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RESEARCH IN EDUCATION: A SUGGESTED COURSE SYLLABUS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING DEPARTMENTS IN KAZAKHSTAN

Abstract

The development of research competencies has become an essential component of teacher education worldwide, including English Language Teaching (ELT) departments. While the ‘Research in Education’ course has been compulsory in ELT curricula of universities in Türkiye since the 2006–2007 academic year, it is still available; our 2024–2025 scan of ELT syllabi in Kazakhstan indicates that the course is still not compulsory in many ELT departments in Kazakhstan. Despite growing recognition that effective teaching and reflective inquiry are interconnected, the absence of a structured *Research in Education* course in Kazakhstani institutions raises critical questions about the research literacy of future English language teachers. The current study is qualitative and aims to contribute to curriculum innovation by offering evidence-based recommendations for integrating the *Research in Education* course into the ELT curriculum in Kazakhstan and suggesting appropriate syllabus content. Through document analysis of publicly available online syllabi from 58 state universities in Türkiye, the authors identified and systematised approximately 324 course topics from 45 accessible syllabi. These topics were thematically grouped and refined into 23 main content areas, including Introduction to Research. Less frequently addressed areas were: the Purpose and Importance of Research. By mapping the current content trends in Turkish ELT departments, this study proposes a model syllabus adaptable to the Kazakhstani context. Recommendations are provided to harmonize ELT curricula in Kazakhstan with international standards by embedding structured research components that foster analytical thinking, academic writing skills, and evidence-informed practice. The findings can serve as a resource for curriculum developers and faculty members seeking to enhance the research literacy of future English language teachers in Kazakhstan. The purpose of the article is to justify the inclusion of the course “Research in Education” in Kazakhstan’s ELT curricula and to propose a content model based on the analysis of Turkish university programs.

Keywords: research in education, suggested syllabus, ELT departments, Türkiye, Kazakhstan.

Introduction

With the rapid advances of modern technologies, education has undergone significant changes and continues to evolve [1]. Educational research has increasingly been recognised as crucial to promoting teaching as a profession [2]. One notable development supporting this evolution is the integration of research-based courses into the curricula of English Language Teaching (ELT) departments across Türkiye and other national contexts worldwide. Over the past two decades, there has been a growing emphasis on improving teachers as researchers and enhancing research capacities in pre-service teachers’ education [3]. Scholars [4, [5] highlight the critical significance of research in improving teachers’ competencies and knowledge, contending that teachers’ participation in research will allow them to recognise the advantages of research and to investigate and analyse the educational procedures that take place in their classrooms.

The focus of educational research has shifted from merely observing teacher behavior to a deeper examination of teachers’ knowledge construction, cognitive processes, and professional learning. This paradigm shift has redefined the role of the teacher, positioning them not only as practitioners but also as reflective researchers. As this shift implies, research in teacher education

has evolved into a dynamic rather than a static concept. As a result, the concept of "teachers-as-researchers" has gained prominence in teacher education discourse [6]. Within this framework, teachers actively engage in various stages of inquiry - including problem identification, envisioning alternative strategies, critical reflection, ongoing monitoring, and instructional design. This engagement promotes a deeper understanding of pedagogical practices and encourages ongoing improvement informed by evidence. Thus, embedding research in teacher education empowers future teachers to refine their classroom practices while fostering a culture of inquiry and continuous improvement within the profession. Numerous studies highlight that integrating research-based courses enhances critical thinking, adaptability, and professional autonomy - skills essential for responding to real-world educational challenges. This global trend reflects a broader recognition of research and reflective inquiry as foundational competencies in effective teaching.

