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Research Article

Self-Evaluation as a Form of Reflective Practice in the Practicum

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the content of the reflection that pre-service EFL teachers are engaged in their self-evaluation reports during the practicum process at a public university teacher education program. So far, most reflection research in teacher education has concentrated on the levels of reflection pre-service teachers are involved in. Against this backdrop, we analyzed self-evaluation reports that the participant teachers wrote after three teaching tasks in the practicum. In general, the findings suggest that the pre-service EFL teachers reflected mostly on the instructional processes. The other areas they considered in their self-evaluations were learner motivation and engagement, their self as a teacher and classroom management. The findings also demonstrate that there is a change in the focus regarding the self as a teacher during the practicum. We conclude that examining the content of reflection has the potential to guide and inform practicum regarding the areas to reflect on through various tasks.

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Statement of Publication Ethics

The study has been conducted by following the publication ethics.
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Authors' Contribution Rate

Author#1: planning, structuring, data collection, data analysis, writing, editing, proofreading; Author#2: data analysis, writing, proofreading.

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None

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Introduction

In the last two decades, the term reflection and reflective practice have become an indispensable part of teacher education, specifically in second language teacher education (SLTE) (Anderson, 2020; Beijaard et al., 2000; Farrell, 1999). With the shift from teacher training, which is generally about the acquisition of entry-level teaching skills, to teacher development and life-long teacher learning in pre-service teacher education, the use of reflective practice in SLTE has raised (Richards, 2008). This heightened emphasis on reflection and similar practices stems from the increasing focus on teacher development, which seeks to empower educators through self-governed practices. This involves them taking charge of their own learning and actively participating in the analysis of their strengths and weaknesses. (Richards, 2008; Wallace, 1991). In this regard, reflectivepractice has been considered as a means of improving teachers' practices (Lefebvre et al., 2022). It is hence argued that teacher educators should actively utilize tools that support reflection in the initial teacher education (Day et al., 2022).

Practicum is an established component of SLTE programs. During this process, pre-service teachers are engaged in various observation and teaching tasks (Gebhard, 2009). It typically includes close collaboration and active participation of pre-service teachers,mentor teachers at schools, and supervisors in the teacher education program (Cirocki et al.,2020). Based on Mattsson et al.'s (2011) model of practicum partnerships, the collaborationwith schools during the process employs the integrative model in Türkiye (Eröz-Tuğa, 2013) where the pre-service teacher education program and the partner schools share responsibilities. In the practicum, class observations, pre- and post-teaching conferences, orevaluation could also be conducted by varying degrees of involvement of pre-service teachers, mentors, and supervisors. Furthermore, pre-service teachers evaluate their own teaching practices via structured reflective guides or intuitively. The reflection could eithertake a written form mostly in the form of journals or an oral form through discussions withpeers, mentors, and supervisors. Pre-service teachers are immersed in learning-to-teach experiences and encouraged to reflect on these through the practicum process when pre- service teachers "shift from students of teaching to teachers of students" (Cirocki et al., 2020, p. 2). In their first professional teaching experiences with real students in a real classroom environment, the points that pre-service teachers assessed themselves convey a passage to their learning not only as an accumulation of three-year on-campus instruction but also in the practicum process. As emerging teachers who have just begun to teach in a genuine teaching context, self- evaluation can afford them to "see of what is actually happening in their classrooms, to appreciate aspects of their own teaching and learning that they might not otherwise be aware of" (Curtis & Szestay, 2005, p. 7). In this article, we examine the content of reflection in self-evaluation reports from a group of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers during their practicumat a public university in Türkiye.

Literature Review

Reflection in Teacher Education and Development

The common integration of reflection into teacher education programs has been discussed around various issues for teacher professional learning and development. First and foremost, there is an ongoing debate about the nature and definition of the term reflection itself. While it is discussed whether it is a form of thinking or a certain form of action (Hatton& Smith, 1995), the two major educationalists in reflective studies, Dewey (1933) and Schön(1983) saw it as an action. Yet, these two fundamental figures have seemed to diverge on the nature of reflection in terms of the role of emotions and science in reflective thinking (Fendler, 2003). To Dewey, reflection is a scientific thinking, differing from impulsive androutine action, leading to professionalization (1933). On the other hand, the intuitive nature and experience and personal practices are

highlighted in Schön's understanding (1983). Regardless of such discrepancies, the common and mostly attributed features of reflection in educational studies are social, emotional, and cognitive engagement with the experiences to make sense of them for improved further personal and professional practices with heightened awareness and insightful understandings (Anderson, 2020; Yeşilbursa, 2011).

Accompanying such theoretical disputes, the time of reflection - when the individual is engaged in reflective actions, has also been subject to the conceptualization of reflective practices. Schön (1983) primarily talked about two distinctive reflection types based on their time: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. The former, reflection-in-action refers to the on-the-spot decisions of teachers when they face a difficulty in their routine teaching. It occurs simultaneously with the action itself as the name suggests. Yet, reflection-on-action has a retrospective nature. It occurs after the completion of tasks or activities and involves a thorough understanding and evaluation process. Reflection-on-action is the most common form of reflection in many teacher education programs. Both types of reflection necessitate recognizing a problem since in Schön's words: "problems do not present themselves to the practitioner as givens. They must be constructed" (1983, p. 40). As a third form, anticipatory reflection, namely, reflection for action, is future-oriented, takes place with anticipation of problems, and acting accordingly pre-emptively (Van Manen, 1995). Overall, the literature argues that all distinctive forms of reflection could be a crucial part of teachers' professional growth in addition to providing benefits for schools and the community (Griffiths, 2000).

