



## Stress in English Language Teaching Practicum: the Views of All Stakeholders

### İngilizce Dili Öğretimi Öğretmenlik Uygulamasında Stres: Tüm Paydaş Görüşleri

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**ABSTRACT:** As the importance attached to the English language is rapidly increasing, the pre-service training of English teachers is becoming more and more important. One of the most essential components of teacher training programs is the practicum course requiring last year English teacher trainees (TTs) to observe classes and do practice teaching before they step into the actual teaching profession. As various stakeholders, such as mentor teachers, supervisors, teacher trainees, school administrators and students are involved in the process of this course, causes of stress on each of these stakeholders were investigated in this study by means of open-ended surveys and interviews. The analysis of the qualitative data through content analysis brought to light the practicum-related problems causing stress for all the stakeholders. Summarizing the main stress-generating factors, the study concludes with suggestions for a less stressful practicum experience. It is believed that understanding the sources of stress arising from the practicum will help relevant stakeholders take necessary precautions to manage stress throughout the course.

**Keywords:** English Language Teaching, Practicum, Stress, Pre-service teachers

**ÖZ:** İngilizce diline verilen önem hızlı bir şekilde arttığı için, İngilizce öğretmenlerinin aldıkları hizmet öncesi eğitim daha fazla önem kazanmaktadır. Öğretmen eğitiminin en önemli kısımlarından biri son sınıf İngilizce öğretmeni adaylarının öğretmenlik mesleğine adım atmadan sınıf gözlemi ve öğretmenlik uygulaması yapmasını gerektiren öğretmenlik uygulaması dersidir. Bu ders sürecine danışman öğretmenler, danışman öğretim üyeleri, öğretmen adayları, okul yöneticileri ve öğrenciler gibi birçok farklı paydaş katıldığından, öğretmenlik uygulaması dersinin her bir paydaş üzerinde stres yaratan sebepleri açık-uçlu anketler ve mülakatlar aracılığıyla araştırılmıştır. Nitel verilerin içerik analizi tüm paydaşlar için öğretmenlik uygulaması dersiyle ilgili stres yaratan sorunları açığa çıkarmıştır. Çalışmanın sonunda, stres yaratan faktörler özetlenip daha az stresli bir öğretmenlik uygulaması deneyimi için bazı tavsiyelerde bulunulmuştur. Öğretmenlik uygulaması dersinden kaynaklanan stres faktörlerini anlamamanın ilgili paydaşlara ders boyunca stresle baş etmek için gerekli önlemleri almasına yardımcı olacağı düşünülmektedir.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** İngilizce dili öğretimi, öğretmenlik uygulaması, stres, hizmet öncesi öğretmenler

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In our world, where the English language is used as an international communication tool, teaching English has become an educational field that is worthwhile investigating within the general education system in any country. The studies pertaining to teaching English deal with various issues and all of these issues are somehow related to the education of English teachers. As rightly argued by Enginarlar (1996), the dissatisfaction with the quality of teaching English is generally ascribed to teacher education programs at universities, and among many essential components of these programs, the practicum, in which last year teacher trainees observe mentor teachers in real classrooms and do practice teaching to real students, has an enormous impact on upgrading the quality of teachers and thus language teaching in general. As stated by many researchers (Clarke & Collins, 2007; Farrell, 2008; Cruickshank & Westbrook, 2013), one of the most important components of English teacher education programs is the practicum that gives teacher trainees (TTs) a chance to become aware of the realistic nature of the teaching profession (Slick, 1998; Intrator, 2006).

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Successful practicum application entitles a stress-free atmosphere not only for trainees but also for all the other stakeholders directly involved with the practicum (i.e., school administrators, mentor teachers, students and supervisors). Only by understanding the causes of stress for each group of stakeholders can an effective practicum environment be created. Hence, the current study aims to reveal the causes of stress for these stakeholders.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this study, stress refers to “the experience by a teacher of unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher” (Kyriacou, 2001. p. 28). Now that the practicum is regarded as the most stressful aspect of a teacher education program (MacDonald, 1993), it is natural that the stress-generating factors resulting from the practicum course have been the subject of many studies both abroad (Numrich, 1996; Gan, 2013; Stokking, Leenders, De Jong, & Van Tartwijk, 2003; Kim & Kim, 2004; Costin, Fogarty, & Yarrow, 1992) and in Turkey (Merç, 2004, 2011; Korukçu, 1996; Paker, 2011; Çelik, 2010). Many of these studies have focused on the causes of stress for TTs as the practicum course is designed for them. One of these studies was carried out in the U.S.A by Numrich (1996) who revealed that the most significant stress-generating factors are related to time management, giving clear directions, responding to students’ various needs, teaching grammar and assessing students’ learning. On the other hand, Gan (2013) lists TTs’ difficulties in experimenting with pedagogical practices they were taught in the training program and a lack of sense of control in class. Similarly, Stokking et al. (2003) state that another cause of stress is the mismatch between TTs’ expectations and the realities of the school atmosphere.

