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DESCRIPTIVE VERSUS DIALOGIC REFLECTION AND POSITIVE VERSUS NEGATIVE STANCE IN THE REFLECTIVE WRITING OF TURKISH PROSPECTIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

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Abstract: While there is a wide body of research that reports the benefits of engaging prospective English Language teachers in reflection during the practicum courses of their teacher education, there are relatively few studies which describe the nature of prospective teachers written reflections on examples of their own teaching during campus-based methodology courses. However, it has been suggested that engaging prospective English Language teachers in reflective practice early on in their teacher education could be beneficial in helping them to develop their critical thinking skills and to make the most of their future teaching experiences. Thus, the current study was conducted to describe the individual reflective profiles emerging from the analysis of the written reflections of 28 Turkish prospective English Language teachers on a video-recorded microteaching experience carried out as part of a methodology course. A mixed method approach was adopted to this aim. First, qualitative analysis of the written reflections revealed reflective categories showing how the participants reflected on their teaching experience. Second, frequency analysis was used to reveal the distribution of these reflective categories for each participant. The data analysis showed that the individual participants displayed different patterns of reflection in terms of descriptive and dialogic reflection, and positive and negative stance.

Keywords: Reflective practice, reflective writing, English language teaching, prospective teachers

Özet: Öğretmenlik Uygulaması derslerinde yansıtıcı düşünce ile yaklaşmanın İngilizce öğretmen adaylarına sağladığı faydalar pekçok çalışmanın konusu olmuştur. Ancak, üniversitedeki metodoloji derslerinde yazılan yansıtmalar üzerinde henüz çok fazla araştırma yapılmamıştır. Oysa İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının öğretmenlik eğitimlerinin ilk dönemlerinden başlayarak yansıtıcı düşünmeyi öğrenmeleri, eleştirel düşünce becerilerini geliştirebileceği çeşitli çalışmalarda rapor edilmiştir. Bu doğrultuda yapılan bu çalışma ile, Türkiye'de öğretmenlik eğitimi alan 28 İngilizce öğretmen adayının, eğitimlerin üçüncü yılında aldıkları bir metodoloji dersinde yazdıkları yansıtmaların özellikleri ortaya konulmaya çalışılmıştır. Araştırmada, karmaşık araştırma yöntemi uygulanmıştır. İlk olarak, yazılı yansıtmaların nitel analizi yapılıp ortaya çıkan yansıtıcı temalar tespit edilmiş. İkinci olarak da yansıtıcı temaların her bir İngilizce öğretmen adayı için dağılımlarını gösterecek frekans analizi yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın sonucunda, betimsel/analitik yansıtıcı düşünce ile pozitif/negatif bakış konularında her bir İngilizce öğretmen adayının farklılık gösterdiği tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Yansıtıcı uygulama, yansıtıcı yazma, İngilizce öğretmenliği, aday öğretmenler

Introduction

Reflective practice (hereafter, RP) has dominated the literature of English Language Teaching (hereafter, ELT) teacher education over the past twenty years following the emergence of the postmethod era (Kumaravadivelu, 1994, 2001). This new age in the field was characterised by a move away from the search for a perfect foreign language teaching method to the recognition of the complexity of the foreign language/teaching process. In the spirit of this

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change, RP seemed to be the ideal approach to teacher education, because it gives teachers a central role in their own development (Freeman, 2002; Richards, 2008; Wallace, 1991).

Despite the recent popularity of RP in mainstream and ELT teacher education, no agreement has been reached on the definition of reflection, and furthermore on its teachability. The most frequently cited definitions are those of Dewey (1991/1933) and Schön (1991/1983), which as Fendler (2003) pointed out, are contradictory. While Dewey emphasised scientific rationality, Schön saw reflective thinking as an artistic and intuitive process. However, drawing on the ideas of a number of researchers, it is possible to describe RP as the cognitive and affective engagement with practical experiences to avoid making impulsive, routine decisions with the view to learning and professional development (Boud, 2001; Brookfield, 1995; Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004; Farrell, 2007).

