The Effects of Microteaching Practices on Pre-service EFL Teachers' Professional Self-efficacy Development

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Abstract

The microteaching practice followed in undergraduate level has been a topic of increasing investigation. Literature presents studies on the effects of microteaching on pre-service teachers' communicative skills, their teaching skills and the advantages and disadvantages of the process. However, there is still scarcity in research examining how microteaching practices affect the self-efficacy levels of pre-service English teachers, especially in the Turkish context. This qualitative case study examined the effects of microteaching experiences on the pre-service EFL teachers' professional self-efficacy. The data were collected through the participants' (N=45) answers to open-ended questions, instructor observation notes and peer observation notes. The content analysis of the data revealed that microteaching mostly helped the participants develop their self-efficacy. Such components of the practice as planning and designing a lesson, taking the teacher role, controlling a classroom, receiving feedback and having the chance to realize the strengths and weaknesses were the major contributors to the participants' self-efficacy. However, some of the participants considered microteaching as a practice negatively affecting their professional self-efficacy. The findings are discussed in the light of relevant literature and some implications are suggested.

Keywords: Microteaching, Self-efficacy, Pre-service teacher, EFL.

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Mikroöğretim Uygulamasının Hizmet Öncesi İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Mesleki Öz-yeterlik İnançlarına Etkisi

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Öz

Lisans eğitiminde yürütülen mikroöğretim uygulaması artan sayıda araştırmada incelenmiştir. Mevcut alanyazın, mikroöğretimin hizmet öncesi öğretmenlerin iletişim becerilerine ve öğretim becerilerine etkisi ve uygulamanın avantaj ve dezavantajlarını incelemiştir. Ancak, özellikle de İngiliz Dili ve Eğitimi alanında uygulanan mikroöğretim uygulamalarının hizmet öncesi öğretmenlerin öz-yeterlik inançlarına etkisinin araştırılması konusunda alanda eksiklik vardır. Bu nitel durum araştırması, mikroöğretim deneyimlerinin hizmet öncesi İngilizce öğretmenlerinin meslekî öz-yeterlik inançlarını incelemektedir. Çalışmanın verileri, 45 katılımcının açık uçlu sorulara verdikleri cevaplar, öğretim üyesinin gözlem notları ve akran gözlem notları yoluyla toplanmıştır. İçerik analizi mikroöğretim uygulamasının katılımcıların öz-yeterlik inançlarını büyük ölçüde geliştirdiğini göstermiştir. Uygulamanın içeriğinde bulunan ders planlama ve tasarlama, öğretmen rolünü üstlenme, sınıf kontrolü, geribildirim alma ve güçlü/zayıf yönleri görme gibi aşamalar katılımcıların öz-yeterlik inançlarını artıran temel faktörler arasında gösterilmiştir. Ancak, bazı katılımcılar mikroöğretim uygulamasının öz-yeterlik inançlarını olumsuz yönde etkilediğini belirtmiştir. Bulgular ilgili alanyazın ışığında tartışılmış ve bazı öneriler sunulmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Mikroöğretim, Öz-yeterlik, Hizmet öncesi öğretmen, Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce.

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Introduction

Microteaching has been a topic of investigation since its introduction. It has attracted attention mainly because of the benefits it brings to the educational process. Research has examined the concept from various standpoints centering on the views and attitudes of pre-service teachers towards microteaching (Banerjee, Halder & Guha, 2015; Gürbüzoğlu, Yalmancı & Aydın, 2014), the effects of microteaching on the development of teaching skills (Bakır, 2014); the effects of microteaching on the development of presentational and interactional skills (Akkuş & Üner, 2017) and the effects of microteaching on the development of subject knowledge (Fernandez, 2010). The perusal of the relevant literature reveals that microteaching as one of the fundamental components in teacher education has been examined from different perspectives. However, the effects of microteaching practices on the self-efficacy development in the professional identities of pre-service EFL teachers remains as an area open for further investigation, the national sphere in particular. Therefore, in order to reach in-depth understanding of the real self-efficacy experiences of pre-service teachers (Creswell, 1998), this qualitative case study aims to investigate how pre-service EFL teachers' development of self-efficacy and self-reflection is impacted through microteaching sessions at undergraduate level.

