

**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: THE PRE-SERVICE EFL
TEACHERS' OPINIONS ON TEACHING PRACTICUM**

*NİTEL BİR ARAŞTIRMA: İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ
ÖĞRETMENLİK UYGULAMASI HAKKINDAKİ GÖRÜŞLERİ**

Dilek TÜFEKÇİ CAN* Mehmet BAŞTÜRK**

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ÖZ: Bu çalışma uygulama okullarında Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersini alan İngilizce aday öğretmenlerinin öğretmenlik uygulaması, uygulama öğretmeni, uygulama öğretim elemanı ve aday öğretmenlerin öz performans değerlendirmeleri ile ilgili görüşlerini ortaya çıkarmak amacıyla yapılmıştır. Araştırma 2015-2016 eğitim-öğretim yılında Balıkesir Üniversitesi Necatibey Eğitim Fakültesi İngilizce Öğretmenliği Anabilim dalında Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersini alan 37 aday öğretmeni kapsamaktadır. Bu nitel çalışmada veri toplama aracı olarak katılımcıların öğretmenlik uygulaması, uygulama öğretmeni, uygulama öğretim elemanı ve katılımcıların öz performans değerlendirmelerini içeren açık uçlu sorulardan oluşan bir anket kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmada ikinci olarak mülakat ve son olarak katılımcıların duygu ve düşüncelerini yazdıkları deneme yazıları nitel veri toplamak amacıyla kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın sonucu aday öğretmenlerin gerçek sınıf ortamında İngilizce öğretmeleri sayesinde birçok farklı konuda tecrübe kazandıklarını ortaya koymuştur. Çalışma aynı zamanda aday öğretmenlerin öğretmenlik uygulaması, uygulama öğretmeni, uygulama öğretim elemanları ve kendi performanslarını değerlendirme konusundaki olumlu görüşlerinin olumsuz görüşlerine göre daha ağır bastığını ortaya çıkarmıştır. Çalışma katılımcıların olumlu ve olumsuz görüşlerinin nedenlerini ortaya koyması bakımından literatürdeki diğer çalışmalardan farklılık göstermektedir. Çalışmanın sonucu, aday öğretmenlere iyi nitelikte bir eğitim verme sorumluluğunu Eğitim Fakültelerindeki Yabancı Diller Bölümleri ile Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın birlikte paylaşmaları gerektiğini ortaya koymuştur. Bulguların ışığında uygulamaya yönelik bazı tavsiyelerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Aday İngilizce öğretmenleri, görüş, öğretmenlik uygulaması, uygulama öğretmeni, uygulama öğretim elemanı, öz-değerlendirme*

ABSTRACT: This study was conducted to explore the opinions of pre-service EFL teachers about Teaching Practicum, practice teachers, teacher trainers and their self-

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* Dr. Öğrt. Üyesi., Balıkesir Üniversitesi, Necatibey Eğitim Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi A.B.D. Balıkesir, tufekci@balikesir.edu.tr.

** Prof. Dr., Balıkesir Üniversitesi, Necatibey Eğitim Fakültesi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi A.B.D. Balıkesir, basturk@balikesir.edu.tr.

evaluations of their performance. The sample group consisted of 37 pre-service EFL teachers taking Teaching Practicum in the department of English Language Teaching, at Balıkesir University, Turkey in the 2015-2016 academic year. The data collection instruments were a questionnaire, which was composed of open-ended questions about the pre-service EFL teachers' opinions on the course itself, practice teachers, teacher trainers and about their own self-evaluations of their performance as well as in-depth interviews and essay papers which included the participants' views and opinions. The results indicated that the pre-service EFL teachers seemed to have experience on a wide variety of issues thanks to teaching English in real class settings. The study showed that their positive opinions on aforementioned issues outweighed the negative ones. Since the study revealed the causes of their positive and negative opinions, it differed from the previous studies in the literature. It was concluded from the results that the departments of foreign language teaching in the faculties of education and the Ministry of National Education should share the responsibility of offering good quality training to pre-service teachers. In the light of the findings, some practical recommendations were noted.

Key Words: *Pre-service English as a Foreign Language teachers, opinion, teaching practicum, practice teachers, teacher trainers, self-evaluation*

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1981, the administration of higher education in Turkey was comprehensively restructured with the establishment of the Higher Education Council (HEC). In 1982, the responsibility for the education of teachers was completely transferred from the Ministry of National Education to Higher Education Council (HEC). Before this date, the teacher education institutions were controlled and organized by the Ministry of National Education (Şaban, 2003). After implementing this law and gathering teacher education institutions under HEC, prospective secondary school teachers were expected to acquire a 4-year education, while elementary school teachers were expected to have a 2-year education in Turkey (Çelik, 2017). However, in 1989 The Turkish Higher Education Council, responsible for teacher training programs and the methods used to train teachers and the approaches used in classroom teaching in schools, caused the teacher education programs in the Higher Schools of Teacher Education 'to be extended from 2 to 4 years and to be transformed into classroom teaching departments of the faculties of education' (Sands & Stevens; 2009: 270). Between the years 1991 and 1999, National Education Development Project (NEDP), a Turkish Government World Bank Project, attempted to 'reform elementary and secondary education schooling in terms of infrastructure, textbooks and educational management' (Grossman et al., 2010: 102). Furthermore, the HEC also resolved to apply the structural and conceptual divisions in all teacher education programs with the curricular reforms (Akşit, 2007). Like all other such departments, the ELT (English Language Teaching) departments have recently been reshaped in terms of

curriculum to conform to the changing social requirements and educational improvements in Turkey (Grossman et al, 2007).