Many studies carried out in both mainstream and ELT teacher education have distinguished between descriptive reflection, which provides an account of events; dialogic, or analytic, reflection, which searches for reasons, provides alternatives and evaluates the result of teaching; and critical reflection, in which the larger socio-political context is taken into account. The general consensus is that dialogic and critical reflective are more conducive to development than descriptive reflection (see, e.g. Collier, 1999; Davis, 2006; Hall, 1997; Hatton & Smith, 1995; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Stanley, 1998; Ward & McCotter, 2004; Watts & Lawson, 2009).

The assumption behind these frameworks is that RP can be taught. However, whether or not RP is teachable is a matter of ongoing debate. Some have suggested that all teachers reflect naturally (Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Others have remarked that RP cannot and should not be taught directly (Edwards & Thomas, 2010), because this would be reducing it to the technical rationality that Schön (1991/1983) had originally criticised in his argument for RP. In addition, Fendler (2003) argued against the concept of a hierarchical order of reflection, believing that such an evaluation has a 'disciplinary or socialising effect' (2003, p. 20) which ultimately undermines the goal of reflection, which is to empower teachers

On the other hand, some have argued that disposition to reflect depends on a number of psychological and personality traits (see, e.g. Richards, Gipe, Levitov & Speaker, 1989), and even that humans are not genetically predisposed to reflect and so reflective thinking should be taught (Gelter, 2003). Referring to the context of teacher education, Yost, Sentner and Forlenza-Bailey (2000) noted that prospective teachers did not receive sufficient educational preparation for reflective thinking, commenting that many prospective teachers held narrow views of knowledge as discrete pieces of information, a mindset which 'is diametrically opposed to the type of thinking required of a reflective practitioner' (p. 46). Similarly, Russell (2005) remarked that many of his prospective teachers did not take the reflective components of their education seriously. They also wanted to be told how to reflect, rather than be told about reflection. Thus, he argued that RP should be taught 'explicitly, directly, thoughtfully and patiently' (Russell, 2005, p. 203). This stance has been echoed in the Turkish context by researchers who have found that, without guidance, prospective teachers tend to reflect entirely descriptively (Kocoglu et al., 2008; Yayli, 2009) or over-exaggerate positive and negative aspects of their teaching (Gün, 2011).

In the current study, I have taken this second line of argument. In Turkey, prospective teachers are admitted to undergraduate level initial teacher preparation programmes, and then appointed to posts in schools after graduation by means of centrally-administered

examinations consisting entirely of multiple choice items, which by their nature emphasise discrete knowledge and correct answers coming from a source of authority. While in Western university contexts students are expected to be responsible for their own progress (see, e.g. Sim, 2007), Demirtaş and Sert (2010) reported that learner-centred activities were not usually practiced effectively in tertiary-level Turkish language classrooms, and that Turkish students of English in general did not take on the responsibility for their own learning. More specifically to English language teacher education, Rakıcıoğlu (2005) found that Turkish prospective ELT teachers believed knowledge came from an authority and was learned quickly without questioning, rather than being personally, socially and critically constructed. Sert (2006) also found that Turkish prospective ELT teachers struggled to monitor their own learning and that their ability for reflection needed improving.

RP has brought about an important change in the view of teacher learning, which is now accepted to be a socially negotiated process that takes place within a context, rather than the translation of knowledge and theories into practice (Richards, 2008). Hence, RP takes into consideration the contribution of the past experiences (e.g. Romano, 2006), personal practical knowledge (e.g. Tsang, 2004) and the ability to anticipate potential teaching-related problems (see, e.g. Boud, 2001; Freese, 2006) of prospective teachers and allows them to apply this accumulation to their own practical contexts. Some researchers (see, e.g. Freeman, 2002) have commented that the knowledge base of the campus-based methodology courses cannot always help prospective teachers deal with every aspect of their own particular teaching context. The proverbial gap between theory and practice can be wider in countries like Turkey, where the educational culture is different to that of the countries from which the predominant theoretical knowledge base of the field has emerged (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003). In an attempt to reduce this gap, since 1998, all teacher education programmes in Turkey have given more emphasis to school-based practicum courses in the final year of study to act as a transition between university and real-life (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003; YÖK, 2007; Alpan & Erdamar, 2011). Their aim is to provide prospective teachers with the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge to realistic teaching contexts and reflect on their practice before they graduate. However, prospective teachers often still find it difficult to apply what they have learned during their campus-based courses to these practical courses. One reason for this could be the fact that they are not sure about how to reflect because they have not received any instructions on how to do so during their teacher education (see, e.g. Sert, 2006; Gün, 2011). Thus, the campus-based methodology courses themselves could be conducted in a way appropriate to RP in order to provide an internal transition between the campus-based and school-based components of teacher education.