Literature Review

The introduction of the concept of microteaching dates back to the 1960s when it was adopted as a part of the teaching training program in Stanford University (Allen, 1966; Brown, 1975). Microteaching was designed to be conducted in a cyclical process, in the first circle of which students were asked to plan their lessons, teach the content, being observed and given feedback and a second circle involving the repetition of these three steps again (Brown, 1975). Quinn (2000) added that the microteaching process also involves the video-taping of teaching sessions which are later used for evaluation by the performer. Since its introduction, microteaching, though preserving the main steps, has been developed in content involving additional feedback and assessment ways (Brown, 1975).

Microteaching has been favored as an effective practice in teacher training as it brings a simulated teaching environment where pre-service teachers can practice the act of teaching within limited time and with their classmates in simulated classrooms (Bakır, 2014; Banerjee, et al., 2015). In this simulated condition, pre-service teachers can apply the theoretical knowledge they receive in their practices (Kuran, 2009; Saban & Çoklar, 2013). What is advantageous in this practice is that it offers a controlled setting in which pre-service teachers can have practical experiences (Dwight & Wnag, 1971). Therefore, such an environment is naturally expected to reduce the anxiety levels of the trainees while increasing their self-confidence and motivation (Arsal, 2014; Karışan, 2017). In the simulated environments through microteaching, pre-service teachers can sense the identity of being teachers and understand the responsibilities and requirements of the profession (Ambusaidi & Al-Balushi, 2012; Göçer, 2016; Hu, 2008).

Microteaching process also helps the professional development of pre-service teachers as it involves feedback sessions with the exchange of ideas of observers (Göçer, 2016). The feedback coming from different agents becomes sources for improvement for pre-service teachers since their awareness of the strong and weak areas increases (Akkuş & Üner, 2017). The combination of feedback from peers and teachers and the performer's personal observations inevitably help pre-service teachers consider their practices from an evaluative stance and follow ways for professional improvement (Göçer, 2016; Hu, 2008).

In the light of the advantages it brings to the training process, the existing research has investigated microteaching with a focus on different aspects. Napoles (2008) examined the relationship among instructors', peers' and students' personal evaluations as regards the music education major students' microteaching experiences. The results revealed that micro teaching experiences helped the professional development of the participants. Saban and Çoklar (2013) studied the views of pre-service teachers in the Computer and Instructional Technology Education

Department as regards the contributions of microteaching to teacher qualifications. The results of the interviews and surveys showed that microteaching enabled the participants to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their practices. Banerjee et al. (2015) adopted a survey method to understand the opinions of trainee students in four Teacher Training Colleges. The analysis of the questionnaire revealed that the participants favored the practice as they experienced the sense of teaching in classroom situations.

Griffths (2016) followed an alternative version of microteaching practice, peer microteaching lesson study, with prospective secondary school teachers from different branches. The post microteaching questionnaire showed that the practice promoted collaboration among the participants and encouraged them to reflect on their performances. Cheng (2017) focused on precision in teaching with pre-service mathematics teachers who were guided by expert in-service mathematics teachers. The lesson video-types and participant reflections indicated that the microteaching sessions helped the participants pay attention to precision in teaching. Akkuş and Üner (2017) centered on the chemistry pre-service teachers' development of communicative skills and illustrated task performance through microteaching. The results of self, peer, group and observer evaluations revealed that microteaching improved the communication skills of the participants. Onwuagboke, Osuala and Nzeako (2017) evaluated the teaching development of 90 students taking the Education Technology course in teaching practice program. The comparison of pre and post-test results showed that the microteaching practice improved the teaching skills of the participants. The results of these studies conducted in different branches for training pre-service teachers showed that microteaching was considered as an effective way of teaching practice helping the professional development of pre-service teachers.

Literature also presents studies on the concept of microteaching examined in language education contexts. Retelj and Puljić (2016) conducted microteaching practices with prospective teachers studying at German, Dutch and Swedish Departments. The analysis of the participants' self-evaluations indicated that the practice offered the participants a chance to have their initial pedagogical experiences and become aware of the principles of teaching with the help of the feedback from teachers and peers. Examining the effects of microteaching on pre-service language teachers' professional development, Göçer (2016) worked with pre-service teachers of Turkish. Depending on the data from the video recordings and participant, peer and instructor comments, the researcher stated that the practice helped the participants overcome their fears and concerns as regards teaching and offered them a chance to gain experience.

