EXPLORING THE MICROTEACHING COMPONENT OF AN EFL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

Microteaching is an important component of pre-service English language teacher education programs. Thus, the aim of the study is to explore the views of 86 third-year non-native pre-service teachers at the Department of English Language Teaching at a university in Turkey regarding the microteaching component of a 14-week course. Throughout the course, each pre-service teacher performed a microteaching session which took between 15 and 20 minutes, observed the sessions of their peers, and gave them written feedback. At the end of the term, pre-service teachers were given a questionnaire including Likert-type items and some open-ended questions. The quantitative data were analyzed using frequency and percentage analyses, while participants' responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed through content analysis. The results indicated that the microteaching component of the course generally contributed to participants' improvement of their English language, their teaching practice competence, and their lesson preparation. However, some participants expressed their negative feelings about issues, such as the artificial microteaching environment and made relevant suggestions for the improvement of microteaching activities.

Key Words: English as a foreign language, teacher education, microteaching.

BİR İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENİ EĞİTİMİ PROGRAMININ MİKRO ÖĞRETİM BOYUTUNUN İNCELENMESİ

ÖZ

Mikro öğretim, hizmet öncesi İngilizce öğretmeni yetiştirme programlarının önemli bir birleşenidir. Dolayısıyla, bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye'deki bir üniversitenin İngilizce öğretimi programında eğitim gören ve ana dili İngilizce olmayan 86 üçüncü sınıf öğrencisinin 14 hafta süren bir ders kapsamındaki mikro öğretim uygulamalarıyla ilgili görüşlerini araştırmaktadır. Bu ders boyunca, her öğrenci 15-20 dakika süren bir mikro öğretim uygulaması gerçekleştirmiş, arkadaşlarının uygulamalarını gözlemlemiş ve onlara geribildirimde bulunmuştur. Dönem sonunda, her öğrenciye Likert tipi maddeler ve açık uçlu sorulardan oluşan bir anket verilmiştir. Katılımcıların açık uçlu sorulara verdiği cevaplar içerik analizi yöntemiyle yapılırken nicel verilerin analizi frekans ve yüzde analizi ile yapılmıştır. Sonuçlar, dersin mikro öğretim bileşeninin öğrencilerin İngilizce dili gelişimine, öğretmenlik uygulaması yeterliklerine ve ders hazırlamalarına genel olarak katkı sağladığını göstermiştir. Fakat bazı katılımcılar, yapay mikro öğretim ortamı gibi konulara ilişkin olumsuz duygularını ifade etmiş ve mikro öğretim uygulamalarının geliştirilmesine yönelik tavsiyelerde bulunmuşlardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngilizcenin yabancı dil olarak öğretimi, öğretmen eğitimi, mikro öğretim.

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is acknowledged that student achievement is closely associated with the effectiveness of the teacher (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). Therefore, teacher education programs must equip candidate teachers with the skills and competencies used by effective teachers (Richards, 2000). As argued by Elghotmy (2012) and Akalın (2003), one of the most important methods used to prepare pre-service teachers for the teaching profession is microteaching. In most of the teacher education programs in the world, microteaching is utilized as a means to enable the pre-service teachers to gain expertise in various teaching skills (Amobi, 2005). Before stepping into the actual classroom environment, pre-service teachers in Turkey have their first simulated teaching experience at the university in the form of microteaching sessions in which they teach a micro level lesson to their peers (i.e., peer-teaching) (Büyükkarcı, 2014). Therefore, as stated by Fernandez (2005), microteaching is the point where theory meets practice in the initial stage of teacher education.

Defined by Wallace (1991) as a training context in which the teaching situation is simplified systematically, microteaching is practiced with a small lesson taught to fewer students who are actually the pre-service teachers' classmates. The most important component of microteaching is the feedback given immediately after each session by the instructor and the classmates who attend the sessions (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008). The purpose of microteaching is to present a lesson to peers so as to acquire experience in lesson planning and teaching (Bell, 2007). It is a technique which helps pre-service teachers to develop their repertoire of professional skills in a safe atmosphere away from the challenges that a normal classroom unfolds (Orlich et al., 1990). As Grudnoff (2011) argues, although microteaching practices cannot perfectly create the conditions of real-life teaching, it can effectively prepare pre-service teachers for the complexities of the profession.

According to Arsal (2014), microteaching is a fast and fun training tool offering pre-service teachers confidence, reinforcement and feedback by providing them with opportunities to experiment with a small segment of what they may plan to teach. Similarly, Fernandez (2005) points out that microteaching engages pre-service teachers in a collaborative process of lesson preparation, implementation, analysis and revision. Also, as indicated by Arends (2000), microteaching activities are useful in reducing pre-service teachers' anxiety levels and increasing their professional commitment to and awareness about the teaching profession; in addition, microteaching can help them to learn how to communicate with students, gain experience in assessment, integrate educational technologies into their classes, and manage their classrooms successfully.

Considering the importance of microteaching in pre-service teacher education programs, this study is intended to evaluate the effectiveness of the microteaching component of the English Language Teaching (ELT) Methodology II course from the perspectives of pre-service teachers at the ELT department of a Turkish university.

1.1. Literature Review

Many research studies have proven the effectiveness of microteaching on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pre-service teachers' professional development both in Turkey (Kavanoz & Yüksel, 2010; Büyükkarcı, 2014; Savaş, 2012; Ögeyik, 2009) and in other

EFL contexts (Ismail, 2011; He & Yan, 2011; Elghotmy, 2012; Rozimela, 2013; Al-Humaidi & Abu-Rahmah, 2015; Ping, 2013).

