justice at every moment of educational and daily life. With this in mind, it can be stated that teacher education is a transformation process of a student from an individual to becoming a teacher as an activist advocating the significance of social justice, equity, and diversity in their future classes.

## CONCLUSION

Believing and advocating the power of social justice, diversity, and equity in teacher education field, we intended to evaluate the current EFL initial teacher education program of Türkiye, designed and started to be implemented in 2018 by CoHE at all teacher education departments of state universities throughout the country. To this end, the program courses were analysed to figure out to what extent diversity issues along with social justice were addressed. The overall findings revealed that the current program give place diversity issues to some extent and address social justice directly in some courses. As stated in the instruction guide of the revised programs by CoHE (2018), diversity, equity, and social justice were paid attention and tried to be placed at centre in designing of the initial teacher education program. However, dimensions of diversity addressed in courses were not so much inclusive. On the other hand, Türkiye is a multicultural and diverse country meaning that teacher candidates can face a diverse student group in real classrooms. Therefore, it is essential to give much more importance to multicultural education in the program to equip teacher candidates with adequate knowledge and skills. Moreover, most of the courses addressing diversity or social justice issues were among the pedagogical and general culture-based courses. Thus, diversity, equity, and social justice issues need to be infused more into content knowledge-based courses. However, we do not claim that purely course addition regarding these issues will be totally enough to prepare teacher candidates for teaching in diverse settings. In fact, the whole program design should be enlightened and envisioned with the perspective of social justice, and teacher educators’ dispositions, commitment, knowledge, and skills are significant for educating future teachers as agents of change with a wholehearted commitment to social justice in education embracing diversity and supporting equity with the purpose of offering education to all students.

Considering the rapid changes in demographics of the society throughout the country, to access to all students from diverse backgrounds and different features has

become more challenging for teachers in recent years. Furthermore, the expectations from teachers are increasing day by day, which in turn bringing more responsibilities and workload on teachers. Thus, initial teacher education programs need to encourage teacher candidates to criticize and challenge the traditional vision and practices associated with schools (Ryan et al., 2009). In this sense, the role of teacher educators and the initial teacher education programs respecting diversity and inclusion through the lens of social justice and equity in education is utmost important to create a more just and democratic education system including teachers who are critical pedagogues, agents of change, activists, humanists, and more just and diversity sensitive.

This study tried to be the voice of social justice regarding diversity issues by evaluating the current EFL initial teacher education program in Türkiye, where the analysis of teacher education programs in terms of social justice and diversity is limited. For further studies, to better understand the efficiency of the initial teacher education programs in educating just teachers, teacher candidates' and teacher educators' perceptions and views can be uncovered. Moreover, comparison of the national initial teacher education program with programs in global contexts can be carried out to design a more social justice-oriented program consisting of a variety of required courses and fields experiences addressing diversity, equity, and social justice issues. Although the data of this research is based on analysis of an EFL initial teacher education program at national level, the remarkable findings and critiques obtained from the study can contribute to the field of language teacher education and shed light on teacher educators, policymakers, and program designers at global context.

As Milner IV (2010, p. 119) proposed, “whether through traditional or alternative teacher education programs, preparing teachers for diversity, equity, and social justice are perhaps the most challenging and daunting tasks facing the field”. Thus, all parties of teacher education i.e., teacher candidates, teacher educators, mentors, supervisors, administrators, and program designers need to internalize deeply the significance of social justice-oriented initial teacher education for diversity, because “diversity is not a trend; rather, it is the reality that everyone lives with” (Valentín, 2006, p. 199).

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This paper is based on the document analysis findings of my Ph.D. dissertation in progress.

## **THE CONFLICT-OF-INTEREST STATEMENT**

This Ph.D. dissertation, in progress, has been funded by Çukurova University Scientific Projects Coordination Unit (Project No: SDK-2022-14998 without any occurrence of conflicting interest in the manner of author(s)).

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