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INTEGRATING CRITICAL-THINKING SKILLS INTO FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING: MICRO-TEACHING PRACTICES OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the integration of critical thinking (CT) skills into the foreign language teaching practices of pre-service teachers in Turkey. Employing a qualitative research design, the study involved semi-structured interviews and micro-teaching sessions conducted with 60 pre-service English Language Teaching (ELT) students. The participants were selected through a purposive sampling method and consisted of 38 females and 22 males, aged between 20 and 26. The data analysis revealed that while the participants recognized the importance of critical thinking in language teaching, they faced significant challenges in its effective implementation. These challenges were primarily attributed to a lack of adequate training and various pedagogical constraints encountered during their preparation. The findings underscored the necessity of adopting more explicit instructional strategies and implementing targeted teacher education programs to foster the integration of CT into classroom practices. Results were categorized into four key themes: the superficial application of critical thinking, limited student engagement, challenges in balancing curriculum demands with critical thinking, and the essential role of instructional support and teacher training. These findings were discussed in relation to existing literature, providing valuable insights and recommendations for the development of teacher education programs aimed at equipping pre-service teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to promote critical thinking effectively.

Keywords: Critical thinking, micro-teaching, pre-service, ELT.

Eleştirel Düşünme Becerilerinin Yabancı Dil Öğretimine Entegre Edilmesi: Hizmet Öncesi Öğretmenlerin Mikro Öğretim Uygulamaları

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki öğretmen adaylarının yabancı dil öğretim uygulamalarına eleştirel düşünme (ED) becerilerinin entegrasyonunu incelemiştir. Nitel bir araştırma deseni benimsenmiş ve çalışma kapsamında 60 İngiliz Dili Eğitimi (İDE) öğrencisi ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ve mikro öğretim oturumları gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma katılımcıları, amaçlı örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilmiş ve 20 ile 26 yaşları arasında olan 38 kadın ve 22 erkekten oluşmuştur. Veri analizi, katılımcıların eleştirel düşünmenin dil öğretimindeki önemini kabul ettiklerini, ancak bunu etkili bir şekilde uygulamada önemli zorluklar yaşadıklarını ortaya koymuştur. Bu zorlukların temel nedenleri, yetersiz eğitim ve öğretmen adaylarının karşılaştığı çeşitli pedagojik sınırlamalar olarak belirlenmiştir. Bulgular, ED'nin sınıf uygulamalarına entegrasyonunu desteklemek için daha açık öğretim stratejilerinin benimsenmesi ve hedefe yönelik öğretmen eğitimi programlarının uygulanmasının gerekliliğini vurgulamıştır. Sonuçlar, dört ana tema altında kategorize edilmiştir: eleştirel düşünmenin yüzeysel uygulanması, sınırlı öğrenci katılımı, müfredat gereklilikleri ile eleştirel düşünme arasında denge kurma zorlukları ve öğretim desteği ile öğretmen eğitiminin kritik rolü. Bulgular, mevcut literatür ışığında tartışılmış ve öğretmen adaylarını eleştirel düşünmeyi etkili bir şekilde teşvik etmeye yönelik bilgi ve becerilerle donatmayı hedefleyen öğretmen eğitimi programlarının geliştirilmesine ilişkin değerli öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eleştirel düşünme, mikro öğretim, hizmet öncesi, İDE.

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INTRODUCTION

Critical thinking's (CT) impact on classroom practice, especially in language and teacher preparation programs, has grown in the last 20 years (Ennis, 2018). For students to improve their language skills and develop their ability to understand, analyze, and evaluate language in meaningful ways, it is essential that CT be incorporated into foreign language teaching (FLT) (Rezaei et al., 2011; Lailiyah & Wediyantoro, 2021; Nosratinia & Zaker, 2015). In addition to fostering language skills, Manalo and Sheppard (2016) found that CT helps students become more immersed in the target language, improves their problem-solving abilities, and prepares them to deal with the social and cultural aspects of their target language. It is even more important to educate learners with these abilities in the current globalized environment where English is the lingua franca (Snider, 2017).