The restructuring of Turkish faculties of education, responsible for the professional development of pre-service educators, has also had a great impact on ELT programs in Turkey. Accordingly, ELT programs have witnessed a major change in terms of its content as the first ELT programs differed from each other in many respects, particularly in the curriculum (Genç, 2015). Consequently, the ELT programs were restructured and redesigned in 1997 by the collaboration between the faculties of education and the Ministry of National Education (MNE) in order to eliminate the main differences (Genç, 2015). Since the programs of language teaching were reshaped, teaching English to young learners, Research Skills, Methods in ELT and Language Acquisition were included in the curriculum as new courses. Additionally, the increase in the amount of teaching practice in terms of the total course credits was the most significant change made in the curriculum (Salı, 2008). Currently, new arrangements are being made in the undergraduate programs of the education faculties as demanded by the teaching staff in these departments.

Accordingly, taking a positive stance towards the initiatives of MNE as well as the faculties of education in their historical reformation puts a great emphasis on pre-service English as a foreign language teachers' (EFL) training. The courses that pre-service EFL teachers take at the undergraduate programs mainly deal with how to teach English to language learners. Among the courses that they take, School Experience in EFL and Teaching Practicum in EFL are the most significant ones, which enable pre-service EFL teachers to have a better understanding of being a teacher. The aim of the former is to familiarize the student teachers with secondary schools in terms of instructional programs, materials, technical resources and administration as well as the teaching profession before the start of full practice teaching whereas the latter aims to provide students with an opportunity to reflect on their school experience with their peers and supervisor and use the feedback received to develop their personal teaching (See YÖK, 2007 for further information).

Since the educational policies and their merits are beyond the scope of this paper, it should be noted that this paper simply focuses on pre-service EFL teachers' education at the practice schools and it limits itself to outlining the opinions of pre-service teachers on teaching practicum, practice teachers, and teacher trainers. Making sense of what is going on at the schools by the help of pre-service teachers' self-evaluation and initiating a discussion that might better the teaching practicum are the two other reasons for carrying out this research.

This paper reports a study conducted with a group of pre-service teachers who took part in the teaching practicum. It also reveals pre-service EFL teachers'

opinions on teaching practicum, practice teachers and teacher trainers. It also reveals pre-service teachers' self-evaluation of their own performance. Thus, the research questions were:

1. What are the opinions of pre-service EFL teachers about teaching practicum?
2. What are the opinions of pre-service EFL teachers about practice teachers at schools?
3. What are the opinions of pre-service EFL teachers about teacher trainers at the faculty of education?
4. What are pre-service EFL teachers' self-evaluations of their performance in teaching practicum?

The purpose of carrying out such a study was to have a better understanding of the process of pre-service teachers' development throughout a teaching practicum. It must be stated that teaching practicum played a significant role in pre-service teaching training as it involved pre-service teachers' facing the real teaching settings. However, pre-service teachers' imminent exposure to real class setting leads them to consider teaching as a challenging task. Accordingly, on some occasions they are under the strong influence of negative opinions or assumptions. Thus, this study attempts to examine their negative and positive opinions on teaching practicums, practice teachers and teacher trainers. This study also examines the pre-service teachers' opinions on their self-evaluations of their own performance in a real class setting.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of teaching, which is defined as 'the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing and what one can become' (Britzman, 2003: 31), is perceived as a professional practice rather than a technical one. However, the concept of 'pre-service teaching', which is defined by Schön as 'the stage where beginning teachers obtain substantial on-campus coursework that they expect to transfer directly to the in-school practical setting where they begin to act as a teacher' (as cited in Wallace, 1991: 13) is a transference from theory to practice in terms of sharing or disseminating knowledge. Accordingly, rather than 'teaching' itself, 'pre-service teaching' has been gradually used within teacher education programs as a means of improving language skills and providing real-life experiences for pre-service teachers (Anderson, 1998). However, according to Freeman and Johnson 'learning to teach is a long-term, complex developmental process that operates through participation in social practices and contexts associated with learning and teaching' (1998: 402). Correspondingly, Taylor and Littleton claimed that "As student-teachers are learning to teach, they continually reconstruct their perceptions and beliefs of the

teaching profession as well as their understanding of the tasks of teaching” (2006: 22). In a similar vein, The Leathes Report, the only chief national investigation of the role of language teaching in British society, defined the purposes of language teaching as such: “Language teaching in schools has and should have a disciplinary and educative aim. It should train the mind, the taste and the character. Language is a means of expressing thought, and the study of foreign language reveals the anatomy of thought” (1918: 86).

In the literature reviewed, it was found that teaching practicum was the key component of teacher education (Barton, Hartwig & Cain, 2015), particularly in increasing pre-service teachers’ self-esteem (Anderson, 1998), in promoting personal development and enhancing social responsibility and personal competence (Chambers & Lavery, 2012), in reducing pre-service teachers’ deficiency in teaching skills and helping them to develop more positive attitudes towards their profession (Sarıçoban, 2016), in changing pre-service teachers’ ideas about teaching positively as they felt like a real teacher (Aydın, Selcuk & Yesilyurt, 2007), in making pre-service teachers familiarize their needs (Gökçe & Demirhan, 2005), in enriching pre-service teachers’ knowledge, skills and experiences (Richards, 2002), in obtaining experiences about communication, classroom management and understanding students’ social and cognitive background (Alaz & Konur, 2009), and in developing professional knowledge and cultural awareness (Lavery, Cain & Hampton, 2014).

In a study, Caner (2010) explored whether a blended learning environment would contribute to the professional growth of pre-service ELT teachers by increasing the contact hours among students and university supervisors and by facilitating peer feedback among pre-service teachers. The results showed that the implementation of blended learning environment could be a model for teaching practicum. In a similar study, Day (2013) aimed to find out if peer observation in an ELT practicum led to reflective teaching. The findings demonstrated that pre-service teachers liked peer observation as they thought that peer observation would modify their teaching practices and beliefs.