Literature also offers another group of research particularly examining microteaching in contexts training pre-service EFL teachers in the international (Al-Humaidi & Abu-Rahmah, 2015; Ismail, 2011; Rozimela, 2013;) and national scale (Büyükkarcı, 2014; Coşkun, 2016; Savaş, 2012). In the international scale, Ismail (2011) in the Arab Emirates and Elghotmy (2012) in Egypt obtained the views of pre-service EFL teachers regarding microteaching. Both researchers reported that their participants considered microteaching as a contributory practice in their professional development by improving their teaching performance. With an emphasis on the positive and negative features of microteaching, He and Yan (2011) in Chinese, based on reflective reports, and Rozimela (2013) in an Indonesian context, based on journals, observation and interviews concluded that microteaching was helpful in the participants' professional development. As regards the negative aspects, He and Yan (2011) referred to the artificiality of the practice while Rozimela (2013) pointed at the confusion the participants experienced related to the expectations of the practice. Ping (2013) followed a pre and post-test design in a Chinese EFL context and Al-Humaidi and Abu-Rahman (2015) adopted reflective reports, self-assessment forms and instructor feedback in the Omanian EFL setting in order to examine the effectiveness of microteaching. They reported that the practice was efficient in offering a practical atmosphere for pre-service teachers to improve their teaching skills. Focusing on pair microteaching, Yan and He (2017) conducted 8-week microteaching practice. The results of the observation notes, post session discussions and reflective journals indicated that pair microteaching helped the professional learning of the participants.

In the national scale, taking the positive and negative aspects of microteaching into account, Ögeyik (2009) reported that the pre-service English teachers generally hold positive considerations of the practice in terms of the development of professional knowledge and competencies. The researcher added that microteaching served as a reflective practice. Kavanoz and Yüksel (2010) studied the impact of microteaching on pre-service EFL teachers and noted, as a result of the observation and reflection reports, that the practice offered chances for self-reflection to the participants. Savaş (2012) examined the pre-service EFL teachers' views regarding microteaching. The analysis of the questionnaire data revealed that the participants have positive considerations of the particular practice in that it assisted their professional development. With an emphasis on the assessment component of microteaching, Büyükkarcı (2014) concluded that formative versions of assessment in microteaching sessions decreased pre-service teachers' anxiety levels. Coşkun (2016) examined the effects of microteaching on pre-service EFL teachers' teaching development. The results from the questionnaire showed that though some students considered the practice as artificial, a great majority of the participants appreciated the contributions of the microteaching sessions to improve their teaching practice.

In the light of the existing literature on microteaching, several conclusions can be reached. The main conclusion is that there are a growing number of studies examining different aspects of microteaching in different contexts. However, regarding its significance in teacher education, one can conclude that there is still room for research on microteaching, especially in the national scale. Another conclusion is that the existing studies mostly investigated microteaching with a focus on its overall effects on teaching skills (Kavanoz & Yüksel, 2010; Ping, 2013), students' general views on the practice (Elghotmy, 2012; Savaş, 2012) and the positive and negative aspects of microteaching (He & Yan, 2011; Ögeyik, 2009). Yet, there are limited number of studies on the effects of microteaching on pre-service teachers' self-efficacy. Of course, there are studies referring to the benefits of microteaching practices in increasing participants' self-efficacy but they presented this aspect as a conclusion not as an aim of their research (Göçer, 2016; Kuran, 2009). Among the studies on the effect of microteaching on the participants' self-efficacy, Merghler and Tangen (2010) worked with a group of pre-service teachers from different departments; Arsal (2014) with pre-service teachers enrolled in a special education teacher preparation programme and Cinici (2016) and Karışan (2017) with pre-service teachers in a science teaching program. Though they were conducted with the participants in different branches, the common conclusion among these studies was that they attracted attention to the propelling effects of microteaching practices in promoting self-efficacy beliefs of the teacher candidates. The researchers reported that before entering the real classroom environments and taking the responsibility of real teaching, the participants could observe and practice teaching in real-like contexts, which helped them have an idea of teaching process. In this way, they developed a sense of accomplishing teaching before graduation.

Though the development of self-efficacy is a significant matter in teacher training, the review of the relevant literature shows that the effects of microteaching practices on the development of self-efficacy has not attracted the attention in deserved, particularly in the national arena. Those studies focusing on self-efficacy have been conducted in several fields like science or special education programs, leaving room for research in the EFL field. Therefore, there is need for research on the effects of microteaching practice on pre-service EFL teachers' self-efficacy development. With this aim, this qualitative case study investigated how microteaching affected pre-service EFL teachers' development of self-efficacy. The following questions guided this study:

1. How do pre-service EFL teachers perceive microteaching?
2. How are the self-efficacy beliefs of pre-service teachers affected by the microteaching practices?