RP provides many ways for prospective teachers to reflect on their practice, one of which is reflective writing (Brookfield, 1995; Farrell, 2007). According to Yost et al. (2000), writing is used in teacher education to encourage PSTs to make connections between what they learn on campus-based courses and their practical experiences, thus enhancing their reflective abilities. Many other researchers in general education have reported the benefits of using different forms of reflective writing in teacher education (e.g. Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Bullough & Baughman, 1996; Collier, 1999; Freese, 2006; Davis, 2006; Watts & Lawson, 2009). There have also been a number of studies carried out with PSTs in the field of ELT showing that reflective writing can be beneficial during practicum in teacher education (Ho & Richards, 1993; Numrich, 1996; Tsang, 2003; Lee, 2007; Luk, 2008; Kocoglu et al., 2008).

Despite the recent research on reflective writing in practicum contexts, there appears to be a gap in the research on reflective writing of prospective ELT teachers in campus-based

courses. In the Turkish context, Arikan (2006) reported the benefits of including reflection on field-related content matter in the Writing skills course of the English Language Teaching programme of a Turkish university. In a study using reflective journals during the Listening and Pronunciation course, Yayli (2009) found that while the participants benefitted from the process of writing a reflective journal, they did not generally reflect beyond a descriptive level, suggesting that explicit instruction was needed for them to do so. In a previous study (Yeşilbursa, 2011), I investigated how and on what of a group of Turkish prospective ELT teachers reflected in their written reflections following a video-recorded microteaching experience carried out during a methodology course. Similar to the findings of Kocoglu et al. (2008) and Yayli (2009), I found that while a majority of the reflection could be considered as descriptive, there was evidence that the prospective teachers were reflecting on their practice dialogically, and that they framed their reflections using positive and negative stances. Similarly, I found that while the reflection was largely on the theme of self, the participants also reflected on their peers, and that some drew on their past experiences and anticipated future practical problems.

Although the Yeşilbursa (2011) study provided a profile for the group of prospective ELT teachers as a whole, as Davis (2006) points out, such quantitative results do not tell the entire story. Reflection is an essentially unique process for each individual (Collier, 1999; Farrell, 2001), hence the present study aims to investigate the written reflections of the Yeşilbursa (2011) more deeply to reveal the individual reflective profiles of the PSTs in terms of descriptive and dialogic reflection, and positive and negative stance. The literature discussed in the Introduction has suggested that dialogic and critical reflection are more conducive to professional development, and that exaggeratedly positive or negative reflections can act as a hindrance. Thus, it is believed that describing these profiles would provide both the individual prospective teachers and myself as their lecturer with valuable information on their reflective processes before they begin their practicum courses. The following research question was formulated to this aim: 'What patterns emerge from the individual profiles of the prospective ELT teachers in terms of descriptive and dialogic reflection, and positive and negative stance?'

The Context

The English Language Teaching (ELT) programme offered by the departments of Foreign Language Education of the Faculties of Education is a 4-year long undergraduate programme leading to a BA degree. Admission to the programme requires completion of Turkish secondary education, or a foreign equivalent, and attainment of the required score on the national university entrance examination (see Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003). Graduates from the programme are employed in Ministry of National Education primary and secondary schools, universities or in the private sector.

As with all teacher education programmes in Turkey, the ELT programme is determined by the Turkish Higher Education Council (hereafter, HEC). The programme currently in operation was introduced in the autumn semester of the 2006-2007 academic year (see YÖK 2007). It aims to provide a solid foundation in the major theoretical and methodological issues of ELT. The first three years consist entirely of campus-based courses with the emphasis moving gradually from theoretical to applied knowledge. The final year includes, but is not limited to, two school-based practicum courses run in cooperation with local Ministry of National Education schools.