In contexts like Turkey, however, successfully integrating CT into teacher preparation programs poses a problem. According to research (Enciso et al., 2017; Tuzlukova et al., 2017), there are large gaps between what is known theoretically about CT and how it is actually used in the classroom. Curriculum restrictions that place an emphasis on standardized testing rather than the development of higher-order thinking abilities and conventional teaching methods that favor memorization over analysis are commonly blamed for this disparity (Yang & Gamble, 2013). There is a lack of room for student-led inquiry and critical engagement because the teaching strategies employed by many educational institutions are still heavily focused on the teacher (Karapetian, 2020). In Turkey, where reforms to the country's educational system have not yet gone far enough, this problem is especially acute in teacher preparation programs (Ghanizadeh & Mirzaee, 2012).

The current literature indicates a necessity for more specific teaching strategies that incorporate critical thinking into both teacher education programs and classroom practices (Manalo & Sheppard, 2016). Recent research indicates that micro-teaching, a prevalent element of teacher training programs, provides an opportunity to analyze how pre-service teachers integrate critical thinking into the way they teach (Sarıçoban, 2010; He & Yan, 2011; Elias, 2018; Karakaş & Yükselir, 2021). Micro-teaching provides a regulated setting for pre-service teachers to develop and evaluate their pedagogical competencies, particularly in developing critical thinking in their students. Despite its potential, research on pre-service teachers' engagement with CT during micro-teaching, especially in FLT situations, is limited.

This study aims to uncover the obstacles encountered by pre-service teachers in fostering critical thinking through an analysis of micro-teaching sessions and their reflective accounts, while also offering recommendations for enhancing teacher education programs to better develop these important abilities. Thus, this study sought to address the following research questions:

1. How do pre-service teachers incorporate critical thinking skills into their micro-teaching practices?
2. What challenges do pre-service teachers encounter when integrating critical thinking into their teaching?
3. How do pre-service teachers' beliefs about critical thinking align with their observed teaching practices?

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a qualitative research methodology to investigate the integration of critical thinking abilities by pre-service English Language Teaching students in their micro-teaching practices. The technique aimed to deliver comprehensive insights into participants' implementation of critical thinking strategies in teaching and to identify the problems they encountered in this process. Data were gathered using two principal methods: video-recorded micro-teaching sessions and semi-structured interviews. The integration of these methodologies allows for a thorough examination of both observable instructional practices and participants' individual perspectives on their experiences.

Participants

Sixty undergraduates in their third year of an English as a foreign language (ELT) program at a Turkish state institution participated in this research. The participants' ages ranged from twenty-five to twenty-six, and there were forty-eight females and twenty-two males. Purposive sampling, a sampling technique often employed in qualitative research to identify particular demographic features, was utilized to pick the participants (Creswell, 2021; Palinkas et al., 2015). To guarantee that all participants had gone through the identical pedagogical methods course—which covered both the theory and practice of CT via micro-teaching—this sampling strategy was selected. Consistent data analysis across the sample was made possible by ensuring that individuals had equivalent amounts of exposure to CT ideas using these selection criteria. This was ensured by assessing participants' prior knowledge of CT through semi-structured interviews, and those without sufficient background were provided with a brief introductory session on CT concepts.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative and exploratory research approach, concentrating on comprehending the intricacies of CT integration in pre-service teachers' practices. This approach was chosen to elucidate the intricate ways in which participants understood and implemented critical thinking in their teaching, along with the obstacles they faced. The research was executed in two stages: the initial phase comprised video recordings of participants' micro-teaching sessions, while the subsequent phase consisted semi-structured interviews performed immediately following the micro-teaching activities. The choice to employ qualitative methodologies corresponds with the essence of the research topics, which sought to investigate "how" and "why" participants integrated CT into their teaching practices (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Qualitative methods are especially appropriate for this inquiry, as they enable researchers to collect comprehensive, detailed data that might clarify the cognitive and behavioral processes embedded in teaching (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

Data Collection

Data were gathered using two principal methods: micro-teaching video recordings and semi-structured interviews. The two methods were intended to enhance one another, with video recordings supplying observational data on participants' teaching practices, while interviews provided insights into participants' cognitive processes and attitudes toward CT. Together, these data collection methods offered a well-rounded perspective on both the observable teaching practices and the participants' internal reflections on CT, providing a solid foundation for the subsequent analysis and interpretation of the findings.