Methodology

This study adopted qualitative case study research design as it aims to reach a detailed analysis of the pre-service EFL teachers' experiences as regards their self-efficacy development through

microteaching. As suggested by Creswell (1998), case study design offers researchers with the chance to examine the issue with its depth. The study focused on the examination of the concept of self-efficacy, which can be defined as individuals' judgment on their capabilities of conducting actions/processes (Bandura, 1997). Considering the importance of microteaching practices in the development of pre-service teachers' professional identities, the researcher aimed to examine the effects of the practice on the professional self-efficacy development.

Before conducting the main study, the researcher obtained ethical permission from the related department and took the voluntary consent of the participants.

Participants and Setting

This study was conducted at English Language Teaching Department at a state university in Turkey. The participants were 45 pre-service EFL teachers taking Teaching English to Young Learners I course given in the first semester in the third grade. After receiving the theoretical aspects related to the course, the participants were asked to conduct microteaching practices as a course requirement. They designed their plans and practices according to the theoretical framework of the course and the instructor's presentation of the main practices of teaching language skills to young learners.

The participants were divided into groups of three. Each group was assigned a topic to teach to a particular young learner level (from A1 to B1) in their micro teaching. Each participant was also assigned a particular skill through which s/he was expected to teach the content in 15 minutes. The aim in assigning the participants particular topics and skills was to examine how they would design young learner courses based on the dynamics of the profile. The aim in asking them to practice a particular skill in 15 minutes was to observe their practice in the teacher's role and understand how they would manage a classroom as an individual teacher.

Data Collection Tools and Process

The data were collected through open-ended questions, peers' observation notes and the instructor's observation notes on the microteaching practices. The open-ended questions were designed in the light of the relevant research and the instructor's observations and informal chats with the participants. The questions were prepared and a field expert was consulted to check their understandability and clarity. Prepared and answered in English, the questions were as follows:

1. What are your views regarding microteaching as a part of teacher training?
2. Do you think the microteaching practices are useful for you in developing your professional practice? Why/ Why not?
3. Do microteaching practices help the development of your self-efficacy? How?
4. What are the contributions of microteaching practices to your professional development?

As regards the peer observation notes, the researcher asked each peer observing the microteaching practices of his/her classmates to keep observation reports. Each participant prepared a report for each group practicing microteaching; that is, 15 observation notes. There was not a pre-prepared report guide; but the peers were asked to refer to the strengths and weaknesses of the performance highlighting the points in which the presenter needs to develop. These peer observation reports were thought to provide a source of feedback for the presenters through which they could evaluate their performances through the eyes of other pre-service teachers.

The instructor observation notes were the third source of data. During each microteaching practice, the instructor (who was also the researcher), took notes for each presenter. The instructor paid attention to such key aspects of teaching as the way the presenter conducted the lessons, approached the students and conveyed content knowledge. She also placed emphasis on the way the presenters reflected their initial professional identities encompassing their self-

efficacy and confidence. She focused on reflections of self-efficacy in terms of how the presenter managed problematic cases like management issues or unexpected questions.

These three data sets were adopted for data triangulation with an aim to ensure trustworthiness in data collection process. Each data source was thought to reflect the self-efficacy experiences of the participants in the microteaching practices from the considerations of the three parties (presenter, peer and instructor).

The data were collected in three main phases. In the first phase, the instructor/researcher took notes about individual microteaching practices. The instructor/researcher made comments on different aspects ranging from how the performers managed class and dealt with student misbehaviors to how they provided instruction and used language.

In the second phase, the peers were asked to reflect on the microteaching practices of their classmates soon after each presentation. The peers were asked to prepare the observation reports immediately so that their reflections on the performances could be fresh. In these reports, the peers were required to involve reflections on each member in the presenter group.

The third phase was conducted after all the participants completed their microteaching sessions. The open-ended questions formed the final data set so that all the participants experienced being active performers in microteaching. The participants answered the questions in the light of their microteaching experiences.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through content analysis (Haggarty, 1996). The analysis process was completed in two main steps to ensure trustworthiness in the analysis process. The data sets were first analyzed separately and then a cross analysis process was followed.

In the first step, the researcher conducted an individual analysis of each data set. The first individual analysis was conducted with the open-ended questions to understand the real experiences of the participants in microteaching practices. The common aspects (i.e. favoring microteaching, breaking prejudices, realizing strengths and weaknesses, applying theoretical knowledge, receiving feedback, etc.) experienced by the participants and how microteaching sessions affected their development of professional self-efficacy were examined. After the analysis of the open-ended questions, the data obtained from the instructor observation notes and peer observation notes were also analyzed individually in order to analyze how the reflections of self-efficacy during microteaching practices were evaluated by different members in the process.