Research on reflection in educational studies has attempted to make sense of reflection through typologies by categorizing reflection. In addition to the time dimension discussed above, the content of the reflection is also categorized. Various typologies categorize the levels of reflection that practitioners engage in differently. However, a common thread is that the lower levels typically involve descriptions of teaching and discussions about its mechanics. On the other hand, higher levels of reflection encompass justifications and the positioning of reflective concerns within broader societal, political, and contextual frameworks. (Jay & Johnson, 2002; Sparks-Langer et al., 1990; Valli, 1997). Such categorizations are handy in analyzing the reflections of practitioners, nevertheless, they convey a message that lower-level reflections are not desirable. However, such reflections, as Zeichner (1994) and Collin et al. (2013) point out, are mainly about teachers' daily practices and are valuable and needed. Similarly, Lefebvre et al. (2022) argue that focusing only on the levels of reflection that imply "a hierarchical gradation rather than a comprehensive approach to reflection" (p. 454) could delegitimize the importance of all categories of reflection. Thus, devaluing teachers' descriptive reflections is limiting and could even be unproductive.

Reflection on Pre-Service Teacher Education

Reflection requires active social and cognitive engagement with the context from pre-service teachers rather than directly applying theory into the practice without considering the contextual elements (Richards, 2008). In this way, pre-service teachers' past experiences and personal practical knowledge assist them in making in-situ decisions and being empowered practitioners (Yeşilbursa, 2011). In other words, reflective practices-driven teacher education is "learning-in-practice'' (Lisle, 2006, p. 118).

Various forms of reflection could be found in teacher education programs. Lee (2008) suggests that reflection is quite meaningful for pre-service teachers as "it is only

when they reflect upon their knowledge critically that they can transfer what they have learned in initial teacher preparation programs as students to the real classroom situations as teachers" (p. 117). Thus, placing reflection at the center of teacher education is insightful since it brings about justifications for teachers' utilizing certain strategies and how they facilitate learning (Lee, 2005).

In reflection-based educational studies, self-evaluation has become nearly synonymous with reflection (McLaughlin, 1991) as one should definitely think over their actions, and identify problems for solution or improvement to practice reflection. Perhaps, therefore Leitch and Day (2000) present reflective practitioners as people with "problem-solving and self-evaluation capacities" (p. 182). Self-evaluation could be a means of a deeper understanding of pre-service teachers' classroom practices. It is seen as fundamental in teacher education especially as a part of practicum since "a teacher's ability and skills to analyze and plan his/her work" are supposed to be among "key teacher competencies" in teacher education (Poom-Valickis & Mathews, 2013, p. 420). Self-observation further allows pre-service teachers to be able to identify strong or weak aspects of their teaching. They can focus on a variety of dimensions that they see there is room for improvement. As pre-service teachers could look back upon their pedagogical decisions and instructional practices via self-evaluation, they also get the chance to realize some points that are ignored while teaching. Overall, self-evaluation is argued to surface pre-service teachers' own beliefs and perceptions about teaching (Richards & Lockhart, 1996).

Reflection in the form of self-evaluation particularly thrives in the process of practicum, "the ideal place to develop reflective practice" (Collin et al., 2013, p. 112). As the practicum is when pre-service teachers get the authentic opportunity to teach and observe classes that take place in their routine time and space, pre-service teachers could build on their own experiences to understand themselves and their practices as teachers. Besides, the structure of the practicum fosters such teacher exploration and learning via several tasks some of which require reflecting on different issues to varying degrees. One way to achieve reflection in practicum then becomes self-evaluation; an inherent constituent of the process. Self-evaluation is described by McLaughlin (1991) as follows:

> an aspect of reflection that is concerned with defining one's concerns, establishing criteria for success, and determining the most appropriate methods to judge the effects of one's actions in the classroom. Self-evaluation involves carefully observing and analyzing one's actions and interpreting the consequences of what one has done. (p. 142)

Research on reflection in practicum is mostly interested in the levels of reflection pre-service teachers are involved in (Leijen et al., 2012; Zhu, 2011) and they showed that pre-service teachers mostly remained at lower-level reflections and rarely reached higher critical level reflections. However, at the practicum stage, what may be more revealing in unearthing pre-service teachers' learning is the study of the content of their reflection. In other words, understanding 'what pre-service teachers commented on during the practicum' could provide insight into their focal points and learning outcomes. . In that sense, Astika (2014) analyzed 40 pre-service teachers' teaching journals at the end of a three-month-long practicum and found that the journals included more reflection on personal and contextual elements of teaching than interpersonal and critical domains. Similarly, Chien (2013) carried out a case study with one elementary school English teacher in their teaching journal for a

semester. The content of the reflection mostly included students' behaviors and performance, and teaching strategies of the teacher. In the Turkish context, exploring the themes of reflection in self and peer evaluation forms and post-conferences of pre-service teachers at the practicum, Gümüşok (2014) found out that pre-service teachers evaluated themselves based on the technical strategies of teaching, pupil engagement, classroom management, and teacher identity. In the same vein, more recently, Yalçın Arslan (2019) analyzed the nature of reflection by four pre-service EFL teachers in the Turkish context over a year through four interviews with each participant going through the practicum stage and ending up as a novice teacher. The study confirmed that the majority of the preservice teachers' reflection was about learning environments, teacher behavior, and competence in all four interviews. However, as time passed, the participants started to reflect more on their identities and missions as language teachers. From another international context with a focus on the nature of pre-service teachers' reflections, Azimi et al. (2019) explored 41 pre-service teachers' 620 reflective excerpts during the practicum process over two years in three practicum courses in Iran. The study found out that in the first times of practice teaching, pre-service teachers mostly commented on the routine level themes such as classroom management and surviving the teaching tasks. Later, their concern was directed to the themes at the technical level, like the instructional design inclusive of preparation and planning teaching. They rarely wrote about the learners' learning process.

