A content analysis of graduate research on Engl...

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International Journal of Human Sciences 1 ISSN:2458-9489 Volume 15 Issue 1 Year: 2018 3 2 4 A content analysis of graduate research on English preparatory programs at universities1 Author12 Author23 This study examines master's and doctoral theses on English preparatory classes at tertiary level in Turkey in terms of completion year, thesis type, subject areas, data types, research design, sample groups, problem statements and recommendations. This study is a systematic review of literature and the data was collected through document analysis technique. Content analysis was carried out on the theses selected through criterion sampling method. A total of 82 theses, which were completed by July 2017, were included in the analysis based on inclusion criteria. The analysis reveals significant results as to theses on English preparatory classes at universities. The most frequent subject areas in the theses were identified as learning styles/strategies, motivation/attitude/belief, program evaluation, increasing vocabulary knowledge, reading skills and foreign language anxiety respectively. The majority of the theses rest on quantitative data and employ descriptive research designs. Samples in the theses mostly consist of students while few of them address instructors. The most frequent themes in problem statements include inadequacy, importance and failure while the most frequent recommendations are about motivation and anxiety, and in-service training. This study has the potential to guide future research by putting forth research trends in graduate research on English preparatory classes at tertiary level. Keywords: English preparatory classes; graduate research; theses; content analysis. Abstract 1. Introduction 1 This study 2 Author1 3 Author2 Submitted: Published: Learning a foreign language has many benefits such as being

open towards the innovations and improvements,	2

being

able to follow publications and news by	2

media tools and travelling to foreign countries more easily as well as

getting a better job, a higher salary and social	2

status (Oktay, 2015). Due to these reasons, people across the world invest their efforts to learn a foreign language. As for Turkey, learning and teaching practices regarding foreign language mostly rest on English. In fact,

foreign language has been synonymous with English in Turkey for more than half a century | 7

(Özmen, Cephe & Kınık, 2016). The

fact that English is the most prestigious **foreign language in** Turkey stems from **the** | 6

policies of governments in Turkey

to spread and enhance learning and teaching of English | 17

(Sarıçoban & Sarıçoban, 2012). Therefore, teaching of English is practiced in

all levels of education in Turkey as **a** | 26

required subject, both in private and state Institutes. Alptekin & Tatar (2011) argue that Turkish people's

exposure to Western languages dates **back to** 18th **century** | 3

and substantive reforms took place in

foreign language teaching and learning with the foundation **of** | 3

Republic of Turkey. They also suggest that sending

tertiary-level students to Western countries, | 3

foundation of education colleges (Anatolian high schools) with dual language instruction, English-medium state and private universities, parallel English medium programs in Turkish medium universities, development of English as a lingua franca and

financial incentives offered by private and public sectors in Turkey for employees with **a** | 3

satisfactory level of English have all paved the way for the predominance of English in Turkey. In addition, English serves as an instrument for

political, economic and cultural relations with the West | 24

(İnal, Özdemir, Kıray & Oral, 2016). Despite the given dominance and significance of

English in Turkey, the quality **of foreign language education** | 12

is highly discussed, criticized and researched (Cesur, 2008; Demir, 2012; Evcim, 2008; Kılıç, 1992). Oktay (2015, p.584) lines up the

problems in foreign language teaching and **learning** which are: **(1)** | 29

Turkey does not have a sufficient foreign language teaching policy, (2) foreign language education mostly rests on "teacher-centered" practices, (3) grammar is central in teaching,