Among studies carried out in Turkey, Kavanoz and Yüksel (2010) investigated the influence of microteaching applications on pre-service EFL teachers. Interviews, observations, self-analysis reports and peer-evaluation forms were used to collect data. It was found that microteaching activities gave their participants opportunities of self-reflection. In another study dealing with the assessment dimension of the microteaching sessions, Büyükkarcı (2014) came to the conclusion that the formative microteaching assessment reduced pre-service teachers' anxiety, and augmented their professional development. Regarding the effectiveness of microteaching videos on methodology courses, Savaş (2012) investigated the opinions of EFL teacher candidates, and revealed that microteaching videos contributed to their English proficiency and their teaching skills. Ögeyik (2009), on the other hand, explored the benefits and drawbacks of microteaching as perceived by prospective EFL teachers, and found that microteaching was generally believed to be effective in terms of their self-confidence, professional development, self-assessment, material development, and teaching competencies. She also found that microteaching leads to reflective practices among pre-service teachers.

There have also been studies in other EFL teacher education contexts in the world. To illustrate, Ismail (2011) focused on the opinions of pre-service EFL teachers in the United Arab Emirates, and revealed that microteaching was deemed to be beneficial for the improvement of their teaching strategies. Investigating the positive and negative aspects of microteaching practices from the perspectives of Chinese pre-service EFL teachers, He and Yan (2011) used reflective paper writing to collect data. They found that while microteaching was beneficial for professional development, some of the participants felt that the created classroom environment for the microteaching sessions was artificial.

In Egypt, Elghotmy (2012) probed the views of pre-service EFL teachers and their instructors about a microteaching course. By means of a questionnaire, semi-structured in-depth interviews and a reflective journal, the researcher concluded that some of the difficulties encountered during the course were modeling the skills, planning/teaching a micro-lesson as well as giving and receiving feedback. However, the course was found to be helpful in enhancing the teaching performance of pre-service teachers. In Indonesia, on the other hand, Rozimela (2013) aimed to reveal the perceived strengths and weaknesses of a microteaching course and the effects of reflective teaching on pre-service teachers' pedagogical performance. The data collected through journals, observations, and interviews indicated that the most problematic aspect of the course was confusion among participants pertaining to the teaching practice. Also, reflective teaching and journal keeping were found to be beneficial for the pre-service teachers. More recently, Al-Humaidi and Abu-Rahmah (2015) have applied a microteaching model and examined its effectiveness in the Omani EFL context. The data was collected through reflective questions raised by peer students, self-assessment forms, and the teacher's feedback. It was found that the model developed for the study helped maximize the effectiveness of microteaching.

In an experimental research study involving a pre-test and post-test, a successful application of microteaching in the Chinese EFL teacher education context was described by Ping (2013). It was found in the study that microteaching provides a powerful context for the development of teaching skills. However, similar to He and Yan (2011), he

concludes his study by drawing attention to an important drawback of microteaching activities, which was the inconsistency of peers in playing their roles as students in the artificial environment created during these activities.

1.2. Significance of the Study

One of the problems in EFL teacher preparation programs is that the received and experiential knowledge are not well-balanced and there is too much focus on the theory rather than the practice (Ur, 1992; Blair, 2001; Seferoğlu, 2006; Sanlı, 2009; Peacock, 2009; Coşkun & Daloğlu, 2010; Ping, 2015). Thus, experiential courses including applications, such as microteaching and the improvement of practical elements in EFL teacher education programs are becoming increasingly important. The current EFL teacher education curriculum in Turkey, which has been in use since the 2006-2007 academic year, offers various courses (e.g., ELT Methodology I and ELT Methodology II) in which pre-service EFL teachers are afforded the opportunity of employing microteaching activities (Ögeyik, 2009).

As it is vital to have a systematic program evaluation for EFL teacher education programs (Reid, 1996; Wallace, 1991), this study aims to evaluate the microteaching component of the ELT Methodology II course by asking the opinions of third-year ELT students who have been involved in microteaching activities for one semester. After revealing their opinions about the effectiveness of microteaching on different dimensions determined by Ismail (2011) (i.e., language improvement and course satisfaction, teaching practice competence and awareness, preparation and management, attitudes and personal feelings), their positive and negative feelings, as well as their suggestions for the improvement of the microteaching component of the course were examined. Therefore, the following research question was generated for this study: What are pre-service EFL teachers' opinions on the microteaching component of the ELT Methodology II course?

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

Utilizing a questionnaire including both closed-ended items and open-ended questions aiming to reveal the participants' opinions on different dimensions of the microteaching sessions applied within the scope of the ELT Methodology II course, this study employs a mixed methods approach. Underlining the growing popularity of mixed methods research, Dörnyei (2007) maintains that the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods allows the multi-level analysis of complex issues.

2.2. Context of the Study

As pointed out by Coşkun and Daloğlu (2010), pre-service teacher education is the responsibility of faculties of education under the governance of the Higher Education Council (HEC). The EFL teacher education programs in Turkey accept students aiming to teach English in primary, secondary and high schools or universities. The enrollment into this four-year program is possible after obtaining the required score in the Undergraduate Placement Examination 5 (LYS 5) prepared by the Student Selection and Placement Centre in Turkey in the form of multiple-choice questions. Upon the successful completion of the program, graduates can sit for the Selection Examination

for Professional Posts in Public Organizations (KPSS) taken to become a teacher in state schools.

In the first and second years, the EFL teacher education programs in Turkey mostly offer theoretical courses, such as Contextualized Grammar and Linguistics. On the other hand, in the third and fourth years, pre-service teachers are provided with more practice-oriented courses, such as Teaching Language Skills and Teaching English to Young Learners. Another course offered in the third year is ELT Methodology II. The content of this course whose microteaching component was evaluated in the present study has been identified in the curriculum (HEC, p.12) as follows:

> "Classroom-based research, teacher directed research and action research, diagnosing learners' language related needs and remedial teaching activities; principles of learner monitoring and role of learner assessment in lesson planning; national and international professional organizations and practical journals."