Several studies have been carried out to recommend syllabi for various ELT courses, offering valuable models for curriculum development. For instance, a research study entitled "EFL Teachers' Most Preferred Topics for the Syllabus of the Course Teaching English to Young Learners", identified key content areas based on teacher-trainers' preferences [7]. These included games, songs, young learners' character traits, oral communication strategies, and visual materials, highlighting the learners' practical and developmental needs. In another collaborative work [8], researchers presented "Views on General Knowledge Elective Courses of ELT Departments: Suggested Syllabus for Diction Course". This study focused on identifying relevant topics to improve pre-service teachers' spoken performance and on proposing a syllabus grounded in practical classroom application. Besides these studies, a syllabus for oral communication classes was recommended in the article "Proposing a Syllabus Design for Oral Classes on Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of Modified Output" [9]. This study analyzed teacher and student views on error correction and offered practical strategies to improve oral proficiency in EFL classrooms. Another researcher developed a detailed syllabus for the literature component of ELT education in her work "A Suggested Syllabus for the Course 'Introduction to British Literature I' at ELT Departments" [10]. The proposed design outlines objectives, content, and instructional strategies specifically tailored for sophomore students in departments such as Hacettepe University's ELT department.

Despite a growing body of research proposing syllabi for various courses within ELT departments, there remains a noticeable gap in scholarly attention to the structure and content of syllabi specifically designed for the *Research in Education* course. This study is particularly relevant for Kazakhstan, where curricular modernization and integration into the global academic space are main priorities in higher education. As pedagogical universities in Kazakhstan aim to improve the research literacy and critical thinking skills of future English language teachers, the establishment of a well-structured "*Research in Education*" syllabus becomes both timely and essential. The significance of the research lies in its attempt to address an existing lack of academic inquiry by identifying and analysing the main topics currently prioritised in such syllabi across different institutional contexts. Accordingly, the present study aims to explore the following research questions:

1. How many ELT Departments of state universities in Türkiye have introduced the syllabus of the *Research in Education* course in their programs?
2. What are the most frequently included topics in the syllabi of these courses, as revealed through qualitative document analysis?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to inform curriculum development practices in Kazakhstani ELT departments and to propose a contextually appropriate, research-based syllabus for future integration.

Materials and methods of research

The research, conducted through document and content analysis, examined syllabus materials from Research in Education courses in ELT departments at state universities across Türkiye. The study examined public course syllabi on university websites to identify shared patterns across 58 Turkish state universities. The research aimed to identify shared thematic aspects that would contribute to the development of teacher education curricula in Kazakhstan.

Research design, data collection and data analysis. The research methodology applied grounded theory principles [11, 12] through open and selective coding to create thematic categories from the data. The course syllabi of 45 institutions provided publicly available content to researchers who gathered 324 initial topic entries. All duplicate or similar items were merged into 23 main thematic categories which represented the course topics. Selective coding was then used to analyze frequency and relevance. A frequency analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel.

Validity and Trustworthiness. The research established credibility through thick description and peer debriefing, while providing detailed syllabus content that showed relevance to the ELT context in Kazakhstani education. The methodological framework serves as a reliable foundation for creating a syllabus that meets the requirements of Kazakhstani teacher education.

Limitations of Study. The research contains several restrictions which affect its validity. Future research should seek expert feedback to determine which topics require elimination and which need addition. Experts will provide suggestions on effective course delivery methods and recommendations on proper topic sequencing. A comprehensive syllabus development approach could start with conducting needs analysis. Following the first-term pilot implementation, the topics should be evaluated against student requirements to help create a trustworthy syllabus.

Results and their discussion

The findings section displays results from analyzing *Research in Education* course syllabi at Turkish state universities to support Kazakhstani ELT curriculum development. The analysis was grounded in two main research questions. The first research question investigated how state universities across Türkiye have implemented the Research in Education syllabus within their ELT programs. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 - Online availability of syllabi

Availability	f	%
Available	45	77,5
Not available	13	22,5

Note: compiled by authors

The analysis indicates that 45 of 58 ELT departments have adopted the Research in Education course as a mandatory requirement, while 13 departments do not include it in their curriculum. The data reveal that most universities in Türkiye include research-based learning in their curricula, but there are different approaches across the country's educational institutions. The results also demonstrate that the majority of Turkish universities have incorporated research-based learning into their curricula, although the national approach to research education varies across institutions. The data reveal a potential for educational improvement in Kazakhstan, as many ELT programs have yet to include this course. Kazakhstani universities should follow the Turkish example by adding the Research in Education course to their pre-service teacher training programs, as it promotes inquiry-based learning and aligns with global ELT education standards.