In a longitudinal study (Tülüce & Çeçen, 2016), pre-service teachers’ video-recorded microteaching simulations were used to explore the role of school-based practicum in promoting pre-service English language teachers’ professional development. Another longitudinal study (Ozmen, 2012) on teaching practice attempted to track possible changes in the beliefs of 49 student teachers over a period of four years. The results showed that student teachers’ engagement in teaching practicum seemed to have a higher impact on the development of the beliefs about language learning and teaching. In another study (Debreli, 2016), the researcher explored the nature of change processes that pre-service teachers undergo throughout their training and the type of beliefs about learning and

teaching in terms of their experiences in a nine-month period. The result indicated that pre-service teachers confronted with many difficulties when their theoretically gained beliefs were confronted with the practically gained reality.

In a qualitative study, Merç (2015) aimed to measure whether pre-service EFL teachers were satisfied with their performance in teaching practice. The findings indicated that the majority of the pre-service teachers were satisfied with their grades. The findings also showed that the pre-service teachers found planning, preparation, general organization and assessment by university teachers as effective means for assessing their performance. On the other hand, assessment by cooperating teachers, writing observation and reflection reports, and assessment by peer teachers were found to be the least effective ones.

Another study (Chunmei & Chuanjun, 2015) revealed EFL pre-service teachers' perceptions of the tensions arising in teaching practicum in secondary schools. The results revealed that the reason of the occurrence of various unexpected difficulties appeared to be the foundationalism paradigm that the teacher education program followed. In another study (Busher et al., 2015), the research was conducted at three universities in Turkey and England in order to explore how well pre-service teachers' universities prepared them for the teaching practicum, what made practicums successful and how practicums fostered their professional development. The result revealed that practicum was effective in developing pre-service teachers' skills, particularly in classroom management, in meeting with the individual differences in terms of diverse learning needs, in familiarizing with students' perspectives and in appreciating what it means to be a teacher 'for real'.

In another study, Gan (2013) examined the challenges that 16 non-native pre-service teachers experienced in teaching practicum. The results indicated that pre-teachers' teaching practicum was characterized by a reality shock which could destabilize the already anxious pre-service teachers. The results of the study also revealed that pre-service teachers' level of English proficiency appeared to affect their teaching performance and how they established and maintained their teacher role. Moreover, a qualitative study conducted by Trent (2013) investigated the experiences of a group of pre-service English language teachers during a teaching practicum in Hong Kong. The results suggested that a critical perspective was needed to reveal and overcome antagonistic relations that might threaten the identity work of pre-service teachers.

Ali, Othman and Karim (2014) reported teaching practicum experiences of student teachers mainly related to the implementation of teaching practicum, effectiveness of the practicum experience in terms of interactions with the mentor teachers and faculty supervisor, and the expectations of the mentor teacher and faculty supervisors on the performance of the students during their practicum

experience. The results indicated that student teachers were concerned over instructional, administration and student management issues during their practicum experiences.

In a case study, Farrell (2008) examined the perceptions and experiences of 60 pre-service teachers concerning the role of support they expected, needed and obtained during teaching practicum. The result suggested more quality collaboration between the triad of the supervisor, the cooperating teacher and the learner teachers. Another study (Yıldız, Geçikli, Yeşilyurt, 2016) investigated the reflections of pre-service English teachers on teaching practice over their experiences and perceptions. According to the results, pre-service teachers thought that teaching practice contributed to self-confidence and competency in teaching and coping up with the difficulties of the profession. Moreover, the result also indicated that they began to assume themselves as real teachers.

The researchers Coffey and Lavery (2015) explored that how involvement in a service-learning experience could contribute to the preparation of pre-service teachers for their first teaching practicum. The result showed that participating in a service-learning program was effective in meeting the challenges of the first practicum. In another study (Stenberg, Rajala, Hilppo, 2016), it was found out that the student teachers participating in the thematic practicum used theory more frequently in their reflections. In other words, their theory-practice connections were stronger than those made by student teachers who participated in the conventional practicum.

Morales Cortés (2016) attempted to find out the role that practicum exerted on pre-service teachers' attitudes towards teaching. The result indicated that English practicum provided pre-service teachers to consider what teaching entailed. The result also indicated that participants were able to reflect, develop awareness, positive attitudes, and satisfaction towards their teaching practice. Another study (Komur, 2010) aimed to explore the relationship between pre-service teachers' teaching knowledge and self-ratings of competencies and their practicum experience. In this study, among three other data collection instruments, the questionnaire explored the strengths and weaknesses of pre-service English teachers; the Teaching Knowledge Test and Teacher Competency Scale showed that student teachers acquired means above the average. Yet, the data indicated that the scores were not reflected in their real class setting.

In conclusion, the present study was carried out under the guidance of several factors, pre-service EFL teachers' experiences on teaching practice was mainly researched in terms of perception, attitudes and beliefs rather than opinions. Although it seems as if belief and opinion are two similar concepts, they are totally different from each other as each of them represents some certain definitions that are not identical. Whereas a belief is a conviction based on cultural or personal

faith, morality or values, opinion is a judgment based on facts. Thus, from limited research reviewed about the opinions of pre-service EFL teachers on teaching practice, it seems impossible to draw conclusions. Second, while many quantitative studies appeared on perception, attitudes and beliefs of the pre-service teachers on teaching practice, few study focused on pre-service teachers' self evaluation of their own performance in real class setting. The third reason is that as pre-service teachers' reflection to teaching practicum are contextually different from each other, the authors of this paper clearly asked pre-service teachers only two dimensions of teaching practice such as positive and negative opinions, particularly on three aspects such as teaching practice course, practice teachers at schools and teacher trainers at faculty. That is, it is essential to examine pre-service teachers' negative and positive opinions as well as their own self-evaluation. With these concerns in mind, this study explores qualitatively pre-service EFL teachers' opinions on teaching practicum, practice teachers and teacher trainers. The study also aims to explore pre-service teachers' self-evaluation of their own performance in real class setting. In conclusion, the study suggests factors that can measure pre-service teachers' opinions on teaching practicum quantitatively in further studies. Finally, the research aims to suggest some pedagogical implications on the related issue.