The course involved in the current study was the Teaching Language Skills II (TLS II) course, the second part of a two-semester long ELT methodology course in the third year of study aimed at teaching the techniques and stages of teaching grammar, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. While HEC provides a general description for each course, material and teaching approach are left to the instructors. In the current study, I adopted a reflective approach to the course and supported theoretical readings and discussions with weekly guided observations (Wajnryb, 1992) of video-recorded language skills lessons given by the instructors in the department, including myself. During the observations, I drew the participants' attention to both effective and ineffective teacher behaviour, the outcomes of this behaviour and possible alternative actions. Thus, in addition to presenting the required course content, I aimed to acquaint the prospective teachers with the reflective skills required of them in the practical courses of the final year.

The final assessment in the TLS II course included a microteaching activity of planning and executing a 40 minute language skills lesson in groups of three using materials of the participants' own choice. The lessons were recorded by the participants themselves using their own digital cameras, thus the responsibility for recording was passed into their own hands rather than being imposed by the instructor. The final portfolios included the microteaching documents: a lesson plan, the video-recording on a CD, a transcription of their own part of the lesson aimed at raising the awareness of their classroom language and positioning in the classroom, and a computer-printed written reflection, in English, on their own performance.

Method

Participants

This study was conducted in the spring term of the 2009-2010 academic year in the ELT programme of a large university in the Western Black Sea region of Turkey. The participants were 28 regular-section students (22 female, 6 male) aged between 21 and 24 years (M = 21.5, SD = .96) in their third year of study. The mean Grade Point Average (GPA) for the group was 2.99 (SD = .43) on a scale of 4. All the participants were Turkish citizens and non-native speakers of English. Because they had been admitted to the programme on the basis of their scores on the foreign language component of the university entrance examination, their English language proficiency was assumed to be similar. None of them had had any formal teaching experience; although at the time of the data collection, they were all giving one-to-one English lessons to primary school pupils of underprivileged families as part of their Community Service course, and one had been teaching primary school pupils voluntarily for a charitable organisation for three years. The prospective teachers were all willing to participate in this study and they chose pseudonyms to protect their identity. They were reassured that the findings would be used for academic research only. All extracts provided in the current study are original in terms of spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Data Sources and Collection

The data of the current study were the reflections written by each participant after watching his/her video-recorded microteaching lessons. They were collected in the participants' portfolios, which they submitted as part of the final assessment at the end of term. 28 written reflections were subjected to the data analysis procedures. It must be mentioned that, unlike the data of previous journal studies (see, e.g. Arikan, 2006; Kocoglu et al. 2008; Yayli, 2009), these data do not represent the development of the participants' reflective processes over time, but rather a snap-shot of their reflection at a particular point in time.

Data Analysis

In the current study, I adopted a mixed method approach, a pragmatic approach to research design in which elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches are combined in a single study for the purpose of breadth and depth of understanding (see, e.g. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). More specifically, the data were initially analysed qualitatively to identify the emerging reflective and thematic categories. Then individual matrices were constructed for each participant showing the frequency of occurrence of these modes and themes. The data were prepared for analysis by scanning the computer-printed reflections and converting them into electronic documents. The data analysis procedure occurred in a number of steps, which are detailed as follows.

The initial step was to reduce the qualitative data (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) by content analysis, a technique in which the many words of a text are classified into fewer categories with similar meanings which are defined according to the focus of the research. The emerging categories were assigned codes which can then be subjected to quantitative analyses (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In this initial analysis, I took Ward and McCotter's (2004) liberal definition of reflection as 'any text focusing on a specific teaching action' (p. 248), since any event written about had been deliberately chosen by the participants as material for reflection. I read and re-read the data to divide them into chunks of meaning with identifiable topics, keeping in mind the focus of the study (Miles & Huberman, 1994), namely the manner and theme of reflection. I used the 'Add comment' facility of the computer software to assign each chunk with two codes. One was given according to the mode of reflection (hereafter, reflective category), and the second according to the content of reflection (hereafter, thematic category). The reflective categories were assigned by a top-down process using a reflective rubric I had previously developed (Yeşilbursa, 2008) in a study with a group of ELT teacher educators. The decision to use this rubric was made after the initial reading through the data. I preferred to use a self-developed reflective framework rather than ones already developed and published (e.g. Hatton & Smith, 1995; Ward & McCotter, 2004) because I wanted to reveal details which were not accounted for in these frameworks. For example, I was interested in whether reflection occurred specifically on solutions or reasons, and whether the participants had learned anything new about themselves as a result of the microteaching. Since teachers tend to exaggerate either on the positive or negative aspects of their lessons when asked to reflect (Gün, 2011), the R+ and R- categories were used to reveal whether the reflections showed evidence of a 'self-congratulatory' approach (Luk, 2008, p. 634); of blaming others (Watts & Lawson, 2009; Freese, 2006), or of 'self-laceration' (Brookfield, 1995) respectively. Table 1 shows the reflective categories that emerged from the initial qualitative analysis in the current study with examples from the data (language errors are original).