It was revealed by Kim and Kim (2004) that TTs feel stress while speaking English throughout the lesson, teaching speaking and listening skills, having classes with unmotivated and interested students, not being able to manage the class properly and being observed. It was also found that not being prepared enough for the lesson, limited English proficiency, lack of confidence, fear of negative evaluation and lack of teaching experience are the causes of stress. Costin et al. (1992) list the major stress factors as follows: heavy workload, lack of time for preparation for teaching practice, the high number of assignments and activities, different expectations from teachers, school administrators and lecturers concerning TTs’ performance, mental tiredness and practicum-related expenses. In another study, Reupert and Woodcock (2010) found that classroom management is the most serious cause of stress for TTs. Likewise, it is indicated that TTs feel stressed out about their abilities in managing the time and the class (Murray-Harvey, Slee, Lawson, Silins, Banfield, & Russell, 2000). On the other hand, poor coordination between schools and universities and lack of cooperation between the TTs and the mentors might be listed as stress-generating problems for TTs (Ong’ondo & Jwan, 2009).

In the Turkish English as a Foreign Language (EFL) practicum context, Merç’s (2004) study showed that the major reasons of stress are related to their previous experience, overcrowded classrooms, the feeling of incompetence, being observed by the supervisor and the mentor, being recorded, using a new teaching technique, managing the time effectively and not knowing the students. In a more recent study, Merç (2011) listed main sources of stress as follows: classroom management, being observed, students’ profiles, teaching procedures and mentors. In the same vein, Korukçu (1996) found that pre-service teachers identified classroom management, teaching methods, lesson planning and motivation of students as the causes of stress, and Paker (2011) listed the following stress-generating factors for TTs: staff relations, classroom management, pedagogy and evaluation, the way TTs are assessed, different expectations of mentors and supervisors as well as the poor quality of feedback received from mentors and supervisors. Finally, in Çelik’s (2010) study, it was found that evaluation-based practicum is one of the most important causes of stress for TTs.

Although sources of the stress experienced by pre-service TTs have been widely studied as reviewed above, a research study dealing with the practicum-related stress-generating factors for other stakeholders, such as mentors and school administrators who are also involved with the practicum has not so far been carried out. Additionally, as pointed out by Çelik (2008), there is a need for further research on stress-generating problems in the EFL practicum context because TTs can get maximum benefit from the practicum when their stresses are focused and alleviated to a minimum level. Thus, the present study is an attempt to bridge this gap in the literature by revealing the sources of practicum-related stress perceived by the stakeholders most directly involved with the practicum (i.e., school administrators, mentor teachers, teacher trainees, students and supervisors) by means of open-ended surveys and interviews focusing on the question “Are there any practicum-related problems causing stress for you, if yes, what are they?”

### 3.METHOD

#### 3.1.Context of the Study

The context of the study is the four-year English teacher preparation program aiming to train nonnative pre-service teacher trainees to be qualified English teachers for public and private primary and secondary schools in Turkey. These programs are comprised of courses focusing on knowledge about how English works in the first year (e.g., contextualized grammar, listening and pronunciation) and include a variety of courses ranging from linguistics to research methods in the second year. In the third and fourth years, on the other hand, TTs are equipped with courses dealing mostly with professional expertise (e.g., teaching methodology, curriculum design and testing). Also, in the first semester of the final year, the program requires senior TTs to attend a compulsory school-experience course which enables them to observe mentors, students and the school system in general. As a continuation of this course, TTs attend the practicum course in the second semester to practice teaching before they graduate as English teachers. According to the description of the course, in each week of the practicum course which lasts for 12 weeks, TTs are required to prepare lesson plans in line with the curriculum developed by the Ministry of Education and present the lessons in front of the mentors, supervisors and other TTs in the schools they are assigned to. The supervisor normally observes each TT once or twice during the semester but TTs have to fill out the observation tasks, write weekly reflections and prepare lesson plans as well as materials to be submitted to their supervisors.

Practicum supervisors are English teacher trainers at the university preparing TTs for their teaching career. They observe TTs’ teaching practices, discuss the lessons during feedback sessions and support them in all phases of the practicum (Bailey, 2006). According to Intrator (2006), the support of the supervisor during the practicum course is crucial as this period is conflicting, dynamic and fragile. On the other hand, mentors to whom TTs are assigned for the practicum are “...experienced, successful and knowledgeable professional who willingly accepts the responsibility of facilitating professional growth...” of TTs (Hutto, Holden, & Haynes, 1991, p. 79). In addition, school administrators of the host school assign mentors to the TTs placed to these schools by their supervisors and do the practicum-related procedural work required by the Ministry of Education.

#### 3.2. Participants

At the end of the academic year when all the requirements of the practicum course were completed by relevant stakeholders, all the school administrators in charge of the English practicum course and the English teachers who cooperated with TTs in various schools during the time of data collection or in earlier years were reached in the city where some of the data for the study was collected. While all the school administrators (N=11) participated in the study, 31 mentors volunteered to take part in the study. In addition, last year pre-service TTs (N=68) studying at two different state universities and supervisors (N=7) working in three state

universities in Turkey shared their opinions about the stress-generating factors in the practicum course. Finally, a group of high school students (N=28) taught by TTs participated in the study. Although the whole population of school administrators dealing with the practicum course took part in the study, only the TTs who came to class on the day when the data was collected filled out the open-ended survey. On the other hand, high school students who have experience with TTs were purposefully selected for the study while supervisors were selected through convenience sampling.