3. METHOD

The present study employed qualitative research design. Qualitative research design consists of data collection procedures, which generally result in open-ended and non-numerical data (Dörnyei, 2007). It uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives, phenomenology, and case studies (Creswell, 2003). As a case study, this study focuses on teaching practice from the EFL pre-service teachers' points of view.

3.1. Setting

This research was carried out at the department of English Language Teaching, at the Faculty of Education, Balıkesir University, Turkey in the 2015-2016 academic year. This program is focused on training pre-service English as a Foreign Language Teachers for primary, secondary and high school level. As this program is a teaching program, it also includes pedagogical constituents which necessitate pre-service teachers' taking theoretical information on the aspects of teaching in general. Currently, methodology of the program commonly centres on how to teach English to language learners.

3.2. Participants

This study was carried out with 36 pre-service teachers, 9 male and 27 female. All participants were fourth year students at the ELT department. The mean age was 22.4, in the range of 21 to 29. Of the participants, 25 % (9) were males, whereas % 75 (27) consisted of female students. In the first semester, all the

participants were required to take the school experience course which includes activities such as observation, assistantship, practice and familiarization with the school practices at primary, secondary and high schools. It must also be noted that the experiences pre-service teachers gained by the school experience course in the first semester heavily influenced their opinions on teaching practicum in the second semester. The participants agreed voluntarily to participate in the research.

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments of this qualitative study consist of a questionnaire, which is composed of open-ended questions about the pre-service EFL teachers' opinions on the course itself, practice teachers, teacher trainers and about their own self-evaluations of their performance in the Teaching Practicum, in-depth interviews and student essays. The questionnaire centred on examining pre-service teachers' opinions developed along the interaction with the process of teaching. In-depth interviews were also conducted with the participants. In-depth interviewing, as a qualitative research technique, involves 'conducting intensive individual interviews' when 'detailed information about a person's thoughts and behaviours' (Boyce, Neale, 2006, 3) is to be explored. The interview questions were prepared by the researchers via literature scanning whereas the open-ended questions, which are an important part of semi-structured interviews in order to obtain responses from the participants who are using their own words, rather than the pre-defined ones by the researcher or past findings (Yin, 2010), were instantaneously raised in connection with the study.

The questions prepared by the researchers were reviewed by three experts in the field to ensure the readability, face validity and content validity of the data collection instruments. Some changes were made based on the feedback from the experts and the questions were finalized. Self-assessment, which 'involves asking learners to report their own knowledge' (Ellis, Barkhuizen, 2016, 46), was also used in the current study since participants answered the last two open-ended questions in the questionnaire by reporting their knowledge on their self-assessment. Thus, this study consists of in-depth interviews used as self-report methods in order to collect data. Apart from questionnaire and in-depth interviews, the participants' essays were also used to collect data. As Ellis and Bakkhuizen stated "Because of the doubts that exist about validity and reliability of self-report methods, it is advisable to combine two or more self-report methods" (2016, 47), a combination of questionnaire, in-depth interviews and essay papers are used in order to combine more self-report methods in this study.

3.4. Procedure

A research proposal was presented to the dean of Necatibey Education Faculty of Balıkesir University, Turkey in order to carry out this research. The proposal included the whole procedure in detail in terms of its significance,

purpose, methodology and tool of research. Soon after the approval was granted, the researchers informed the participants about the procedure. Since this study involved firstly a questionnaire on pre-service teachers' opinions, prior to the administration of the questionnaires, each of the participants were informed about the fact that their rights would be protected and that they would be also informed about the results of the research. The study used a four-step procedure: instruction, practice, data collection and data analysis.

3.4.1. Instruction

In the instruction part, the researchers introduced the procedure on teaching practicum giving some information on the theoretical aspects of teaching practicum, on how the practicum could best be carried out, and on the preparation of the teaching practicum files.

3.4.2. Practice

In the practice part, after 36 pre-service teachers had been informed about teaching practice course, they were grouped in pairs, which means that there were 18 groups, each of which presented their own presentation in a class setting at the very end of the semester. Each of the groups made a presentation which covered at least a class hour. At the end of each groups' presentation, they answered the questionnaire, and wrote an essay paper. The researchers also conducted in-depth interviews with the participants each week in theoretical hours of teaching practicum.

3.4.3. Data Collection

The instruments including questionnaire, in-depth interviews and essay papers were used in order to ensure data triangulation, trustworthiness and validity of the data. The main purpose of using a background questionnaire in the study was to obtain information about the participants' age and gender. The questionnaire also consisted of eight different questions, two of which were about teaching practicum, practice teachers, teacher trainers and self-evaluation. The researchers interviewed each of the participants on their reflections in each week. In this process, the researchers noted and decoded the narrations of the participants. Last, the participants who made their presentations in class wrote essays about their experiences after they completed their sessions.

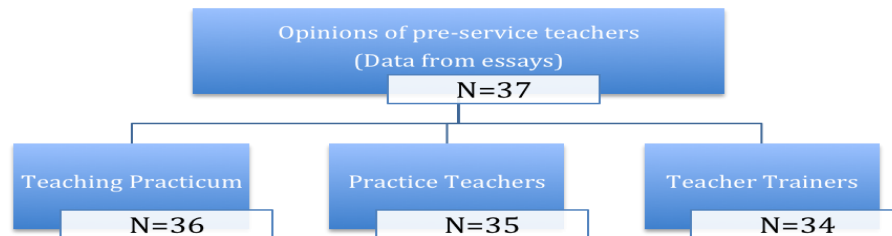
In in-depth-interviews and essay papers, the researchers asked participants the following questions on teaching practicum:

1. Can you give specific details about your presentation?
2. What did you learn from teaching practicum?
3. What were your opinions about teaching practicum?
4. Do you think that teaching practicum is useful for your future profession?