Within the scope of this course, in addition to the suggested content mentioned above, each pre-service teacher carried out a microteaching session by focusing on one of the three stages of a lesson (i.e., presentation, practice and production). At the end of each session, the instructor gave feedback to the pre-service teacher on the strengths of the lesson and the teaching areas that were in need of improvement. Also, all the pre-service teachers participating the microteaching sessions as so-called students observed the sessions and wrote at the end of these sessions a peer evaluation on the positive and negative aspects. These evaluation forms were then submitted to the pre-service teachers who did the microteaching so that they could also see what their peers thought of their microteaching performance. The purpose of using self and peer evaluation forms throughout microteaching activities is to encourage reflective teaching. As Richards and Farrell (2005) point out, reflective teaching is a teacher education approach based on the idea that language teachers or candidate language teachers can improve their teaching skills by critically reflecting on their own teaching experiences.

2.3. Participants
The present study is an evaluation of the microteaching component of the ELT Methodology II course from the perspectives of third-year pre-service teachers who took part in microteaching sessions for 14 weeks at the ELT department of a state university in Turkey. Out of 117 pre-service teachers who took the course, 86 (25 male, 61 female) volunteered to participate in the study.

2.4. Data Collection Instrument
The questionnaire used in this study was developed by Ismail (2011). His five-point Likert scale extending from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' has 32 items categorized into four themes as follows: language improvement/course satisfaction (e.g., Microteaching encouraged me to develop my vocabulary), teaching practice competence/awareness (e.g., Microteaching encouraged me to develop autonomy), preparation/management (e.g., Microteaching gave me an opportunity to improve my lesson planning) and attitudes/personal feelings (e.g., Microteaching consumed a lot of my time). The questionnaire was found to be reliable by Ismail (2011) with a Cronbach's alpha value of .91. This value for the current study was found to be .89.

In addition to the Likert scale, some open-ended questions were included to enable participants to express their positive and negative feelings about the microteaching component of the course. Participants were also asked to make suggestions to make the microteaching component of the course more useful.

2.5. Data Collection Procedures

Throughout the ELT Methodology II course, each pre-service teacher performed a microteaching session which took around 15-20 minutes, evaluated themselves, observed the microteaching sessions of their peers and gave them feedback. At the end of the term, all the students who took the course were invited to respond to the questionnaire, and among the 117 pre-service teachers, 86 volunteered to participate in the study. It took approximately 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

2.6. Data Analysis
The responses given by the participants to Likert-type items were analyzed using the frequency and percentage analyses in SPSS 23. Qualitative responses given to open-ended questions were analyzed by means of content analysis to find common patterns related to the positive/negative aspects of the microteaching practices (Patton, 2002). Participants' responses to open-ended questions are referred to with a number (e.g., Pre-service Teacher 1: PT 1).

3. FINDINGS

Quantitative Data
Participants expressed their opinions about four different aspects of the microteaching practice (i.e., language improvement/course satisfaction, teaching practice competence/awareness, preparation/management, attitudes/personal feelings) by indicating their level of agreement (i.e., Strongly Agree: SA; Agree: A; Not Sure: NS; Disagree: D; Strongly Disagree: SD) with relevant questionnaire items presented below.

Table 1.

Language Improvement/Course Satisfaction

	SA		A		NS		D		SD	
Microteaching...	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. helped me develop confidence in my speaking ability	17	19.8	50	58.1	12	14	5	5.8	2	2.3
2. helped me learn to speak clearly	13	15.1	13	15.1	44	51.2	20	23.5	9	10.5
3. encouraged me to develop my vocabulary	12	14	37	43	24	27.9	11	12.8	2	2.3
4. allowed me to apply ideas I learned from different courses	30	34.9	47	54.7	7	8.1	2	2.5	0	0
5. encouraged me to work harder	25	29.1	26	30.2	20	23.5	9	10.5	6	7
6. raised my motivation in the course	16	18.6	38	44.2	18	20.9	11	12.8	3	3.5
7. helped me to better understand different teaching methods	31	36	40	46.5	8	9.3	5	5.8	2	2.3
8. helped me discover and fix my language problems	15	17.4	42	48.8	14	16.3	10	11.6	5	5.8

As can be realized from Table 1 illustrating frequencies (N) and percentages (%) of responses to the items regarding language improvement and course satisfaction, pre-service teachers (PTs) generally agreed (strongly agreed or agreed) with the idea that microteaching activities helped them with their language use. They also indicated that they were mostly satisfied with the microteaching component of the program. Among the agreed items, the highest level of agreement (46.5% agreed and 36% strongly agreed) was found with the item "Microteaching helped me to better understand different teaching methods" while the lowest level of agreement was found with the item "Microteaching helped me learn to speak clearly" which was marked as 'not sure' by 51.2%, 'disagree' by 23.5% and 'strongly disagree' by 10.5% of the PTs.

Table 2.
Teaching Practice Competence/Awareness

	SA		A		NS		D		SD	
Microteaching...	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
9. helped me develop awareness of my teaching competence	33	38.4	41	47.7	8	9.3	3	3.5	1	1.2
10. helped me develop the actual teaching skills I will need later	38	44.2	38	44.2	8	9.3	1	1.2	1	1.2
11. gave me an opportunity to learn by observing others	43	50	37	43	4	4.7	2	2.3	0	0
12. made me aware of what makes a good teacher	32	37.2	46	53.5	5	5.8	2	2.3	1	1.2
13. gave me a valuable opportunity to apply my teaching skills	33	38.4	43	50	6	7	4	4.7	0	0
14. encouraged me to develop autonomy	24	27.9	38	44.2	20	23.3	3	3.5	1	1.2
15. helped me discover my teaching strengths and weaknesses	39	45.3	41	47.7	3	3.5	2	2.3	1	1.2

Analyzing PTs' views about the effects of microteaching applications on teaching practice competence and awareness on Table 2, it was realized that the level of PTs' agreement with all items was very high. Especially with the item "Microteaching helped me discover my teaching strengths and weaknesses", nearly all the participants expressed their agreement.

