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Coping Strategies of Pre-Service Teachers of Turkish with Tensions in Achieving Agency

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A R T I C L E I N F O	**A B S T R A C T**
	Purpose: Pre-service and in-service teachers experience conflicts between the requirements of teaching and their own personal desires, which might lead to serious tensions with negative consequences. Teachers, especially pre-service teachers, try to cope with tensions by developing strategies accompanied by actions teachers take to modify the teaching context and achieve teacher agency. The purpose of this study was to identify how pre-service teachers in Turkey cope with different types of tensions during their

practicum in schools. This study also investigated how their coping strategies motivate actions to develop teacher agency. **Research Methods**: This was a qualitative study guided by symbolic interactionism focusing on how shared meanings are constructed and mediated. Data were collected through reflective journals, semi-structured interviews, and a focus group interview to obtain the meanings made by pre-service teachers. Eight pre-service teachers of Turkish language at a public university participated in the study. Data were analyzed through content analysis. **Findings**: Findings reveal that pre-service teachers experience all types of tensions described in the literature and cope with them using four of the strategies mentioned in the literature. They do not receive help without asking for it. Many teachers turn to people around them to find a solution, but not many of them take initiatives to achieve agency. **Implications for Research and Practice**: Findings from the study display that pre-service teachers suffer from tensions in their teaching experiences in schools. They do not receive help without asking. For a qualified teacher identity process, continuous mediation should be at pre-service teachers' disposal and teachers should not be left alone. Supervisors at the faculties of education should raise pre-service teachers who are aware of tensions, coping strategies, and teacher agency issues.

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Introduction

> "I sometimes feel like I am on the brink of being a good teacher; however, this feeling does not last long. Soon I start to feel that I would like to live as a university student forever. However, what I do is learn to stay in school, the place I will always belong to" (Zehra).

This striking and thought-provoking remark is a piece of reality sometimes exempted from and sometimes relying on what is taught in pre-service teacher education programs and what is experienced in different institutions (Allen & Wright, 2014; Cochran-Smith, 2005; Korthagen, 2010; Yayli, 2008). The feeling expressed here could be categorized as a combination of a tension and an action taken to solve the tension. In other words, this excerpt provides a context in which tensions are experienced and teacher identity is constructed. The way the pre-service teacher negotiates the tension displays an action of teacher agency in the communities of prescribed structures (Biesta, Priestley & Robinson, 2015).

Professional Teacher Identity Formation and Teacher Tensions

According to Wenger (1998), interest in identity issues in a specific context both narrows the focus on the person with a point of view of social realities and broadens it "beyond communities of practice", and "the concept of identity serves as a pivot between the social and the individual" (p. 145). What Wenger notes here is not a dichotomy between the self and the society; on the contrary, "it is the social, the cultural, the historical with a human face" (p. 145). Focusing on the identity formation processes that teachers experience could be a feasible starting point for teacher development (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009), as identity formation includes both the individual and professional facets of becoming a teacher (Olsen, 2010). The individual and professional processes may accommodate some conflicts between the requirements of the profession and personal desires (Beijaard, Meijerd, & Verloop, 2004), which might "result in serious tensions for teachers that could have severe consequences" (Pillen, Beijaard, & den Brok, 2013a, p. 661) for teachers.

The issue of tension has been investigated in a considerable amount of research (Pillen et al., 2013a). According to Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), tensions have a big influence on the theoretical and practical development of all teachers. Tensions provide beginning teachers with opportunities to question their identity formation processes (Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson & Fry, 2004) or end in serious consequences (Pillen et al., 2013a). Developing strategies and overcoming such suffering is crucial for teachers to adapt to the teaching profession and its setting.

Research has recently concentrated on how tensions occur and how teachers cope with them in teacher education. Pillen et al. (2013a) perused the teacher education literature and proposed a list of tensions for beginning teachers with which they conducted a study with 24 beginning teachers. Their findings revealed three main categories:
  (1) The change in role from student to teacher;
  (2) Conflicts between desired and actual support given to students; and
  (3) Conflicting conceptions of learning to teach.