(4) students are not spending enough time for language learning, | 2

(5) the number of students in the classes is too high, (6) language teaching starts too late and language teaching environment is not appropriate, (7) practice is not sufficient, (8) university entrance exams do not include questions in a foreign language, (9) students

are not motivated enough **to learn a foreign language,** | 6

(10) homework is not helpful with the language learning and students | 2

do not actively participate in foreign language courses. In addition to elementary and secondary schooling, higher education Institutes in Turkey provide English language education because of the ineffective education in former

levels. Most of the language education provided in elementary and secondary schools at a low proficiency level is expected to result in merely 'educational learning' which only leads to the increase of knowledge but students cannot use this knowledge to interact and participate in the new language (Atar, 2014, p.20) Preparatory classes,

schools of foreign languages and departments of foreign languages 18

affiliated to rectorates serve for this need (Özkanal, 2009). Particularly preparatory classes for teaching English are common in tertiary levels. Procedures and principles for the functioning of these classes have continuously been changed and the final arrangement was

carried out by Council **of Higher Education** with **a** regulation published in **the** 19

official gazette in 2016. This regulation holds that there are two types of preparatory foreign language classes, which are mandatory classes and optional classes. The former addresses the students in the departments which, fully or partially, offer education in English medium. The latter offers foreign language education for students in departments with Turkish medium language. Students in mandatory classes who cannot be successful in two years do not

have the right to continue their education. Students **in** 21

optional classes can move on to their departments even if they are unsuccessful in language education. The widespread teaching of English and over 50 departments of English language teaching and linguistics in Turkish universities have increased the academic research on this issue (Yağız, Aydın & Akdemir, 2016). Besides, reasons such as the incongruence between policy objectives and instructional practices (Sarıçoban & Sarıçoban, 2012), the need for competent English instructors in universities (Özmen, Cephe & Kınık, 2016) and the inefficiency in

gaining the necessary language **skills at the targeted levels** 23

till the end of higher education 2

(Oktay, 2015) have concentrated research on preparatory English classes. Issues addressed in these studies include duration, nature and medium of instruction, curriculum planning, course book teaching, material design and assessment (İnal et al., 2016). In order to integrate academic studies to see their mutual contributions, there is a

need in examining and comparing research studies periodically (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005; Selçuk, Palancı, Kandemir & Dündar, 2014). These synthesizing studies, in any field, may focus on articles (Solak, 2014; Yağız, Aydın & Akdemir, 2016), theses (Adıgüzel & Ergünay, 2012; İnal et al., 2016; Özmen, Cephe & Kınık, 2016) or studies in certain journals (Eğmir, Erdem & Koçyiğit, 2017) though some studies also examine articles, proceedings and theses (Alptekin & Tatar, 2011). With respect to ELT and applied linguistics, research trends in articles and theses are examined by researchers around the world (Motha, 2009; Woravut, 2012). In spite of this, there are a few review studies in Turkish context that deal with the research trends

in the field of English **language** learning and **teaching.** Despite **the** considerable number **of**

25

research studies in this field, systematic review of them are quite rare in Turkish scientific context (Solak, 2014; Yağız, Aydın & Akdemir, 2016) Accordingly, more studies in specific fields of ELT are needed to be reviewed to get a mutual conclusion from the studies carried out independently and guidance for future research. The review studies on teaching and learning of English are explained below. Graduate research on teaching and learning of English in Turkey was

examined by Özmen, Cephe & Kınık (2016)

28

and İnal et al. (2016). Özmen, Cephe & Kınık (2016) examined 137 doctoral research studies

on English language teaching in Turkey **between 2010 and 2014. The** major subject areas **of**

14

the 137 theses are

teaching English as a foreign language, foreign language teacher education and second language acquisition.

7

Teaching English as a foreign language theme included **the** sub- areas **of**

20

language skills, language components, curricular studies, testing,

learner and teacher variables, document analysis & language use, `4`

world Englishes, technology, young learners, intercultural communication, multiple intelligences, and other issues, foreign language teacher education theme included sub-areas of preservice

teacher education and in-service training, `4`

and second language acquisition theme included sub-areas of acquisition of morphosyntax, acquisition of lexemes, error analysis and focus on form. İnal et al. (2016) reviewed

doctoral research on **English language teaching and learning between 2009 and 2013 at Turkish universities.** They categorized **the 25** `9`

theses into four groups according to their research focus:

(1) instructional variables and designs, (2) learners, (3) textbooks, (4) program development **and evaluation.** `9`