Considering the discussion above, this study aims to explore the content of the reflection pre-service EFL teachers are engaged in their self-evaluation reports during the practicum experience. In their initial profession teaching experiences with real learners in real schools, pre-service teachers' own review of their teaching would not just inform teacher education as an immediate reflection of the initial teacher education learning but also immersion in more organic and multi-dimensional experiential learning. As novice teachers embarking on their teaching journey within an authentic educational environment, self-assessment grants them the opportunity to gain insight into the true and possible occurrences in the classrooms. It enables them to recognize and value elements of their own teaching and learning that may otherwise go unnoticed. Furthermore, analyzing the content of pre-service teachers' reflections based on a few teaching tasks over a semester offers the teacher education community an opportunity to observe their practice-oriented growth.

In line with these aims, we asked the following research questions:

1. What aspects of teaching do pre-service EFL teachers consider and emphasize when they reflect on their own teaching?

2. Which changes are observed in the aspects of teaching pre-service EFL teachers consider and emphasize when they reflect on their teaching from the beginning till the end of the practicum?

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative case study methodology. Stake (1995) argues that qualitative case studies enable researchers to "seek greater understanding of the case" and to "appreciate the uniqueness and complexity of the case, its embeddedness, and interaction with its contexts" (p. 16). Based on this conceptual framing, this study defined its case as the self-evaluation practices of pre-service EFL teachers at a public university in Türkiye.

Such an interpretive approach that acknowledges the complex and nuanced nature of phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) fits well as a method of inquiry in this study to rigorously understand and explore its bounded case by time, space, and activity.

Context and Participants

This study was conducted at an English language teaching department of a public university in Türkiye. The data was collected during the Practice Teaching course offered in the Spring 15-16 term. The Practice Teaching course "consolidating the skills necessary for teaching English as a foreign language at primary and secondary schools through observation and teaching practice" (University General Catalogue, 2014, p. 453) was relevant to the aims of this study as the pre-service teachers were engaged in many reflective practices through written reflective reports, self or peer feedback forms and evaluations and such.

The participants were 29 pre-service EFL teachers. They were attending public and private institutions at the middle and high school levels. They were following their Practice Teaching coursework both at these K-12 schools and the university-based teacher education program. For ten weeks, they spent six hours at schools and attended a two-hour seminar discussion at the university based on the required readings. The pre-service EFL teachers regularly reflected on their observations of the mentor teachers at their schools, the articles discussed in the seminar, and finally their own teaching sessions. Throughout the course, they completed observation and teaching tasks and further evaluated their own teaching sessions in separate evaluation forms.

Data Collection

To meet the requirements of the Practice Teaching course, each pre-service EFL teacher taught three lessons at their K-12 schools. These were scheduled and evaluated by their mentor teacher at schools. In addition to these, the pre-service EFL teachers prepared a 40-minute lesson plan as their final teaching task. This final lesson was observed and evaluated both by the mentor at the school and the Practice Teaching course instructor at the university. After each teaching task, the pre-service EFL teachers wrote self-evaluations. They commented on the strong aspects of their 40-minute teaching and what they were happy with regarding their lesson. They also focused on what they would have changed if they had re-designed or re-taught this lesson, and how they responded to the issues that their mentors mentioned in their feedback. In this study, we examined all three self-evaluation forms from pre-service EFL teachers after they did their teaching at practice teaching schools over threemonths. These self-evaluation reports were written at regular intervals after every three weeks as the pre-service teachers taught in their practice teaching schools.In total, we investigated 87 self-evaluation reports of one- to two-page length. The followingquestions were given as probes:

- What were the strong aspects of your 40-minute teaching? What are the points that you are happy with in your teaching experience?
- If you had a chance to re-do Teaching Task 1 (2/3), what are the things you would change? What were the aspects of the activity or your teaching that

could be/need to be re-designed if you had a second chance?

- What are some of the issues mentioned in your mentor teacher's feedback? How do you respond to these comments?

Data Analysis

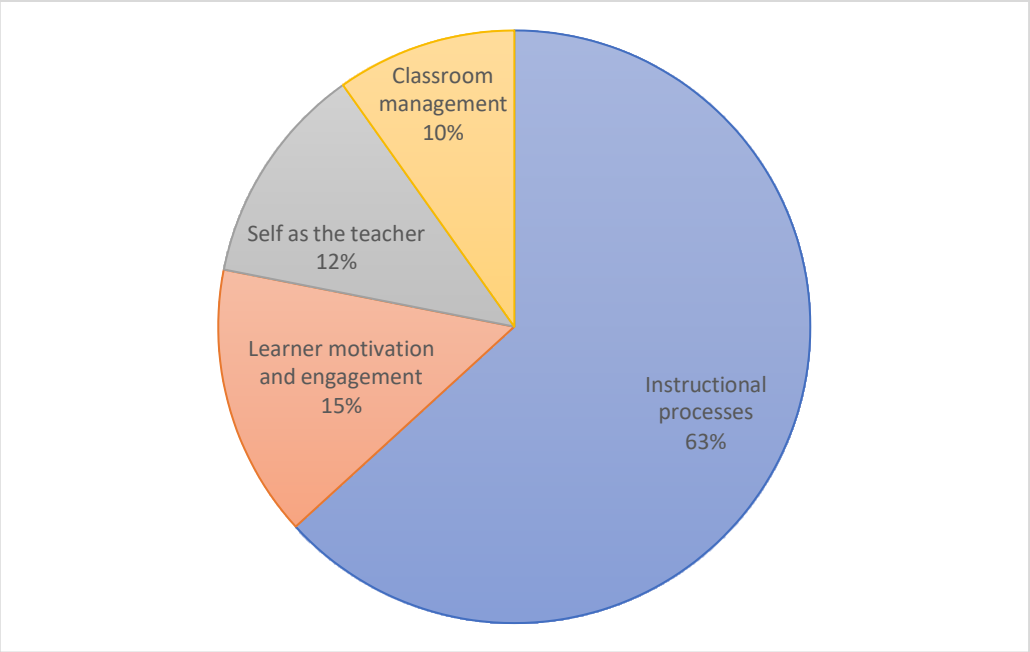
A cyclical-reiterative analysis process was adopted with reference to Creswell (2013) as in the following sequence: "a preliminary read-through of the database, coding and organizing themes, representing the data, and forming an interpretation of them" (p. 195). First, we formed a database for the current case (Yin, 2018). Then, we conducted a thematic content analysis (Patton, 2015) to achieve a broader interpretation of the data. The coding scheme of Şanal-Erginel (2006) guided us to explore the data in the initial coding phase as it is informed by pre-service teachers' and on on-campus learning. We enriched the initial coding by in-vivo or descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2013) as our data set required more experimentation and practice learning-oriented comments. This was an inductive process consisting of "data reduction, data grouping, and the formation of concepts that can be used to answer research questions" (Kyngäs, 2020, p. 14). The data was analysed on MaxQDA software (Version 12, Release 12.3.1). To achieve peer checking - "the stability of responses to multiple coders of data sets" (Creswell, 2013, p. 253)- we reflected on our initial analysis, compared and discussed our codes and categories, and then finalized the representation of the data for the discussion. After we both analysed the data, we sought agreement on our codes and reached a %89 agreement rate. For the codes where we fell apart in our interpretations, we either re-wrote or re-assigned codes for these sections. We stored and analyzed the data confidentially. Furthermore, we anonymized the participants after their informed consent was obtained. We report their comments by assigning numbers as participants (e.g., P1) in the three self-evaluation reports (e.g., E1 for self-evaluation 1). The study was carried out in accordance with research ethics and approved by the institutional ethical review board as well (2016-EGT-026).