Table 3.
Preparation/Management

Microteaching…	SA		A		NS		D		SD	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
16. helped me learn to organize my time	24	27.9	37	43	18	20.9	4	4.7	3	3.5
17. helped me learn how to manage the class	29	33.7	43	50	11	12.8	1	1.2	2	2.3
18. offered me a practical opportunity to teach a lesson	35	40.7	44	51.2	4	4.7	1	1.2	2	2.3
19. gave me an opportunity to improve my lesson planning	34	39.5	38	44.2	9	15	4	4.7	1	1.2
20. helped me write good lesson objectives	26	30.2	39	45.3	12	14	8	9.3	1	1.2
21. encouraged me to develop teaching activities and materials	38	44.2	42	48.8	4	4.7	1	1.2	1	1.2
22. helped me learn how to predict classroom problems	23	26.7	43	50	15	17.4	3	3.5	2	2.3
23. helped me learn to use technology appropriately	25	29.1	39	45.3	15	17.4	4	4.7	3	3.5

As Table 3 demonstrates, participants positively evaluated the benefits of microteaching activities in terms of preparation for teaching and classroom management. All the items were agreed upon by at least 70.9% of the participants.

Table 4.
Attitudes/Feelings

Microteaching…	SA		A		NS		D		SD	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
24. was carried out in an artificial environment	21	24.4	36	41.9	19	22.1	9	10.5	1	1.2
25. resulted in neglecting key activities in the methods course	8	9.3	25	29.1	26	30.2	25	29.1	2	2.3
26. consumed a lot of my time	8	9.3	22	25.6	15	17.4	35	40.7	6	7
27. made me feel bored	6	7	9	10.5	14	16.3	41	47.7	16	18.6
28. forced me to do difficult tasks	6	7	14	16.3	19	22.1	39	45.3	8	9.3
29. was time limited and controlled	9	10.5	32	37.2	17	19.8	24	27.9	4	4.7
30. made me feel embarrassed when teaching my friends	4	4.7	13	15.1	15	17.4	27	31.4	27	31.4
31. forced me to think of the evaluation criteria while planning	16	18.6	28	32.6	25	29.1	14	16.3	3	3.5
32. forced me to think of the evaluation criteria while teaching	18	20.9	30	34.9	20	23.3	16	18.6	2	2.3

As illustrated on Table 4, participants had mixed feelings about the microteaching component of the course. For example, the item "Microteaching made me feel embarrassed when teaching my friends" was disagreed (disagreed or strongly disagreed) by 62.8% of the participants. However, there were some items agreed upon. For instance, 70.3% of the participants indicated agreement with the item "Microteaching was carried out in an artificial environment". The other items agreed (agreed or strongly agreed) by approximately half or more than half of the participants are as follows: "Microteaching was time limited and controlled" (47.7%), "Microteaching forced me to think of the

evaluation criteria while planning" (51.4%), "Microteaching forced me to think of the evaluation criteria while teaching" (55.8%).

Qualitative Data

The qualitative data obtained through the open-ended questions also yielded some important findings. To illustrate, as far as the positive aspects of the microteaching sessions are concerned, many PTs (N=34) drew attention to the self and peer evaluation forms and thought that by means of these forms used at the end of each microteaching session, they discovered their teaching strengths and weaknesses and could reflect on the areas they need to improve in order to teach more effectively. Some of the comments made by the PTs about the benefits of the forms are as follows:

PT 43: The forms made me criticize myself, let my peers criticize me and let me criticize them. We all came to realize our strong and weak points, and the forms helped a lot to develop ourselves. We could see ourselves in a critical way from our friends' perspectives.

PT 14: I realized my positive and negative sides in my teaching.

PT 78: I had the chance to evaluate my peers' performances and compare them with mine. I gained a better understanding of my strengths and weaknesses. I was able to see my own mistakes.

As an additional benefit of peer observation of microteaching sessions, 9 PTs claimed that they learned new activities from their friends. One of the comments in line with this claim is as follows: "I learned new and creative activities while observing friends." (PT 39)

In addition, pertaining to peer-observation, 5 PTs stated that as a result of microteaching activities, they "...learned that they should be open to their friends' criticisms." (PT 6) As for self-evaluation forms, on the other hand, it was indicated by 8 PTs that these forms helped them develop their critical thinking skills. One of the comments representing other similar comments is as follows:

PT 64: The self-evaluation forms made us think about the positive and negative aspects of our teaching. So we had a chance to think critically about our own teaching.

Another positive dimension of the microteaching application reported by 18 PTs was that it made a significant contribution to their classroom management skills and helped them to develop anticipation skills for possible problems that might emerge during the lesson. Two of the relevant comments are as follows:

PT 35: Thanks to microteaching, I learned how to manage a class and handle undesired behaviors during the lessons.

PT 29: As we observed our friends' microteaching performances, some unexpected things happened during the lessons. So by comparing our friends' reactions to these things, we got to learn how to anticipate potential problems and deal with them.

Additionally, 12 PTs held the idea that their self-confidence showed a considerable amount of increase as a result of the microteaching sessions. One of the comments made in line with this issue is:

PT 72: Microteaching performances boosted my self-confidence and thus I got accustomed to speaking in front of an audience.