### **3.3. Data Collection and Analysis**

The data for the present qualitative study was collected by means of open-ended surveys or interviews based on the question “Are there any practicum-related problems causing stress for you, if yes, what are they?” Because their number was not very high, the supervisors and the school administrators were interviewed by the researcher about the stress-generating practicum-related factors for themselves. Also, ten of the mentors wanted to have face-to-face interviews with the researcher while the remaining preferred to respond on the survey sheet when they had time. The researcher took notes of the administrators, supervisors and mentors’ responses during the interviews because of some participants’ concerns about the tape recording of the interviews. On the other hand, as their number was higher, an open-ended survey including the purpose of the study and a space for participants to list the causes of stress for themselves was administered to TTs and to high school students at the end of a class hour towards the end of the second academic year.

The analysis of the survey was made by the researcher through content analysis to determine common themes in the participants’ responses, and the data was read and re-read to divide them into chunks of meaning with identifiable topics, taking the focus of the study into account (Miles & Huberman, 1994), namely practicum-related problems causing stress for the participants. All individual perspectives were analyzed and similar perspectives were grouped according to common themes. This analyzing technique can be described as cross-case analysis allowing researchers to group together responses from different participants to common question/s (Patton, 2002).

In the following part of the study, the findings are presented and participants’ comments written on the survey sheet are referred to with a number (e.g., Teacher Trainee 1: TT 1; Mentor 1: M 1; Student 1: S 1) to maintain anonymity. As interviews were not recorded, comments of the administrators, supervisors and some of the mentors were formulated in the form of indirect statements.

## **4. FINDINGS**

The results of the study are presented under five main categories as the stress generating factors for the school administrators, mentors, teacher trainees, students and supervisors.

### **4.1. School Administrators**

Among 11 school administrators, only 4 expressed that they had felt stressed out because of certain reasons while the remaining 7 indicated that they did not encounter with any problems throughout the course. One of the school administrators drew attention to the way TT dressed for the practicum. He underlined the necessity for TTs to dress formally like mentor teachers when they visit schools for the practicum. Another administrator implied that the amount of money paid to school administrators in return for the paper work done for the practicum course is not satisfactory. He highlighted the need for an increase in the payments to the administrators doing all the administrative work required by the practicum. On the other hand, one administrator attracted attention to the lack of initial meetings with supervisors and TTs before the official practicum period started. He recommended that such meetings would minimize the stress on their

side because getting to know each other and being familiar with the school environment were very important for the TTs. Finally, one administrator stated that he might sometimes feel stressed out because of the tension between the mentors and the TTs in their schools.

#### 4.2. Mentors

Even though only two of the cooperating mentors claimed that they did not experience stress during the practicum, the remaining mentors justified why they felt stressed out. Nearly half of the mentors (N=13) stated that the paper work that needed to be handled by themselves and the TTs caused stress. There is a common concern among these mentors that there are lots of unnecessary forms to fill out and TTs' energy is mostly spent on these forms and reports instead of on their actual teaching performances. One of the relevant comments representative of other similar comments about the paper work required in the practicum is: "I spend most of my breaks filling in forms and this causes stress for me" (M 16).

On the other hand, 6 mentors indicated that some TTs lack motivation and do not display enthusiasm sufficiently enough to get maximum benefit from their practicum experience. To illustrate TTs' lack of motivation, one mentor commented as follows: "Some students repetitively ask for permission to leave the school earlier than scheduled by making up excuses, which shows their lack of interest in the course" (M 12). Related to this, 3 mentors also complained that some TTs sometimes came to class late, which distracted their attention and caused stress. Besides, 5 mentors commented that some TTs made only a little preparation for their teaching practice. These mentors suggested that more effort should be spent by the TTs in terms of preparation for the course. One of the mentors commented on this issue as follows: "I do not think that many of the trainees are well-equipped and prepared for their teaching practices" (M 5). Pertaining to TTs' low level of motivation, 5 mentors highlighted that TTs' lack of communication with themselves (e.g., not informing the mentor about whether they will not be able to come to class and not consulting with the mentor in advance about the materials they have prepared for their teaching practice) was the main cause of stress they experienced during the practicum. One of the mentors highlighted this point as follows: "When they do not come to school to observe classes or do practice teaching without letting me know, I have to revise my plan for that day" (M 18).

Another important aspect of the practicum causing stress for the mentors was some TTs' classroom management skills. Six mentors indicated that TTs had difficulty managing the class and handling discipline problems. For example, one of these mentors stated "When some trainees teach, a roaring noise spread in the classroom" (M 3). As for their lack of classroom managing skills, 2 mentors specifically touched on the issue of TTs' time management by asserting that some TTs had serious problems with regard to time management in their teaching practices. On the other hand, 6 mentors pointed out that the sudden negative change in the behavior of students when they were taught by the TTs also caused stress for themselves. According to these mentors, the change in the students' behavior is related to the perception of the TTs as "...not real teachers to listen to and to respect" (M 14). In terms of the classroom management of the TTs, 2 mentors discussed TTs' inappropriate use of their voice while teaching as a source of stress. From the perspective of these mentors, some TTs are not successful in adjusting their voice which is often unnecessarily very high "...as if they were shouting all the time" (M 7).