1. Micro-Teaching Sessions: Micro-teaching sessions were conducted as part of the "Teaching English Language Skills" course, without any separate lecturing specifically for the micro-teaching activities. Over the course of 14 weeks, each participant had the opportunity to conduct a micro teaching session within the framework of the course. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the role of critical thinking in teaching English language skills, ensuring that they were aware of the objectives before the sessions began. Every participant executed a 20-minute micro-teaching session. The meetings were recorded on video and subsequently analyzed to pinpoint instances of CT strategy application. Micro-teaching is a recognized technique in teacher education that enables pre-service teachers to practice and enhance their teaching skills in a regulated setting (He & Yan, 2011). The recorded sessions underwent thematic analysis, concentrating on certain critical thinking tactics, including questioning approaches, problem-solving activities, and reflective practices.

2. Semi-Structured Interviews: Subsequent to the micro-teaching sessions, participants were interviewed utilizing a semi-structured framework. The interview questions aimed to investigate participants' impressions of CT, the problems faced in integrating these skills, and their reflections on teaching approaches. Semi-structured interviews were selected for their capacity to facilitate in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives while assuring comprehensive coverage of pertinent themes (Powney & Watts, 2018). The interviews were transcribed verbatim and examined for reoccurring themes about participants' comprehension and implementation of critical thinking in their instruction.

Data Analysis

The micro-teaching videos and semi-structured interviews were subjected to thematic analysis, a prevalent method in qualitative research for identifying patterns and themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis was performed in two phases:

1. **Micro-Teaching Video Analysis:** The video recordings were scrutinized to pinpoint particular instances of the application of critical thinking skills. Thematic codes were formulated according to the CT frameworks established by Davies (2015) and Yang & Gamble (2013), encompassing areas such as questioning tactics, student interaction, problem-solving activities, and reflective practices. The coding process was iterative, with initial codes improved as new patterns emerged from the data.

2. **Interview Transcript Analysis:** The semi-structured interviews were examined for recurring themes concerning participants' perspectives of critical thinking and their thoughts on the problems faced throughout their instruction. Thematic analysis of the interviews identified many primary obstacles, including the struggle to balance curriculum requirements with the promotion of critical thinking, insufficient student participation, and a deficiency in confidence about the facilitation of critical thinking activities. The outcomes of the interview analysis were juxtaposed with the data from the micro-teaching sessions to discern any differences between participants' articulated beliefs and their demonstrated teaching methods.

FINDINGS

A variety of findings regarding the incorporation of critical thinking (CT) into the instructional practices of pre-service teachers were uncovered through the analysis of the micro-teaching sessions and semi-structured interviews. Several major themes emerged from the data, illuminating the benefits and drawbacks of using CT in FLT settings, especially in a Turkish educational context. The results are organized according to the following themes: students' lack of investment, the need of instructional assistance and teacher training, the need to balance critical thinking with curricular expectations, and inadequate application of critical thinking.

Superficial Application of Critical Thinking

The micro-teaching sessions revealed, among other things, that students only applied critical thinking methods on a surface level. By asking pre-service teachers to reflect on their answers, for example, many future educators showed that they understood CT principles. However, this understanding was often limited to basic reflective questions without encouraging deeper cognitive engagement. For instance, pre-service teachers rarely incorporated activities that required students to compare and contrast differing perspectives, critically assess the implications of their responses, or apply critical thinking in complex problem-solving contexts. While participants frequently asked students to reflect, these reflections remained on a surface level rather than engaging with higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, or evaluation.

In particular, participants seldom prompted students to explore contrasting viewpoints or consider the broader implications of their ideas, a crucial aspect of critical thinking development. Instead, their questions tended to focus on comprehension or recalling information. This suggests that while pre-service teachers recognize the value of CT, they may lack the confidence or pedagogical skills to effectively push students beyond basic memory exercises. This hesitance could be attributed to concerns about classroom management or a preference for teacher-led instruction, which limits opportunities for student-centred inquiry. As a result, critical thinking was often incorporated in a limited, superficial manner rather than being fully integrated into teaching practices. This reflects the challenges that novice teachers face in translating theoretical knowledge of CT into practice, especially when managing a classroom of diverse learners.