In the second step, after the individual analysis of the data sets, a cross-analysis was conducted in order to reveal the similarities and differences in the reflections of performers (in open-ended questions), peers (in observation reports) and instructor (in observation notes). In other words, an analysis of the microteaching practices in terms of self-efficacy development was aimed through a comparison of different perspectives.

The in-set and cross-set analysis steps were followed in order to establish and follow unity in the analysis process. The adoption of these steps was thought to increase trustworthiness.

Results

The results obtained from the three data sets revealed that all the participants favored microteaching as an effective practice in teacher training. They appreciated the contributions of microteaching to their professional development as it helped them to experience the sense of being teachers and to shoulder the responsibility of conducting lessons. The chance to conduct lessons as an almost-real teacher was reported to increase their self-efficacy. Experiencing that they were able to plan and prepare lessons, stand on the stage in the teacher's role and control a classroom, most of the participants enjoyed the increasing sense of efficacy in their teaching capabilities as noted by a participant:

> *"I really enjoyed being the teacher in the class during this micro teaching. To be honest, before I started the practice, I was really nervous and though I would not be able to do it. But when the process started, I felt that I can be a good teacher because I loved teaching and communicating with students. So, I can say that my confidence in my teaching skills increased with the help of this microteaching."*

Another participant also shared a similar point stating that microteaching helped her break down her prejudices in managing a class. She explained that she had fear of standing in front of other people; therefore, she was afraid of teaching. Through the microteaching practice, she reported the change in the way she gained confidence in her abilities to teach. She noted that she now perceived herself as a prospective teacher who was capable of conducting classes:

> *"As to the contributions of microteaching, I can say that I now believe I can be a successful in teaching. Before the practice, I thought that I did not have the capabilities of being a good teacher but after acting for 15 minutes as a teacher who communicated with her students and guided them, I gained the confidence that I can do it."*

The realization of the strengths and weaknesses during microteaching practice was also viewed as a contribution to their professional self-efficacy. All the participants noted that they realized the difference between being a student and being a teacher when they stood in front of the classroom. Though sometimes being challenged, they were content that they were able to see the areas needing extra time and effort for development. Having such an experience, a participant commented as the following:

> *"This microteaching experience taught me that sitting in the classroom as a student is actually an easy thing. But when you are the teacher, you see the other side of the medal. You are expected to manage a number of things from controlling the class and teaching your content effectively. But, I am really happy that I was involved in this microteaching practice because I became aware of what I can and cannot do. So, I truly believe that before we graduate and become real teachers, these microteaching practices help us develop our professional self-efficacy."*

Microteaching sessions were also valued by the participants as they were able to apply the theoretical knowledge they obtained in the ELT department. The below reflection shows how a participant benefitted from the experience of putting theory into practice in the process of strengthening her sense of self-efficacy:

> *"We learn many things about language teaching in the department. And, before we become real teachers we can apply what we learn in our practices through microteaching. In these practices, I can use a classroom management technique or I can adopt a particular vocabulary teaching strategy. So, experiencing that what I have learned can be applied in practice effectively increases my professional self-efficacy."*

Receiving feedback from the instructor and peers was also influential in the development of self-efficacy for the participants. 38 of the participants referred to the feedback from different agents as a factor helping them become aware of the strong and weak aspects in their practices. The feedback was considered useful in helping them identify areas to develop in their future practices. Appreciating the availability of feedback from different agents, a participant offered the below comment:

> *"I know that the comments of my instructor and peers are not criticism but feedback. So, I try my best to benefit from their feedback for my professional development. The more different ideas I hear, the more different perspectives I can look through. So, I believe feedback on these practices really helps me evaluate myself more objectively. And, this objective evaluation increases my efficacy."*

Feedback was also regarded as a motive increasing professional self-efficacy by another participant. He expressed that the feedback he received from his instructor and peers offered him new outlooks and helped him evaluate himself more objectively:

> *"One of the advantageous aspects of microteaching practices is that you can get feedback about your performance from different people. This introduces a variety of perspectives through which you can evaluate your own practice. I believe this is a great chance because with the help of feedback, the*

degree of subjectivity decreases in my personal evaluations. I think this is important for professional development."