The research aimed to determine which topics appeared most often in the syllabi of these 45 universities. The process of inductive categorization led to the creation of broader thematic headings for topics that shared similar characteristics. Researchers identified twenty-three unique course topics throughout their analysis. The analysis of topic frequency patterns helped determine

main curriculum areas which guided the creation of a suitable ELT syllabus for Kazakhstani educational institutions. Thus, the results in Table 2 answer the second research question: *What are the most frequently included topics in the syllabi of these courses, as revealed through qualitative document analysis?*

Table 2 - Frequency and Percentage of the Most Preferred Topics in the Syllabi of 45 State Universities in Türkiye

№	Topics	f	%
1	Introduction to the Course and Basic Terms	43	95,5
2	Research Methods (Qual, Quan, Mixed)	39	86,6
3	Research Setting and Participants (Sampling)	38	84,4
4	Preparing a research report in line with research principles and ethics	37	82,2
5	Data collection Tools	36	80
6	Data Analysis	31	68,8
7	Validity and Reliability	25	55,5
8	Review / Evaluation of Students Projects	25	55,5
9	Structure and Content of a Research Project	23	51,1
10	Philosophy of Science and Scientific Research	20	44,4
11	Research models and types	20	44,4
12	Access to Research Studies	18	40
13	Presentation of the Projects	18	40
14	Reporting the Research Project	16	35,5
15	Action research in education	14	31,1
16	Literature Review	12	26,6
17	Defining the Research Problem	9	20
18	Criticizing a research study	9	20
19	Results and Discussion	7	20
20	Citation Rules and Writing References	6	13,3
21	Purpose and Importance of The Research	4	8,8
22	Relationship between research and science	3	6,6
23	Limitations of the Research	3	6,6
Note: compiled by authors			

Table 2 analysis explains that syllabi most commonly include the topic “*Introduction to the Course and Basic Terms*”. The fundamental terms that represent the basic components of this course are known as “basic terms”. The development of teacher education through research depends heavily on understanding essential research concepts. ELT teachers become better prepared to investigate educational problems systematically during their teaching practices when they understand fundamental terminology. Case study concepts enable teachers to study classroom complexities that traditional methods fail to capture. Teachers must understand interview methods, observation techniques, and document analysis procedures to conduct case study research. Teacher training programs which implement research-based education with proper structure enable students to acquire these essential competencies. The same applies to students who need to understand the concepts of control and experimental groups. A control group consists of participants who remain untreated, whereas an experimental group receives treatment. Pre-service teachers who master these concepts will create classroom inquiries and test educational interventions while developing innovative teaching approaches. A lack of knowledge of fundamental terms poses major obstacles for ELT students when conducting educational research.

The inclusion of this topic in the syllabus stands essential for establishing research skills in upcoming teachers.

The syllabi list "Research Methods" as the second-most favoured topic among the listed options. The topic includes methods that use numbers as well as methods that use descriptive information. Quantitative research relies on numerical data analysis, whereas qualitative research relies on descriptive, non-numerical data collection. Researchers choose between these approaches based on their research goals, environmental settings, and specific targets. Quantitative research stands out because it enables pre-service ELT teachers to conclude measurable variables, including age, language level, and gender [13]. Qualitative research uses an inductive, iterative process to yield rich, contextually grounded information about classroom practices and learner experiences. These methods serve as valuable tools for investigating the complex nature of language teaching and acquisition processes [14]. Mixed-methods research, which combines quantitative and qualitative methods, has become increasingly popular in applied linguistics and language education research. Mixed-methods research remains an essential approach for teacher training because it delivers thorough explanations of educational problems [15].

The inclusion of "*Research Methods*" as a fundamental element in ELT curricula stands essential because of its methodological importance. Teacher education programs need to equip future educators with the ability to choose suitable research methods which align with their defined research questions and educational objectives. ELT departments list "Research Setting and Participants (Sampling)" as their third-most prevalent syllabus component. The process of conducting educational research requires researchers to select appropriate research settings along with suitable participants. The study components determine the credibility level, transferability, and overall study integrity. Pre-service teachers can create practical, meaningful studies for actual classrooms by defining precise research settings. The quality and credibility of educational research improve when researchers understand basic sampling principles, including sample size determination and participant representation [16].