Findings

The findings showed that the aspects of teaching that pre-service EFL teachers considered and emphasized when they self-evaluated themselves were instructional processes, learner motivation, and engagement, self as the teacher, and classroom management. The most common theme was instructional processes (N=251 out of 405 codes) taking up to around 62% of the whole data. In all three self-evaluation reports, it was the main theme. Learner motivation and engagement (N=59 out of 405 codes) was the second most common theme in all reports consisting of around 15% of the whole data set. The least common themes differed from the beginning till the end of the semester contrary to the most common theme staying the same. The pre-service EFL teachers made more reference to their self as the teacher in their final reports. However, three themes other thanthe main theme still received similar focus. Talking about pre-service teachers' self as the teacher (N=48 out of 405 codes) took up around 12% of the data while classroom management (N=39 out of 405 codes) took up around 10% of the self-evaluation reports. The following figure shows an overview of the areas of reflection in self-evaluations:

Instructional Processes

Figure 1. Areas of Reflection in Self-Evaluations

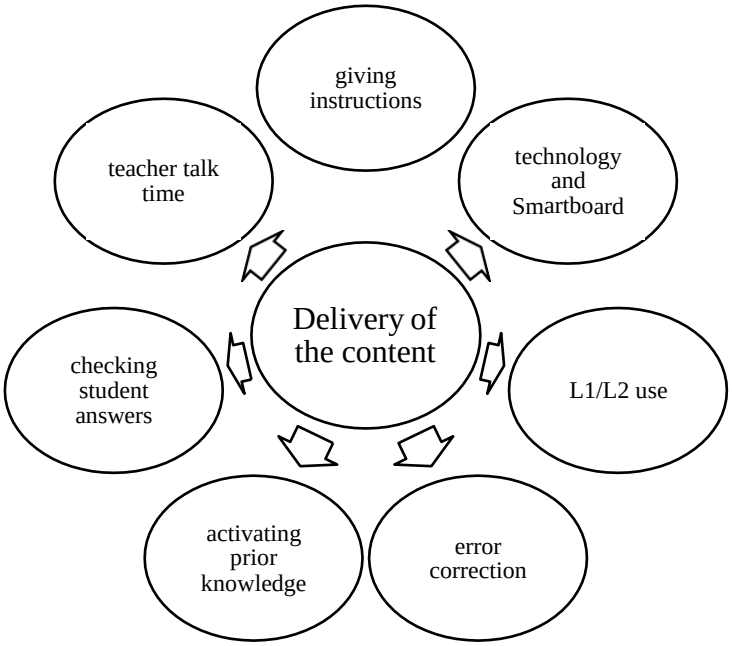


The pre-service EFL teachers focused on the delivery of content, materials and activities, skills teaching, time management, and interaction patterns in relation to instructional processes in the class.

Delivery of the Content

The most common category under this theme was the delivery of content with subcategories of giving instructions, technology and Smartboard use, L1/L2 use, error correction, activating prior knowledge and giving examples, checking answers and teacher talk time.

Figure 2. Delivery of the Content



To start with, being able to give instructions successfully was found quite important by the pre-service EFL teachers. They stated that they were able to give clear instructions such as "I was good at giving instruction as well. I adapted my language according to my students' level. I explained everything step by step and I provided a model for my students" (P8, E2), but there were some instances when they could not achieve their goals while giving instructions: "while giving the instructions, I should use more simple language for all the students to be able to understand" (P14, E2). Some of the pre-service EFL teachers mentioned their own strategies: "I was careful about using simple and concise statements. I even supported them with demonstrations. When the students seemed not able to understand one part, I asked a student who understood to translate the instructions into Turkish" (P5, E1). However, there were sometimes problems regarding instructions:

> If I had a chance to do my teaching task again, I would check the understanding of students after giving instructions so that they do not get lost while doing the activity. The reason why I did not check was that the students were not used to this, and I thought they would be puzzled if I wanted them to repeat the instructions to the whole class. However, I realized that they would do it perfectly if I had given them the chance. (P1, E3)

Another pre-service EFL teacher also referred to some areas of improvement: "I realized that I didn't say everything they needed to do the activity. For example, in my student-to-student interview activity, they needed to do this in pairs to ask and answer all their questions" (P21, E3). Additionally, vague, or complicated instructions led to problems:

> I created the groups first; I wanted students to write the names of things in the pictures individually. This was very problematic because I should have told them to write the names of objects first, then I should have created the groups. I wanted them to match the pictures including letters with the pictures including numbers. There were some misunderstandings in this part. I would give an example after my instruction. (P8, E1)

The subsequent focus was on technology use, especially how to use Smartboard. We grouped any types of instructional technologies including black board under this category.