3.4.4. Data Analysis

The data collected from each source were analysed individually. The statements in relation to the positive and negative opinions of pre-service teachers on teaching practicum, practice teachers and teacher trainers were coded under certain themes as coding is the chief activity of the analysis (Miles & Huberman, 1994) in a qualitative research. The statements on positive and negative opinions of pre-service teachers particularly on teaching practicum, practice teachers and teacher trainers were examined in detail. Moreover, the affective statements of pre-service teachers were decoded in order to understand how they felt while they were practising teaching English in real class setting. After this process was separately conducted for each of the data sources as well as for each of the pairs, the data were all compared and contrasted with all of the other participants. Then the data gathered from each source were transferred into concept maps in which the statements were classified. After the comparison of the statements and numbers in concept maps, it was found out that the data regarding the negative and positive opinions of pre-service teachers seemed similar. In other words, the data triangulation indicated that the data obtained through different sources ensured validity and trustworthiness. Conclusively, the data were combined and the numbers and frequencies were given, which can be seen in the following section.

Figure 1. Sample concept map.



4. RESULTS

The results indicated that the pre-service teachers had both positive and negative opinions on teaching practicum, practice teachers and teacher trainers. Apart from these, they claimed that they also had positive and negative opinions on themselves when they were questioned on their own self-evaluation in the process of teaching practice. However, it should be stated that the pre-service teachers'

positive opinions on teaching practicum, practice teachers and teacher trainers outweigh the negative ones.

The results revealed that the pre-service teachers (N=22) had positive opinions on teaching practicum.

Table 1. I feel positive about Teaching Practicum. Because...

Positive opinions on Teaching Practicum	Number	(Frequency %)
1. I feel like a real teacher that makes me happy.	17	18.90
2. I experienced teaching English in real class setting.	15	16.67
3. I liked teaching students.	11	12.22
4. I learnt how to deal with class management.	8	8.89
5. I had a chance to practice my abilities.	8	8.89
6. I experienced the real atmosphere of schools.	7	7.78
7. I learnt how to communicate with students.	6	6.67
8. I learnt the importance of teacher-student relationship.	4	4.44
9. I discovered my own weaknesses in teaching.	3	3.33
10. I had ideas on possible students' profile.	3	3.33
11. I learnt some procedures about state schools.	2	2.22
12. I learnt how to fill in the class notebook.	2	2.22
13. I learnt how to make a lesson plan.	2	2.22
14. I learnt how to use interactive board.	2	2.22
Total	90	100

The following excerpt reveals that the participant is pleased to have experience as being a real teacher in a real class setting:

Since I had a chance to teach English at a real class setting, I learnt how to be a teacher. Feeling like a real teacher made me very happy. It was an invaluable experience for my part, especially in teaching English, communicating with students and managing class.

The results revealed that pre-service teachers (N=14) had negative opinions on teaching practicum.

Table 2. I feel negative about Teaching Practicum. Because...

Negative opinions on Teaching Practicum	Number	(Frequency%)
1. It is difficult to manage the class.	14	18.18
2. The students are naughty, stubborn and disrespectful.	9	11.68
3. The classes are crowded and noisy.	8	10.39
4. Practicing at the year of KPSS exam is difficult.	7	9.09
5. It is time wasting and just a formality.	6	7.79
6. The students do not understand and I often switch.	6	7.79
7. It is difficult to make a lesson plan.	6	7.79
8. It is anxious to talk in front of the whole class.	5	6.49
9. Arranging the date of practice is difficult.	2	2.60
10. There is no useful feedback.	2	2.60
11. It is difficult to write a report.	2	2.60
12. The curriculum is not sufficient.	2	2.60
13. The materials are not good.	2	2.60
14. There is no organization at schools.	2	2.60
15. I did not have any experience in preparing exams.	1	1.30
16. I did not have any experience in parental meetings.	1	1.30
17. It interrupts teachers' and students' routine.	1	1.30
18. The practice school is far away from my dorm.	1	1.30
Total	77	100

The following excerpt reveals that the participant has some negative opinions on teaching practicum:

Teaching practicum was totally unnecessary. It was a waste of time at the year of KPSS. Anyway, the practice teacher did not observe me while I was teaching in teaching practicum. For this reason, I was unable to see my own mistakes. I had no feedback even though I went to the practice school, attended the classes and presented lessons. Beside this, the class I was teaching was very noisy and crowded. I was unable to control the whole class while I was trying to do the activities.

The results also revealed that the pre-service teachers (N=22) had positive opinions on their practice teachers at schools.

Table 3. *I feel positive about practice teachers at school. Because...*

Positive opinions on practice teachers	Number	(Frequency %)
1. S/he is helpful in giving practical info.	22	26.52
2. S/he is nice, easy-going and considerate.	21	25.31
3. S/he is a good mentor and model.	8	9.64
4. S/he does not pay attention to attendance.	6	7.23
5. S/he gives positive feedback.	5	6.02
6. S/he cares how we practice the course.	5	6.02
7. S/he is good at class management.	5	6.02
8. S/he does not dictate us.	3	3.61
9. S/he encourages us about teaching.	3	3.61
10. S/he provides us materials for teaching.	3	3.61
11. S/he is good at using technology.	2	2.41
Total	83	100

The following excerpt reveals that the participant has some positive opinions on the practice teachers at schools:

The practice teacher was very helpful. Actually, she tried to help us to get used to the process of teaching practicum. She was a good teacher and she trained us in practicing teaching English to students. She cared how we practiced the lesson. And, she also answered what we asked about any kind of issues either on teaching or on personal.

The results also revealed that the pre-service teachers (N=9) had negative opinions on their practice teachers at schools.