In addition to the classroom management skills of the TT, another common issue causing stress for the mentors is TTs' lack of knowledge about students' level of English. Four mentors complained that some TTs were not aware of the proficiency levels of the students they were teaching. One of these mentors said: "Most of my students find the lessons taught by trainees either very easy or sometimes very difficult, and I have to teach the same thing again later" (M 3). Relevant to TTs' lack knowledge about the students, two mentors pointed out that some TTs ignored individual differences among students while another mentor drew attention to TTs' lack of knowledge about the age-specific characteristics of students. One of these teachers exemplified

this issue as follows: “One of the trainees tried to present the lesson through the Red Little Riding Hood which is obviously not a good context for high school students” (M 13).

Another cause of stress for the mentors arises from being observed. Four mentors pointed out that they felt stressed out because of being observed by the TTs. One of these teachers made the relevant following comment: “The presence of another person in my class is not something I prefer” (M 9). Contrary to this view, two mentors thought that the time allocated for the observation of the mentor and TTs’ teaching practices are not sufficient, and one of these mentors even suggested that “the practicum course should start in the first year at the university, not in the last year” (M 2). Another cause of stress as two mentors raised was related to the lack of communication between the mentor and the supervisors while two mentors thought that the lack of financial support for the TTs to help them with the practicum-related expenses (e.g., materials) could sometimes be the cause of stress for the mentors. About the financial support, one of the mentors commented as follows: “There should be a small budget to be allocated to the trainees so that they can at least pay for the materials they use in their teaching practice” (M 7).

### **4.3. Teacher Trainees (TTs)**

During the practicum experience, the most active stakeholder is without doubt the TTs themselves. Except for five TTs indicating that the practicum is not stressful at all, an overwhelming majority of the participating TTs (N=63) shared the causes of stress for themselves. The most commonly mentioned cause of stress was connected to their classroom management skills. Twenty-one TTs underlined that they felt stressed out because of difficulty in maintaining classroom discipline. For instance, one of the TTs stated: “I feel stressed out as I am not very successful in controlling the students” (TT 29). Also related to classroom management, eight TTs specifically touched on their inability to manage time during teaching practices. One TT commented as follows about managing the time: “I always feel the need to check my watch to be able to finish the lesson on time” (TT 51). Moreover, seven TTs mentioned the lack of student respect for the TTs as they were not considered to be “real” teachers. To illustrate, one TT indicated: “Students do not think that we are real teachers and do not take us seriously” (TT 42). This point was also commented on by some mentors. Overcrowded classrooms (N=2) and not being able to predict problems in the class (N=2) were also mentioned as sources of stress negatively influencing TTs’ classroom management skills. Regarding classroom management, 2 TTs focused on their unsuccessful use of voice during teaching practices, which is another factor affecting their classroom management negatively.

Another common concern shared by many TTs was the amount of paper work (e.g., observations forms). Fifteen TTs claimed that there was a lot of paper work to complete in the practicum file to be submitted to the supervisor. One of the comments representative of other similar ones is as follows: “We have to fill in all the forms and write many reports before we submit our practicum file to our supervisors” (TT 12). Five TTs made comments especially on the lesson plans they had to prepare for each of their teaching practice. Preparing lessons plans was perceived as difficult and time consuming for these students. One of these TTs argued: “I do not think I will prepare lessons plans as detailed as the ones I prepare for the teaching practice in the practicum” (TT 7). Likewise, four TTs argued that they had other courses to study; however, the practicum course took most of their time. One of these TTs indicated: “I have only a little time for my other courses because of the practicum” (TT 44). As can be realized from the following comment, another source of stress resulting from the heavy load of the practicum course was the lack of time and concentration to study for KPSS (N=3), which is taken in the last year as a prerequisite exam to get a job in a state school in Turkey: “In the last year of the university, I need to spend most of my time studying for KPSS. If I cannot pass it and find a job, what is the point of studying at a university?” (TT 31).

Being observed by classmates, the mentor and the supervisor was considered by some TTs to be causes of stress in the practicum. 6 TTs indicated that they felt stressed out because of being observed by the supervisor. One of these TTs explained the reason of stress with the following words: "When my supervisor came to watch my teaching performance, I felt really stressed out" (TT 17). On the other hand, 4 TTs stated that being assessed by their supervisors only for once during the practicum experience was the source of stress. On the other hand, being observed by the mentor was mentioned as a stress-generating factor by 3 TTs, one of whom commented as follows: "Mentor teachers' observing and evaluating my teaching practice makes me stressed" (TT 39). Similarly, 2 TTs attracted attention to the stressful experience of being observed by classmates. Related to this, 2 TTs argued against the idea of videotaping the teaching practices, watching and critiquing the lessons together with their classmates and the supervisor as they thought that it was a stressful requirement of the practicum. One TT made the following comment regarding the videotaping of the lessons: "The idea of being videotaped for the purpose of being criticized by friends and supervisors irritates me" (TT 42).