More specifically, 9 PTs argued that microteaching sessions helped them to improve themselves in terms of lesson planning: "Microteaching enabled me to take into consideration each detail of my lesson plan and its realization in the classroom." (PT 24) On the other hand, 5 PTs underlined the benefit of microteaching in terms of giving instruction: "I learned how to give clear and level-appropriate instructions." (PT 50) Moreover, 3 PTs found the microteaching application useful in terms of materials development: "Microteaching encouraged me to create my own authentic materials." (PT 21) Furthermore, 3 PTs thought that it was good to work in a group during the lesson preparation process for the microteaching session.

The fact that microteaching was beneficial in terms of PTs' development of language skills (e.g., grammar, pronunciation) and their use of voice during their teaching was raised by 2 PTs. Also, 2 PTs indicated that microteaching raised awareness on how to create student-centered classroom environment while 2 other PTs stated that microteaching was fun. One of the comments underlining the fun nature of microteaching is as follows:

PT 61: Microteaching is like a fun role-playing as one of us took the role of the teacher while the others pretended like students.

In addition, each of the following positive points was voiced by one PT as the benefits of microteaching activities: learning how to correct students' errors effectively, using technology more creatively, arranging my speech according to the level of students, managing time during a lesson and developing awareness of different ELT methods.

On the other hand, as for the negative aspects of the microteaching component of the course, the most frequently commented point was the unrealistic classroom environment created for the microteaching sessions. Many participants (N=27) complained about the fact that the atmosphere involving peers who acted as if they were at the age and level of the students the lesson was aiming at was artificial. As can be realized from the following comments made by PTs, the artificial nature of microteaching environment reduced the credibility of the lessons:

PT 20: I could not feel like I was in a real classroom.

PT 49: Teaching my own friends and acting as if they were young learners made me feel a bit uncomfortable.

PT 52: I do not think the activities we did in our microteaching can be done with real students.

Many PTs (N=24) also brought up the issue that the criticisms/comments written by some peers in the peer evaluation forms filled out for each session were personal and unfair. The peer evaluation forms included only two questions asking peers' opinions as to what

went well during the microteaching sessions and what could have been better. Pertaining to peers' feedback written on these forms, some PTs made remarks as follows:

PT 75: The feedback given by our peers was not to the point. And their evaluation of my teaching made me feel stressed.

PT 11: Our friends' feedback was not constructive.

PT 3: Some students in the classroom could not properly evaluate our performance. Some of them wrote nothing on the papers while some others only made personal comments.

Another negative aspect indicated by some PTs (N=11) was that they felt anxious in microteaching sessions because they were graded on the basis of their microteaching performance. One of their comments representing other similar comments is as follows:

PT 26: We were all very nervous as we were graded on the basis of our microteaching performance.

On the other hand, while 9 PTs drew attention to the limited time (i.e., approximately 15-20 minutes) allocated to microteaching sessions by making comments like "Time limitation for our microteaching puts a lot of pressure on us." (PT 57), 5 PTs made comments regarding the high cost of the materials they used in their microteaching sessions. Pertaining to the cost of the materials, one PT stated: "I spent a lot of money on the materials of only a short lesson." (PT 80) In addition, one PT stated that the preparation process for the lesson required too much time and effort while another PT complained about the lack of classroom equipments needed in the sessions.

Some participants also made suggestions for the improvement of the microteaching component of the course. It was recommended by 9 PTs that because of the artificiality of the microteaching environment, they should be given the chance to perform their microteaching in real classrooms. One PT commented as follows:

PT 19: During the microteaching, some friends could not behave as if they were at the level we were aiming to teach. So we should be taken to schools to do microteaching.

Highlighting the fact that the level of microteaching lessons (i.e., A1, A2, B1, B2) were randomly assigned by the course instructor, 5 PTs underlined the need to be given the freedom to choose the level they would like to focus on in their microteaching. One PT stated: "I think we would have been more motivated if we had been given the freedom of determining the level of the lesson." (PT 63) On the other hand, 3 PTs commented that they should have been given more time for lesson planning and preparing materials while 2 PTs called for the video recording of the microteaching sessions for later use while writing their self-evaluation. Also, 2 PTs believed on the merits of reteaching the lesson in line with peer and instructor feedback. As for the revision and reteaching of the microteaching sessions, one PT stated:

PT 54: We can do the microteaching again after we get feedback from friends and the lecturer to evaluate whether we can make necessary changes.

The need for guidelines in the peer evaluation forms was also voiced by 2 PTs. Related to the lack of guidelines helping PTs to focus on specific aspects of the microteaching while writing peer evaluation, one PT suggested:

PT 18: Because we were not given any prompts in the peer evaluation form, we did not have a clear opinion as to what to focus on during microteaching observations.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to seek an answer to the research question "What are pre-service EFL teachers' opinions on the microteaching component of the ELT Methodology II course?" The analysis of the data revealed positive findings related to the microteaching experience in this study as participants generally found the application of microteaching useful. The relevant literature also provides supportive evidence on the usefulness of the microteaching practice (Amobi, 2005; Bell, 2007; Fernandez, 2005; Higgins & Nicholl, 2003).

The recurrent patterns emerging from the qualitative data in this study generally corroborate the quantitative data obtained through the items in the questionnaire. The analysis of PTs' responses both to the Likert-type items and to the open-ended questions revealed promising results in terms of the effectiveness of microteaching sessions throughout the term. From PTs' perspectives, microteaching application was beneficial in terms of their language improvement, teaching practice and competence, as well as lesson preparation and effective classroom management. As also discussed in the literature, microteaching experience is helpful in terms of preparing lessons and improving classroom management skills (Külahçı, 1994).