In addition to graduate research, articles on teaching and learning of English in Turkish context were examined by Solak (2014) and Yağız, Aydın & Akdemir (2016). Solak (2014) examined 189

research papers on **foreign language teaching in Turkish context** `1`

published between 2009-2013 in SSCI and Ulakbim `1`

databases. The variables were authors, year,

journal index, language **of the paper, research design,** topic **of** the **paper, data collection tools,** data analysis method, **sample** and **sample size. The** `1`

most frequently studied topics were found to be teaching, learning, concept analysis, educational technology,

teacher training, attitudes, curriculum studies,

development and adaptation of scales and tests, development of teaching materials | 1 |

and other topics. Yağız, Aydın & Akdemir (2016) examined 274 research articles published in Turkey between 2005 and 2015 in the field of English language

teaching and learning as a foreign language. They found out **that** language learning and **teaching** | 16 |

is the most common focus in the studies and quantitative research designs with descriptive tools and analysis procedures are preferred more. Finally, Alptekin & Tatar (2011) reviewed nearly 130 articles, conference proceedings and doctoral theses on

applied linguistics and foreign language education for **the** period **of** | 3 |

2005-2009 in Turkey. The main areas of the studies were

foreign language teaching and teachers, foreign language learning and learners, foreign language teacher education, the four language skills, measurement and evaluation, and the relationship between language and culture. | 8 |

These review studies are on

teaching and learning English as a foreign language in | 12 |

general. İnal et al (2016) and Özmen, Cephe & Kınık's (2016) studies are on graduate research while Solak (2014) and Yağız, Aydın & Akdemir's (2016) studies are on articles. Besides, Alptekin & Tatar's study is on articles, conference proceedings and graduate research. They yield rich data as to ELT field. For instance, they reveal that the research on ELT mostly focus on teaching and learning, learner characteristics, four language skills, teacher training, evaluation, textbooks/materials, curriculum development and educational technology. Though these review studies point to the general trends in ELT field, studies analyzing more specific sectors of ELT are also needed as they would provide concrete conclusions and recommendations about that sector. There aren't any studies reviewing the research on English preparatory classes at tertiary level, which account for the majority of

foreign language teaching in universities. Given **the** significance **of** | 27

preparatory English classes in universities in Turkey, the number of students attending these classes and the accumulation of research studies particularly theses on these classes require an in-depth review. In addition, the above-cited review studies are limited to short time spans of research as they include the whole field. Analyzing specific factors of a field within a long-time span would provide the longitudinal trends. The first graduate research on English preparatory classes was finished in 1992. This analysis may help researchers see the research trends in English preparatory classes at tertiary level and help them base their future research on these findings. Therefore, this study aims to carry out an analysis of master's and doctoral theses on English preparatory classes at universities in Turkey. 2.

Purpose of the Study The purpose of this study is to analyse **the** | 6

master's and doctoral theses about English preparatory classes at tertiary level in Turkey in terms of thesis type and thus put forth research trends to guide future research. 2.1.

Research Questions RQ1: What is the distribution of theses **in** | 11

terms of thesis type and year? RQ2: What is the distribution of theses in terms of the subject areas of the studies? RQ3: What is the distribution of theses in terms of data types? RQ4:

What is the distribution of theses in terms of **research design?** RQ5: **What is the distribution of theses** | 5

in terms of participants? RQ6: What is the distribution of theses in terms of problem statements? RQ7: What is the distribution of theses in terms of recommendations? 3. Method This study is a systematic review of the literature. The data was collected through document analysis technique. Content analysis was carried out on the data obtained. The theses were grouped under themes of subject areas according to their titles, keywords and the topics studied. While coding and categorising the data, constant comparison technique was used for consistency. All the theses analysed in this study can be accessed online from the thesis centre of the Higher Education Council (tez.yok.gov.tr), which is worth mentioning for the sake of the validity of the study. 3.1. Sample A total of 82 theses4 comprise the sample of this study, which were selected through criterion sampling method. In the sampling process, some inclusion criteria were used. The sample was 4 Akpur, 2015; Alıcı, 2004; Altaş, 2012; Altıner, 2008; Arın, 2010; Ataman, 2017; Ateş Özdemir, 2014; Aydemir, 2011; Aydemir, 2013; Aydın, 1998; Ayhan, 2014; Balabakgil, 2016; Balcı,