Coping with Tensions and Achieving Teacher Agency

Pillen, Beijard and den Brok (2013b) focused on coping strategies with tensions of beginning teachers to state that both emotion-focused and problem-focused coping behaviors are used by novice teachers. After a tension questionnaire, an instrument including five different strategies of coping with tensions was applied and participants were asked to choose among the following strategies for their own cases:

(1) Searching for a solution yourself;
(2) Asking for help by speaking about the tension with a significant other;
(3) Receiving help without taking an initiative;
(4) Putting up with the situation; and
(5) Receiving help without asking for it.

Teacher identity formation has processes regarding tension formation, the ways of negotiating them, and opportunities for teachers and teacher educators "to help their student teachers to turn tensions into learning moments" (Pillen et al., 2013a, p. 675). Sachs (2005) noted that identity is not a stable entity; it is not given to teachers by others. On the contrary, it is negotiated through experience and through the sense produced by that experience. Finally, it becomes a mediator between the teacher agency and the given structure (Flores & Day, 2006). Teachers negotiating their tentative identities also negotiate the tensions in the setting of teaching. According to Smagorinsky et al. (2004), tensions could be productive and this productivity is fortified with the help of efforts of teachers in solving the challenging problems. Thus, coping with tensions is a crucial component of teacher identity construction, as tensions could be very serious. Therefore, novice teachers need to learn how to cope with tensions (Pillen et al., 2013b) that are a natural pathway to identity formation.

Pillen et al. (2013a) argued that beginning teachers should not be left alone as they need support from teacher educators and mentors. They underscore the idea that novice teachers who share their tensions will receive help from others. Consequently, sharing these tensions seems to be a critical strategy to overcome potential problems.

According to Wenger (1998), identity formation needs to negotiate new situations and the associated tensions in those situations. In those cases, teachers take actions that help them resolve the tensions they experience. Recent research on teacher education has focused on teacher agency, which can be defined as a teacher's manipulation to shape their teaching tasks and conditions (Biesta et al., 2015). Developing agency in teachers has a lot to do with identity formation (Zembylas, 2005), as teachers might be able to eliminate the efforts to replace the teacher agency with prescriptive practices thanks to their professionally developed identities. A person equipped with power, thus with a well-developed "self", could resist any pressure as "[p]ower is what says no" (Foucault, 1980, p. 139). The process of professional identity development of teachers is expected to promote teacher agency so that teachers could consciously regulate their own work and anything related to their work. According to Biesta et al. (2015), agency is apparent in the activities of teachers and in their reactions to given situations and contexts, but agency is "not a quality of the actors themselves" (p. 626). To them, the achievement of agency should be understood through its iterational (past), practical-evaluative (present), and projective (future) dimensions. That is, traces from all these dimensions are inherent in the actions of teachers.

Coping with and negotiating the tensions could inherently bear an action towards a problem (Pillen et al., 2013b). When teachers decide to modify the context to make conditions better for teaching, they act in a way they choose or are advised by senior teachers, mentors, supervisors, or principals. If they keep silent and do nothing, this means they are emotionally influenced and they believe that they can change nothing (Admiraal, Korthagen, & Wubbels, 2000). Any attempt to change the circumstances in the teaching setting, however, could be taken as an endeavor to manipulate the context, which develops teacher agency. Few studies have looked into the issue of teacher tensions (Yayli, 2008) in a Turkish setting. Also, no research has been conducted with the aim of investigating the coping strategies of teachers with tensions and the relationship between those strategies and agency building. Thus, this study aimed to report on how pre-service teachers in Turkey cope with various tensions during their practicum period in schools. It also investigated how their strategies motivate actions to develop teacher agency. With these purposes in mind, this study aimed to answer the following research questions:

    (1) How do Turkish pre-service teachers cope with different types of tensions in their processes of identity formation?

    (2) How do their coping experiences motivate actions in their work?

Method

Research Design

This study was guided by symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969), which "focuses on the construction and mediation of shared meanings. Teaching is unique in that prospective teachers have extensive opportunities to observe the profession from their time as a student" (Sexton, 2008, p. 74). Symbolic interactionism sees human beings, therefore teachers, as active agents in shaping their worlds depending on the socially constructed meanings (Allen & Wright, 2014) they ascribe to the things end events. Those meanings are not stable, but modified through social interaction. Pre-service teachers construct meanings as they encounter people, things, and events, and these meanings convey epistemological clues of their identity construction. Thus, research on meanings based on symbolic interactionism could provide everyone in the field of teacher education with valuable findings and implications.