Table 4. *I feel negative about practice teachers at schools. Because...*

Negative opinions on practice teachers	Number	(Frequency %)
1. S/he does not show respect to us.	9	19.57
2. S/he does not try to control the class.	8	17.39
3. S/he does not behave students well.	6	13.04
4. S/he is inexperienced and unprepared.	6	13.04
5. S/he uses GTM to make students passive receivers.	5	10.87
6. S/he assumes us as a chance to do her/his own duties.	4	8.70
7. S/he shouts suddenly in the class.	2	4.35
8. S/he does not care about the four-letter words.	2	4.35
9. S/he does not do activity and course becomes dull.	2	4.35
10. S/he does not deserve her salary.	1	2.17
11. S/he does not give us proper feedback.	1	2.17
Total	46	100

According to the results, among 37 pre-service EFL teachers, 4 of them suggested that they did not feel negative about their practice teachers at schools. However, the following excerpt reveals that the participant has some negative opinions on the practice teachers at school:

S/he will never be a good model for me. Her methods are rather traditional. S/he still uses GTM (Grammar Translation Method). S/he does not manage her class effectively. S/he was not active. By the way, s/he is inexperienced in guiding us as a practice teacher.

The findings also revealed that the pre-service teachers (N=22) had positive opinions on their teacher trainers at the faculty of education.

Table 5. *I feel positive about teacher trainers at the faculty of education. Because...*

Positive opinions on practice teachers	Number	(Frequency %)
1. S/he has a good relationship with the students.	19	27.14
2. S/he is kind, helpful, relaxed and fair.	13	18.57
3. S/he is a good mentor and model.	11	15.71
4. S/he makes us feel comfortable about practice school.	9	12.86
5. S/he is experienced enough to guide me.	8	11.43
6. S/he gives us enough time for preparing our reports.	7	10.00
7. S/he gives us useful information and feedbacks.	3	4.29
Total	70	100

The following excerpt demonstrates that the participant has some positive opinions on the teacher trainers at the faculty of education.

S/he gave us tolerable amount of information on the process of teaching practicum. S/he made us relax by her/his cool behaviour. And his/her experience in teaching practicum gives us an insight that s/he is one of the greatest teachers. Moreover, s/he has a good relationship with us.

The findings of the study also showed that the pre-service teachers (N=6) had negative opinions on their teacher trainers at the faculty of education.

Table 6. *I feel negative about teacher trainers at the faculty of education. Because...*

Negative opinions on practice teachers	Number	(Frequency %)
1. S/he does not visit us at the practice school.	6	19.36
2. S/he does not show any tolerance.	5	16.13
3. S/he is not interested in what we are doing.	5	16.13
4. S/he does not carry out the theoretical part of the course.	4	12.90
5. S/he gets angry if reports are not delivered in due time.	4	12.90
6. S/he does not contribute to our academic knowledge.	4	12.90
7. S/he is not fair as she gives everyone the same grade.	2	6.45
8. S/he pays no attention to attendance.	1	3.23
Total	31	100

According to the findings, among 37 pre-service EFL teachers, 6 of them reported that they did not feel negative about their teacher trainers at the faculty of education. However, the following excerpt demonstrates that the participant has some negative opinions on the teacher trainers at the faculty of education.

I have had some troubles with my teacher trainer. First of all, s/he does not accept our excuses. I think s/he believes s/he is always right in every condition even if s/he does not have any idea on the conditions of National Government Schools. All in all, what s/he was responsible for is to visit us at the practice school, but s/he is unable to do this, as s/he has always been very busy with duties of the faculty.

The findings also revealed that pre-service teachers of English (N=21) felt that they were good at on a variety of issues in teaching when they self-evaluated themselves.

Table 7. *After I had taken the course, as a prospective teacher of English I feel that I am good at ...*

Positive opinions on self-evaluation	Number	(Frequency %)
1. Communicating with students.	13	16.88
2. Motivating students.	9	11.69
3. Teaching speaking.	9	11.69
4. Teaching English to young language learners.	9	11.69
5. Teaching grammar.	8	10.39
6. Class management.	6	7.79
7. Creating safe atmosphere for students.	5	6.49
8. Teaching vocabulary.	4	5.19
9. Understanding psychology of learning.	4	5.19
10. Teaching reading.	3	3.90
11. Teaching listening.	2	2.60
12. Using visual materials.	2	2.60
13. Teaching writing.	2	2.60
14. Using interactive boards and computers.	1	1.30
Total	77	100

The following excerpt indicates that one of the pre-service teachers felt that s/he was good at on a wide range of issues in teaching when s/he self-evaluated herself/himself.

I am good at communicating with students, motivating them, teaching topic effectively and doing activities which students can enjoy. I think I am also good at creating a friendly and warm atmosphere as well as understanding their teaching weaknesses straightforwardly.

The results also revealed that the pre-service teachers (N=16) felt that they were bad at on a variety of issues in teaching when they self-evaluated themselves.

Table 8. *After I had taken the course, as prospective teacher of English I feel that I am bad at.*

Negative opinions on self-evaluation	Number	(Frequency %)
1. Class management.	9	18.36
2. Speaking English and using class discourse.	8	16.36
3. Applying methods, approaches and techniques in real class settings.	6	12.24
4. Controlling my anxiety.	5	10.20
5. Making the students participate in activities.	4	8.16
6. Arranging time.	3	6.12
7. Teaching listening.	3	6.12
8. Teaching speaking.	2	4.08
9. Teaching grammar.	2	4.08
10. Being tolerant.	2	4.08
11. Teaching vocabulary.	1	2.04
12. Teaching reading.	1	2.04
13. Planning lessons.	1	2.04
14. Using authentic materials in class.	1	2.04
15. Using smart boards and computers.	1	2.04
Total	49	100

The following excerpt demonstrates that one of the pre-service teachers felt that s/he was bad at on a wide range of issues in teaching when s/he self-evaluated herself/himself.