2017; Balkul, 2010; Baylan, 2007; Bayram, 2011; Bora, 2013; Cengizhan, 2016; Cesur, 2008; Cincioğlu, 2012; Çekirdek, 2014; Çelik, 2015; Çetinkaya, 2017; Çevikbaş, 2016; Dağlıoğlu, 2004; Daylan, 2001; Demir, 2012; Demirkol, 2009; Derince, 2016; Doğan, 2016; obtained from the thesis centre of the Higher Education Council using the keywords "preparatory 161 class (hazırlık sınıfı)" and "preparatory programme (hazırlık programı)". After the search was 162 completed, the analyses were carried on the theses which were open to access by the authors. Theses 163 about the prep classes of other languages than English; theses about prep classes in secondary 164 education; and theses about different preparatory programmes (e.g. marriage preparatory courses and 165 so on) were excluded. As of July 2017, there were 82 theses compatible with the inclusion criteria 166 which were taken as the sample of this study. 167 168 4. Findings 169 4.1. The type and year of theses 170 Of the theses, 69

(84.1%) were master's theses and 13 **(15.9%) were doctoral theses. The** | 5 |

171 distribution of the theses with respect to completion year

can be seen in Table 1. 172 **Table** 1. Distribution **of** theses **in** | 10 |

terms of year Year f % 1992 1 1,2 1994 1 1,2 1996 1 1,2 1998 1 1,2 1999 1 1,2 2001 1 1,2 2004 4 4,9 2005 1 1,2 2006 2 2,4 2007 3 3,7 2008 8 9,8 2009 4 4,9 2010 5 6,1 2011 8 9,8 2012 9 11 2013 7 8,5 2014 8 9,8 2015 6 7,3 2016 7 8,5 2017 4 4,9 Total 82 100,0

It can be seen from Table 1 **that the** highest **number of theses** was completed **in** | 13 |
the period **of**

2011-2014. The year 2008 stands out exceptionally out of this period with a number of eight studies. It can be inferred that the studies about preparatory classes at universities in Turkey started to boom in the year 2008 with an exceptional decline in the year 2009. In July 2017, there were already four theses which is an indicator of the interest continuing about the topic. 4.2. Subject areas of theses Efe, 1996; Erakman, 2015; Erarslan, 2011; Erkol, 2011; Ertan, 2008; Evcim, 2008; Felek Başaran, 2011; Gülsoy, 2011; Gültekin Çakar, 2009; Gündüz, 2015; Güneş, 2004; Güntürkün, 2007; Gürata, 2008; Hiçyılmaz, 2006; İleri, 2013; Kar, 2014; Karabey, 2011; Karabıyık, 2008; Karagöl, 2015; Karakılıç, 2014; Kaya, 2014; Keşmer, 2007; Kılıç, 1992; Koçer, 2012; Korkmaz, 2014; Köse, 2012; Mede, 2012; Oğuz, 2017; Ok, 2005; Önkuzu, 2013; Özaydınlı, 1994; Özdoğru, 2008; Özkanal, 2009; Özkardeş, 2011; Öztürk, 2010; Padem, 2012; Pulat, 2010; Sarar, 2008; Sakrak, 2009; Şanlı, 2016; Şen, 2012; Tatış, 2010; Temir, 2015; Toker, 1999; Tokuç, 2014; Uludağ, 2013; Uzun, 2013; Yalçın, 2016; Yıldız, 2013; Yılmaz, 2004; Yılmaz Yakışık, 2012; Yördem, 2016 180 181 182 The theses about the preparatory classes in Turkey were grouped under themes of subject areas according to the topic they focused on, the titles of the theses and keywords of their abstracts. The distribution of theses with respect to subject areas is provided in Table 2. Table 2. Subject areas of theses Subject areas f % Learning styles/strategies