Context and Research Sample

Teachers in Turkey do not have the desired flexibility to shape their working settings and conditions. The rigid centralized structure of the public schools imposes prescriptive programs, syllabi, testing, and other practical issues on teachers no matter whether the practitioners are novice or experienced teachers (Uygun, 2008). For this study, pre-service teachers were chosen purposely bearing in mind that any dichotomy in the early years of teaching could end in tensions of various kinds (Pillen et al., 2013a). Being able to cope with the tensions in their early experiences, pre-service teachers might expand their agency for actions in different contexts. As shown in Table 1, the participants of the study include eight pre-service teachers (six females and two males) of Turkish language studying at a public university in Turkey. After the fall term during which they observed classes, they stated that they had some frustrations about teaching among other pre-service teachers. Therefore, the sampling of the participants was purposive. They all volunteered for the study

and willingly participated in each data collection procedure during their internships at a public school. They stated that they benefited from this piece of research experience, answered every question, and reflected on their teaching sessions sincerely.

Table 1

Study participants

Name (Pseudonym)	Gender	Age
Zehra	Female	21
Canan	Female	22
Sema	Female	22
Serap	Female	21
Belma	Female	22
Emel	Female	22
Zafer	Male	23
Selim	Male	22

Research Instruments and Procedure

The qualitative data for this study were collected through reflective journals, face-to-face semi-structured interviews, and one focus group interview. Each of the pre-service teachers volunteered to keep a journal in which they reflected on their observations and teaching sessions throughout the spring term of an academic year. They made daily entries and knew that they could be critical for the reflection as proposed in the literature (Hatton & Smith, 1995; Zeichner & Liston, 2010). The meanings the participants made throughout the study were analyzed to trace probable signs of tensions (Lauriala & Kukkonen, 2005) and understand how they took actions to evade those tensions.

The entries were made and the interviews were held in Turkish. For the validity of interview questions, a colleague in the field of educational sciences was consulted. The interview took about 25 minutes for each participant. It was conducted in the office of the researcher. One focus group interview was held in a classroom setting at the end of the term.

Validity and Reliability

For the internal validity of the study, opinions were collected from the experts on the design, instruments, and data analysis. The sources of information in data collection were also triangulated (journal keeping, interview, and focus group interview) to justify the themes. The purposive sampling in the study was another factor that supported the internal and external validity. In addition, through cross-checking, an intercoder reliability of .94 was achieved for the codes and the themes with the help of another expert in the field of educational sciences (Creswell, 2014).

The remaining issues were negotiated for full agreement. The meanings made by the participants were supported by intact excerpts quoted from the data.

Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed within the framework of tension types proposed by Pillen et al. (2013a). To reach the meanings of the participants, a qualitative content analysis was conducted to derive codes and themes from the transcripts of journals, interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Creswell, 2004), and a focus group interview. The verbatim excerpts to be included in the findings section were translated into English by the researcher. The codes and themes were agreed on and negotiated with another researcher to reach a more reliable analysis. The findings were discussed according to the aforementioned framework of tension types.

Results

Findings from the qualitative data analysis are presented within the boundaries of predetermined framework adopted from Pillen et al. (2013a) study. Under each subheading, depending on the presented excerpts, obtained tensions from pre-service teachers of Turkish language are deeply discussed in terms of coping with the tension and teacher agency. These subheadings are 'the role change', 'support to students', and 'conceptions of learning to teach'.

The Role Change

The double role of pre-service teachers in schools can give rise to tensions during the faculty-school partnership period. Pre-service teachers are both students and novice teachers while they perform an internship at their future institutions. They seem to shuttle between the faculty and the school. The opening words of this paper uttered by Zehra show that she prefers being a student to being a teacher as the new role creates a burden on her. In the interview, she also said:

> I think being a teacher is very prestigious and I like this job. However, a university student is much freer than a teacher since they (students) have fewer responsibilities. [R: What kind of responsibilities?] Your dressing, seriousness, punctuality, for instance. You feel you have suddenly grown up.

Zehra noted her complaints about the formal role accompanying the job of teaching. She found her new role a bit scary and resisted it by saying she would like to live as a university student forever. Experiencing a similar cross-institutional tension, Belma added:

> The atmosphere at university was more relaxed in terms of bureaucracy. However, you do not feel so free in schools. I think being a university student is much better than being a teacher. You have a lot of responsibilities as a teacher.

