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PROFESSIONAL LEARNING IN THE ELT PRACTICUM: CO-CONSTRUCTING VISIONS*

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ABSTRACT

This article reports the results of a teacher educator self-study exploring the dynamics of professional learning and mentoring among university practicum supervisors, cooperating teachers, and prospective English teachers from four different settings in Turkey. Bringing together five teacher educators with 12+ years of supervision experience, this study focused on the improvement of the quality in practicum in English Language Teaching (ELT) teacher education programs in different cities. Integrating the perspectives of cooperating teachers and student teachers, we found that there is a need for co-constructing visions for professional learning early on in practicum among teacher educators and cooperating teachers. Our one-and-a-half year-long collaborative inquiry revealed three themes related to the practicum: the need for improving communication patterns among teacher educators and cooperating teachers; clarifying roles and visions for professional development of student teachers; and the need for all practicum stakeholders to develop stronger professional enthusiasm and ownership of ELT based on their professional identities.

Keywords: Pre-service teacher education, ELT, practicum, teacher educators, professional learning, self-study

İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ ÖĞRETMENLİK UYGULAMASINDA ÖĞRENME SÜREÇLERİ: BİRLİKTE GELİŞTİRİLEN YAKLAŞIMLAR

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, öğretmenlik uygulamasında görev alan öğretim elemanlarının, öğretmenlik uygulaması okullarında görev yapan danışman öğretmenlerin ve öğretmen adaylarının mesleki öğrenme ve danışma etkileşimlerinin bireysel bakış açısı aracılığıyla değerlendirilmesini amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla, 12 yıldan fazla danışmanlık deneyimi olan ve farklı şehirlerde İngilizce öğretmeni yetiştirme programlarında görev yapan öğretmen yetiştiriciler, öğretmenlik uygulaması dersinin iyileştirmesini amaçlayarak bir araya gelmiş ve deneyimlerini yansıtmıştır. Daha sonra öğretmenlik uygulaması sürecinde danışman öğretmen olarak görev yapan hizmet içi öğretmenlerin ve öğretmen adaylarının görüşleri de alınmıştır. Bunların sonucunda, öğretim elemanları ile okullardaki danışman öğretmenlerin, öğretmenlik uygulamasının planlanması aşamasından itibaren "birlikte geliştirilen yaklaşımlar" oluşturmasının gerekliliği ortaya çıkmıştır. Bir buçuk yıl süren ortak çalışmaya dayalı olan bu araştırmada, öğretmenlik uygulamasına yönelik olarak üç tema öne çıkmıştır. Bu temalar, öğretim elemanları ile danışman öğretmenler arasındaki iletişim kalıplarının geliştirilmesi, öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik uygulaması sürecindeki rollerinin ve yaklaşımlarının belirginleştirilmesi ve tüm öğretmenlik uygulaması paydaşlarının İngilizce öğretmeye dayalı mesleki kimliklerine ilişkin güçlü profesyonel istek ve sahiplenme duygularını geliştirmelerinin gerekliliği olarak gruplanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hizmet öncesi öğretmen eğitimi, İngilizce öğretmenliği, öğretmenlik uygulaması, öğretmen yetiştiriciler, mesleki öğrenme, bireysel çalışma

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1. INTRODUCTION

In language teacher education programs, the practicum component is a core and essential element that facilitates the professional learning of prospective teachers. The organization of the practicum in teacher education programs may bring challenges to teacher educators since the practicum context differs from other program courses in the sense that it is enacted by multiple stakeholders at different venues. It involves cooperation between parties that do not necessarily share the same academic background, teaching philosophy, and teaching styles. In this regard, teacher educators often find themselves having to establish rapport among all stakeholders in the process, including the cooperating teachers and the student teachers.

In order to assure the smooth flow of the practicum, the practicum supervisors need to make sure both groups know and fulfill their responsibilities to each other while establishing strong relationships with the student teachers who trust them in being a role model and the cooperating teachers with whom they would like to have continuous professional conduct. Maintaining harmony between the cooperating teachers and the student teachers may become one of the main concerns for the practicum supervisors during mentor-mentee matchups and even in the choice of cooperating school.

In the last couple of decades, approaches to supervision in teacher education involved a shift in the supervisor's role from that of an authority figure and educational expert to a more collaborative and reflective guide where the supervisor encourages critical reflection and on-going self-evaluation of teaching practices (Bailey, 2006; Wallace, 1991). Assuming the role of the collaborative and reflective supervisors, we identified a common need in exploring our practicum contexts. Emerging from the tradition of self-study of practice in qualitative research (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009), this multi-site study, we inquired about ways in which the relationship among the stakeholders of practicum could be better understood and enhanced in a way that would make the process effective and educative for all stakeholders.