Research courses in ELT education benefit from including dialogues on ethical and inclusive sampling methods, as they foster reflective thinking among student teachers. Future educators develop a better awareness of the variables that affect learner performance through such discussions, which help prevent biased interpretations in multilingual classrooms. Future educators who learn about this topic in ELT curricula gain the ability to design relevant research studies while solving complex classroom problems using data-driven methods. The knowledge base enables educators to solve English language instruction problems and assists colleagues in adapting teaching methods for students of different ages, proficiency levels, and educational backgrounds.

"*Preparing a research report in line with research principles and ethics*" ranks fourth among 37 state universities' syllabi. Teacher education depends heavily on ethical principles when conducting educational research. The teaching profession faces risks to its integrity when pre-service teachers demonstrate insufficient ethical awareness [17]. A lack of ethical reasoning training among teachers leads to problems with fairness, classroom management, and responsibility for resource use.

Ethical competence is an essential factor in research design and implementation. Research must obtain ethical approval before commencing because student-based studies may raise psychological and contextual sensitivities [18]. Research ethics is a required element in teacher education programs throughout Canada, the United States, and the Netherlands, demonstrating its worldwide importance [19]. Future educators will gain a better understanding of ethical research when ELT curricula include this topic, as it teaches them both ethical study design and proper research reporting methods. This competence is essential for developing responsible teacher-researchers capable of making informed, justifiable decisions in pedagogical contexts.

The syllabi show that the following topics have the second highest frequency: “*Data Collection Tools*” and “*Data Analysis*” appear in 80% and 68.8% of programs respectively. ELT departments tend to focus on building research methodology skills among their pre-service teacher students. The curriculum includes surveys and interviews, combined with observations and coding, as well as data interpretation techniques, demonstrating the institution's focus on teaching fundamental research competencies to future educators. The inclusion of these topics enables future teachers to analyze classroom problems with evidence while implementing research-based educational practices. This focus supports the development of reflective practitioners in ELT programs through alignment with modern research standards in Kazakhstan.

The topics in the mid-range category account for 20% to 55.5% of syllabi and combine fundamental research concepts with specialised content. The group's most common topics include “*Validity and Reliability*” and “*Review/Evaluation of Students' Projects*” (55.5%) which demonstrate their essential role for developing assessment and critical thinking abilities. The topic “*Structure and Content of a Research Project*” (51.1%) receives substantial attention, indicating that students must learn research planning and presentation methods. The syllabus includes “*Philosophy of Science and Scientific Research*” alongside “*Research Models and Types*” (44.4%) to explain theoretical frameworks, while “*Access to Research Studies*” and “*Presentation of the Projects*” (40%) emphasise practical research application and presentation skills. “*Reporting the Research Project*” has a 35.5% occurrence rate, and “*Action Research in Education*” appears at 31.1% in syllabi, though the latter remains crucial for classroom inquiry. The research syllabus contains “*Literature Review*” at 26.6% and “*Defining the Research Problem*” at 20% alongside “*Criticizing a Research Study*” and “*Results and Discussion*” at 20%. The fundamental research components are present in the curriculum, yet their limited representation suggests they may fall within broader categories or lack direct emphasis.

The last group of topics accounts for less than 15% of the syllabi, demonstrating minimal coverage across ELT programs. “*Citation Rules and Writing References*” is included in only 13.3% of cases, although it remains essential for academic integrity and scholarly writing. The research topics “*Purpose and Importance of the Research*” (8.8%), “*Relationship between Research and Science*” (6.6%), and “*Limitations of the Research*” (6.6%) receive limited attention in the curriculum. Research methodology fundamentals, including citation rules and research purpose definition, alongside awareness of science research connections and limitations, receive inadequate coverage in current ELT academic programs. Their minimal presence indicates either a lack of focus or an unmarked presence, which may hinder the full development of pre-service teachers. The research findings demonstrate that pre-service English language teachers in Kazakhstan require systematic training of these basic elements for their professional development. The implementation of these elements will prepare future teachers to practice evidence-based teaching while maintaining ethical standards that match international academic expectations.