For example, quite a few of them told they had made use of a Smartboard: "I feel very satisfied when I see that the smart board can be used in a crowded classroom and group activities can be applied as well" (P3, E3), or "Since smart boards are not used in classes too much, we thought that using them would draw students' attention to the lesson. We designed games and colorful images to make it more interesting" (P1, E1). The use of a Smart board allowed them to integrate presentations or videos into the pre-service EFL teachers' classes making the students' participation more meaningful: "They got very excited seeing the pictures on the smart board. They were intrigued by the board game. Even the students who normally do not take turns much were trying to make sentences in English while playing the game" (P16, E1). Yet, for some pre-service EFL teachers, navigating the board was not that easy and there was a need for prior training using the board: "the smart board was not like the computers I used before. I could not complete my competition game because of this problem, and it took nearly 5 minutes from my teaching time" (P14, E1). In some cases, there were unexpected problems utilizing instructional technology when one of the computers in the class did not work and the pre-service EFL teacher had to change the room:

> I was bound hand and foot because my lesson plan was based on the PPT with lots of colorful pictures. Then, we found an empty classroom and moved there, but then, my mentor teacher said that was the "science classroom" and we could not be there. And we found another classroom. When I thought that everything was going to be alright, the mouse and keyboard of the computer in that class did not work again. The students brought another mouse, but it did not work, either. Losing 15 minutes of the lesson, I started the lesson helplessly. Unfortunately, I had no flashcards or printouts. All I could do was to explain the differences between deep and shallow and narrow and wide by using my gestures. (P17, E2)

Language use of both L1 and L2 was another area that the pre-service EFL teachers reflected on in their self-evaluations. For some of them, it was the case that they dominantly used English in the classroom: "I almost never switched to Turkish" (P4, E1), or "I did my teaching task in a public school, and they were not used to listening to the whole lesson in English. I did not speak even a word in Turkish and they were able to understand all my instructions throughout the lesson" (P7, E1). The pre-service EFL teachers stated that they felt like they set a model for students "For the first time, I realized that I used my English in a way that they can use as a model" (P22, E3). Regarding this bilingual use in the class, L1 was generally mentioned as an aid: "When a student could not understand what I was asking, I asked another student to translate it to her friend. I think it worked well because the student was able to answer my question correctly" (P13, E3). P12 stated the consistency in using English also influenced the students: "They are not used to English speaking in the classroom, they firstly tried to discourage me. But I continued to use English. Then, they began to get used to it and asked me their questions in English" (E1). Similarly, P17 wrote: "I tried to simplify my language as much as possible while giving instructions. After seeing that they understood the instructions clearly and tried to respond to me in English, I realized that using L2 was not so difficult" (E2).

Error correction was another topic that pre-service EFL teachers considered when they reflected on their teaching. Most of the time they were not in favor of immediate correction: "my aim was not increase accuracy in that lesson. I was trying to get the students talking. If I had corrected their mistakes all the time, they would be more reluctant to speak up and participate" (P5, E2). The pre-service EFL teachers not only relied on their own

practice while evaluating themselves but also their mentors':

> When a student did not answer the question correctly, another student took the turn to correct it. According to my observations, the students who answered incorrectly did not listen to the correction because they were demotivated by their teacher. But, in my teaching task, when the students tried to make sentences in the picture matching activity, I helped them to answer my questions by providing the necessary vocabulary, asking extra questions. It was motivating for the students. (P4, E3)

Next, the pre-service EFL teachers commented on activating students' prior knowledge and giving examples in their self-evaluations. P15 stated: "I liked the connection of my lesson with the previous lesson. They covered a poem related to Jewish massacre which later turned into a blues song. I also included so many materials related to the same topic" (E3), and P6 wrote: "I believe my introduction was quite nice. Because I asked what they did that morning in their English class, I connected the lesson to previous information, and they started talking" (E1). Giving examples was a priority for the pre-service EFL teachers: "Also, in my last activity, I was not sure about giving an example of my own, but I saw that it was the right thing to do. They liked the example I gave from my own life" (P9, E1). The pre-service EFL teachers also realized when the instruction fell short in activating prior knowledge and suggested alternative practices:

> I didn't use any pictures or any kind of materials. Just talking about nature-inspired objects and asking for them were not effective enough to start a lesson. I could have brought some examples of nature-inspired objects to the class, hung some pictures on the board or simply Google nature-inspired objects on the smart board. (P8, E2)

Finally, the pre-service EFL teachers referred to checking students' understanding and answers, and teacher talk time in relation to the delivery of the content. For example, P18 exemplified how they used wait time: "I frequently asked about whether there was something unknown or unexplained for them. I waited around 8-10 seconds for them to think, make their sentences and then move to the lesson" (E1). P11 focused on a change in their future practice: "the way we checked students' answers with the PPT because there were answers on the PPT. I should have listened to the students' answers first, then shown the correct answers" (E2). Teacher talk time was also reconsidered in self-evaluations:

> I realized that I kept the teacher talk time too long in the while-reading part. I was trying to give information about Gaudi's sources of inspiration and how he imitated nature while constructing some parts of his buildings. I think, instead of giving all this information by myself, almost lecturing the class, I could have created an activity by using that information. (P13, E2)

Materials and activities, skills and systems

There was also a substantial focus on materials and activities, skills and systems such as writing, listening, reading, speaking, grammar, and vocabulary. Mostly, the pre-service EFL teachers were happy with their practices: "My story is quite effective. Although it is very short and easy, it enabled me to show the rationale behind using reported statements" (P8, E3). There were also a few instances of problems: "I would find more enjoyable and different activities for the students rather than focusing on the course book that much" (P21, E2), or "I regret I focused on the activities in their book. They were regular, ordinary. I should have created more enjoyable and unexpected ones. If I had come up with my original activities, they would have been more willing" (P17, E2). The action focus for the future was also prevalent in using materials and designing activities:

> I would have skipped the last activity (the board game) and spent all time on the second activity (writing sentences related to cartoon characters). If I had done this, we could have repeated all important points

> in detail or we could have completed the board game as the whole class, and I can give feedback to the answers. I could have asked all the extra questions I had planned. (P5, E3)

Furthermore, the pre-service EFL teachers commented on how they managed or could have managed teaching skills or systems of the language. For writing, P14 stated they wanted students to write a descriptive paragraph "about their imaginary buildings by using the words they learned in the lesson. It is a good way of encouraging students to use their skills, and they can practice writing by using the new words in sentences" (E2). For listening, P22 wrote how they would adapt instructional practice: "when I asked a question from time to time about the video they were watching, they did not know which element was important to them. I would supply them with a worksheet, so they could be ready to talk" (E2). For grammar, P16 commented that they gave the rules of the structures by writing on the board and did not ask the students to copy them in their notebooks: "Maybe, I could have given them a small piece of sheet on which the rules are written to make them attach to their notebooks because even if they memorize the rules, they immediately forget" (E2). Another area of reflection was time management for the pre-service EFL teachers. There were few instances where they reflected-in-action and changed their next action in the class: "I did not have much time left, so I decided to end the lesson by wrapping up the grammar points, yet the students continued to play the game, so I could not create a sense of closure here" (P6, E3), or were left puzzled:

> I could not finish my lesson on time. We could not finish the last activity because the explanation part took more time than I planned. The students were not used to listening to explanations in English. I have no solution for this part in my mind. (P15, E1)

Regarding instructional processes, the pre-service EFL teachers reflected on interaction patterns such as pair and group work. P10 stated: "I wanted students to work in pairs to guess the meaning of the words. They can learn from each other. My last activity was also good. It pushes being creative by working as a group" (E2). P19 wrote: "They worked in pairs, and even though it is a boring topic for students, I tried to make it more learnable with a lot of activities" (E1). Lastly, it was seen that the pre-service EFL teachers were well prepared for their lessons in terms of planning, and they were flexible with their plan while teaching.

Learner Motivation and Engagement

In relation to motivating and engaging learners in the class, the pre-service EFL teachers reflected on the importance of a positive atmosphere, teacher smile, encouraging students, grabbing their attention, keeping them on task, providing an interesting topic and activity, praising students, attending to them by names. Creating a positive atmosphere and teacher smile as a motivational factor were the most common aspects of teaching that the pre-service EFL teachers considered in their self-evaluations. These were helpful in their teaching. P14 wrote: "I smiled all the time so that students could feel safe" (E1). P9 stated: "I asked how they are doing lately and what they do in their leisure time- as unusual. I showed how I cared about them and wanted to learn their life a little bit by asking real questions" (E1). Preparing attention-grabbing activities was another priority for the pre-service EFL teachers. P17 commented: "the way I drew students' attention to the sentences including should in the dialogues and the way I connected the sign and notices to 'should' constructions were successful" (E2). Encouraging students was also found important in

P12's practices: "I also encouraged some students to talk by asking them to comment or chose the students randomly for some questions" (E3). The pre-service EFL teachers mentioned that they praised students occasionally: "When they said something nice or correct, I praised their answers by saying "Well-done" or "That's very smart of you" (P18, E1).

Learner engagement was not only about acknowledging positive or smooth moments in the class. In one incident, P16 called a student with a different name confusing two names with similar meanings and the student told another friend that this made them upset. However, P16 wrote:

> I have never thought that calling a student with a wrong name would make him/her feel that much sorry and share it with someone else. When I heard it, I went to Uygar and said, I am so sorry, it is totally my mistake. The names are so similar to one another, I got confused. This will never happen again. (E2)

Self as the Teacher

The pre-service EFL teachers commented on how they felt themselves as teachers and the importance of having rapport in the class. For example, P19 felt confident as a teacher: "It went very well. I felt confident and positive, and this was one of my strengths" (E1). They valued having close relationships – rapport with students:

> Also, I liked the relationship between me and my students even if it was for a limited time. I felt that the students considered me closer. The thing I liked most about that day was the break-time before my teaching when all the students gathered around me and asked me some questions. One of them even said, *Why don't you work in our school*, which made me the happiest person at that moment. (P12, E3)

Likewise, P4 wrote after their final teaching task how the students appreciated them:

> I was very emotional. After the class, when most of the students came and hugged me, for the first time, I felt like a teacher. I had this awesome communication and energy with the students. They loved me as much as I loved them. During the lesson, they tried to help me since they knew that (the supervisor) was grading my performance. I was happy to hear that those students want me to be their teacher. Even if my first day at that school was a total disaster, my last day was a bliss. It was one of the best days of my life and sharing that day with those students was one of the greatest feelings that I have experienced. (E3)