As part of this project, five teacher educators from four different contexts in Turkey conducted a collaborative research study in order to understand the dynamics of the interactions among the stakeholders of the practicum (i.e., cooperating teachers, practicum supervisors, and student teachers) to enhance the quality of interactions by exploring the practicum processes in four different ELT teacher education programs. By coming together and working collaboratively as English language teacher educators, we aimed to deepen our understanding of each other's unique contextual concerns and to co-construct visions for professional learning in ELT.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the current literature on teacher education, practicum has been defined by a number of studies as a reciprocal relationship between a less-experienced individual and a more-experienced individual who share a consistent, regular career context to learn and grow professionally (Haggard, Dougherty, Turban, & Wilbanks, 2011). As this definition suggests, through these interactions every stakeholder is involved in professional learning and developing processes throughout the practicum process. Although studies discuss the cooperating teachers' role as mentors (e.g., Koç, 2012; Russell & Russell, 2011) and focus on the mentoring relationships between the dyad members of the practicum, the role that teacher educators as university supervisors play in the process and the need for support and collaboration are considered as two important constructs that require attention (Burns, Jacobs, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2016).

2. 1. Studies on the practicum relationship among the stakeholders

Studies that focus on the relationship between cooperating teachers and student teachers have investigated the nature of feedback and type of advice provided by the cooperating teachers, and the difference these make in the practicum experience of the student teachers (McGraw & Davis, 2017; Smith & Lewis, 2015). The cooperating teachers in McGraw and Davis's (2017) study in the Australian context used inquiry-oriented mentoring when the feedback processes were interactive and constructive in a school setting. In inquiry-oriented professional learning communities (PLCs), professionals meet regularly to examine and learn from their own practice by means of structured dialogue and action research by determining an issue and systematically collecting and analyzing data to gain insights into that phenomenon, improve teaching practice based on the results, and share these with other professionals and trainees in professional development encounters (Dana & Yendol-Hoppey, 2008; Yendol-Hoppey, Dana, & Delane, 2009). Inquiry-oriented mentoring is defined as an "appropriate tool for developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of mentors who work with prospective teachers within the professional development school" (Yendol-Hoppey, Dana, & Delane, 2009, p. 6). McGraw and Davis (2017) report that mentors who work in school contexts where inquiry-oriented feedback is encouraged are more knowledgeable and resourceful than those from instruction-oriented contexts and that they provide better guidance for mentees.

Similarly, Smith and Lewis (2015) suggest that facilitative, rather than directive, feedback leads to catalytic interventions that enhance student teachers' self-reflection and autonomous learning processes. Focusing on the effective aspects of the practicum partnerships, some studies highlight the importance of understanding the roles and expectations of both the student teachers and the cooperating teachers in this process (Russell & Russell, 2011), and some report frustration on both sides when their respective expectations are not met (e.g., Izadinia, 2015) during the cooperation period.

On the other hand, the professional learning processes of the teacher educators and the need for developing a professional community for supervisors based on collaborative norms with an emic perspective of the teacher educators' experiences is an important aspect of practicum (Levine, 2011). Thus, to help the teacher educators improve the practices needed for practicum supervision, and based on the felt-need for providing a support network throughout the process, the teacher educators of the present study aimed to identify and inquire into the improvement of the quality in practicum in EFL teacher education programs by focusing on their practicum involvements and share their experiences.

2. 2. Teacher educator self-study

Studies that take the practicum supervisors as their focus have examined the communication approaches of practicum supervisors (e.g., Strieker et al., 2017); the student teachers' expectations of the practicum supervisors (e.g., Yuan & Hu, 2017); and the pedagogical effectiveness of the practicum supervisors and its effect on the student teachers' practicum experience (e.g., Bullock, 2012). Strieker et al. (2017), for example, report that the collaborative and nondirective communication approaches of the practicum supervisors enhance the self-directed and self-regulated professional learning of the student teachers. Parallel to these findings, Yuan and Hu's (2017) results indicate that according to student teachers and in-service teachers, the qualities of effective EFL teacher educators include knowledge of the field, professional development efforts, and social/interpersonal awareness. A self-study focusing on a practicum supervisor's developing pedagogy as a supervisor of practicum, Bullock's (2012) project highlights the importance of studying one's own assumptions about how student teachers (should) learn and the impact of the quality of their relationships with the student teachers has on achieving their principles of practice.

3. METHODOLOGY

3. 1. The need for research

As observed in the tradition of collaborative teacher inquiry, teacher educators have also increasingly generated collaborative research projects that can help improve the effectiveness of teacher education programs, especially the practicum components (Butler & Schnellert, 2012). As English language teacher educators, we have been participating in annual meetings of English Language Teacher Education and Research (ELTER) which is a teacher education research colloquium in Turkey. During a research group discussion in the ELTER 2016, the researchers discovered that each of us would benefit from not only conducting self-study research on our own work but also comparing practices from each practicum context. In this one-and-a-half-year long self-study project, we aimed to identify and inquire into the professional development issues that emerged during preservice teacher supervision work with cooperating teachers.