Table 1. Reflective categories with examples from the data

Category	Explanation
R	general reflection
Example	'In this lesson ,we talked about hospitals and made my friends do an activity called "At the Doctor' s Office"' (Ayça)
R+	positive reflection
Example	'I prepared a paper on which instructions are written. This was very helpful to me at the beginning of lesson.' (Efe)
R-	negative reflection
Example	'I couldn't show my exact performance in the lesson.' (Özge)
RR	reflection on reasons
Example	'because in this way, we saw our mistakes and criticized ourselves' (Sibel)
RS	reflection on solutions
Example	'I should try to increase my speed of speech and speak more fluently and rhythmically' (ElifK)
RN	reflection on new discoveries
Example	'I realised that I used "ok" many times' (Büşra)

The data were assigned thematic categories by bottom-up analysis, involving several readings of the data by the researcher and an independent coder, a research assistant from the same department as the researcher who was familiar with qualitative data analysis. After several conferences with the second independent coder, the coding system was modified to resolve any discrepancies. A final independent coding of 10% of the data revealed acceptable levels (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of 90% agreement for the set of reflective codes, and 95% for the set of thematic categories. However, since the scope of the current study does not cover the thematic categories, these will not be discussed any further.

In order to reveal the individual reflective patterns of the PSTs, I constructed a matrix showing the frequency of occurrence of the reflective categories for each participant. The emerging individual profiles are discussed by illustrating with relevant extracts from the data in the following section. For the purposes of the current study, and according to the literature discussed in the Introduction, I grouped the R, R+ and R- categories under the general category of 'descriptive' reflection, which has been defined as a general account of the events of a lesson. I also grouped the RR, RS and RN categories under the general category of 'dialogic' reflection, which has been defined as a search for reasons behind and alternatives to classroom actions and events. I also refer to the occurrence of the R+ and R- categories separately as 'positive' and 'negative' stance to capture any differences in how the participants frame their teaching.

Results

The findings of the frequency analysis are shown in Table 2. The table reveals a number of patterns in terms of descriptive/dialogic reflection and positive/negative stance, supporting Collier's (1999) and Farrell's (2001) observation of reflection as a unique, individual process. In this section, I will discuss the differences in terms of descriptive and dialogic reflection then positive and negative stance, giving examples from the data (all errors are original).

Table 2. Individual reflective profiles in terms of descriptive and dialogic reflection and positive and negative stance