Lack of support from the mentor, supervisor and the administrator as well as the lack of financial support for the TTs were other points some TTs mentioned as sources of stress during their practicum experience. For example, 13 TTs argued that they did not receive satisfactory support and feedback from their mentors. One of them stated: "Mentors may sometimes think we are substitute teachers and send us to the classroom with only little guidance and feedback" (TT 33). Additionally, 3 TTs thought that the expectation of the mentors from the TTs were very high. The lack of supervisor support for the TTs was also mentioned by 2 participants. Likewise, 3 TTs claimed that they did not have sufficient administrative support. In addition, 2 TTs thought that their mind seesawed between the mentor and the supervisor as their expectations had been different throughout their teaching practice. These students also called for more cooperation between the supervisor and the mentor. One of them commented: "There is a need for more cooperation between the mentors and the supervisors to be able to guide us better" (TT 46). On the other hand, like some mentors, 4 TTs voiced their concerns about the high cost of the materials they prepared for their teaching practices and recommended that there should be some kind of a financial support so that they could meet some of these expenses. One of these TTs stated: "Sometimes I cannot afford the materials I plan for my teaching practice, so some kind of support like a scholarship should be provided to practicum students" (TT 10).

There were also problems regarding the logistics of some schools where the practicum course was carried out. Among the issues raised were the faulty technological equipment and the unavailability of a room for TTs to spend time in breaks. Three TTs complained about the lack of technological equipment to utilize for teaching practice. One of these TTs commented as follows: "When the projector works, the computer does not work. Or when the speaker works, the projector does not work. There has always been a problem with the technological equipment in my classroom" (TT 9). On the other hand, as can be realized from the following comment, three TTs asserted that the unavailability of a room so that TTs can spend time during breaks caused stress for themselves: "I have to wait in the classroom, walk outside or around the school during breaks" (TT 3).

Similar to the concerns shared by some mentors, some TTs made comments about their unfamiliarity with students' proficiency levels. Believing that they either overestimated or underestimated students' English proficiency levels, 7 TTs felt stressed out due to students' low proficiency, especially their limited ability to speak English. For instance, one TT indicated: "Sometimes no students raise their hands to answer my questions and I do not know what to do" (TT 50). Similarly, 3 TTs stated that they had difficulty preparing materials suitable for the level of the students. Additionally, 2 TTs underlined the need to extend the practicum to four years rather than the last year to get to know students better.

#### 4.4. Students

Out of 28 students participating in this study, 19 stated that they did not have any problems because of the presence of TTs in their classes either for observation or teaching practice. Still, 9 students mentioned some problems causing stress for themselves. Three students argued that the way TTs corrected their mistakes was not appropriate because some TTs humiliated them while correcting mistakes. For example, one student stated: “Some of the trainees discourage us from speaking by making fun of us when we make a mistake” (S 3). Moreover, as mentioned by both some mentors and TTs, 2 students underlined the unnecessarily loud teaching voice of some TTs. One of them commented as follows: “Some trainees teach in a shouting manner” (S 22). Similar to the comments of some mentors and TTs about the lack of classroom management skills as a source of stress, another student attracted attention to some TT’s overreaction while managing the class as another source of stress for students: “When we chat with each other, some trainees can get very aggressive” (S 11). Also, like some mentors and students, two students thought that some TTs were not aware of their English levels and they could not understand some of the lessons presented by the TTs because of their lack of understanding of their levels. As one of them indicated: “Some lessons are repeated by the teacher as we cannot understand the lesson taught by some trainees well enough” (S 18).

#### 4.5. Supervisors

All the supervisors taking part in this study made some common comments with regards to the problems causing stress for themselves. Among these common issues, mentor-student conflict was emphasized by 4 supervisors as a stress-generating factor during the practicum. They thought that in case of a tension between the TT and the mentor, they felt stressed out. In the same vein, 2 supervisors highlighted mentors’ unwillingness to cooperate as the source of stress. Likewise, one supervisor felt stressed out because some mentors sometimes scorn and even yell at students while they are observed by TTs, which might expose TTs to inappropriate way of classroom conduct. In addition to the problems stemming from the mentor-TT relationship, supervisors’ heavy work load in other courses and their responsibilities in the practicum course were mentioned as other causes of stress. Being aware of the fact that visiting schools and observing TTs for once or twice is not sufficient, 2 supervisors thought that giving detailed feedback on the TTs’ teaching, checking observation reports and many other practicum-related documents caused stress while they have other courses to make preparation and teach. Furthermore, it was claimed by one supervisor that administrative procedures sometimes delayed the timely supervision of the course, and another supervisor stated that some administrators did not arrange rooms for the supervisor-TT meetings at schools. Regarding TTs’ motivation, one supervisor argued that some TTs did not display the required amount of motivation and enthusiasm for the practicum course while another supervisor believed that the reason why TTs could not spend enough time for the practicum was because of their other courses and exam preparation.

### 5. DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

The results of the study showed that although most of the school administrators and students expressed that they did not feel stressed because of the practicum; most of the mentors, supervisors and TTs explained the reasons why they became stressed out during the practicum experience.