3. 2. Research design

This study was designed as a self-study of practice within the qualitative paradigm (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). With connections to several genres of research on teachers, teaching, and professional development (e.g., action research, lesson study, and teacher research), language teacher educators' self-studies could contribute to the development of professional learning practices in teacher education contexts (Kitchen, 2009; Lassonde, Galman, & Kosnik, 2009).

All research processes took place within our ongoing supervision work in 2016 and 2017. During this time, we conducted self-studies in our EFL teacher education programs in four different settings. The collaborative inquiry process allowed us to explore and discuss common concerns related to the professional development of student teachers in each practicum context. For this purpose, we focused on the following research questions: (1) What elements do the cooperating teachers and practicum supervisors attach importance to with regard to professional development and roles in the practicum? (2) What characterizes the collaborative interactions between the cooperating teachers and the practicum supervisors?

3.3. Four practicum contexts

The participating institutions for this inquiry were teacher education programs housed in the Faculties of Education of four universities in Turkey and Northern Cyprus. Pseudonyms were used to identify each institution. The number of undergraduate students enrolled in each program ranged, approximately, between 200 and 500. In these undergraduate ELT programs, student teachers were provided with a foundation in theoretical and applied areas through courses in education, English linguistics and literature, teaching of grammar and the four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening), first and second language acquisition, teaching English to young learners, materials development, syllabus design, language testing, and foreign language teaching methodology to prepare them to teach English at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

In their senior year, student teachers complete their teaching practice requirements by attending cooperating schools for a total of 126 hours throughout a 28-week period, covering two school semesters. The practicum sites are public and private K-12 schools in the city where the universities are located. At these cooperating schools, student teachers are matched with mentor teachers whom they observe and assist. They also teach classes on their own to receive feedback and evaluation from their cooperating teachers. The supervisors establish initial connection and make practicum arrangements with cooperating schools. They also hold regular weekly seminars on the university campuses during which they discuss pedagogical challenges student teachers may face during the practicum. Table 1 presents the four research settings and participants.

Table 1.
Research Contexts

	Cooperating schools	Cooperating teachers	Student teachers
Northern University	1	2	10
Western University	3	3	15
Eastern University	1	2	12
Southern University	3	9	9
Total	8	16	46

3.4. Procedures

After coming together as a collaborative research group and generating research questions, each of us introduced the aim and scope of this inquiry to student teachers and cooperating teachers in different contexts. Since all research processes were framed as part of ongoing practicum work, student teachers and cooperating teachers demonstrated willingness to express their views and contribute to the improvement of practicum processes.

We collected data for the study during 2016 and 2017 as part of the practicum courses. Our database consists of (a) field notes of university supervisors during their classroom observations of student teachers, (b) reflections of university supervisors on in-class group discussions with student teachers, (c) interviews with cooperating teachers during the course of the practicum, (d) written teaching evaluation sheets completed by cooperating teachers and university supervisors, and (e) the collection of documents such as student portfolio artefacts, self-evaluation reports, and reflective journals.

3.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis involved a qualitative analysis of all datasets gathered from the practicum contexts to uncover the perspectives, expectations, and reflections of the stakeholders on the practicum experience. We utilized descriptive coding of data and interpreted the emerging categories during multiple collaborative team meetings (Saldaña, 2013). The confirmation of analytical processes continued on multiple online group discussions to ensure confirmability and credibility (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The content analysis of data revealed three main themes that represent the common areas of importance in our ELT practicum contexts: (1) communication patterns in the practicum, (2) professional development, and (3) professional identities.

4. FINDINGS

First, in each context, in varying forms, the need for enhancing communication patterns in the practicum emerged as a key theme. In particular, with reference to all stakeholders in the practicum, the continuity of the communication in practicum processes was emphasized. In addition, in all contexts, we found that the need for commitment to engage in ongoing communication and being open to criticism were noted as crucial. With regard to professional development, key areas of emphasis in the contexts of the participants conveyed different visions and processes of learning. Other areas of emphasis in our practicum contexts were the construction of

professional identities which involved stakeholder perceptions of becoming a teacher, a mentor, and a supervisor. Figure 1 presents these themes and their linkages.



Figure 1. A relational map of themes

4. 1. Communication Patterns in the Practicum

As language teacher educators, we value reflective practice engagement as a core component of the practicum experience for all stakeholders. In our collaborative inquiry, initially, we reflected on our interaction patterns with the mentor teachers with the goal of deepening our understanding of ways (e.g., Santoli & Martin, 2012) in which we could improve professional learning processes of teacher candidates. Throughout the collaborative teacher research endeavor, we regularly reflected on our ongoing language teacher supervision processes. This inquiry allowed for a thorough exploration of the nature of interactions with mentor teachers and the ways in which we could improve supervision. During the supervision of preservice English language teachers in the cooperating schools, several common communication-related challenges emerged.