10 12.2 Motivation/attitude/belief 8 9,8 Program evaluation 7 8,5 Increasing vocabulary knowledge 5 6,1 Reading skills 5 6,1 Foreign language anxiety 5 6,1 Needs analysis 4 4,9 CALL 3 3,7 Meta-cognitive strategies 3 3,7 Writing skills 3 3,7 Grammar mistakes 2 2,4 Listening comprehension skills 2 2,4 Opinions 2 2,4 Speaking skills 2 2,4 Native, non-native teacher 2 2,4 Causal attributions 2 2,4 Student autonomy 2 2,4 Curriculum design/evaluation 2 2,4 Use of mother tongue 1 1,2 Course book review 1 1,2 Course book adaptation 1 1,2 Language competence and alignment to university 1 1,2 Critical literacy 1 1,2 Blended learning 1 1,2 Integration of the target culture to classroom 1 1,2 Achievement of English 1 1,2 Syllabus design 1 1,2 Attitudes towards homework 1 1,2 Student burnout 1 1,2 Problems in assessment 1 1,2 Performance management system 1 1,2 Total 82 100 As Table 2 reveals, 82 theses were grouped under 32 themes of subject areas ranging from learning styles to performance management systems. The most studied three subject areas were learning styles/strategies (f=10, 12.2%), motivation/attitude/belief (f=8, 9.8%) and program evaluation (f=7, 8.5%) while only one thesis each was completed in 14 themes. 4.3. The types of data in theses 193 The

distribution of the theses **according to the** types of the **data** collected **is given in** | 11 |
Table 3. 194 **Table** 3. **Distribution of**

theses in terms of the data types Data types f % Quantitative 56 68,3 Mixed 19 23,2 Qualitative 7 8,5 Total 82 100,0 195 The theses regarding this table are marked with * in the references section. 196 It is observed in Table 3 that the majority of the theses collected quantitative data (f=56, 197 68.3%). 19 of the theses collected mixed data (23.2%) and in seven theses qualitative data were 198 collected (8.5%). 199 200 4.4. The research designs of theses 201 The theses were grouped

according to the **research design** employed. **The distribution of** the 202 **theses** | 5 |

in this respect

can be seen in Table 4. 203 **Table 4.** Distribution **of** theses **in** | 10 |

terms of research design Research design f % Descriptive 65 79,3 Quasi-experimental 16 19,5 Causal comparison 1 1,2 Total 82 100,0 204 The theses regarding this table are marked with * in the references section. 205 Most of the studies (f=65 76.8%) used a descriptive research design. 16 of the theses are 206 quasi-experimental (19.5%), 2 are curriculum development studies (2.4%) and one (1.2%) is a causal 207 comparative study. 208 209 4.5. The participants in the theses 210 In the theses about English preparatory classes, a total of 19.044 students and 792 academics 211 comprised the samples. The distribution of the theses with respect to the sample groups addressed 212

can be seen in Table   5. 213   **Table**   5. Distribution   **of**   theses   **in**   10

terms of sample groups Sample f % Student 53 64,6 Student/instructor 23 28,0 Instructor 6 7,3 Total 82 100 The theses regarding this table are marked with * in the references section. 53 of the theses (64.6%) have samples consisting of students, 23 of the studies have mixed samples of students and instructors together (28%), and 6 of the studies have samples consisting of instructors alone (7.3%). 4.6. Problem statements in the theses In all the 82 studies, 156 problems were stated, 118 of which could be grouped under 7 meaningful themes and 28 sub-themes. The remaining problems were grouped under the category of others. Table 6 lists the themes of problems. Table 6. Problem statements of theses Themes f Sub-themes f Inadequacy 38 of research about the topic studied of teaching vocabulary of the curriculum of motivation other issues 16 6 3 3 10 Importance 33 of teaching English of individual differences of teaching learning process of motivation-attitude of affective characteristics of thinking strategies of other issues 6 5 5 4 3 2 8 Ineffectiveness / 18 failure General failure in language teaching Failure in exams Other issues 12 3 3 Needs 11 Of students Various needs 8 3 Skills 8