Mentors’ concerns can be categorized into five: the high amount of paper work (e.g., forms and tasks to be completed by the TT and the mentor), lack of TT motivation and interest in the practicum, TTs’ poor classroom management skills, TTs’ unfamiliarity with students’ English levels and age and being observed by the TTs. Lack of communication feasibility between the supervisor and the mentor along with the poor relationship between the mentor and the TT are also among factors causing stress for some mentors. Similar to these findings, the stress-



generating factors from the perspective of TTs can be grouped into six: poor classroom management skills, the high amount of paper work, being observed by classmates, mentors and the supervisors, lack of mentor and supervisor support as well as the lack of financial support to meet practicum-related expenses, not being able to estimate students' levels and logistical constraints of the schools. Sources of stress for the supervisors can be summarized with the following key words: mentor-student conflict, heavy work load, lack of TT motivation and enthusiasm about the practicum. On the other hand, concerns emphasized by students taught by TTs can be listed as follows: overreaction during the teaching practices, humiliating students while correcting mistakes, continuous use of loud voice while teaching and not being aware of students' English levels.

Corroborating with the finding that classroom management is a source of stress for different stakeholders, many research studies confirms that maintaining appropriate classroom management is a difficult component of practicum causing stress (Rieg, Paquette, & Chen, 2007; Kim & Kim, 2004; Reupert & Woodcock, 2010; Merç, 2011). Murray-Harvey et al. (2000) also indicate that student teachers are highly concerned with their abilities in managing the time and managing the class. The classroom management as a factor causing stress is justified by some mentors and TTs who pointed out that the reason why TTs have difficulty in managing the classroom may be because of the fact that TTs are not considered to be real teachers. This finding is also supported by Kyriacou and Stephens (1999).

In terms of the high amount of paper-work and thus the difficulty of having a balance between other courses and the practicum from the perspective of various stakeholders participating in this study, the literature yielded similar results. According to Fogarty and Yarrow (1994), heavy workload in the practicum, the number of assignments and activities are the causes of stress for TTs. Both some mentors and supervisors participating in this study implies that among many other works to do related to other courses, allocating the ideal amount of time to give feedback to students is difficult; therefore, more time should be spent for the practicum while reducing other responsibilities. As for being observed as another cause of stress for the participants of this study, many studies (Merç, 2004; Murray-Harvey et al., 2000; Kyriacou & Stephens, 1999; Kim & Kim, 2004) found similar results.

Regarding the link between the university and the school, some participants in this study expressed their dissatisfaction with the TT-mentor, supervisor-mentor or the TT-supervisor relationships. According to the research, the school-university partnership is described as one of the most important dimensions of the practicum that can result in the success or failure of a practicum course (Graham, 2006; Zeichner, 2010) because only through the cooperation development of university and school relationships through the process of universities and the school where TTs go for their practicum experience, the gap between theory and practice can be bridged. Only if the relationship among all the stakeholders both from the university side (TTs, supervisors) and the school side (administrators, mentors, students) can an ideal practicum environment be created for TTs (Farrell, 2008) and the stress arising from the practicum could be handled through the cooperation of these stakeholders (Brannan & Bleistein, 2012). The importance of communication feasibility between the TTs and the mentors was also highly emphasized in the literature (Farrell, 2008; Mann & Tang, 2012; Hudson, 2004).

In line with some of the major findings of the study and relevant literature, this paper can be concluded with the following suggestions so that a practicum course including a low amount of stress for different stakeholders can be developed:

1. Because of the lack of perceived communication feasibility among stakeholders involving in the practicum experience taking part in this study, it could be suggested that the cooperation between the school and the trainees' educational institution should be

maintained (Kelly et al., 2004; Atay, 2007; Murray-Harvey et al., 2000; Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Ong'ondo & Jwan, 2009). According to Atay's (2007) findings, the practicum helped TTs to improve their teacher efficacies when the practicum program was carried out in collaboration with TTs, mentors and supervisors. Regarding the coordination between supervisors and mentors, Bailey (2006) maintains that both stakeholders should work in close cooperation for the success of the practicum. The close relationship between the TT, the supervisor and the mentor is also essential for the alleviation of the stress mentors and TTs experience because of being observed (Murray-Harvey et al., 2000).