4. 1. 1. The need for regular communication between stakeholders

A key theme that emerged in the reflections of teacher educators, as a result, was the criticality of the frequency of meetings. The cooperating teachers and supervisors underscored how through regular ongoing conversations, we were able to promptly address emergent needs among student teachers and seek improvements in the ways we provided feedback. In their focus group interview, two cooperating teachers pointed out their expectations from the supervisor in the following way. First Aysel comments:

All student teachers have their personal characteristics and a background at the university. As their supervisors, you know them, but we do not. We feel that if we get to know them more, we will be able to help them more. (Aysel)

And the other teacher, Feyza, adds:

So, it is important that we are in close contact and dialogue with you [the supervisor]. It is important that we establish a dialogue with you; you are from Southern University. We care about what you will say and your perspective [in approaching the student teachers]. (Feyza)

Biweekly site visits by the supervisor also enhanced the social relationship and academic exchanges. This, in turn, facilitated the collaboration between the cooperating school and the university, as the Northern University Supervisor (Nus) suggests:

Although practicum supervision is considered as additional to on-campus courses that we offer, it requires meticulous planning and allocation of time. Being in constant contact with the cooperating teachers in addition to the school administration creates the necessary professional context for an effective practicum experience. (Nus)

4. 1. 2. The need for open communication between stakeholders

Another key theme that relates to the quality of supervision of the practicum process was the emphasis placed on the nature of the interaction between the supervisor, student teachers, and the cooperating teachers. The

interaction between the supervisor and the cooperating teachers while communicating with the student teachers could be characterized as constructive, guiding, nurturing and supportive (O'Brian, Stoner, Appel, & House, 2007). Similarly, the supervisors and cooperating teachers need to have a dialogical, respectful and ongoing communication focused on the wellbeing and development of the student teachers. Given the varying needs, goals and personal characteristics of each preservice teacher, the dialogue between the practicum supervisor and the cooperating teacher has to take into consideration the situational and contextual differences that influence the developmental processes in practicum. In one of the focus interviews upon hearing the supervisor's concern on the fact that cooperating teachers spend a lot of time by talking to student teachers and the supervisor only during their breaks, one cooperating teacher noted that they were ready to devote this time for the good of student teachers and their particular needs. She said:

Actually, we can meet regularly but also involving the student teacher into this dialog will be better. Maybe it should be compulsory for them for every two weeks—40 minutes. That way we can talk about student teachers' particular teaching needs. And also, they can see our [the supervisor's and mentor teacher's] interaction [on particular issues]. (Aysel)

Another cooperating teacher from another school in the same district commented on the nature of collaboration among supervisors and cooperating teachers and how important it is for the student teachers to witness this collaboration:

When I was a student teacher, I observed teachers in their collaboration and in interaction with each other. And in time I found myself doing what they were doing. This learning is fundamental, and also this transformation is important. Maybe you should conduct longitudinal research on this. (Sezgi)

Hence, it became clear that dialogical interactions were crucial in the conduct of practicum supervision.

4. 1. 3. The need for commitment to engage in reflective interactions

A common area of importance highlighted in all four practicum contexts was the need for cooperating teachers and practicum supervisors to commit to engaging in reflective interactions throughout the practicum period. Despite the challenges linked to heavy workloads, cooperating teachers expressed an interest in deepening the reflective conversations. The cooperating teachers emphasized how they appreciated the close connection with the supervisor while overseeing the work of student teachers. Even though cooperating teachers were always very busy, they were glad to have practicum supervisors to have ongoing conversations and reflections on the progress of teacher candidates. A cooperating teacher described what happens when cooperating teachers meet with and talk to practicum supervisors as follows:

Whenever we [referring to other cooperating teachers at the school] have the opportunity to see you in our school in person, we have the chance to find answers to our questions [on practicum applications, mentoring practices, how to fill out evaluation forms]. Due to the workload in the school, sometimes it would be difficult to consider the probable solutions to the problems [faced during the practicum. (Ayşe)

Such interaction patterns require the commitment of supervisors and teachers to regularly do site visits and allocate time for reflective conversations on the practicum processes. The need for such reflective conversations is widely discussed in the literature. For example, in one study (Akcan & Tatar, 2010) exploring the nature of feedback given to teacher candidates, the practicum supervisor regularly visited the school, and during one such visit, she asked the teacher candidate:

Supervisor: Why did you write the questions on the board rather than just asking the learners to complete a story?

Teacher Candidate: I asked the students to write a paragraph. First, I gave them the questions. If I did not do this, they would be confused. In order to prevent confusion, I gave them the questions. It is a classroom management tactic.

Supervisor: So, this strategy worked well for you.