I feel that I am unable to control the class and I am also certain that I will never be able to control the class. Because, personally, I hate dictating and being dictated to me. Moreover, I think that I do not pronounce well. As I am not a creative person, I am neither good at applying the methods nor the techniques I have learned at the faculty of education. "I am a failure."

In sum, the findings of this study suggested that the pre-service teachers had both positive and negative opinions on teaching practicum, practice teachers and teacher trainers. However, their positive opinions on three aspects outweighed the negative ones. What is more, the findings on the pre-service teachers' negative self-evaluations of their own performance might be related to their pedagogical skills (classroom management, etc.), affective states (controlling anxiety, etc.), target language proficiency (having difficulty in using classroom discourse, teaching listening, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, reading) and their inexperience in technical concerns (using computer and technology, etc.).

5. DISCUSSION

Four main conclusions were drawn from the study. First, the pre-service EFL teachers interviewed in this study seemed to have experience on a wide variety of issues in teaching English in a real class setting. More specifically, the pre-service EFL teachers' positive opinions on teaching practicum outweighed their negative opinions. The pre-service EFL teachers were positive as they felt like a real teacher, they experienced teaching in real class setting, they liked teaching students, they learnt how to deal with classroom management and had a chance to practice their teaching abilities. Apart from these, some of the pre-service teachers felt positive as they experienced real atmosphere of the schools, they learnt how to communicate with students, and they learnt the importance of teacher-student relationship. Last of all, few pre-service teachers were positive on teaching practice as they discovered their own weaknesses in teaching, they had some ideas on students' profile, they learnt some procedures about state schools, they learnt how to fill in class notebook, how to make a lesson plan and how to use interactive boards. On the contrary, they felt negative on a wide variety of issues such as managing class, dealing with the naughty, stubborn and disrespectful students and struggling with crowded and noisy classroom. Apart from these, the pre-service EFL teachers thought that practicing at the year of KPSS exam was very challenging, as they did not have enough time to study their exam. Some of them considered teaching practicum to be a formality and a waste of time. They also did not like students' profile and they found difficult to make a lesson plan. Additionally, they became anxious while talking in front of the class, which means that they have English language teaching anxiety. However, few pre-service teachers had negative opinions on arranging the date of practice with their courses and on having no useful feedback. Apart from these, few of them were negative on writing reports and on the insufficiency of the curriculum and materials. Moreover, they also thought that the schools were not organized in terms of teaching practicum. Among others, only one participant was negative on teaching practicum, as s/he did not have any experience in preparing exams and in parental meetings. One of them thought that teaching practicum interrupted teachers and students' routine. One of them also thought that the distance of practice school was a negative factor on teaching practicum.

Secondly, the pre-service teachers' positive opinions on practice teachers at practice schools outweighed their negative ones. The pre-service teachers felt positive about their practice teachers at schools because they thought that they were helpful in giving practical information about teaching. They also had positive opinions on the practice teachers' personal characteristics such as being nice, easy-going, kind and considerate besides their being good mentors and models. Some of them are positive as practice teachers gave positive feedback, cared how they

practised the course, managed class perfectly, encouraged them to teach, provided them with material for teaching and used technology. Yet, few pre-service teachers also felt positive, as practice teachers did not dictate them. It is remarkable to note that a few pre-service teachers were positive, as practice teachers did not pay any attention to attendance. On the contrary, the pre-service teachers had some negative opinions on practice teachers as they did not show them respect, they did not try to control the class, and they did not behave students well. A few pre-service teachers thought that practice teachers were inexperienced and unprepared. They also revealed that they used traditional methods such as GTM. They were negative on practice teachers as they forced them to do their duties. Few pre-service teachers had negative opinions on practice teachers because of their shouting in the class, being uninterested to the bad words that students say to each other and uncaring to do activities in class. Among the pre-service teachers' negative opinions, only one participant felt that practice teachers did not deserve their salary.

Thirdly, the pre-service teachers' positive opinions on teacher trainers at the faculty of education outweighed their negative ones. However, the pre-service teachers were positive on teacher trainers as they had good relationship with them. They thought that the teacher trainers were kind, helpful, calm and fair and they also had the idea that they were good mentors and models. The pre-service teachers were on the positive opinion that teacher trainers made them feel comfortable about practice schools. The teacher trainers' having considerable experience on practice schools, their leaving enough time for preparing their reports and their giving useful information and feedbacks were the other positive opinions of pre-service teachers. In contrast to this, the pre-service teachers had some negative opinions on teacher trainers, as teacher trainers did not visit them at the practice schools. Among negative opinions, the teacher trainers' lack of tolerance, their disinterest in what the pre-service teachers did at the practice school, their unawareness of the theoretical part of the course, their getting angry if the reports were not delivered in due time, their deficiency in contributing academic knowledge of pre-service teachers and their being unfair while giving grades can be enumerated. Interestingly enough, only one pre-service teacher was negative about the teacher trainer, as teacher trainers did not warn the pre-service teachers who do not attend the courses.

Fourthly, the result of the study showed that the pre-service teachers positive opinions outweighed the negative ones after they had the process of teaching practicum and they were interrogated about their own self-evaluations. The pre-service teachers had positive opinions about themselves particularly in communicating with students, motivating students, teaching speaking to students, teaching English to young language learners, teaching grammar, managing class, creating safe atmosphere for students, teaching vocabulary, reading, listening, and

writing. Being aware of the psychology of learning and using interactive boards and computers were the two other positive opinions of the pre-service teachers. On the contrary, among the pre-service teachers' negative opinions on their self-evaluation were managing class, speaking English and using classroom discourse, applying methods and techniques in real class setting, controlling their anxiety, making students participate in the activities, arranging time, teaching listening, speaking and grammar and being tolerant. Few of the pre-service teachers had negative opinions on their teaching vocabulary, reading, planning lessons, using authentic materials in class and using computer and technology.