The pre-service teachers enjoyed being in the class as a teacher on different occasions: "I also really enjoyed being in that class (congratulating announcements from the school speaker and singing a song) because it was a pleasure to watch the students, they could spend enjoyable time in the classroom" (P7, E3). Sometimes, they positioned themselves and the students in the class: "If the aim is to raise awareness of certain phenomena by teaching language, students should know why they discuss or give their opinions over these (hunger, poverty) topics and we should not add personal values to the discussions" (P18, E3). The teacher they aspired to be was such that, in P5's words: "We should never give up counting on our students. No matter how bad they are, they are children in the end, and we can help them to improve themselves" (E3). Additionally, they referred to certain actions that would not go together with their teacher self. For example, P23 reflected on a specific action of her mentor teacher while evaluating themselves and how they act as a teacher: "I would be very disappointed to hear such words from my teacher or I would not say these to my students. Sometimes teachers do not choose the best way (to manage the classroom)" and added, "I don't find it very appropriate to reflect private life issues into the lesson" (E3). These comments attributed specific practices for teachers as

desirable and appropriate, and the pre-service teachers were evaluating the extent to which they live up to these features.

Classroom Management

In managing the classroom, the pre-service EFL teachers paid attention to dealing with misbehavior, teacher voice, monitoring the class, and noise. Among these, the effective use of the teacher's voice was found the most important factor in classroom management. Most of the pre-service EFL teachers mentioned problems with their teacher's voice, and it impacted their lesson to varying extents as their teacher's voice was "too low" (P4, E2; P17, E1) or they could not use it "effectively" (P9, E3; P25, E2).

P25 reflected on an incident when they repeatedly tried to explain in English by showing the instructions on the Smartboard but could not manage and then one of the students yelled what they were expected to do in the activity: "I was very calm and did not get angry no matter how hard it was for me. Normally, in real life, I am an easily angered person. However, when I am in the classroom, I am not" (E2). P11 wrote that: "I ignored some minor issues. Sometimes, I went near the students who were misbehaving and stood there for a while until they stopped the behavior. Also, I tried to make eye contact with misbehaving students" (E3). P12 reported some problems with classroom management:

> The group sitting next to the door was so disruptive both for me and the classroom because they did not listen to their friends; did not focus on the activity and talked among themselves about other things. Since I had to listen to the answers of the other groups at this time, I could not control them that much, and this caused a breakdown in my teaching. I would definitely want them to sit in different groups. (E3)

There were some extreme cases as well. In one of the classes, when the pre-service EFL teachers were co-teaching a lesson and the mentor teacher was not in the classroom, one of the students who was reported to be disrespectful in the earlier session clasped another student with hearing impairment by the throat. P20 wrote they did not know what to do but immediately interfered with the situation: "When I seized the student by the collar and made him sit down in one move, I thought I did wrong and felt a little bit guilty. Then, I relieved myself thinking What if something happens to him" (P20, E3).

Finally, the findings showed that, although we identified a slight change in the least common theme from the beginning till the end of practice teaching, the areas of reflection in self-evaluations except instructional processes were comparable to each other. Considering the aspects of teaching the pre-service EFL teachers considered and emphasized when they reflected on their teaching from the beginning till the end of the practicum, we found that the focus on their self as the teacher was almost exclusively present in the final reports. The other three themes showed a similar trend in all three self-evaluation forms; the instructional processes theme was the dominant one followed by learner motivation and engagement. Classroom management received similar emphasis in all reports, being not the least common theme in the initial ones. However, the focus on the self as the teacher doubled in the final reports, making it the third common theme overall.

Discussion

This study sets out to outline the focus of pre-service EFL teachers' reflection in their

self-evaluation forms during the practicum process and present if their focus changed throughout the semester. The results yielded the dominance of instructional process-focused reflection in the evaluation forms, followed by learner motivation and engagement, self as a teacher, and classroom management. Overall, the findings show that reflection is a recurrent activity involving a cyclical set of experiences and critical examination (Lefebvre et al., 2022) and not only an individual but also a relational process drawing on individual ideas, interpretations, and interactions with others (Marshall et al., 2022). The pre-service teachers gained classroom experience and continuously evaluated the classroom environment, their in-situ actions, and sometimes based on observations of their mentors.

The comprehensiveness, breadth, and depth of the category of the instructional process may have contributed to the great ratio of the reflection on this field. It encompasses multiple entry-level teaching skills: giving instructions, technology use, language use, error correction and materials, and skills use. A closer examination of the focus of these reflection points suggests that these are the basic elements of teaching, without sufficient possession of which teachers may not enter the profession. Considering the practicum, the very first professional experience with actual students in real teaching environments, pre-service teachers' reflection displays that they assessed themselves based on entry-level teaching skills such as creating a suitable learning environment, facilitating learner participation, and dealing with misbehavior (MoNE, 2017). In addition, the greatest amount of attention to the instructional processes could be meaningful and expected as Leijen et al. (2012) point out emerging teachers may be more concerned with technical aspects of teaching, which are more available to control in the teaching process. This result is also in line with Yalçın Arslan (2019) and Azimi et al. (2019) in which pre-service teachers in Turkey and Iran also topicalized their practicum experiences in the technical and immediate-context related issues such as classroom management and teaching skills. Quite similarly, pre-service teachers frequently commented on their activities and materials design and use during their teaching experiences. They expressed future-projected alternative ways of achieving their plans and designs acknowledging their problematic aspects. One may argue that in self-evaluation forms pre-service teachers mainly focus on their retrospective practices; however, as shown in the data; design and preparation-oriented comments could have the potential to function as anticipatory reflection (Van Manen, 1995) giving the pre-service teachers opportunities to take pre-emptive measures and be much more prepared and welcoming for unexpected teaching moments. These show that the pre-service teachers not only reflected onaction (Schön, 1983) but also onaction (Van Manen, 1995).