2. As more time is needed by the TTs to get used to the school environment and the teaching profession in general, it is suggested that duration of the practicum course should be extended in English teacher preparation programs (Guyton & McIntyre, 1990; Enginarlar, 1996; Lee & Loughran, 2000). As also recommended by Atay (2007), the practicum course is more effective when its duration is extended to one year rather than one semester. Moreover, because some of the supervisors, TTs and mentors complained about the amount of work to do within the practicum course as also highlighted by Stephens (1996), it would be a wise decision to scatter the course into two semesters and no other responsibilities should be given to these stakeholders so that they can only focus on the practicum. Most importantly, TTs should be given the awareness that pre-service teacher education is not something limited to the practicum; instead, it should be perceived as a continuous process leading to lifelong learning (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2010).
3. Considering that TTs are generally assigned to do their practicum in either primary or secondary schools, it can be suggested that they should be prepared to teach in both levels and have practicum experience in both (Enginarlar, 1996) because most TTs do not know where they will be teaching. To help TTs alleviate stress arising from their lack of awareness about students' levels, Evers (2004) also underlines the need to expose TTs to diverse observation and teaching experiences in a wide range of school contexts and to a variety of students to help them become more aware of students' levels and age-specific characteristics.
4. As understood from the comments of some TTs, some mentors were not very cooperative enough and did not give proper feedback to TTs. For instance, some students believe that the way TTs correct their mistakes are not appropriate and even humiliating. In this case, mentors should highlight the need for a more acceptable way of error correction such as "embedded correction". It is argued that the quality of the mentoring is vital as a means of teacher development; consequently, mentors should be trained to realize the importance of the practicum course for TTs and to be aware of their responsibilities in this course (Arnold, 2006; Merç, 2004; Bourke, 2001). Similarly, Kelly et al. (2004) recommend that training mentors in how to mentor will increase the chances for TTs to learn more from their practicum experience. Furthermore, the school administrators should assign TTs to experienced teachers who voluntarily accept to cooperate with TTs (Hutto et al., 1991) and in the process of selecting the mentors, the school administrator should consider some of the roles attributed to mentors such as motivating, sharing, influencing and counseling (Kay & Hinds, 2002) as well as characteristics such as being honest, reflective and sensitive (Brooks, Sikes & Husbands 1997).

5. Considered to be one of the major stress-generating factors from the perspective of different stakeholders, classroom management is an area in need of improvement in the English teacher education programs. It would be fair to assert that there is a need for new courses to improve students' managerial competence so that TTs can deal with possible problems they might experience in their future working environments (Coşkun & Daloğlu, 2010; Reed, 1989). Investigating the current curriculum in English teacher education programs, Coşkun and Daloğlu (2010) came to the conclusion that there is only one course called "Classroom Management" directly related to students' managerial competence.

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### Uzun Özet

Bu makalede İngilizce öğretmenlik uygulaması dersine müdahil olan tüm paydaşların bu ders boyunca yaşadıkları stres yaratan sorunları açığa çıkarmaktır. Bu amaç için nitel bir veri toplama modeli oluşturulmuştur ve veriler açık uçlu anketler veya mülakatlar yoluyla toplanmıştır. Her iki araç için üzerinde durulan soru “Öğretmenlik uygulaması dersi sizin üzerinizde herhangi bir stres yaratmakta mıdır? Evetse, bu stresin sebepleri nelerdir?” olmuştur. İngilizce öğretmenliği son sınıf öğrencilerinin öğretmenlik uygulaması dersi için gittiği bu araştırmanın yapıldığı yerdeki okullarda görev yapan bu dersle ilgilenen 11 okul yöneticisi ve İngilizce öğretmenlik uygulaması dersinde danışmanlık yapmış olan 31 İngilizce öğretmeni bu çalışmaya katılmıştır. Ayrıca, öğretmen adaylarının derslerine katılan 28 lise öğrencisi ve bu dersi yürüten üç farklı üniversitede görev yapan 7 öğretim üyesi danışman bu dersle ilgili stres yaratan sorunları dile getirmiştir. Son olarak, iki farklı devlet üniversitesinin İngilizce öğretmenliği öğrencilerinden verilerin toplandığı gün sınıflarında olanlardan öğretmenlik uygulaması dersiyle ilgili yaşadıkları stres yaratan sorunları yazmaları istenmiştir. Toplanan veriler içerik analizi yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir ve öğretmenlik uygulaması dersinin okul yöneticileri açısından pek fazla stres yaratmadığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Ancak bazı öğretmen adaylarının uygun olmayan kıyafetler giymeleri, yöneticilerin bu dersle ilgili yaptıkları çalışmalarının karşılığı olan ücretin düşüklüğü ve dönem başında bazı öğretmen adayları ve danışmanlarıyla toplantı yapılamaması okul yöneticileri için stres yaratan sorunlar arasında yer almıştır. Bunlara ek olarak, öğretmen adayların okullardaki danışman öğretmenleriyle gerilim yaşamaları bir okul yöneticisi için strese yol açmıştır. Öğretmen adaylarının derslere girdiği bir sınıftaki öğrencilerin çoğu da okul idarecilerinin büyük bir kısmı gibi öğretmenlik uygulaması dersiyle ilgili herhangi bir sıkıntı yaşamadıklarını ileri sürmüşlerdir. Fakat bu öğrencilerin bazıları açısından stres kaynakları şu şekilde özetlenebilir: bazı öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik uygulamaları esnasında aşırı reaksiyon vermeleri, öğrencilerin hatalarını düzeltirken onları aşağılayan bir tutum takınmaları, devamlı yüksek sesle ders anlatmaları ve öğrencilerin seviyelerinin farkında olmamaları.