Neither Zehra nor Belma wanted to take on the responsibility of being a teacher. They felt the tension of role change from the point of view of disciplining themselves

as teachers. This is a case of 'feeling like a student' rather than 'acting like an adult teacher' as proposed by Pillen et al. (2013a,b).

When asked how they cope with their tensions, Zehra said:

I frequently ask myself about who I am in this school. I repeat the answer "You are a teacher" until I feel I am a teacher. I know I am a teacher and I belong to the community of teachers.

Zehra engaged in a sort of self-therapy. She tried to find the solution by herself without asking for help. She stated that she did not ask anyone for help because she believed the problem was something individual. On the other hand, Belma said she did nothing to get rid of the tension she experienced:

Actually, I did not do anything about it. I thought everything would be better in time and get accustomed to my new position in life. I decided to wait until things got better. [R: Why?] I know that people experience similar things and that they can do much to handle them. [R: Do you think it worked?] Yes, a little.

Belma also took the role change as an individual issue, but, unlike Zehra, she just waited. Her way of acting (or not acting) did not successfully cope with the tension and she did not do anything to change the context for herself. She adopted a strategy of putting up with the situation. In other words, she did not achieve agency at all because she thought the tension was something personal. Zehra, on the other hand, took an individual action and stood against the role change tension.

Tensions about role change are considered personal processes of teacher identity formation by other participants as well. They mostly stated that they tried to cope with the problem by themselves without taking definitive action. None of the participants asked others for help, which was an interesting finding. Their meanings of experiencing a problem because of the role change refer to an individual process that should be solved alone.

Support to Students

Making an impact on students is the main goal of teaching. Frustrations of pre-service teachers about learning outcomes from the students are observable in the meanings of the participants:

My first efforts in teaching did not sound good to me as I could not motivate the students to participate in the activities. Later. I figured out what moves were necessary to keep the things going. However, I suspect that I will make a perfect teacher very soon. (Zafer)

After my first teaching session, I asked my mentor about my teaching. She gave me advice on my eye contact, posture, and some other psychical things. She did not utter a word about anything scientific. After that, I decided to regulate my own teaching in a way. (Sema)

I know I have to work hard to improve my teaching. I get nervous in front of the students. Not because I do not know the subject matter, but I think it is a matter of ability to move from theory to practice. (Belma)

Tensions about support to students seemed to stem from some personal and professional issues. Some novice teachers sounded unsure of their ability to teach and a significant part of this concern comes from linking theory to practice. They perceive teaching as a scientific process in which theoretical knowledge is transferred into practice. As for coping strategies, Zafer was quite interested in motivating students to cooperate in the classroom activities and believed that it was really hectic for him. When asked about this, he said:

> I tried to convert the well-known activities and techniques into games and I did it. This time, everything went better, though not the best according to my criteria. I did not ask my mentor for anything, I do not know why but I did not.

Another participant, Serap, initially thought that she could resolve the tension with the help of her mentor:

> I sometimes find myself shuttling between my mentor and my supervisor as their beliefs about teaching are poles apart. As I am in the school for my practice, I choose to comply with my mentor to survive there.

In the beginning, Serap said that she tried to do what her mentor did in the classroom. Later, she changed her mind and wanted to make a useful impact on students by coming up with new methodologies:

> The experienced teachers do not know much about contemporary methods and techniques of teaching. They just follow the Teacher's Book and do nothing different, which really bores the students in the classroom. After a period of hesitation, however, I used new ways of teaching. The students enjoyed my class, I am sure of that. (Serap)

Serap's decision was very significant in achieving agency. Despite the power inequality between her and her mentor, she was able to do something to support her students. She did not do what many teachers did, but instead highly valued the theoretical knowledge she received at university and developed a sense of practical knowledge. This action has also a lot to do with the issue of learning to teach.

Conceptions of Learning to Teach

Pre-service teachers are given theoretical knowledge during their undergraduate education at universities in Turkey, which they can then put into practice when they start their internships. This period represents a time when novice teachers suffer from conflicts between what was taught at the teacher education institutions (universities in Turkey) and teaching performance at the target institutions. The gaps between theory and practice, between the supervisor and mentor, and between the individual way of teaching and the mentor's way result in different conceptions of learning to teach. Most participants in this study stated that they suffered from the proficiency levels of experienced (old) teachers, the gap between the teacher education institutions and reality of schools:

> Most of the teachers do not know about the latest theoretical knowledge. They do not want to learn anything new. I do not know what I will do when I am a teacher in the near future. Really, time will tell. (Selim)

In another entry, Selim added the following thoughts:

> I had a problem with the vice director of the school. When I was talking about theoretical issues I studied at the university, he just stopped me and said "This kind of knowledge does not work here." I could not say anything.