Writing skill Reading skill Speaking skill Listening skill   22

Other skills Four skills 1 1 2 1 2 1 Problems 6 About curriculum Of students Of instructors 2 3 1 Unawareness about an issue 4 About students About instructors 3 1 Other 38 The theses regarding this table are marked with * in the references section. The most frequent theme of problem statements is inadequacy which consists of statements about inadequacies of research about the topic studied in the literature, teaching vocabulary, curriculum, motivation and other specific issues that could not be categorized. Following inadequacy, the next frequently studied theme is importance. The problem statements in the theses included expressions as to the importance of teaching English, individual differences, teaching-learning process, motivation-attitude and so on. The third theme is ineffectiveness or failures which are about general failure in language teaching or failure in exams. The fourth theme is about the needs which are mostly about students. Skill theme includes issues about four skills collectively or writing, reading, speaking and listening skills individually. The next theme involves problems as to curriculum, students and instructors. Lastly, four theses justified the topic as a result of a lack of knowledge or unawareness about the issue and thereby to obtain information about it. 4.7. Recommendations of the theses In 82 theses analysed, there were 275 recommendations excluding implications for further research. The categories of recommendations are provided in Table 7. 247 Table 7. Recommendations of theses Subject f Regarding motivation and anxiety 21 In-service training, new courses, briefing 20 About skills 15 About curriculum 13 About ESP 13 About giving more importance to various 11 issues About course/activity books 11 Regarding raising awareness 7 Use of L1 7 Regarding communicative teaching 5 Interests, needs, individual differences 3 Other (couldn't be categorized) 149 There are various recommendations about various specified subjects and practices and there are ones containing general statements or ones about more than one matter at a time. The recommendations were grouped under categories according to the issues they address and 126 of them were grouped under 11 categories (see table 7). The rest

includes individual recommendations in a wide range of issues. The most frequent recommendations are on motivation and anxiety, in- service training, new courses and briefing while the least frequent ones are on interests, needs and individual differences as well as specific recommendations in the category of other. 5. Discussion and Conclusion With the aim of carrying out a content analysis on graduate theses about English preparatory classes at universities in Turkey, this study examined 82 master's and doctoral theses in terms of thesis type and year, subject areas, data type, research design, sample groups, problem statements and recommendations. It was identified in the analysis that 69 master's (84.1%) and 13 doctoral (15.9%) theses were completed and were accessible by July 2017. This high number of graduate research indicates the academic interest in English preparatory classes at tertiary level in Turkey. When the completion years of the theses are analysed, it is seen that the period of 2011-2014 accommodates condensation of theses with the highest rate of 11% in 2012 and the number of theses continues to increase at a high rate, as well. This finding is in parallel with articles on ELT, too. Solak (2014) found out that the

highest number of articles on ELT **was published in 2013** in **the** period **of** | 1 |

2009-2013 and Yağız, Aydın & Akdemir (2016) report that the

highest number of articles were published in 2013, | 1 |

2011 and 2014 respectively between 2005 and 2015. The subject areas of 82 theses were grouped and the most frequent themes were identified as learning styles/strategies, motivation/attitude/belief, program evaluation, increasing vocabulary knowledge, reading skills and foreign language anxiety respectively. Similar review studies in the literature grouped research in terms of themes or subject areas in broad categories. For instance, Özmen, Cephe & Kınık (2016) reviewed doctoral theses on ELT between 2010 and 2014 and found out that the subject areas of theses were

teaching English as a foreign language, foreign language teacher education and second language acquisition. The | 4 |