Teacher Candidate: Yeah, actually Mrs. Sarı (the cooperating teacher) was using this a lot in the class.

Asking a 'Why' question, the supervisor encouraged the teacher candidate to reflect on her teaching and increase the candidate's awareness of her own teaching.

For reflective interactions to emerge, regular contact and discussions on pedagogical practices are needed. Interactions like this are common during school visits by supervisors. Regular on-site conversations allow for focus on both micro (in-class pedagogy) and macro (issues involving the school system) contextual issues.

4. 2. Professional development in practicum

Another theme that characterized our collaborative interactions was the efforts towards reaching an agreement with regard to the need for co-constructing visions for professional development in the student teaching field experience. This also included our ongoing comparisons of visions for language teacher identity.

As we explored each context, we compared how visions for professional development were uniquely constructed by cooperating teachers, student teachers, and ourselves. For instance, initially, as teacher educators, each of us described our approaches to supervision and the influences that shape our supervision choices. This initial comparison did not reveal any significant divergences. Among the sources of influence mentioned were: clinical, collaborative, developmental, and reflective frameworks for supervision (Gebhard, 2009; Pajak, 2003). It was through this process of co-inquiring that we were able to rethink our supervision work as we reflected on our work with mentor teachers. Thus, the practicum functions as a venue for supporting the professional development of cooperating teachers and teacher educators as well. Through the process of working with student teachers, cooperating teachers also construct new pedagogical content knowledge. During each school visit, the supervisors also reflect on their own pedagogical knowledge. In sum, all stakeholders in the practicum contexts dynamically navigate the professional learning opportunities emerging in their practicum communities.

4. 3. Professional identities in the practicum

The cooperating teachers and the practicum supervisors also reflected on their perceived roles in the practicum experience, which were determined by the professional learning needs of the student teachers. Considering the mentoring behaviors and the professional learning instances during the mentoring practices, each stakeholders' role in the practicum emerged as important constructs to be examined (Ragins, 2012).

4. 3. 1. The need for understanding the roles of a mentor

The primary role enacted by cooperating teachers was related to being a pedagogical mentor. In all contexts, cooperating teachers found mentoring as a demanding but rewarding relationship. For Ayşe, one of the cooperating teachers, this involved a vision for ongoing development and feedback. She stated:

After completing the practicum, student teachers will find their own ways of teaching English in their own classes... As a mentor, I try to show them the right way, guide them by making recommendations on the problems that I observe in their teaching practices, implementations of the lesson plans prepared by them. (Ayşe)

For the cooperating teachers, overseeing the work of student teachers adds additional roles. In the interviews, the cooperating teachers often discussed the constraints at their school settings related to hosting multiple student teachers as part of the practicum. Requirements of the National Ministry of Education also lead cooperating teachers to process several forms for the assessment of English teacher candidates. These include formative teaching evaluations, tracking teacher candidates' attendance, and a summative evaluation uploaded to the Ministry of Education's preservice teacher evaluation system online. Navigating these roles and responsibilities, cooperating teachers often reported difficulties in completing each task. One cooperating teacher stated:

There are too many student teachers in the classroom, and I have a lot of paperwork to complete. I can hardly find time to observe all of them thoroughly. (Seda)

It is noteworthy that the cooperating teachers' concerns are often about extrinsic factors like having student teachers in the classrooms and their reflections on their role in establishing a rapport among the student teachers and the students. This could be due to the cooperating teachers' inexperience as mentors, not being aware of their role as a mentor, not receiving mentoring training, and not being aware of the mentoring tasks required during the practicum (Gareis & Grant, 2014).

4. 3. 2. The need for understanding the roles of a supervisor

Another area of emphasis related to professional identities was the various roles assumed by the supervisors during the practicum. In an attempt to cater to multiple needs that arose for each context, such as university-based classroom tasks and assignments; requests from cooperating teachers and school districts; and inquiries of student teachers related to their pedagogical content knowledge construction, we perform a plethora of functions in the supervision process.

In this regard, one of the practicum supervisors noted how she discovered the different roles she performs. This practicum supervisor from Northern University stated:

Throughout the semester I realized that I am not just a supervisor, monitoring and evaluating the process, but I am also a mentor. Additionally, just as student teachers need guidance, it is necessary to remind the cooperating teachers of their responsibilities as well. (Nur)

As practicum supervisors, we were concerned about establishing an environment in which the student teachers reflected on their teaching and effectively worked with the cooperating teachers. During the post-observation feedback sessions between the supervisors and student teachers, it was evident that creating an interactive and dialogic environment was crucial.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this long-term, collaborative teacher educator self-study, we arrived to the conclusion that the practicum has the potential to provide a multi-directional, productive, professional learning environment for all stakeholders (Betteney, Barnard, & Lambirth, 2018; Heggen, Raaen, & Thorsen, 2018). In order for this learning to take place, committing to ongoing, constructive and open dialogue among all parties is essential. This multi-directional, reciprocal professional learning process is dynamic, rather than static. Our study also revealed the importance of careful mentor selection, preparation and support as the experience and attitude of the cooperating teachers determine the effective conduct of the practicum process (Betteney et al., 2018; Gareis & Grant, 2014; Haggard et al., 2011; Koç, 2012). Despite heavy workload and high number of teaching hours which make it a burden for mentors to engage in sustainable professional development endeavors, continuous and inquiry-based professional learning opportunities would benefit both mentors and student teachers in practicum.