Limited Student Engagement

The low participation rate in critical thinking exercises by students was another noteworthy outcome of the micro-teaching sessions. It was difficult for pre-service teachers to establish a classroom climate that encouraged active engagement from students in CT activities. Although some educators made an effort to include CT-focused group discussions or activities, the focus was typically on the teacher. This meant that students rarely had chances to analyze critically on their own or participate in substantive investigations (Enciso et al., 2017; Bellaera et al., 2021). The larger difficulties that beginner teachers encounter when shifting from content-driven, traditional pedagogies to student-centered, interactive ones that encourage CT are mirrored in this research. Facilitating student engagement in CT activities was a common theme among participants, who often mentioned feeling pressed to cover specific subject rather than foster in-depth investigation of ideas due to time restrictions and curricular demands. Standardized testing and strict curriculum standards frequently restrict instructors' freedom in class design in the Turkish educational setting, making these issues all the more apparent.

Balancing Curriculum Demands with Critical Thinking

In both the interviews and the micro-teaching sessions, the challenge of aligning curriculum requirements with the goal of fostering critical thinking was a recurring theme. From the interviews, many participants expressed frustration with the need to follow standardized curricula, which they believed did not provide sufficient time for critical thinking activities. They reported feeling pressured to prioritize factual knowledge and rote memorization over critical thinking, largely due to the demands of preparing students for standardized exams (Williams, 2004). In the micro-teaching sessions, this tension between curriculum and critical thinking was also evident. Participants often demonstrated a focus on covering required material, with little opportunity to engage learners in critical thinking tasks. For example, several pre-service teachers were observed emphasizing factual recall and procedural knowledge, likely in an effort to meet the curricular standards and evaluation requirements. It is well-known that in highly standardized education systems like Turkey's, there is a contradiction between curricular coverage and the promotion of CT. The interviews revealed that participants were particularly concerned about tight evaluation deadlines and short class periods, which they felt left little room for in-depth critical thinking exercises. In contrast, during the teaching sessions, participants were observed to struggle with balancing test preparation with activities that encouraged creativity and higher-order thinking. As a result, pre-service teachers felt constrained in their ability to fully implement critical thinking techniques in the classroom.

Role of Instructional Support and Teacher Training

The interviews indicated a robust agreement among participants on the necessity for enhanced instructional assistance and specialized teacher training in CT. Numerous pre-service educators recognized that their comprehension of CT was predominantly theoretical, lacking much practical direction for its integration into their pedagogical methods (Davies, 2015). Participants indicated a preference for increased practical training in CT, encompassing opportunities to witness proficient educators demonstrating CT tactics in authentic classroom environments and to obtain feedback on their own application of these strategies. This discovery underscores the necessity of equipping pre-service teachers with both academic understanding and practical practice in computational thinking. Prior studies indicate that teacher training programs providing continuous, practice-focused support are more effective in equipping educators to use CT proficiently (Yang, 2012; Lithoxidou & Georgiadou, 2023). Participants in this study underscored the necessity for continuous professional growth in critical thinking, indicating that their existing training had insufficiently prepared them to promote higher-order thinking among their students.

DISCUSSION

By examining the perspectives of Turkish pre-service teachers, this study added to the expanding literature of research on the topic of critical thinking's (CT) incorporation within FLT. Important implications for teacher preparation programs, difficulties in pedagogically incorporating CT into curricula, and other related topics were illuminated by the results. This discussion addressed these results, drew connections to related literature, and offered suggestions for how to apply them in the classroom.

Theoretical Understanding vs. Practical Application

The disconnect between the theoretical comprehension of CT and its practical implementation in the classroom is one of the most significant findings of this study. Despite the fact that pre-service teachers exhibited a comprehensive understanding of CT concepts during their interviews, this did not always translate into effective practice during their micro-teaching sessions. This disparity between knowledge and practice is not exclusive to this investigation; it is a prevalent obstacle that has been identified in the literature on teacher education (Nosratinia & Zaker, 2015). It is suggested by research that pre-service teachers frequently encounter challenges in transitioning from surface-level inquiry and reflection activities to more intricate CT tasks, including the synthesis of ideas, critical analysis, and problem-solving. This discrepancy may be attributed to a dearth of pedagogical training that is specifically designed to promote CT in the classroom. Pre-service teachers are frequently instructed in general teaching methodologies; however, numerous teacher education programs fail to offer sufficient instruction on how to effectively integrate CT into FLT. Consequently, pre-service teachers may comprehend the significance of CT but lack the practical tools and strategies necessary to incorporate it into their lessons (Davies, 2015). This is further complicated by the fact that a significant number of pre-service teachers are still in the process of developing their own

critical thinking skills, which makes it challenging for them to model and promote these processes in their students.