Another participant appreciating the role of feedback on their self-efficacy development valued instructor feedback as it introduced a more professional outlook. This participant commented that instructor feedback offered her the chance to become aware of the strong and weak areas in her practice. This realization was regarded as a major step to her professional development:

"We received feedback from our instructor and our peers after microteaching sessions. I think the feedback coming from the instructor is really helpful for us because she based her comments on her professional experience. I learned many things about the particular aspects of teaching and realized the areas needing further development. So, with the help of her professional support, I sensed the increase in my self-efficacy."

The act of standing in front of a group of students was also regarded as a factor helping the development of professional self-efficacy for the participants. Feeling high levels of anxiety before microteaching, a participant shared her experience that she performed much better than she planned during the practice. She explained that her performance increased her efficacy and she gained higher motivation and confidence in her capabilities as a teacher:

"Before starting the microteaching, I was highly nervous and I really felt anxious thinking that I would perform badly. But when the practice started, almost all my anxiety disappeared and I sensed the increase in my confidence in my capabilities to interact with the students and teach something to them. I can say that, with the help of microteaching practice, I realized the power in myself to be an effective teacher."

Another issue calling attention in the expressions of most of the participants was the sense of uneasiness they felt in using English as the medium of instruction. One of the participants reported that he felt anxious because he had hesitation in using the target language during his practice. As a prospective language teacher, this participant stated that he was challenged with the thought that he would not be able to teach the topic in English effectively. But within the flow of the practice and with the feedback from his instructor, the participant conducted the class more efficiently than he hoped and thought:

"As a prospective language teacher, I knew that I was expected to use English effectively in my practice. But I had hesitations thinking that I would make mistakes while using the language. However, during the practice, I had almost no problems with using English. I think this is because I was there as the teacher with authority and because I benefitted from the comments our instructor provided for us before the practices. All in all, I did not experience what I was afraid of in the microteaching session. Seeing that I can control and manage a class as a capable language teacher really increased my self-efficacy."

Referring to her confidence in using the target language, another participant also commented that she felt herself more comfortable during microteaching than during her talk to the instructor as a student. Considering this experience, this participant stated that being the teacher in the microteaching practice gave her the courage to use the language without hesitating:

"As a student, I generally feel some anxiety while talking with instructors in English. I am afraid of making grammar or pronunciation mistakes. Thus, before the microteaching, I thought I would experience difficulty in speaking English. But it did not happen at all. I felt really comfortable in front of the students. I think this was because I was the authority there and I was the one who knew more than the students in the subject I would teach. So, thanks to this microteaching experience, I saw that I can be a good language teacher who uses English effectively."

On the other hand, some participants having problems with their language performances during microteaching were negatively affected in terms of their self-efficacy. The mistakes in the language use done during microteaching practices became sources of de-motivation for some participants and decreased their self-efficacy. Making involuntary language mistakes during her practice, one participant maintained that he thought about his mistakes even a few days after the

microteaching. He added that he felt a natural decrease in his confidence and his abilities as a prospective language teacher:

> *"I plan to be an English teacher but I made such preventable mistakes during my microteaching that I now question my language abilities as a teacher-to-be. Even after a week, I regretted that I had done those mistakes. I know it is natural to make mistakes as a non-native speaker or even as a person. But, I still cannot help thinking of my performance. So, I can say this microteaching experience negatively influenced my efficacy beliefs."*

Classroom management was also among the issues affecting the participants' self-efficacy. Controlling a classroom full of students, establishing good relationships with them and teaching the lesson content were among the factors affecting the participants' self-efficacy in microteaching sessions. One of the participants explained that she was anxious before the practice thinking that she would be negatively affected by the management issues in her practice. She stated that the microteaching was an experience in which she understood how difficult it was to manage a whole classroom:

> *"In the department, we were thought that classroom management is one of the main components of effective teaching. So, I was really afraid of the management issue during my practice. And I realized I was right to be afraid of this issue because it was really challenging to control a classroom full of students while teaching something to them. Although I knew that they were actually my friends and they acted normally, I was still challenged by some of their behaviors. This microteaching experience taught me that knowing the course content well is not enough; you should control the whole class while teaching your content. But, I still believe that microteaching practices are helpful for us because we can become aware of the details of the profession, which is an issue we fail to realize as students. So, microteaching actually increased my self-efficacy because I now know that I am open for further development."*

However, not all the participants shared the same perspective. Demotivated by the classroom management problems during her practice, one of the participants noted that she lost her confidence in her capabilities of controlling a classroom. Referring to her microteaching experience, she maintained that she experienced low levels of efficacy because of the negativity of her practice.