Other participants stated:

> The first day of my observation at school was like a shock to me. I thought what I had learnt from the books were useless. That is a pity. However, I believe that there must be a good way of using my knowledge in schools. I want to try that no matter how challenging it is. (Sema)

> The things I have learnt at university do not apply to the real life in schools. Teachers do not take the theoretical knowledge into consideration. They act as they like. I also could not do all I wanted to do. I feel a bit guilty about that. (Canan)

Some participants referred to their relations with mentors:

> My mentor does not care what I am doing. Once I asked her for feedback on my teaching, she just smiled and said that I was OK. I do not understand what OK means. Despite my insistence, she did not elaborate on it. She did not give me detailed feedback. How could I know if I am learning to teach? (Selim)

> My mentor does not like talking to me. She rather prefers to drink tea and rest during the breaks. (Sema)

> Similarly, most of the participants complain about the indifference of the mentors. Only one of them (Belma) stated that she talked to her mentor and that her relations with the mentor were beneficial. She was able to interact with her mentor in a positive way.

Novice teachers state that their tensions about different conceptions of learning to teach are more severe than the others. Especially during the focus group interview, they all stated that they cannot accept that their four-year undergraduate education period was useless. Some participants, like Serap, who decided to stick with contemporary methods, used some tactics to avoid the severe results of the tensions and took actions against them:

> Some friends accepted everything as is and just went on teaching as their mentors advised them to do. I remembered that my supervisor at the university could help me with it. I talked to him and he told me that I should do something suitable for the context. He said there is no common solution for the tensions I experience. I immediately adopted this stance. (…) For example, I changed my way of teaching, activities, etc. from class to class. It was big help to me. (Sema)

The frustration Sema lived was serious and her solution partially helped relieve her despairs. Canan, on the other hand, tried talking to her mentor and asked for help. She said this cooperation with the mentor lasted about two weeks, after which she felt better. She went back to the books she studied at the university. She drew some conclusions useful for her teaching:

> I have learnt that teaching is very difficult. If my students understand that I am trying hard for them, they change a little. Some students tend to cooperate to make me feel better. I must admit I cannot do everything by the book, but trying makes me happier. I think I will learn till the last day of my teaching. (Canan)

In contrast, Selim did not consult anyone:

> I just followed the Teacher's Book while teaching and I thought the information in that book was ready for my use. I believe it did work. When I combine theoretical knowledge from university with the Teacher's Book, I reach some good ways of teaching.

Selim's case is about not taking any risks if there are some practical notes like the Teacher's Book. He tended to negotiate the program and strictly applied the theory he studied at the faculty. Canan also felt safe by complying with theoretical knowledge. Their strategies had some actions but not resistance to anything. Negotiating the mentor or the supervisor appears to be a matter of power as the pre-service teachers need to obey the instructions of their supervisors as well as their mentors. In addition, Belma added that if pre-service teachers do not cooperate with the school administration, they feel very lonely in the schools, offering a reminder that the school administration is another power holder in the faculty-school partnership period.

Discussion and Conclusion

The interplay between the self and the profession can be seen as a product of the dichotomy between being human and being a teacher (Shapiro, 2010). The pre-service teachers suffer the transition period from the role of being a student to being a teacher. In this period, they try to negotiate the personal and social identities of being a teacher while identifying as a student. This study displayed a strong case of tensions about learning to teach. In a study by Yayli (2008), the dichotomy between the theory and practice created a mentor-supervisor dichotomy as a byproduct. This particular dichotomy seems to appear in Turkish settings and pre-service teachers seek strategies to overcome this type of tension.