Pedagogical Challenges in Implementing CT

The difficulties of adopting CT in FLT situations are complex and fundamentally embedded in the overarching pedagogical paradigm guiding pre-service teachers. This study emphasizes the conflict between curriculum requirements and the advancement of critical thinking. Pre-service teachers frequently have limitations due to the necessity of adhering to a mandated curriculum that emphasizes factual information and standardized evaluation at the expense of cultivating higher-order thinking skills. This contradiction is especially evident in Turkey, where educational methods persist in prioritizing teacher-centered instruction and rote memorization. This challenge extends beyond Turkey; it is a worldwide concern extensively addressed in the literature. Numerous educational institutions prioritize information delivery and examination preparation, thereby restricting opportunities for the open-ended exploration and inquiry crucial for cultivating critical thinking (Yang & Gamble, 2013). Consequently, pre-service teachers may experience pressure to prioritize curricular coverage over critical thinking, resulting in a more superficial use of critical thinking practices in the classroom. The conflict between curriculum requirements and the advancement of critical thinking highlights the necessity for teacher education programs to equip pre-service teachers with the tools and tactics essential for effectively reconciling these competing demands.

The Role of Classroom Culture and Student Engagement

This study also revealed significant cultural and institutional issues that affect the implementation of CT in educational settings. Research indicated that classroom culture significantly influences instructors' engagement with critical thinking. In numerous cultures like Turkey, conventional educational norms prioritize teacher-directed learning and inhibit student independence (Karapetian, 2020). The cultural background may hinder pre-service teachers from establishing a classroom atmosphere that fosters critical inquiry and active student engagement. Research indicates that in environments where students are habituated to passive learning, educators may find it challenging to cultivate the active involvement essential for critical thinking (Tuzlukova et al., 2017). The current study clearly showed that pre-service teachers often reported difficulties in including pupils in critical thinking tasks. Numerous pre-service educators observed that their students preferred conventional, teacher-centered methodologies and shown hesitance in participating in activities that necessitated critical thinking or the questioning of their own beliefs (Manalo & Sheppard, 2016). This discovery underscores the necessity of teaching educators in critical thinking while also equipping students to engage in more student-centered, inquiry-driven learning contexts.

Addressing the Disconnect: The Need for Targeted Training and Support

According to the results, pre-service teachers need more specialized training and assistance in order to successfully incorporate CT into FLT. While many of the study's participants acknowledged CT's significance, many also expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to successfully incorporate CT strategies into their classroom instruction. It is in line with earlier studies that have discovered that many teacher preparation programs place an emphasis on CT theory without giving future educators enough opportunity to put that theory into practice in authentic classrooms (Yuan, 2023). Incorporating more practice-oriented training into teacher education programs could be a solution to this issue. Opportunities for pre-service teachers to see more seasoned educators modeling CT practices and for them to receive feedback on their own efforts to apply these strategies are beneficial, according to research (Yang, 2012). As they gain experience with CT and reflect on their own practice, pre-service teachers can strengthen their competence in the area and learn more about how to incorporate it into their lessons. Additionally, teacher preparation programs should make continuing professional development in CT a top priority, so that future educators have someone to lean on as they shift from classroom theory to real-world application.

Implications for Teacher Education Programs

The results of this study hold significant significance for the planning and carrying out of teacher education programs. There is a distinct necessity for more explicit teaching in critical thinking, encompassing both theoretical and practical elements. Teacher education programs must provide pre-service teachers with a comprehensive understanding of computational thinking ideas and facilitate chances for skill practice in structured settings, such as micro-teaching sessions. This might assist pre-service educators in cultivating the confidence and pedagogical proficiency required to promote critical thinking in their students (Yang &

Gamble, 2013). Secondly, teacher education programs ought to emphasize assisting pre-service teachers in reconciling the curriculum's expectations with the advancement of critical thinking. This may entail instructing pre-service teachers in methodologies for incorporating computational thinking into content-specific courses, while equipping them with resources to develop more student-centered, inquiry-driven learning environments. Teacher education programs must prioritize reflective practice, urging pre-service teachers to critically evaluate their teaching techniques and implement modifications that enhance cognitive engagement in their students (Pedro, 2005; Fletcher, et al., 2019).