Okullardaki bazı danışman öğretmenler ise bu ders için çok fazla evrak işinin olduğunu ve bu yüzden öğretmen adaylarının zamanının büyük bir kısmının staj dosyasında yer alan gözlem formu gibi formların doldurulmasıyla geçtiğini ifade etmişlerdir. Ayrıca, bazı öğretmenler okul uygulaması dersi için kendileriyle çalışan öğretmen adaylarının motivasyon ve ilgilerinin düşük olduğunu ve bu durumun kendilerinde strese yol açtığını savunmuşlardır. Öte yandan, bazı danışman öğretmenler, öğretmen adaylarının zayıf sınıf yönetimi sergilediklerini ve öğrencilerin seviyesine ve yaşına aşına olmadıklarını ileri sürmüşlerdir. Öğretmen adayları tarafından gözlemlenmek de bazı danışman öğretmenler için stres yaratan bir durum oluşturmuştur. Son olarak, üniversite danışmanları ve danışman öğretmenler arasındaki iletişim eksikliği ve bazı öğretmen adaylarının okuldaki danışman öğretmenleriyle olan zayıf iletişimi öğretmenler için stres yaratan diğer sorunlar olarak karşımıza çıkmıştır.

Uygulama dersini alan öğretmen adayları tarafından da benzer sorunların kendileri için strese neden olduğu ifade edilmiştir. Örneğin, öğretmen adaylarının bir kısmı kendilerinin zayıf sınıf yönetimi becerilerine ve ders anlatımı süresince zamanı iyi ayarlayamamalarına değinerek bu noktalarda yaşadıkları strese dikkat çekmişlerdir. Bazı aday öğretmenler ise sınıf disiplinini sağlayamamalarının nedenini öğrenciler tarafından “gerçek öğretmen” olarak algılanmamalarıyla ilişkilendirmişlerdir. Bununla birlikte, yapılması gereken evrak işlerinin çokluğu, her ders için ders planı hazırlama, sınıf arkadaşları, okuldaki danışman öğretmenler ve üniversitedeki danışmanları tarafından gözlemlenmek öğretmen adaylarında stres yaratan diğer sorunlar olmuştur. Okuldaki ve üniversitedeki danışmanlarından yeterli desteği alamamak, uygulama dersi için yaptıkları harcamalara ilişkin finansal bir desteğin olmaması, öğrencilerin seviyelerini tahmin edememek ve okullardaki lojistik sıkıntılar İngilizce öğretmen adayları için stres yaratan diğer problemler olarak listelenebilir. Öte yandan, okul öğretmenleri ve öğretmen adayları arasındaki çatışmalar, öğretmenlik uygulaması dersinin yanı sıra yürütülmesi gereken diğer dersler ve görevlerden ötürü ağır iş yükü altında kalmaları ve öğretmen adaylarının uygulama dersiyle ilgili motivasyon eksikliği üniversitede görev yapan danışman öğretim üyeleri için strese neden olmuştur.

Yukarda özetlenen stres yaratan sorunlarla ilgili bazı tavsiyeler de bulunulabilir. Bu tavsiyeler, ilgili paydaşların streslerini azaltmak için bazı önlemler almalarına yardımcı olabilir. Mesela, üniversite-okul işbirliği sağlanarak ve sistemli bir şekilde koordinasyon kurularak birçok sorundan kurtulmak mümkündür. Ayrıca, okullardaki öğretmenlerin bu dersin daha verimli geçmesi için eğitilmeleri ve daha işbirlikçi bir tutum içinde dersi sahiplenmeleri sağlanmalıdır. Okullardaki danışman öğretmenlerin yöneticiler tarafından seçiminde ise öncelik gönüllü olarak danışmanlığı kabul eden öğretmenlere verilmelidir. Bunun yanı sıra, uygulama dersinin süresi ve kapsamı genişletilerek bu ders en azından bir dönem yerine bir akademik yıla yayılmalı ve öğretmen adaylarının farklı seviyelerden ve yaş gruplarından öğrencilere ders vermesi sağlanmalıdır. Ayrıca, öğretmenlik uygulaması dersi tüm paydaşlar için belli bir yoğunluk gerektirdiğinden özellikle danışman öğretmenlerin ve üniversite öğretim üyelerinin ders saatleri azaltılmalı ve bu sayede bu paydaşların bu derse daha çok zaman harcaması ve öğretmen adaylarını daha iyi yönlendirmeleri sağlanmalıdır. Çoğu paydaşın da ifade ettiği gibi, öğretmen adayları sınıf yönetimi açısından ciddi sorunlar yaşamaktadır. Bu sebepten kaynaklı sorunların çözümü için İngilizce öğretmenliği bölümlerinde daha fazla sınıf yönetimi ağırlıklı dersler verilmesi önerilmektedir. Bazı aday öğretmenler ise üniversite danışmanları tarafından kısa bir süreliğine gözlemlenip değerlendirilmeleriyle ilgili sıkıntıları dile getirmişlerdir. Bir veya iki kez gözlem yapıp öğrenci performansını sadece bu derslerle sınırlandırarak değerlendirmek yerine, süreç odaklı ve en azından 4-5 defa farklı günler ve haftalarda gözlemler yapıp öğrencinin öğretmenlik performansı bu şekilde değerlendirilmedi. Son olarak, aday öğretmenlerin okul uygulaması dersi için yaptıkları harcamaları göz önünde bulundurarak, bu harcamaların en azından bir kısmının karşılanması öğretmen adaylarındaki maddi zorluklardan kaynaklı stresini azaltabilir.

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