Participants			Reflective category							
			Descriptive reflection				Dialogic reflection			
Name	Gender	GPA	R	R+	R-	Total	RR	RS	RN	Total
			f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)
Ayça	F	3.27	13 (37.14)	8 (22.86)	6 (17.14)	27(77.17)	5 (14.26)	1 (2.86)	2 (5.71)	8(22.83)
Özge	F	3.08	0	6 (31.58)	10 (52.63)	16 (84.21)	2 (10.53)	0	1 (5.26)	3(15.79)
Efe	M	2.96	1 (5.56)	2 (11.11)	6 (3.33)	9(20)	2 (11.11)	5 (2.78)	2 (11.11)	9(80)
Sibel	F	2.73	5 (25)	3 (15)	3 (15)	11(55)	4 (20)	3 (15)	2 (10)	9(45)
Caner	M	2.94	0	4 (15.38)	9 (34.62)	13(50)	4 (15.38)	7 (26.92)	2 (7.69)	13(50)
ElifK	F	3.25	3 (17.65)	6 (35.29)	2 (11.76)	11(64.70)	0	3 (17.65)	3 (17.65)	6(35.30)
Murtaza	M	2.25	4 (25)	2 (12.5)	3 (18.75)	9(46.25)	2 (12.5)	2 (12.5)	3 (18.75)	7(53.75)
Büşra	F	3.21	6 (18.18)	14 (42.42)	2 (6.06)	22(66.67)	8 (24.24)	1 (3.03)	2 (6.06)	11(33.33)
Şerafettin	M	2.79	3 (16.67)	0	4 (22.2)	7(38.87)	4 (22.2)	6 (33.33)	1 (5.56)	11(61.13)
Ayşegül	F	2.9	7 (31.82)	5 (22.73)	4 (18.18)	16(72.73)	0	3 (13.64)	3 (13.64)	6(27.27)
Naz	F	3.39	11 (42.31)	4 (15.38)	4 (15.38)	19(73.07)	7 (26.93)	0	0	7 (26.93)
Zerrin	F	3.5	4 (14.81)	8 (29.63)	5 (18.52)	17(62.96)	2 (7.41)	1 (3.70)	7 (25.92)	10(37.03)
Sercan	F	3.58	0	4 (44.44)	2 (22.22)	6(66.66)	2 (22.22)	0	1 (11.11)	3(33.33)
Gül	F	2.79	3 (13.64)	8 (36.36)	7 (31.82)	18(81.82)	2 (9.09)	1(4.55)	1(4.55)	4(18.19)
ZehraS	F	3.7	1 (5.56)	6 (33.33)	4 (22.22)	11(61.11)	4 (22.22)	1 (5.56)	2 (11.11)	7(38.89)
Gözde	F	3.29	4 (33.33)	6 (50)	2 (16.67)	12(100)	0	0	0	0
Rüzgar	F	2.37	5 (33.33)	4 (26.67)	2 (13.33)	11(73.33)	3 (20)	0	1 (6.67)	4(26.67)
Başak	F	3.05	3 (11.11)	8 (29.63)	8 (29.63)	19(70.37)	5 (18.52)	0	3 (11.11)	8(29.63)
Çiğdem	F	3.5	4 (14.81)	11 (40.74)	3 (11.11)	18(66.66)	3 (11.11)	1 (3.7)	5 (18.52)	9(33.33)
Ada	F	2.93	9 (26.47)	11 (32.35)	8 (23.53)	28(82.35)	2 (5.88)	3 (8.82)	1 (2.94)	6(17.64)
Özgür	M	2.07	3 (17.65)	3 (17.65)	6 (35.29)	12(60.59)	2 (11.76)	0	3 (17.65)	5(29.41)
Yağmur	F	2.85	7 (25.93)	9 (33.33)	2 (7.41)	18(66.66)	9 (33.33)	0	0	9 (33.33)
ElifA	F	3.35	4 (36.36)	0	6 (54.54)	10(90.9)	1 (9.09)	0	0	1 (9.09)
ZehraB	F	3.3	0	0	5 (38.46)	5 (38.46)	1 (7.69)	3 (23.08)	4 (30.77)	8(61.54)
Hüseyin	M	2.2	11 (32.35)	10 (29.41)	8 (23.53)	29(85.29)	3 (8.82)	0	2 (5.88)	5(14.70)
Hayat	F	2.6	2 (11.11)	9 (50)	5 (2.78)	16(63.89)	1 (5.56)	0	1 (5.56)	2(11.12)
ElifM	F	2.72	1 (4)	16 (64)	1 (4)	18(72)	4 (16)	1 (4)	2 (8)	7(28)
Çiçek	F	3.14	13 (27.66)	11 (23.40)	14 (29.79)	38(80.85)	2 (4.26)	0	7 (14.89)	9(19.15)
Total			127 (19.87)	178 (27.81)	147 (28.64)	452(76.32)	84 (13.15)	42 (6.58)	61 (9.55)	187(29.28)

Note: F=female; M=male; GPA=general point average; R=general reflection; R+=positive reflection; R-=negative reflection; RR=reflection on reasons; RR=reflection on solutions; RN=reflection on new discoveries;

Although a majority of the participants reflected more in a descriptive way than a dialogic way, supporting the findings of Kocoglu et al. (2008) and Yayli (2009), some of them displayed different patterns in doing so. Efe, for example, showed a balance between descriptive and dialogic reflection, with nine reflections in each category. Gözde and ElifA

reflected almost entirely in the descriptive mode, with ElifA only showing one instance of dialogic reflection. ZehraB reflected more dialogically, with 8 reflections out of 13 being in this category. Of her 8 dialogic reflections, 3 were related to new discoveries about herself, and 8 of them related to solutions. Şerafettin also reflected more dialogically, with 11 dialogic reflections in comparison to 7 descriptive reflections. 6 of these 11 dialogic reflections were related to solutions.