In addition, some PTs indicated that the microteaching component was beneficial as they believed that through the self and peer evaluation forms, they could develop their critical thinking skills, discover their teaching strengths and weaknesses, and reflect on the areas they need to improve. This finding is similar to the results of other studies concluding that such forms paving the way for reflective practices not only raise PTs awareness of their strengths and weaknesses as a point of departure for improvement, but also facilitate professional growth in the long run (Britton & Anderson, 2010; Blank, 2009; Bailey, 2006; Richards & Lockhart, 1996). Microteaching is also regarded as a means of pre-service teacher development believed to enhance PTs' self-confidence and improve their instructional skills (Peker, 2009; Şen, 2009; Tsang & Wong, 1996).

Another important finding of the current study is that some PTs pointed out that they learned new activities from their friends, observed different classroom management procedures, and improved their language skills (e.g., pronunciation). Also, some of them claimed that they made progress in the following areas as a result of microteaching practices: lesson planning, giving instruction, preparing materials, adjusting their voices in the classroom, error correction, creative use of technology and time management. Similar benefits of the microteaching experience for the training of prospective EFL teachers were revealed in some other studies carried out in Turkey (Ögeyik, 2009; Kavanoz & Yüksel, 2010).

Conversely, it was found that many PTs agreed on the questionnaire item "Microteaching was carried out in an artificial environment." The qualitative data also showed that the microteaching sessions were performed in an unrealistic classroom environment in which

peers played the role of lower-level students. This finding is also consistent with the results of many other previous studies underlining the artificial nature of microteaching practices (Stanley, 1998; Cripwell & Geddes, 1982; Ögeyik, 2009; Wilson & I'Anson, 2006; He & Yan, 2011). For instance, according to He and Yan (2011), the most commonly perceived weakness of the microteaching experience is its artificiality restricting PTs' development of real-life classroom teaching competences. Similarly, Stanley (1998) claims that PTs might be unwilling to take part in microteaching activities because of the unnatural classroom environment.

Another negatively evaluated aspect of the microteaching practices throughout the course was that it forced PTs to think about the evaluation criteria before and during their microteaching performances (Questionnaire items 31/32). The qualitative findings also revealed that PTs were anxious during microteaching sessions because they were graded on their performances. The high agreement level with the item "Microteaching was time limited and controlled" also mirrors the comments of some PTs (e.g., "Time limitation for our microteaching puts a lot of pressure on us." PT 57). Moreover, it was found that some PTs complained about the cost of the materials they used in their microteaching sessions. Pertaining to the expenses and the time limitation, some researchers also highlighted the wastefulness of microteaching and the time pressure while preparing and presenting materials (Cripwell & Geddes, 1982; Lederman & Gess-Newsome, 1991).

Another dimension of the microteaching experience about which some PTs expressed their concerns was related to the comments written by some peers in the peer evaluation forms. These PTs indicated that some comments were unfair and personal. The open-ended peer evaluation form included two questions asking peers' opinions as to what went well and what could have been better during the session. Rather than an open-ended peer evaluation form on which PTs can make positive and negative comments about the microteaching performances they observe, Ekşi (2012) argued for a more structured form allowing peers to put a tick next to given prompts (e.g., pausing to give students time to think) because pre-service teachers in her study indicated that they learned more from each other's performance thanks to a guided feedback form.

In line with the discussion above and the suggestions of PTs taking part in the study, the following recommendations can be made in order to improve the microteaching component of the ELT Methodology II course:

- Since the on-campus microteaching experience is not sufficient to prepare PTs for real-life school teaching contexts because of the artificiality of students and classroom atmosphere, there is a need to provide them with opportunities for school-based teaching experiences (He & Yan, 2011). Amobi and Irvin (2009) also emphasize the importance of off-campus field-based teaching opportunities. Additionally, Macias (2013) argues that the practice of observing real classrooms should start at early stages of the pre-service education programs to reduce the mismatch claimed by PTs to exist between the realities of the actual classrooms and what they are taught at university.

- Because no guidelines were provided to PTs in the peer evaluation forms, they had difficulty in making proper comments about their classmates. Instead of peer-evaluation forms requiring peers' comments only about the positive and negative aspects of the lesson they observe, there is a need for a more structured peer evaluation form including

guidelines and prompts (Ekşi, 2012). This is also likely to discourage peers' unfair and personal comments.

- As some PTs suggested, the microteaching lessons should be retaught in line with the feedback from the instructor and the peers. Therefore, it is recommended that an opportunity to reteach the lesson should be given to the PTs after the critique of the lesson by means of self/peer evaluation forms and the instructors' feedback (Wallace, 1991).

- Some PTs called for the video recording of the microteaching sessions for later use while writing their self-evaluation forms. Therefore, the video-taped microteaching technique should be incorporated into the current program. According to the literature, this technique enables PTs to acquire reflective and analytical skills which lead to self-correction of specific elements in their emerging teaching skills (Büyükkarcı, 2014; Harford & MacRuairc, 2008; Whitehead & Fitzgerald, 2007).

In conclusion, as in all evaluation studies expected to reveal areas for program improvement (Murphy, 2000), evaluating the microteaching component of an ELT department of a state university in Turkey produced some important ideas about the actions which can be taken for the betterment of microteaching practices. Although the results of the current case study are unique to the context of the research and may not be generalized to all similar pre-service EFL teacher education contexts in Turkey, the findings are believed to illustrate the common problems encountered in such programs. However, to increase the EFL teacher education standards in the world, and thus to improve prospective English teachers' teaching competencies, there is a need for more studies with larger groups of pre-service teachers in different parts of the world. Finally, as the findings of the present study are only based on pre-service teachers' perceptions revealed by means of a questionnaire, future researchers can use other data collection instruments such as individual interviews, focus groups and observations or carry out experimental studies.