Since the participants in this study were majoring in English as a Foreign Language Teaching, it is no more surprising to see that they frequently reflected upon language use. What is surprisingly pleasant is that pre-service teachers reflected upon their successful target language use in the evaluation forms. Their writing conveyed that they resorted to the mother tongue as an aid rarely and most of the time they utilized English as a medium of instruction and their students were able to understand them. Their emphasis on the state school was worth noting as stated by the participants. The perception about the target language use in the Turkish state school was that students receive target language instruction in their mother tongue, and they wouldn't accomplish following the target language use. However, the positively worded content of the reflection of this group of pre-service teachers

could be promising and contribute to the pre-service teachers' growing comfort in speaking more in the target language. It further signals their enactment on the use of the language rather than ethnolinguistic ownership (Lee & Canagarajah, 2019).

One of the findings of this study is that pre-service teachers did not reflect on classroom management so frequently. Classroom management ranked last in the evaluation forms. The practicum is part of the 'survival stage' at which pre-service teachers are mostly interested in dealing with the students and silencing them and keeping the class under control (Fuller & Bown, 1974, as cited in Hascher et al., 2004, p. 634). One would assume that the participants would comment on classroom management issues to a great extent as in the case of Azimi et al. (2019). What is sensible in this finding is that the pre-service teachers mainly commented on managing the classroom as a point to be improved, not as their strong suit. Lack of experience and the growing responsibility of teaching the language to real students (Hascher et al., 2004) may have driven the participants to perceive classroom management as a room for development. After all, classroom management is "a topic about which student teachers often know little and have a great deal of anxiety" (Day, 1990, p. 53).

Overall, our findings are quite similar to Astika (2014). Her category of the personal domain was quite similar to the instructional processes and self-as-a-teacher in this study and her contextual domain was inclusive of student engagement, and motivation. The two domains of instructional processes and self-as-a-teacher constituted nearly 90% of the reflection set. We can infer that within the reframe of the practicum with the actual students in the real school environment, pre-service teachers are more inclined to be concerned about instructional processes and student involvement and interest more than other elements.

One noteworthy finding of our study is that pre-service teachers' reflections on self-as-a-teacher showed an increase gradually. That is, they commented on how they felt, and how their students acknowledge their teacher persona more in the last self-evaluation form especially. This also resonates with Yalçın Arslan (2019) in which the pre-service teachers increased their focus on identity and mission as they gained more experience in the practicum. In our study, identity-focused reflection mostly constituted both how they felt as teachers and their references to aspired identities by having certain characteristics but refraining from others; as identity is "to become a certain person or, conversely, to avoid becoming a certain person" (Wenger, 1998, p. 215). The focus on the self as a teacher could be due to the fact that pre-service teachers' identity development was affected by the experience of the practicum and the relationship they built with real students as this is one of the constituents of teacher identities (Izadinia, 2013) and students could function as identity mirrors (Meng, 2014) for the pre-service teachers. Receiving immediate positive feedback from the receiver of their service; students, seemed to positively contribute to the pre-service teachers' perceptions of themselves, in(directly) confirming their emerging teacher identity constructed through classroom practices (Kanno & Stuart, 2011) during the practicum. Finally, this finding shows that teacher learning is also an identity-construction process (Yazan & Lindahl, 2020) profoundly shaped by practice (Taşdemir, 2021). Thus, reflective activities fostering pre-service teachers' actively exploring their teacher identities are needed in pre-service teacher education programs.

Conclusion and Implications

Understanding reflection is important since it is necessary to explore the learning processes of pre-service teachers and know what they touch upon, consider, and emphasize when they write reflective reports (Davis, 2006). One of the tools for engaging pre-service teachers in such reflective practice is self-evaluations in the practicum process. In this paper, we investigated the content of reflections made by pre-service EFL teachers after completing teaching tasks at practicum schools and evaluating themselves. Additionally, we examined any observed changes in this content. To this effect, we analyzed self-evaluation reports of pre-service EFL teachers during their practicum at a public university in Türkiye. The findings showed that the pre-service EFL teachers reflected mostly on various aspects of their instruction, namely, the areas that have the most visible connection to practice. Then, they focused on affectionate ways of engaging learners, their teacher selves and managing the classroom and disruptive behaviors.

As the pre-service teachers are engaged in several reflective tasks in the practicum process, this could create the basis for exploring different areas of their instruction and pedagogical practices. In this study, the majority of reflection points in the self-evaluations consisted of entry-level professional skills. Therefore, we suggest that the content that is addressed in reflective tasks, either through observation or teaching, could first aim at actively exploring these aspects and then broader discussions in the field such as diversity, social inclusion, and multiculturality, preparing pre-service teachers to handle emerging classroom contexts. Another aspect to explore is how to promote the university and the school partnerships that will support pre-service teachers' reflective activities in the practicum. Reflective tasks or self-evaluations could also encourage pre-service teachers to deliberately ponder on their teacher identities through various tools such as narrative guides or prompts. It is seen that by gaining in-class practice, the pre-service teachers directed their focus to identity-based reflection points more. Thus, reflective practices need to provide opportunities that will foster pre-service teachers' understanding of the ever-emerging teacher identities on a deeper level.

This study has a few limitations. For instance, we only focused on a specific group of pre-service EFL teachers at a public university in Türkiye. Further research is needed to explore different educational contexts around the world and different teacher education and training programs. Close analysis of various cases would inform how self-evaluation could promote reflection across the career span of English language teachers. Additionally, other data sources such as interviews or think-aloud protocols and other tools such as video-based (Lefebvre et al., 2022) or vignette-based instruments (Yılmaz & Akar, 2022) could be utilized to enhance our understanding of self-evaluation and reflective practice. The ways the stakeholders in the practice teaching process such as mentors, peers, and supervisors influence pre-service teachers' reflective understanding need also be investigated to further this line of research.

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