The fact that Gözde and ElifA reflected entirely in the descriptive mode suggested that they had not probed into their experiences beyond a statement and an evaluation of what had happened during the lesson. Ward and McCotter (2004) would argue that without deeper questioning of practice beyond the statement of whether a lesson went well or otherwise, informed change cannot take place. Interestingly, these two PSTs were high academic performers, with GPAs of 3.29 and 3.35 respectively, suggesting that academic achievement may not always be associated with reflective thinking (Yost et al., 2000), although it would be impossible to make any generalisations on the basis of two cases. In a later conversation with Gözde, she admitted that when she studied, she allotted an amount of time to each assignment in proportion to its weighting in the overall evaluation. Perhaps she did not regard the 10% assigned to the reflection as worth spending much valuable time on, hence the relatively short (12 reflections) written reflection. This finding echoes that of Russell (2005), who remarked that PSTs did not take reflection as seriously as other coursework. It also exemplifies the tension which occurs when reflection is subjected to assessment, as Boud (2001) warns. In the current context, in which the PSTs are from an educational background which gives more importance to received knowledge over experiential knowledge (Çakıroğlu & Çakıroğlu, 2003; Rakıcıoğlu, 2005), it suggests the necessity for clear assessment criteria to strike the balance between reflection for learning and development purposes, and reflection for performance.

ZehraB and Şerafettin reflected more predominantly in a dialogic way, but each to different purposes. ZehraB wrote a relatively short entry (13 reflections) which focused largely on negative discoveries about herself and what she should do about them. Şerafettin, on other hand, reflected on what had gone wrong during the lesson and focused on what he could have done to make it more effective. He opened his reflection as follows: 'For the reflection part I can tell a lot. First of all, honestly, I can make a better preparation for the lesson. If I could have done it, the lesson would have been in the required form and there wouldn't have been any unwanted instances during the lesson.' In a discussion with the researcher after his microteaching, he admitted that he had prepared the lesson hastily without cooperating with his teaching partners, Caner and Efe; and that he 'at least had a lot to write for the reflection', suggesting that some PSTs may see engaging in more dialogic reflections as an opportunity to compensate for poor performance.

Unlike other reflection rubrics (e.g. Ho & Richards, 1993; Ward & McCotter, 2004), the rubric used in the current study enabled the researcher to investigate the individual differences in terms of negative and positive stances of the prospective teachers. It was observed that 12 out of 28 PSTs (42.86%) made more positive reflections than they did negative; 13 (46.43%) made more negative reflections than they did positive; and 3 of the PSTs (10.71%) made an equal amount of positive and negative reflections.

Closer inspections of the findings in Table 2 revealed that an almost equal number of PSTs had reflected more positively than negatively as had vice versa. Of these two groups, the interesting examples are those which show a wider difference between the two stances. For example, only one of ElifM's 22 reflections was negative. Luk (2008) found that PSTs with

overly optimistic attitudes to their teaching were not necessarily high performers, since they often used their reflections to justify their practices. In ElifM's case, she also used a number of intensifiers, which Luk (2008) remarks as giving reflection an 'essentialist and over-simplistic tone that runs contrary to the spirit of reflection' (p. 637), for example 'I am very successful in explaining activities'. While, the researcher knows ElifM to be an enthusiastic teacher, these reflections could forewarn the potential adoption of a self-congratulatory approach (Luk, 2008; Ward & McCotter, 2004), which would not be conducive to future professional development (Gün, 2011).

On the other hand, 5 of the 13 PSTs reflecting more negatively did so to a greater degree. Efe, Şerafettin and Caner, who were microteaching partners, displayed more negative reflections, because of their self-admitted badly coordinated lesson. Interestingly, the other 2 PSTs reflecting predominantly more negatively were ElifA, who had also reflected predominantly in a descriptive mode, and ZehraB, who had shown more dialogic reflections on new discoveries and solutions. In ElifA's case, the negative expressions were directed towards her peers rather than herself. She opened her entry negatively, and assigned the blame of what she thought was a bad performance to the disinterest of her friends. Here is the opening of her reflection:

'I couldn't tell the lesson was good. First of all, I was very anxious when I started to the lesson, even my hands were trembling while I was showing the story. Secondly, I saw many friends not interested in what I was saying … After I saw these behaviours, I only wanted to finish the presentation as quickly as possible… If they hadn't been my friends or if they had been real students, the situation would have not been so. I would have asked reasons and justifications insistently and they would have answered the questions voluntarily.'