CONCLUSION

This study's findings demonstrated a complex relationship between the theoretical principles of critical thinking (CT) and the actual difficulties of incorporating these skills into foreign language teaching (FLT) methodologies in pre-service teacher education. It is clear that although pre-service teachers acknowledge the significance of critical thinking (CT), a substantial disparity persists between their theoretical comprehension of CT and their capacity to apply it proficiently in actual classroom environments. The disparity is intensified by established educational methods that emphasize content transmission and standardized testing rather than fostering higher-order thinking skills, alongside a teacher-centric pedagogical culture that restricts student engagement and inquiry. To effectively integrate computational thinking into foreign language teaching, teacher education programs must extend beyond theoretical instruction and provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to implement computational thinking strategies in structured settings, such as micro-teaching, accompanied by continuous feedback and reflective support. Furthermore, a transformation in educational policy and curriculum development is essential to foster more adaptable, student-centered learning settings suitable to the advancement of critical thinking. Teacher education programs must address systemic impediments and pedagogical idiosyncrasies that impede the promotion of critical thinking, enabling future educators with both knowledge and the confidence to cultivate critical thinking in their pupils. This necessitates a coordinated endeavor to harmonize the goals of teacher training with the requirements of contemporary education, ensuring that critical thinking is integrated into teaching methods rather than being seen as a supplementary ability. The success of this initiative depends on a comprehensive strategy that integrates educational policy, curriculum development, and classroom practice, ensuring that pre-service teachers are adequately equipped to address the cognitive demands of contemporary learning settings.

Ethical Statements

This study was not supported by any institution. This study was conducted in accordance with ethical rules. The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article. The researcher's contribution rate to this article is 100%.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki hizmet öncesi İngiliz Dili Eğitimi (İDE) öğretmen adaylarının yabancı dil öğretim uygulamalarında eleştirel düşünme (ED) becerilerini nasıl entegre ettiklerini ve bu süreçte karşılaştıkları zorlukları incelemektedir. Araştırma, nitel bir tasarım kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiş ve yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ile mikro öğretim oturumlarından elde edilen veriler üzerine odaklanmıştır. Katılımcılar, amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi ile seçilmiş olup, 20-26 yaş aralığında 38 kadın ve 22 erkek olmak üzere toplam 60 öğretmen adayından oluşmaktadır. Araştırmanın amacı, eleştirel düşünme becerilerinin öğretim süreçlerine dahil edilmesi sürecinde karşılaşılan pedagojik engelleri belirlemek ve bu becerilerin sınıf ortamında etkili bir şekilde uygulanmasını destekleyecek öğretmen eğitimi programları için öneriler sunmaktır.

Veri toplama süreci iki aşamadan oluşmuştur: Birinci aşamada, katılımcıların mikro öğretim oturumları video kaydına alınmış ve bu oturumlarda eleştirel düşünme becerilerinin uygulanışı gözlemlenmiştir. İkinci aşamada, mikro öğretim oturumlarının ardından katılımcılarla yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmelerde, katılımcıların eleştirel düşünme becerileri hakkındaki algıları, bu becerileri uygulama sürecinde karşılaştıkları sorunlar ve öğretim yöntemleri üzerine yansımaları incelenmiştir. Bu iki yöntem, hem öğretim süreçlerinin doğrudan gözlemlenmesini hem de katılımcıların bu süreçler hakkındaki düşüncelerinin derinlemesine anlaşılmasını sağlamıştır.