Post-method pedagogies should be sensitive to the 'local, individual, institutional, social and cultural context' in which classrooms operate (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p. 544). Therefore, further studies can be conducted which investigate the reflection of the personal teaching styles and cultural beliefs of student teachers in their contexts. Additionally, subsequent research could examine how certain ways of collaborative inquiry are associated with observable in-class teaching practices of the cooperating and student teachers in addition to the impact on supervisory practices of the teacher educators. Recognition of the socially and culturally situated nature of teaching will increase understanding towards the diverse nature of language teaching/learning processes.

Teacher education programs could play a significant role in supporting the role of cooperating teachers as teacher educators who are more aware of reflective teaching practices. Reflecting together with a cooperating teacher as a mentor will encourage the student teachers to examine their teaching practices. As Orland-Barak (2001) pointed out, mentor teachers need to be informed carefully about how to communicate with student teachers more interactively. Thus, regular meetings in constructing tripartite dialogue among the stakeholders (e.g., Mtika, Robson, & Fitzpatrick, 2014) and opportunities for providing official mentoring training (e.g., Sayeski & Paulsen, 2012) for the stakeholders specifically for practicum applications could be organized.

5. 1. Limitations of the study

While we benefited from the multiplicity of contextual perspectives brought from each of our settings in this study, each researcher could not visit each context and exchange experiences related to the supervision of practicum. Data sources were gathered during collaborative group meetings. Further research on building a professional community for supervisors can incorporate site visits by each researcher.

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GENİŞ ÖZET

1. Giriş

Bu çalışma, İngilizce öğretmenliği programlarında Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinde görev alan öğretim elemanlarının, öğretmenlik uygulaması okullarında görev yapan danışman öğretmenlerin ve öğretmen adaylarının mesleki öğrenme ve danışma etkileşimlerinin öğretim elemanlarının bireysel bakış açısı aracılığıyla değerlendirilmesini amaçlamaktadır.

Öğretmen eğitim programlarında yer alan Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinin organizasyonu, sürecin danışmanlığını yürüten öğretim elemanlarına süreçteki diğer iki paydaşla - danışman öğretmenler ve öğretmen adayları - ilgili olarak zorlu deneyimler yaşatabilir. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinin sorunsuz bir şekilde akışını sağlamak için, öğretim elemanlarının bu süreçteki paydaşların birbirleriyle olan sorumluluklarını bilmelerini ve yerine getirmeleri için gerekli ortamı sağlaması, rol model olmaları için kendilerine güvenen öğretmen adaylarıyla güçlü ilişkiler kurmaları gerekmektedir. Danışman öğretmenlerle mesleki dayanışma içinde olarak öğretmen adayları ve danışman öğretmenler arasındaki uyumu sürdürmek, danışman geri bildirimlerinin sağlanması ve hatta işbirliği yapan okulun seçimi, öğretim elemanlarının Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinin düzenlenmesinde temel kaygılardan bazıları olarak sıralanabilir.

Öğretim elemanlarının bireysel çalışmalarının değerlendirildiği bu çok alanlı çalışmada, Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinin paydaşları arasındaki ilişkinin, süreci tüm paydaşlar için etkili ve eğitici hale getirecek şekilde daha iyi anlayıp geliştirilebileceği olasılıklar sorgulanmıştır. Bu projenin bir parçası olarak, Türkiye'de dört farklı bağlamdan beş öğretim elemanı, Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinin paydaşları (okullardaki danışman öğretmenler, öğretmen adayları ve öğretim elemanları) arasındaki etkileşimlerin dinamiklerini geliştirmek için işbirlikli bir araştırma çalışması yürütmüştür. Bu nedenle dört farklı İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğretmen eğitimi programında görev yapan öğretim elemanları, öğretmenlik uygulaması süreçlerini inceleyerek etkileşim kalitesinin artırılması amacıyla bir araya gelerek ve işbirliği yaparak, mevcut öğretmen yetiştirme programlarında bulunan özgün bağlamsal kaygıları anlamayı ve mesleki öğrenim için tüm paydaşların etkileşimlerini inceleyerek derinlemesine bir bakış açısı geliştirmeyi hedeflemiştir.