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GENİŞ ÖZET

1. Giriş

Öğrenci başarısı genelde öğretmenin etkinliği ile doğru orantılıdır (Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000). Bu yüzden, öğretmen yetiştirme programları önem kazanmakta (Richards, 2000) ve Akalın'ın (2003) da belirttiği gibi, hizmet öncesi öğretmen yetiştirmede kullanılan etkili yöntemlerden biri olan mikro öğretim öne çıkmaktadır. Öğretim ortamının sistemli bir şekilde basite indirgendiği bir eğitim bağlamı olarak nitelendirilen mikro öğretim (Wallace, 1991), hizmet öncesi İngilizce öğretmeni yetiştirme programlarının önemli bir birleşenidir. Mikro öğretim uygulamalarında, mikro öğretim uygulamasını gerçekleştiren öğretmen adayının arkadaşlarından oluşan bir öğrenci grubu vardır ve bu öğrenci grubu dersin hedeflediği öğrenci kitlesi gibi davranır. Öğretmenlik mesleğine adım atmadan önce, aday İngilizce öğretmenleri ilk ders anlatma tecrübelerini mikro öğretim uygulamaları sayesinde edinirler (Büyükkarcı, 2014). Fernandez'in (2005) de ifade ettiği gibi, mikro öğretim, öğretmen yetiştirme süresince teoriyle pratiğin bir araya geldiği ilk noktadır.

Genellikle, yabancı dil öğretmeni yetiştirme programları pratikten çok teoriye odaklandıkları için eleştirilmektedir (Seferoğlu, 2006; Blair, 2001; Coşkun & Daloğlu, 2010; Sanlı, 2009; Peacock, 2009; Ur, 1992; Ping, 2015). Bu yüzden, pratiğe dayalı mikro öğretim uygulamaları gibi etkinlikler önem kazanmıştır. Özelikler, 2006-2007 akademik yıllarından bu yana uygulanan öğretmen yetiştirme programı öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik deneyimi kazanmaları için daha fazla uygulamaya yer vermektedir (Ögeyik, 2009).

Bu çalışmadaki mikro öğretim uygulamaları kapsamında, her bir aday 15-20 dakikalık bir öğretim faaliyeti gerçekleştirmiştir. Faaliyet sonunda dersi anlatan öğretmen adayına öğretim üyesi ve derse katılan öğrenciler tarafından geri bildirim verilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'deki bir üniversitenin İngilizce öğretimi programında eğitim gören ve ana dili İngilizce olmayan 86 üçüncü sınıf öğrencisinin 14 hafta süren Özel Öğretim Yöntemleri II dersi kapsamındaki mikro öğretim uygulamalarıyla ilgili görüşlerini araştırmaktadır.

Bu çalışmaya benzer çalışmalara alanyazında sıkça rastlanmaktadır. Örneğin, Kavanoz ve Yüksel (2010) mikro öğretim uygulamalarının İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının özyansıtma becerilerini artırdığını ortaya çıkarmışlardır. Türkiye'de yapılan başka bir çalışmada ise, Ögeyik (2009) mikro öğretim uygulamalarının, İngilizce öğretmeni adayları için kendine güven, mesleki gelişim, özdeğerlendirme, materyal hazırlama ve öğretmen yeterliliklerini geliştirmede etkili olduğunu göstermiştir.

Yurt dışında yapılan çalışmalardan da kısaca bahsetmek gerekirse, He ve Yan (2011) ve Ping (2013) gibi araştırmacılar mikro öğretim uygulamalarının yapay bir ortamda yürütüldüğü sonucuna ulaşmışlardır.

2. Yöntem

Bu çalışma hem nitel hem de nicel verilere dayanmaktadır. Özel Öğretim Yöntemleri II dersini alıp mikro öğretim faaliyeti gerçekleştiren 117 üçüncü sınıf İngilizce öğretmenliği öğrencisinden 86'sı Ismail (2011) tarafından hazırlanan ve güvenilirliği saptanan ankete

gönüllü olarak katılmıştır. Anket, 5'li Likert tipi sorulardan oluşmaktadır ve mikro öğretim faaliyetlerinin öğrencilere katkısını araştırmaktadır.

Ayrıca, bu ankete açık uçlu sorular eklenerek bu mikro öğretim faaliyetlerinin olumlu ve olumsuz yanları ve bu faaliyetlerin gelişmesi için katılımcıların tavsiyeleri araştırılmıştır. Katılımcıların açık uçlu sorulara verdiği cevaplar içerik analizi yöntemiyle yapılırken Likert tipi maddelerin analizi SPSS 23'de yapılmıştır.

3. Bulgular

Araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre, dersin mikro öğretim bileşeni çalışmaya katılan öğretmen adaylarının İngilizce dil gelişimine ve öğretmenlik yeterliklerine genel olarak katkı sağlamıştır. İlgili literatürdeki birçok çalışma da mikro öğretimin etkinliğini ispatlamıştır (Amobi, 2005; Bell, 2007; Fernandez, 2005; Higgins & Nicholl, 2003). Özellikle uygulamalarda kullanılan özdeğerlendirme formları sayesinde, katılımcılar kendilerini eleştirel düşünce becerileri, kendine güven ve öğretmenlik davranışları noktalarında geliştirdiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Buna benzer bulgular alanyazında da mevcuttur (Britton & Anderson, 2010; Blank, 2009; Bailey, 2006; Richards & Lockhart, 1996; Peker, 2009; Şen, 2009; Tsang & Wong, 1996).