Conclusion

The research results demonstrate how the Research in Education course functions as a fundamental element in pre-service teacher development. A large number of Turkish ELT departments across 45 universities have adopted this course because institutions recognise research competence as an essential component of teacher preparation. The contemporary educational environment has driven teacher education programs to establish research skills as mandatory professional capabilities.

The Turkish approach presents a useful framework for others to learn from. After the Council of Higher Education in Türkiye modified its policy during the 2006–2007 academic year, the elective course became a required component of teacher education programs. The educational reform aligns with international standards because countries including Finland, Australia, and Canada have integrated research components into their teacher education programs for a long time.

Experts and government officials agree that integrating research into pre-service education strengthens students' critical thinking skills, enhances teaching methods, and establishes continuous professional development practices. Research findings indicate that ELT departments in Kazakhstan require immediate curriculum adjustments for improved educational outcomes. Kazakhstan needs to focus on training future EL teachers who develop research abilities for critical educational reflection alongside their responsibility to advance educational reforms.

ELT departments at universities throughout Kazakhstan need to establish research-based syllabi as a fundamental educational requirement for the nation. Researchers suggest the following steps to enhance research competence among ELT departments in Kazakhstan: (1) every ELT program in state universities needs to establish *Research in Education* as an essential course; (2) the course needs implementation through international standards that recognize Kazakhstan's educational framework and its multilingual student population and diverse academic needs; (3) the promotion of multiple research approaches including qualitative and quantitative and mixed methods should be implemented to prepare future EL teachers with relevant tools for different classroom environments; (4) The academic writing component and citation standards along with research ethics must receive top priority to build academic integrity and scholarly literacy; (5) research-based learning combined with inquiry-based teaching methods should be promoted to build active student participation while decreasing the power gap between educators and students.

The establishment of a systematic *Research in Education* course within Kazakhstani ELT programs serves as a vital step toward developing teachers who are both reflective and research-oriented. This initiative will not only enhance teacher professionalism but also contribute meaningfully to school improvement and educational reform.

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БІЛІМ БЕРУДЕГІ ЗЕРТТЕУЛЕР: ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІН ОҚЫТУ ӘДІСТЕМЕСІ КАФЕДРАЛАРЫНА АРНАЛҒАН ОҚУ КУРСЫНЫҢ СИЛЛАБУС ЖОБАСЫ

Андатпа

Зерттеу құзыреттерін дамыту бүкіл әлем бойынша мұғалімдерді даярлау жүйесінің, соның ішінде ағылшын тілін оқыту (ELT) мамандықтарының маңызды құрамдас бөлігіне айналды. Түркия университеттерінің ELT оқу жоспарларында «Білім беру саласындағы зерттеу» пәні 2006–2007 оқу жылынан бастап міндетті курс ретінде енгізіліп, қазіргі күнге дейін оқытылып келеді. Ал 2024–2025 оқу жылына арналған Қазақстанның ELT бағдарламаларына жүргізілген талдау нәтижесінде, бұл пәннің көптеген жоғары оқу орындарында әлі де міндетті емес екені анықталды. Тиімді оқыту мен рефлексивті зерттеу өзара байланысты екені кеңінен мойындалғанымен, қазақстандық жоғары оқу орындарында құрылымдалған «Білім беру саласындағы зерттеу» пәнінің болмауы болашақ ағылшын тілі мұғалімдерінің зерттеу сауаттылығына қатысты маңызды сұрақтарды тудырады. Бұл сапалық зерттеу оқу бағдарламаларын жетілдіруге үлес қосу мақсатында «Білім беру саласындағы зерттеу» пәнін Қазақстандағы ELT оқу жоспарларына енгізу жөнінде дәлелге негізделген ұсыныстар беруді және пәннің мазмұнын ұсынуды көздейді. Түркияның 58 мемлекеттік университетінің қолжетімді онлайн оқу жоспарларына жүргізілген құжаттық талдау барысында авторлар 45 оқу бағдарламасынан шамамен 324 тақырыпты анықтап, жүйеледі. Бұл тақырыптар мазмұны бойынша 23 негізгі бағытқа топтастырылды. Ең жиі қамтылған тақырыптарға «Зерттеуге кіріспе», «Зерттеу әдістемелері» (сапалық, сандық, аралас), «Зерттеу ортасы» және «Іріктеу рәсімдері» жатады. Сирек қарастырылатын бағыттар қатарына зерттеудің мақсаты мен маңыздылығы, оның ғылыми ізденіспен байланысы және зерттеу шектеулері кірді. Түркиядағы ELT бағдарламаларының мазмұнын талдау негізінде бұл зерттеу Қазақстандық контекстке бейімделетін үлгілік оқу бағдарламасын ұсынады. Сонымен қатар, зерттеу құрамдастарын құрылымданған түрде енгізу арқылы аналитикалық ойлау, академиялық жазу және дәлелге негізделген тәжірибені дамытуға бағытталған ұсыныстар беріледі. Алынған нәтижелер Қазақстандағы болашақ ағылшын тілі мұғалімдерінің зерттеу сауаттылығын арттыруды көздейтін оқу бағдарламаларын әзірлеушілер мен оқытушылар үшін пайдалы ресурс бола алады. Мақаланың мақсаты – «Білім берудегі зерттеулер» курсының қазақстандық ELT оқу бағдарламаларына енгізілуін негіздеу және түрік университеттерінің бағдарламаларын талдау негізінде мазмұн моделін ұсыну.