2. Yöntem

İlgili alanyazında belirtildiği gibi, öğretim elemanları, öğretmen eğitimi programlarının, özellikle de uygulamaya yönelik bileşenlerin etkinliğini geliştirmeye yardımcı olabilecek işbirlikli araştırma projelerine önem verdiklerinde, öğretmen eğitimi programlarının etkililiğini de arttırmıştır (Butler ve Schnellert, 2012). İngilizce öğretmeni yetiştiricileri olarak, Türkiye'de öğretmen eğitimi araştırma platformu olan İngilizce Öğretmenliği ve Araştırma (ELTER) oluşumunun katılımcıları olan öğretim elemanlarından oluşan araştırmacı grubu, yıllık olarak düzenlenen toplantılara aktif olarak her sene katılmaktadır. Araştırmada görev alan öğretim elemanları, ELTER 2016'daki bir araştırma grubu tartışmasında, her bir öğretim elemanının öğretmenlik uygulamasında görevli olduğunu ve kendi çalışmaları ile ilgili sadece bireysel araştırma yapmakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda öğretmenlik uygulamasının her bir uygulama bağlamındaki paydaşların etkileşimlerinin karşılaştırmasından da faydalanılacağını keşfetmişlerdir. Öğretim elemanları, bir buçuk yıllık bireysel olarak yürütülen araştırma projesinde, danışman öğretmenler ve öğretmen adaylarının katılımıyla ortaya çıkan mesleki gelişim konularını belirleyip bu araştırmayı planlamışlardır.

Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemlerini kullanan doğal bir araştırma tasarımı uygulanmıştır. Öğretmenler, öğretim ve mesleki gelişim ile ilgili çeşitli araştırma türleriyle (örneğin, eylem araştırması, ders içi araştırmalar ve öğretmen araştırması) bağlantı kurarak, dil öğretmeni eğitimcilerinin bireysel çalışmalarının da öğretmen eğitimi bağlamında mesleki öğrenme uygulamalarının geliştirilmesine katkıda bulunabileceği ileri sürülmüştür. (Kitchen, 2009; Lassonde, Galman ve Kosnik, 2009; Pinnegar ve Hamilton, 2009).

Bu araştırmanın tüm süreçleri 2016 ve 2017 akademik yıllarında devam eden öğretmenlik uygulaması sürecinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Bu süre zarfında öğretim elemanları öğretmenlik uygulaması danışmanları olarak dört farklı İngilizce öğretmenliği öğretmen eğitimi programlarında bireysel çalışmalarını yürütmüşlerdir. Bu araştırma deseni, işbirlikli sorgulama sürecinde, her bir öğretmenlik uygulaması bağlamında öğretmen adaylarının mesleki gelişimi ile ilgili ortak endişelerin araştırılmasına ve tartışılarak ele alınmasına olanak sağlamıştır. Bu amaçla, aşağıdaki araştırma sorularına odaklanılmıştır: (1) Öğretmenlik uygulamasında etkileşimde bulunan danışman öğretmenler ve öğretim elemanları için mesleki gelişim ve öğrenme sürecindeki rolleri açısından önem taşıyan unsurlar nelerdir? (2) Öğretmenlik uygulamasında işbirliği yapan danışman öğretmenler ve öğretim elemanları arasındaki işbirlikli etkileşimler nasıl tanımlanabilir?

Bu araştırmaya katılan kurumlar, Türkiye ve Kuzey Kıbrıs'taki dört üniversitenin eğitim fakültelerinde yer alan İngilizce öğretmenliği programlarıydı. Her bir programa kayıtlı lisans öğrencilerinin sayısı, yaklaşık 200 ile 500 arasındadır. Bahsi geçen lisans programlarında, İngilizce dilbilim, İngiliz dili ve edebiyatı, dilbilgisi ve dört becerinin öğretimi, birinci ve ikinci dil edinimi, çocuklara yabancı dil öğretimi, materyal geliştirme, eğitim programı tasarımı, dil sınavı hazırlama ve yabancı dil öğretim metodolojisi gibi alan derslerine yer verilmektedir.

İngilizce Öğretmenliği lisans programlarında öğretmen adayları son sınıfa geldiğinde, iki akademik dönemi kapsayan 28 haftalık bir süre boyunca toplam 126 saat işbirliği yapan okullara giderek öğretmenlik uygulamalarını tamamlarlar. Öğretmenlik uygulaması okulları, üniversitelerin bulunduğu şehirde bulunan kamu ve özel okullara ait ilk ve orta dereceli eğitim kurumlarıdır. Bu işbirliği yapan okullarda, öğretmen adayları dönem boyunca gözlem yapacakları danışman öğretmenler ile eşleştirilebilirler. Ayrıca, öğretmen adayları bireysel olarak hazırlayıp uyguladıkları öğretim planları hakkında danışman öğretmenlerden geri bildirim ve değerlendirme alırlar. Bu bağlamda öğretim elemanları ilk bağlantıyı kurar ve işbirliği okulları ile görüşmeler yaparak gerekli öğretmenlik uygulaması düzenlemelerini yapar. Öğretim elemanları, danışman öğretmenlerin görev yaptıkları okullardaki uygulamaların düzenlenmesine ek olarak üniversite kampüslerinde düzenli olarak haftalık seminerler düzenler. Bu seminerlerde genellikle öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik uygulaması sürecinde karşılaştıkları pedagojik zorluklar tartışılır.