In sum, similarly, the results of the study did not contradict to the results of the previous research in terms of the pre-service teachers' confrontation with many difficulties when their theoretically gained beliefs were confronted with the practically gained reality (Stenberg, Rajala, Hilppo, 2016; Debreli, 2016). The results also did not negate to the previous studies regarding pre-service teachers' appreciating what it means to be a teacher 'for real' and developing their skills (Aydin, Selcuk & Yesilyurt, 2007; Busher et al. 2015). Additionally, the results comply with the previous results concerning pre-service teachers' inadequacy in English language competence which appeared to affect their teaching performance (Gan, 2013) and concerning their consideration on what teaching entailed (Morales Cortés, 2016). This study also conforms to the previous studies as it was also found out that teaching practicum was the key component of teacher education (Ozmen, 2012; Barton et al., 2015; Tülüce & Çeçen, 2016) and that it promoted personal development and enhanced social responsibility and personal competence (Chambers & Lavery, 2012). The results also indicated similarity as is the case in previous studies as teaching practicum was also effective in pre-service ELT teachers' obtaining experiences about communication, classroom management and understanding students' social and cognitive background (Alaz & Konur, 2009; Busher et al., 2015). The results also showed parallelism and consistency with the study of Sariçoban (2016) as it indicated teaching practicum was helpful for them to develop more positive attitudes towards their profession.

Conversely, the results of the study contribute to the limited literature in the context of teaching practicum, particularly in terms of the pre-service teachers' self-evaluation of their own performance. Interestingly, while Merç (2015) suggested that assessment by university teachers is an effective way and, on the contrary, assessment by cooperating teachers were found to be the least effective one for assessing pre-service teachers' performance, the results of the present study indicated that the pre-service EFL teachers did not complain about the assessment by the teacher trainers but by the unfair assessment of the university teachers. Similarly, whereas Trent (2013) suggested overcoming antagonistic relations that might threaten the identity work of pre-service teachers, the results of our study

showed that the pre-service EFL teachers did not reveal re(identification) of their work. However, some participants were negative on practice teachers as they were treated as a chance to do their own duties. The reason of this could be that the borderline of the work identity may not be clear enough to carry out the participants' involvement in teaching practice. Moreover, the results of the this study did not indicate that the effectiveness of teaching practice was related to the interactions between practice teachers, teacher trainers and learner teachers while the previous studies (Farrell 2008; Ali, Othman and Karim, 2014) found that effectiveness of the practicum experience was related to the interactions with the mentor teachers and faculty supervisor, and the expectations of the mentor teacher and faculty supervisors on the performance of the students during their practicum experience. This study also did not comply with the previous studies as it did not give a meaningful data on the increase of contact hours among students and university supervisors (Caner, 2010) and as there was no reference on the benefit of peer observation which would modify pre-service teachers' teaching practices and beliefs (Day 2013).

5. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATONS

In this study, it was found that teaching practicum allowed the pre-service teachers to (re)consider what teaching and learning entail from the perspective of practice school teachers and teacher trainers, and to re(assess) their self-evaluation of their performance in teaching practicum. The teaching practicum enabled the pre-service teachers to be teachers at schools that helped them build a new identity as English teacher.

The pre-service teachers taking teaching practice course are assumed to obtain realistic information about their own occupation. Yet again, when the pre-service teachers were interrogated qualitatively about their teaching practicum course, practice teachers, teacher trainers and self-evaluations of their performance by the help of questionnaire, essay papers and in-depth interviews, the researchers reached some remarkable conclusions as mentioned above.

In the light of the conclusions, some practical recommendations can be noted. In the broadest sense, the curricula of pre-service training programs should be revised in terms of their usefulness in teaching practicum. In other words, EFL teachers should be trained according to the needs of foreign language education system. Within the scope of the results obtained, first pre-service teachers need to raise awareness of teaching practicum by the help of their teacher trainers at the faculty of education in order to carry out a consequential pre-service training. Secondly, pre-service teachers need a careful supervision of their practice teachers at the practice schools in the course of teaching practicum in order to have experience in every sphere of teaching. Only by this way, it seems probable to train pre-service teachers both theoretically and practically during their educational

practices. And thirdly, pre-service teachers' self-evaluations clearly indicate that they are having difficulty in creating a meaningful classroom discourse in English. Thus, they should be academically trained on how to develop classroom discourse in order to apply communicative language teaching. Fourthly, practice teachers should be provided with in-service training on teaching practicum before they are assigned as practice teachers. As known, some practice teachers at schools do neither have knowledge about the responsibilities and duties of practice teachers nor have the ability or will to guide pre-service teachers. For this purpose, pre-service teachers' negative opinions on practice teachers at schools can be decreased as practice teachers will be trained on a wide variety of aspects such as showing respect, behaving well and having experience in training pre-service teachers, etc. Fifthly, pre-service teachers' negative opinions on teacher trainers indicate that teacher trainers do not visit them at the schools. This clearly identifies that teacher trainers pay little attention to teaching practicum. Accordingly, a fairer solution to this problem should be suggested by considering all its impacts.

The study was restricted to 37 pre-service teachers of English at a state university in Turkey. Moreover, the study was confined to the qualitative data obtained from a questionnaire, in-depth interviews and essay papers. The data included Turkish EFL teachers' positive and negative opinions on teaching practicum, practice teachers and teacher trainers. It also included pre-service teachers' self-evaluations of their performance in teaching practicum. To be brief, the data obtained in this study are limited to the factors above. Thus, it is vital to conduct qualitative studies for a better understanding of the outcomes of teaching practicum. Hence, further research should focus on the effects of teaching practicum and the ways of dealing with the negative opinions on teaching practicum and the factors that could affect EFL teachers' opinions on their self-evaluation. Relatively, more research is required in order to improve teaching practicum from the perspective of not only pre-service teachers but also of practice teachers and teacher trainers.

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