Негізгі сөздер: білім беру саласындағы зерттеу, ұсынылған оқу жоспары, ағылшын тілін оқыту бөлімдері, Түркия, Қазақстан.

ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ В ОБРАЗОВАНИИ: ПРЕДЛАГАЕМЫЙ УЧЕБНЫЙ СИЛЛАБУС ДЛЯ КАФЕДР ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА В КАЗАХСТАНЕ

Аннотация

Развитие исследовательских компетенций стало важнейшим компонентом подготовки педагогов во всем мире, включая направления по преподаванию английского языка (ELT-программы). В университетах Турции курс «Исследования в образовании» является обязательным в учебных планах ELT-программ с 2006–2007 учебного года и продолжает преподаваться в настоящее время. Между тем, проведенный в 2024–2025 гг. анализ ELT-программ в вузах Казахстана показал, что многие кафедры преподавания английского языка до сих пор не сделали этот курс обязательным. Несмотря на признание того, что эффективное преподавание тесно связано с рефлексивным исследованием, отсутствие структурированного курса по «Исследованиям в образовании» в казахстанских университетах вызывает серьезные вопросы относительно исследовательской грамотности будущих учителей английского языка. Настоящее качественное исследование направлено на поддержку обновления учебных планов, предлагая основанные на эмпирических данных рекомендации по

включению курса «Исследования в образовании» в учебные планы и образовательные программы по английскому языку (ELT) в Казахстане, а также варианты его содержательного наполнения. Через анализ документов, публично доступных онлайн-силлабусов 58 государственных университетов Турции, авторы выявили и систематизировали 324 тематические единицы курса на основе 45 доступных силлабусов. Эти темы были тематически сгруппированы и сведены в 23 основные содержательные категории. Частотный анализ позволил выделить наиболее часто преподаваемые из них, среди которых: «Введение в исследование», «Методологии исследований» (качественные, количественные, смешанные), «Исследовательская среда» и «Процедуры выборки». Реже освещались такие аспекты, как цель и значимость исследования, его связь с научным познанием и его ограничения. Путем картирования современных содержательных тенденций в турецких ELT-программах данное исследование предлагает модель силлабуса, адаптированную к казахстанскому контексту. Представлены рекомендации по гармонизации учебных планов ELT-программ в Казахстане с международными стандартами за счет включения структурированных исследовательских компонентов, способствующих развитию аналитического мышления. Полученные результаты могут служить ресурсом для разработчиков учебных программ и преподавателей, стремящихся повысить исследовательскую грамотность будущих учителей английского языка в Казахстане. Цель статьи - обосновать включение курса «Исследования в образовании» в учебные планы ELT в Казахстане и предложить модель содержания, основанную на анализе программ турецких университетов.

Ключевые слова: исследования в образовании, предлагаемый учебный силлабус, кафедры преподавания английского языка (ELT), Турция, Казахстан.

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