Araştırmanın bulguları dört ana tema altında toplanmıştır. İlk tema, eleştirel düşünmenin yüzeysel uygulanmasıdır. Mikro öğretim oturumlarının analizi, öğretmen adaylarının genellikle eleştirel düşünmeyi sadece yüzeysel düzeyde entegre ettiklerini göstermiştir. Çoğu katılımcı, öğrencilerden yalnızca bilgi hatırlama veya basit yansıtma yapmalarını istemiş, daha derin bilişsel beceriler gerektiren analiz, değerlendirme veya sentez gibi etkinliklere yeterince yer vermemiştir. Bu durum, öğretmen adaylarının eleştirel düşünme becerilerini teorik olarak anlamalarına rağmen, bunları sınıf ortamında etkin bir şekilde uygulama konusunda eksiklik yaşadıklarını ortaya koymaktadır. Özellikle, katılımcılar, öğrencileri farklı perspektifleri karşılaştırmaya, çıkarımlarını eleştirel bir şekilde değerlendirmeye veya karmaşık problem çözüme etkinliklerine yönlendirmede yetersiz kalmışlardır.

İkinci tema, sınırlı öğrenci katılımıdır. Mikro öğretim oturumları, öğretmen adaylarının sınıfta aktif bir öğrenci katılımı sağlamada zorluk yaşadıklarını ortaya koymuştur. Çoğu durumda, sınıf etkileşimleri öğretmen merkezli kalmış ve öğrencilerin eleştirel düşünme etkinliklerine aktif bir şekilde katılım göstermeleri sınırlı olmuştur. Katılımcılar, müfredat baskıları ve zaman kısıtlamaları nedeniyle öğrenci merkezli bir yaklaşımı hayata geçirmenin zor olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Bu durum, özellikle Türk eğitim sisteminde, öğretmen merkezli ve ezberci yaklaşımların hâkim olduğu bir bağlamda daha belirgin hale gelmektedir.

Üçüncü tema, müfredat gereklilikleri ile eleştirel düşünme arasında denge kurma zorluklarıdır. Katılımcılar, standart müfredatın ve sınav odaklı eğitim sisteminin, eleştirel düşünme becerilerini entegre etmeye yönelik çabalarını sınırladığını belirtmişlerdir. Mikro öğretim oturumları sırasında, öğretmen adaylarının genellikle ders içeriğini hızlı bir şekilde tamamlamaya odaklandıkları ve eleştirel düşünme etkinliklerine yeterince zaman ayıramadıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Bu durum, katılımcıların sınıf içi uygulamalarda müfredat gerekliliklerini yerine getirme ve öğrencilerde eleştirel düşünmeyi teşvik etme arasında bir denge kurma konusunda zorlandıklarını göstermektedir.

Dördüncü ve son tema, öğretim desteği ve öğretmen eğitiminin kritik rolüdür. Görüşmeler, katılımcıların eleştirel düşünme becerilerini uygulamalı olarak öğrenme fırsatlarının sınırlı olduğunu ve bu nedenle kendilerini yeterince donanımlı hissetmediklerini ortaya koymuştur. Katılımcılar, özellikle deneyimli öğretmenlerin sınıf ortamında eleştirel düşünme stratejilerini nasıl uyguladıklarını gözlemleyebilecekleri fırsatların artırılması gerektiğini belirtmişlerdir. Ayrıca, katılımcılar, uygulamalı eğitim ve sürekli geri bildirim mekanizmalarının bu becerileri geliştirmede kritik bir öneme sahip olduğunu vurgulamışlardır.

Bu çalışma, eleştirel düşünme becerilerinin öğretmen eğitimi programlarında daha etkili bir şekilde entegre edilmesi gerektiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Özellikle mikro öğretim gibi yapılandırılmış ortamların, öğretmen adaylarının hem teorik bilgi edinmelerine hem de bu bilgiyi pratikte uygulamalarına olanak sağladığı

vurgulanmaktadır. Ayrıca, eğitim politikalarının ve müfredatın, eleştirel düşünmeyi teşvik eden daha esnek ve öğrenci merkezli bir yapıya dönüştürülmesi gerektiği önerilmektedir.

Sonuç olarak, bu araştırma, öğretmen adaylarının eleştirel düşünme becerilerini sınıf ortamında uygulamada karşılaştıkları zorlukları ve bu zorlukların üstesinden gelmek için gereken eğitsel destekleri ortaya koymaktadır. Eğitim programlarının, öğretmen adaylarını eleştirel düşünmeyi hem teorik hem de pratik düzeyde benimseyebilecek şekilde yapılandırılması gerekliliği, bu çalışmanın en önemli çıkarımlarından biridir.