Bu çalışmanın önemli başka bir bulgusu da, mikro öğretim uygulamalarının öğretmen adaylarının ders planlama, materyal hazırlama, sesini kontrol etme, hata düzeltme, teknolojiyi yaratıcı kullanma ve zaman yönetimi noktalarında faydalı olduğudur. Benzer sonuçlar, Türkiye'de yapılmış diğer çalışmalarda da açığa çıkarılmıştır (Ögeyik, 2009; Kavanoz & Yüksel, 2010).

Olumsuz değerlendirilen boyutlardan en önemlisi ise mikro öğretim faaliyetlerinin doğal olmayışıdır. Katılımcılara göre, akranlar uygulamanın odaklandığı yaş gurubu ve dil seviyesine uygun davranmamaktadır. Bu da yapay bir ortam yaratmaktadır. Katılımcılar, uygulamaların yapaylığını (gerçek sınıf ortamında gerçekleştirilmediğini) bir olumsuzluk olarak değerlendirirken, bazı öğrenciler ise uygulamaların sonrasında arkadaşlarından gelen geribildirimlerin adil olmadığını vurgulamışlardır. Bunun için, bu uygulamaların gerçek sınıf ortamında yapılması gerektiği önerilmiştir. Diğer bir olumsuz boyut ise, öğretmen adaylarının uygulamalar boyunca değerlendirilme kaygısı taşımasıdır. Özellikle, açık uçlu sorulara verdikleri cevaplarda, adayların mikro öğretim uygulamaları sonunda verilecek nottan ötürü kaygılandığı görülmüştür. Ayrıca, her bir uygulamanın 15-20 dakika ile sınırlandırılması zaman baskısı yaratmıştır. Bununla birlikte, bazı adaylar mikro öğretim uygulamalarında kullanmak üzere hazırladıkları materyallerin yüksek maliyetinden ve hazırlanma sürecinin çok uzun sürdüğünden şikâyet etmişlerdir. Bazı araştırmacılar bu noktada benzer sonuçlara ulaşmışlardır (Cripwell & Geddes, 1982; Lederman & Gess-Newsome, 1991).

Bulgular ve öğrencilerin bazı tavsiyeleri ışığında, yürütülen mikro öğretim uygulamaları için aşağıdaki önerilerde bulunulabilir:

- Hizmet içi öğretmen yetiştirmede yürütülen mikro öğretim uygulamaları, öğretmen adaylarını gerçek sınıf içi okul deneyimlerine hazırlamamaktadır (Stanley, 1998; He & Yan, 2011; Cripwell & Geddes, 1982; Ögeyik, 2009; Wilson & I'Anson, 2006) çünkü sınıf ortamı ve öğrenciler yapaydır; bu yüzden bu tip uygulamalar okullarda gerçek sınıf ortamında yürütülmelidir (He & Yan, 2011).

- Uygulamalar süresince kullanılan akran değerlendirme formlarında yönlendirici sorular veya ifadeler bulunmadığından, bazı öğretmen adayları arkadaşlarının mikro öğretim uygulamaları ile ilgili objektif değerlendirmeler yapamamıştır. Uygulamalardaki olumlu ve olumsuz yönlerin yazılmasını gerektiren açık uçlu akran değerlendirme formlarının yerine, yönergeler ve yönlendiricilerle yapılandırılmış kapalı uçlu ifadelere yer veren bir akran değerlendirme formuna ihtiyaç vardır (Ekşi, 2012).

- Öğretmen adaylarına göre, öğretim üyesi ve akran dönütleri doğrultusunda, mikro öğretim uygulamalarının tekrarına izin verilmelidir. Wallace (1991) da mikro öğretim uygulamalarında, derslerin dönütlere göre şekillenip tekrar edilmesinden yana olduğunu bildirmiştir.

- Özdeğerlendirme formlarını yazarken kullanılmak üzere bazı öğrenciler yaptıkları mikro öğretim etkinliğinin kamerayla kayıt altına alınması gerektiğini ifade etmişlerdir. Alanyazına göre, bu etkinlikleri kayda almak, öğretmen adaylarının analitik düşünme becerilerini geliştirir ve özgelişimlerini sağlar (Whitehead & Fitzgerald, 2007; Harford & MacRuairc, 2008; Büyükkarcı, 2014).

Sonuç olarak, bu tip değerlendirme çalışmaları değerlendirmesi yapılan programlar için gelişim olanakları sağlar (Murphy, 2000). Bu çalışma da, bir devlet üniversitesindeki İngilizce öğretmenliği bölümünde 14 hafta boyunca uygulanan mikro öğretim uygulamalarının gelişimine katkı sağlamıştır. Yukarıda belirtilen öneriler ve bulgular, yürütülen uygulamaların etkinliğini artıracaktır. Araştırmanın sonuçları, sadece çalışmanın yürütüldüğü bağlamla sınırlı olsa da, ülkemizde İngilizce öğretmeni yetiştirmede kullanılan bir yöntem olan mikro öğretim uygulamalarını benzer şekilde yürütün bağlamlar için bazı fikirler verip yaşanan ortak sorunlara ışık tutmaktadır. Gelecekte bu alanda yapılacak çalışmalar, mikro öğretim uygulaması yaptıran öğretim üyeleri ve daha fazla öğretmen adayından veri toplayarak bu etkinliklerde yaşanan sorunlara çözüm önerileri sunabilir. Sınıf içi gözlemler, öğretmen adaylarıyla mülakatlar ve günlükler aracılığıyla toplanacak nitel veriler bu etkinliklerde yaşanan aksaklıkları açığa çıkarmakta kullanılabilir. Deney ve kontrol grubu oluşturularak farkı mikro öğretim modellerinin uygulandığı ve bu modellerin etkinliklerinin araştırıldığı çalışmalar da gelecekte yürütülebilir.