The extract shows that ElifA took a negative stance right from the beginning, and her anxieties were exacerbated when she thought that her friends were not listening to her. Her conclusion was that her performance would have been better had she been in front of a real class, which could be interpreted as a projection into the hypothetical future. ElifA could have been reacting, not reflecting (Gün, 2011), which is typical of a prospective teacher at the early stages of professional development (Collier, 1999). However, Freese (2006) reports that emotions such as fear, anger and frustration can hinder professional growth, so raising PSTs' awareness of these tendencies early on in their teacher education would be beneficial.

ZehraB, on the other hand, directed her negative feelings toward herself. She started off her reflection as follows: 'At first, I did not want to watch the video because I feel something different while I am watching myself. I thought I did not perform well. Anyway I started watching it, I saw that I was using my hands too much.'

First she commented on how she was not eager to watch herself on the video, and then she listed a number of problems she had found, including her gestures, the ungrammaticality of her instructions, the pace of her speech and how she had not spent enough time with the groups during group work. As mentioned earlier, ZehraB engaged in dialogic reflection when reflecting on these negative aspects, suggesting the potential to turn this experience into an opportunity to learn, rather than one to pass the blame onto others or to blame herself unnecessarily (Brookfield, 1995).

Discussion and Conclusion

This article has presented the findings of a mixed-method study which set out to determine the individual reflective profiles of a group of ELT PSTs following a video-recorded microteaching experience using a rubric developed by the researcher. Initial qualitative

analyses revealed the different reflective modes and themes of reflection in the writing. Individual matrices conducted for each participant showed that the PSTs reflected differently in terms of descriptive and dialogic reflection and positive and negative stance.

The results present significant findings for teacher educators of the reflective processes of PSTs at a critical time of their professional development. First, it appears that even through a single written reflection on one microteaching event a good deal of insight can be gained into the way prospective teachers see themselves as teachers and how they reflect on their own practice. The current study has shown that the prospective teachers approached the reflective task in unique and individual ways. It would be beneficial for Turkish ELT teacher educators to include written reflections on teaching experiences conducted as part of the campus-based pedagogical courses to provide them with practice for the practicum courses. In this way, they can encourage their students to adopt an approach which will help them to develop as professionals throughout their careers. Furthermore, the rubric used in the current study could help both teacher educators and PSTs raise their awareness of the latter's reflective patterns. In this way, unproductive patterns such as self-congratulation and self-laceration can be detected early on. In order to realise this, teacher educators in contexts similar to that of the current study must be made aware of the benefits of implementing RP into their campus-based courses. They must also be made aware of the fact that high academic performance may not always entail practical expertise or the potential for creative reflection with an open mind, especially in educational environments such as that in Turkey. In turn, reflective tasks could be given more weighting in the overall course evaluation to reflect their importance to students who are highly performance-oriented and may approach the tasks strategically. Finally, it must be remembered that the prospective teachers involved in the current study were not native speakers of English. Therefore, direct instruction in reflective writing as a genre could be integrated into the methodology courses in similar contexts.

There are, however, a number of limitations to the current study which open new pathways for further research. First, its aim was to reveal the reflections of prospective teachers at a particular stage of their development, and is therefore cross-sectional in nature. Thus, it does not claim to trace any changes in behaviour over a period of time. Longitudinal research could be conducted to give such detail. Second, the time constraints of the methodology course in the current study involved meant that it was only possible for the participants to carry out one microteaching activity. Giving prospective teachers more opportunities to engage in microteaching activities would both help them to develop their teaching and reflective skills as well as to provide teacher educators/ researchers with more insight into the prospective teachers' reflective processes. Third, it was not possible in the current study to conduct interviews with all of the participants to cross-validate the data. Further studies could use more systematic interviews with the participants to gain more insider perspective on prospective teachers' reflections and how they view their practice.

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