most frequent sub- areas included pre-service teacher education,

learner and teacher variables, and language skills | 4 |

respectively. Solak (2014) reviewed articles on foreign language teaching between 2009 to 2013 and found out

that the most frequently studied topics include **teaching,** learning **and**
        | 1 |

concept analysis. Furthermore, Yağız, Aydın & Akdemir (2016) list the most frequently subjects of articles on ELT published between 2005 and 2015 as language learning & acquisition, language teaching and teacher education respectively. When the categories in this study are considered in a broader manner, it can be suggested that the themes of theses on English preparatory classes at tertiary level are in the same fashion with theses and articles on ELT. It was identified in the analysis that the majority of the theses rest on quantitative data (68.3%). Mixed data (23.2%) and qualitative data (8.5%) follow it. Besides, more than three-quarters of the theses employed a descriptive research design. The dominance of quantitative methods and data in theses on English preparatory classes at tertiary level coincides with other theses and articles on ELT. İnal et al. (2016) found out that doctoral ELT research from 2009 to 2013 mostly employed quantitative research design. Similarly, Solak (2014) identified that nearly half of the articles on foreign language education from 2009 to 2013 employed quantitative research designs (48.7%) while this ratio is 33.9% for qualitative methods and 17.5% for mixed methods. While 71.1 % of articles on ELT published between 2005-2015 employed quantitative methods, only 13.5% used mixed methods and 9.5% used qualitative methods (Yağız, Aydın & Akdemir, 2016). However, Özmen, Cephe & Kınık (2016) identified that, of the doctoral ELT theses between 2010 and 2014, 71% used mixed methods, 24% used quantitative methods while only 5% used qualitative methods. The high ratio of mixed methods is an interesting finding; however, they also reported that studies with mixed method mostly relied on quantitative data. The findings of this study and other review studies on ELT reveal that there is need for studies with more qualitative data to get a richer understanding of the issues in the field. Most of the theses on English preparatory classes at tertiary level in Turkey (64.6%) have samples consisting of students while few studies have samples consisting of instructors alone (7.3%). This case is also valid for articles. Solak (2014) found out in his review of articles on foreign language education from 2009 to 2013 that while mostly students from elementary to post graduate level constitute the samples in papers, teachers/instructors make up only 8.5%. Similarly, the ratio of teachers and academics in the samples of articles on ELT published between 2005-2015 is 21% (Yağız, Aydın & Akdemir, 2016). These findings unearth the need to address the experiences of instructors who

are one of the most important stakeholders **in foreign language** learning and **teaching**
      | 15 |
process. The problem **statements**

which form the bases for the studies and give out the motives of the researchers, indeed, show so much similarities or contiguities that 118 of the total 156 could be grouped under seven categories. Inadequacy, ineffectiveness and importance are the most recurring motives for the study. A total of 275 recommendations were made in the theses, 20 of which are about in-service training or putting new courses in faculty curricula for teacher education. Two issues come forth as a result of these recommendations. The first is, all the training programmes or new courses would have their own needs of resources, curriculum, planning and books and would have their own problems

similar to the ones of ELT or preparatory classes. It sounds like a solution causing new similar problems; however, none of the recommendations included any idea in terms of this aspect. The second twister is caused by the questions of how, where and when the recommended courses or training programmes can be applied, who the teachers would be and which resources would be used. To conclude, this study analysed masters' and doctoral theses on English preparatory classes at tertiary level in Turkey and reached significant findings as to the subject areas of the studies, data type, research design, sample groups, problem statements and recommendations. English preparatory classes are an important part of foreign language learning and teaching experiences. Such that, 26% of the doctoral ELT theses between 2010-2014 are about English preparatory programs of the universities (Özmen, Cephe & Kınık, 2016) and there is a need for more research. However, the future studies should be guided based on the previous studies. This study serves for this need and provides a general picture of the literature of graduate research on English preparatory classes of universities by putting forth the research trends in the field. While determining new subject areas for research and designing studies, this study could be taken into consideration to prevent repetition.

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