> *"Of course, I know that microteaching offers us an environment where we can act as teachers; and I also know that this is not a real classroom but a simulated version of it. Yet, I encountered some management problems and could not deal with them so effectively as I planned. So, I was honestly demotivated and almost lost my confidence in my future-teacher identity. This experience led me to brood over how I would manage a real class in my future profession because I could not manage an artificial class now."*

The results also revealed that the feedback coming from the instructor and peers did not always yield positive outcomes for the participants after microteaching practices. Though limited in number, some of the participants referred to some demotivating effects of feedback. One of them explained that her self-efficacy in her capabilities as a prospective language teacher was challenged because of the feedback she received from the instructor and friends:

> *"I know that feedback we receive from peers and instructors are for our good. But, still I feel criticized when someone gives me feedback. Because I think that I planned everything appropriately and held my voice as a teacher. But hearing that I had drawbacks in presenting what I planned, I really become demotivated and tend to lose my confidence. To be honest, I can say that receiving feedback does not always contribute to my teacher identity as it decreases my self-efficacy."*

The peer observation notes and instructor observation notes were also in line with the comments provided by the participants in their answers. The points highlighted in the comments of the instructor and peers were mainly about the performer's language capacity and classroom management skills.

The analysis of the instructor notes showed a more professional outlook on the performances. She first directed attention to the way the presenters established classroom control to create a healthy

learning environment. The ways the presenters controlled the whole class, dealt with disruptive behaviors and approached students were all involved in the management criteria. The reflective notes revealed that though the microteaching sessions were not real classroom atmospheres with real student profiles, most of the participants were challenged by even the minor management problems. Therefore, the instructor noted that these prospective teachers' self-efficacy might be negatively affected by the problems they experienced in their practices. Besides encouraging the presenters, the instructor also gave them some practical hints they could follow in their future teaching events. Another point in the instructor's remarks was language use. She paid attention to the clarity and understandability of the language to the learner profile assigned to the presenter. She noted that some of the presenters were highly influenced by the mistakes they made while they were presenting their content. She observed that a few students even reflected their decreasing motivation because of their mistakes in their non-verbal behaviors. Thus, thinking that such negative experiences may result in a decrease in the efficacy beliefs of the future language teachers, the instructor tried to encourage the presenters stating that anxiety was a dynamic affecting their performances. She tried to hearten them stressing that they would perform better when they are in real classrooms as real teachers. The emphasis on the practical aspects can be considered as a reflection of the professional guide provided by the instructor.

As regards the peer observation notes, the emphasis was considered to be more on the emotional side of the performances. Like the instructor, the peers also referred to the language use and classroom management issues in the practices. However, the peers frequently underlined the possibility that the presenter might be negatively affected by the anxiety factor and; therefore, perform poorly. The emphasis on the emotional aspects can be considered as the reflection of the common experiences of peers feeling anxious during their practices observed by instructors and other classmates.

The overall evaluation of the results point at the following areas as the highlights in the findings reflecting the perspectives of the participants, peers and instructor:

- The contributions of microteaching to self-efficacy development: planning/preparing more effective classes, standing on the stage, managing classroom, dealing with emotions, breaking down prejudices, gaining self-confidence, applying theory into practice, receiving feedback, realizing strengths and weaknesses and developing a professional outlook
- The challenges through microteaching practices affecting self-efficacy development: making language-related mistakes, experiencing demotivation, having difficulty in classroom management and receiving feedback from peers/instructor.

Based on these common items, therefore, one can conclude that micro teaching practices mostly helped the development of the self-efficacy of pre-service EFL teachers as they experience the sense of being teachers practicing the profession before graduation. They prepared for and practiced the pre, while and post stages of teaching. In addition, they received feedback from their peers and instructor after the practices, offering them different perspectives to evaluate themselves. Seeing themselves on the stage as teachers and receiving feedback from the other members naturally helped the improvement of the self-efficacy of the participants. However, there were also some participants, though limited in number, who were negatively affected by the natural flow of the microteaching sessions and experienced low levels of self-efficacy.

Discussion and Conclusion

This qualitative case study examined the effects of microteaching experiences on the pre-service EFL teachers' professional self-efficacy. The results obtained through the participants' answers to the open-ended questions, instructor and peer observation notes in this study indicated that the pre-service EFL teachers appreciated the microteaching practice for the development of their professional self-efficacy, as also highlighted in the studies by Banerjee, et al. (2015), Cheng (2017) and Shanu (2016). Providing the participants with different chances for practicing and receiving feedback, microteaching practices were reported by the participants in this study to

contribute to the self-efficacy beliefs of the pre-service EFL teachers. In the light of these results, there are several points to be discussed.