3. Bulgular, Tartışma ve Sonuçlar

Araştırmanın bulgularına göre, öğretim elemanları ile okullardaki danışman öğretmenlerin, öğretmenlik uygulamasının planlanması aşamasından itibaren öğretim elemanlarının "birlikte geliştirilen yaklaşımlar" oluşturmasının gerekliliği ortaya çıkmıştır. Bir buçuk yıl süren ortak çalışmaya dayalı olan bu araştırmada, öğretmenlik uygulamasına yönelik olarak üç tema öne çıkmıştır. Bu temalar, öğretim elemanları ile danışman öğretmenler arasındaki iletişim kalıplarının geliştirilmesi, öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik uygulaması sürecindeki rollerinin ve yaklaşımlarının belirginleştirilmesi ve tüm öğretmenlik uygulaması paydaşlarının İngilizce öğretmeye yönelik mesleki kimliklerine ilişkin güçlü profesyonel istek ve sahiplenme duygularını geliştirmelerinin gerekliliği olarak gruplanmıştır.

Bu uzun süreli, öğretim elemanlarının bireysel çalışmasının değerlendirildiği işbirlikli çalışmada, öğretmenlik uygulamasının tüm paydaşlar için çok yönlü, üretken ve profesyonel bir öğrenme ortamı sağlama potansiyeline sahip olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Bu mesleki öğrenmenin gerçekleşebilmesi için, tüm paydaşlar arasında devam eden, yapıcı ve açık diyaloga odaklanılması için istekli olma ve mesleki bağlılık gerekmektedir. Bu çok yönlü, karşılıklı profesyonel öğrenme süreci statik olmaktan çok dinamiktir. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda, danışman öğretmenlerin deneyim ve tutumlarının, uygulama sürecinin etkili uygulanabilmesinde belirleyici rol oynadığını, dikkatli danışman seçiminin, hazırlığın ve mesleki desteğin önemini ortaya koymuştur. Sürekli ve sorgulamaya dayalı mesleki öğrenme fırsatları hem danışman öğretmenler hem de öğretmen adayları için faydalı olacaktır.

Araştırmanın sınırlılıkları olarak, çalışma sürecinde her bir araştırmacının, ortaya koyduğu bağlamsal perspektiflerden çok yararlanırken, araştırmacılar her bir bağlamı ziyaret etmemiştir ve Öğretmenlik Uygulamasının dersinin denetimi ile ilgili birebir deneyim alışverişinde bulunmamıştır. Veri kaynaklarının paylaşılması ile oluşturulan işbirliği, ELTER grup toplantıları sırasında sağlanmıştır. Dolayısıyla yurt içinde farklı öğretmen yetiştirme programlarının da katılımı ile daha geniş platformlara ulaşılabileceği göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır.

Yöntem sonrası pedagoji, bir sınıfın faaliyet gösterdiği "yerel, bireysel, kurumsal, sosyal ve kültürel bağlama" duyarlıdır (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, s. 544). Bu nedenle, öğretmen adaylarının kişisel öğretim stilleri ve bağlam odaklı kültürel inançlarının kendi uygulamalarındaki yansımalarını araştıran çalışmalar yapılabilir. Ek olarak, ilerleyen zamanlarda gerçekleştirilecek çalışmalarda, işbirliği yapan danışman öğretmenlerin öğretmen adaylarıyla etkileşimlerinin gözlemlendiği, sınıf içi öğretim uygulamalarının incelendiği, karşılaştırıldığı ve paydaşlar arasında nasıl ilişkilendirildiği de incelenebilir.

Öğretmen eğitim programları, öğretmen adaylarının yansıtıcı öğretim uygulamalarının farkındalığında önemli bir rol oynayabilir. Orland-Barak'ın (2001) belirttiği gibi, danışman öğretmenler, öğretmen adaylarıyla daha etkileşimli iletişim kurma konusunda dikkatli bir şekilde bilgilendirilmelidir. Böylece, paydaşlar için özel olarak üç taraflı diyalogun oluşturulmasında düzenli toplantılar (ör., Mtika ve diğerleri, 2014) ve öğretmen yetiştirme programlarında görev alan öğretim elemanlarının da katıldığı resmî danışmanlık eğitimleri (örneğin, Sayeski ve Paulsen, 2012) organize edilebilir.