The first point is related to the benefits of the teaching-learning atmosphere for microteaching. Even if it is not a real teaching situation but a simulated version (Akkuş & Üner, 2017; Banerjee, et al., 2015), microteaching practice helps pre-service teachers apply their theoretical knowledge in their practices. Therefore, through these simulated practices, they can test the efficiency and applicability of the theoretical knowledge besides evaluating their own capabilities to conduct classes based on theory. In this sense, this study echoes the results reported by Fernandez (2005) and Gürbüz (2015).

The second point of the discussion is about the opportunity the pre-service teachers reach to realize the strengths and weaknesses in their teaching performances. The participants favored the microteaching process explaining that they realized the aspects which needed development. This result is in line with those presented in Akkuş and Üner's (2017) study.

The third point has to do with the feedback provided by different members involved in the microteaching sessions. The participants mostly valued the feedback from their instructor and peers as they were presented a different outlook to evaluate their performances. The feedback from different members can be considered as the introduction of a different and more objective stance helping the participants critically analyze their practices. The contributions of the feedback component in microteaching sessions were also valued in previous research (Kılıç, 2010; Retelj & Puljić, 2016).

Considering all these major components and processes involved in microteaching, one can conclude that the practice provides pre-service language teachers with the opportunity to position themselves as teachers in simulated teaching-learning atmospheres and evaluate their existing knowledge and capabilities while identifying potential areas for development. Seeing themselves in the teacher's position helps prospective teachers feel the responsibility and understand the peculiar aspects of the profession. Through microteaching sessions, they can evaluate and identity their professional outlook not just as students but as practicing teachers. Therefore, the chance to become the leader of the class is thought to strengthen the professional self-efficacy of the pre-service teachers.

The feedback component also serves as an essential contributor to the development of the sense of professional self-efficacy because it presents different perspectives to pre-service teachers. Being undergraduate students, pre-service teachers may have difficulty in making objective evaluations of their performances. But feedback from the peers and instructor offers them objective criteria to follow and a professional glance to evaluate the performances. However, feedback was also considered as a negative component in microteaching practices by some participants in this study. Those participants explained that receiving feedback was a factor decreasing their motivation as also reported as a challenge by Courneya, Prat and Collins (2008). The case of possible demotivation may be because those participants felt being criticized while receiving feedback. Therefore, instead of considering feedback as a source of evaluation and development, they might have experienced low levels of motivation.

In conclusion, microteaching can be regarded as an effective practice in pre-service teacher education as it offers an atmosphere of gaining experience (Göçer, 2015), promoting self-reflection (Kavanoz & Yüksel, 2010), professional development (Elghotmy, 2012; He & Yan, 2011; Savaş, 2012) and the development of teaching practice (Al-Humaidi & Abu-Rahman, 2015; Coşkun, 2016; Ping, 2013). Therefore, the combination of all these factors inevitably enhances the sense of professional self-efficacy of pre-service EFL teachers. Through the microteaching, prospective teachers who are capable of questioning and evaluating their own performances and who can identify their strengths and weaknesses are expected to develop the sense of self-efficacy regarding their professional identities.

In the light of these results, it can be suggested that microteaching should be an integral part of teacher education. That is why, the following points should be kept in mind while adopting this practice in teacher training:

- Since microteaching provides teaching practice opportunities for pre-service teachers, instructors should be careful to maintain encouraging atmospheres. Otherwise, the initial experiences of the pre-service teachers may become discouraging for their future practices.
- As feedback is an essential component in microteaching practices, instructors should show examples of constructive feedback so that peers can present not destructive but constructive feedback content to presenters.
- In order to create relaxing and encouraging atmospheres, instructors should pay attention to the manner they present their feedback on practices. They should consider that the negative content and attitudes would damage the self-efficacy of not only the presenter but also other peers, adversely affecting their professional self-efficacy.

This study examined the effects of microteaching on pre-service EFL teachers' professional self-efficacy. In order to reach deeper analysis of the effects of microteaching practices on the development of professional self-efficacy, future research can be conducted with higher numbers of pre-service teachers studying at different universities. As this study showed the positive contributions of micro-teaching practices on the self-efficacy development of pre-service teachers, the long-term effects of this practice can be evaluated with longitudinal studies. As this study adopted qualitative research design, future research is suggested to combine both qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to reach generalizable results besides picturing the existing case.

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