Teachers develop strategies of their own to address all types of tensions in their epistemological development. This study corroborates the findings in the literature (Yayli, 2008; Pillen et al., 2013a, Sachs, 2001; Sexton, 2008). Pre-service teachers mostly prefer to negotiate the role (mentor or supervisor), the power, and the program. Some of them do nothing to evade the tension, though this may be because they are emotionally influenced (Admiraal et al., 2000). Others try to avoid the psychological and physical states disturbing them. Four of the coping strategies

derived from the literature by Pillen et al. (2013b) were observable in this study: a) searching for a solution yourself, b) asking for help by speaking about the tension with a significant other, c) receiving help without taking the initiative, and d) putting up with the situation. Some participants took the initiative, which was important for agency achievement. Their fifth strategy (receiving help without asking for it), however, was not traced in the stances and meanings of the participants. For the context of this study, the participants did not receive any help from significant others without asking for it. This finding could be said to corroborate Pillen et al. (2013b), as in that study only 1% of total frequencies across all tensions was resolved through this fifth strategy. Cabaroglu (2014) found that novice teacher turn to other people around them and try to get help as a result of a conflict. However, the people around them do not offer help unless asked. Thus teacher educators, supervisors, and mentors should be available for pre-service teachers and offer help even when they do not seem to need it. Continuous mediation will be very helpful as some novice teachers might be shy to ask for help. This will also help novice teachers take actions and achieve agency in the specific contexts of teaching. As an important source of mediation processes, instructors at faculties of education should be instructed in the latest teacher education theories. Pre-service teachers believe that some university instructors lack the necessary skills to support them with practical knowledge and contemporary methods and techniques (Aykac, 2016).

Pillen et al. (2013a) noted that teachers learn from tensions, which is in line with the findings from this study. For example, one participant, Canan said that, "You can learn even from the worst experiences." Most of the participants believe that anything lived in the community of the practice, whether good or bad, will support their teaching.

This qualitative study was conducted with eight pre-service teachers of Turkish language at a state university in Turkey. It also focused on the strategies of the participants to internalize the nature of coping with tensions in communities of practice to achieve agency in professional identity formation. Despite its limitations, the findings can contribute to the field of teacher education for local and international settings. Similar studies in various contexts might provide the literature with useful perspectives to develop teacher education programs in which theory building processes and practical experience can meet successfully. One stance made by a participant could contain several tensions, which is why the intermingled nature of the tensions should not be underestimated while considering the findings from similar studies. Allen (2009) stated that prospective teachers tend to value practical knowledge more when they become practitioners at schools, though they value both theory and practice during their internships. Thus, longitudinal studies tracing teachers both in pre-service and in-service terms could reveal epistemological processes in the formation of multiple identities with respect to tensions and teacher agency.

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Türkçe Öğretmeni Adaylarının Öğretmen Etkinliği Oluşturma Yolunda Gerginliklerle Başa Çıkma Stratejileri

Atıf:

Özet

Problem Durumu: Öğretmen kimliği gelişiminin önemli bir parçası öğretmen gerginlikleridir. Öğretmenlerin kendi istedikleri ile mesleğin gerektirdikleri arasında gerçekleşen bu çatışma öğretmenler için ciddi sonuçlar doğurabilmektedir. 'Öğretmen gerginliği' kavramı son yıllarda sıkça çalışılmış ve öğretmenlerin yaşadıkları gerginliklerin öğretmen yetiştirme alanyazınında önemli bir yer edindiği görülmektedir. Alanda gerçekleştirilen bir çalışma sonucunda öğretmen gerginlikleri üç ana başlık altında toplanmıştır:

(1) Öğrenci rolünden öğretmen rolüne geçiş

(2) Öğrencilere sunulan katkı ile istenen katkı arasındaki çatışma

(3) Öğretmeyi öğrenmeyle ilgili çelişkili kavramlar

Aynı çalışma ekibi tarafından yapılan başka bir çalışmada ise yeni öğretmenlerin bu gerginliklerden kurtulma stratejileri beş başlık altında ele alınmıştır:

(1) Kendi başına bir çözüm bulmak

(2) Yardım istemek ya da önemsediği biriyle gerginlik hakkında konuşmak

(3) Kendi başına harekete geçmeyip yardım almak

(4) Duruma katlanmak

(5) Yardım istemeden birinden yardım almak

Öğretmen yetiştirme süreçleri gerginlikler ve onlarla mücadele süreçleriyle doludur. Bunlar öğretmelerin öğrenme süreçlerine katkıda bulunur ve öğretmen kimliği geliştirmeye yardımcı olur. Öğretmenler ve öğretmen adayları kendilerine sunulan yapı ile kendi etkinlikleri arasında bir denge kurmak gereksinimi hissederler. Öğretmen etkinliği kavramı, öğretmenin içinde bulunduğu bağlamı, şartları ve görevleri düzenleyebilmesiyle ilgilidir. Kendine verilen şartları düzenleyen öğretmenler, öğretme ortamlarını daha iyi bir duruma getirmek için harekete geçerler. Bu harekete geçme eylemi öğretmen etkinliği ile ilgilidir. Öğretme ortamlarındaki gerginlikleri yaşayan öğretmenler bunlarla mücadele edebilmek için bazı kararlar alırlar ve harekete geçerler. Yani öğretmen etkinliği için bir süreç oluştururlar. Türkiye bağlamında yürütülen çalışmalarda gerginlik konusu ele alınmış olsa da, bu gerginliklerle başa çıkma stratejileri ve bunların nasıl bir

öğretmen etkinliği yarattığı konuları araştırılmamıştır. Bu yüzden bu çalışma alanyazındaki bir eksikliği giderecektir.

Araştırmanın amacı: Bu çalışmanın amacı, hizmet öncesi öğretmenlerin yaşadıkları gerginlikleri nasıl çözdüklerini ve bu amaçla harekete geçerek nasıl bir öğretmen etkinlik içine girdiklerini belirlemektir.

Yöntem: Bu çalışma, sembolik etkileşimci bir yöntemle öğretmen adaylarının oluşturdukları ortak anlamların izini süren nitel bir çalışmadır. Çalışmaya güz dönemindeki okul gözlemleri sırasında bazı konularda çatışma yaşadıklarını belirten sekiz hizmet öncesi Türkçe öğretmeni gönüllü olarak katılmıştır. Bu yüzden çalışmanın amaçlı bir örnekleme sahip olduğu söylenebilir. Çalışmaya katılan sekiz öğretmen adayından altısı kadın, ikisi erkektir ve katılımcılar 21-23 yaş aralığındadır. Çalışmanın verileri yansıtıcı günlükler, yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formları ve bir odak grup görüşmesi yoluyla toplanmıştır. Toplanan nitel veriler önceden belirlenen gerginlik türleri ve korunma stratejileri çerçevesinde incelenmiştir. İnceleme sırasında hizmet öncesi öğretmenlerin ifadelerinde yer alan ortak anlamlar belirlenmiş ve tartışılmıştır. Bu anlamaları desteklemek amacıyla, bulgular içinde katılımcıların doğrudan ifadelerine yer verilmiştir Katılımcıların gerçek kimlikleri yerine takma adlar kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın geçerliği için her aşamada alandan deneyimli bilim insanlarına danışılmıştır. Çalışmada kullanılan amaçlı örneklemin de iç ve dış geçerliği desteklediği söylenebilir. Elde edilen kodlar ve temaların güvenirliğini belirlemek amacıyla başka bir bilim insanı tarafından aynı veriler kodlanmış ve %94 oranında bir mutabakat sağlanmıştır. Geriye kalan bölüm için uzlaşma yoluna gidilmiştir.

Bulgular: Bu çalışmadan elde edilen bulgular daha önce belirlenen öğretmen gerginlik türleri alt başlıkları çerçevesinde sunulmuştur. İlk olarak, öğretmen adaylarının öğrencilikten öğretmenliğe rol değişimi onlarda ciddi gerginlik yaratmaktadır. Öğretmenlik mesleğini sorumluluk olarak anlamlandıran hizmet öncesi öğretmenlerden biri çözümü kendisi bulmaya çalışmış ve kendine terapi uygulamaya karar vererek bir etkin olma örneği göstermiştir. Diğerleri ise hiçbir şey yapmadan ya durumu kabullenmiş ya da önemli bir etkinlik göstermeden gerginliğin çözülmesini beklemişlerdir.

İkinci gerginlik türü olan öğrencilere verilen destekle ilgili çatışma birkaç katılımcı tarafından dile getirilmiştir. Bazı öğretmen adayları öğretme kapasiteleri konusunda emin olamamaktadır. Bunun da genel anlamda kuramdan uygulamaya geçişle ilgili olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Onlar için öğrencilere destek sağlamak bildiklerini uygulamaya dökebilmek anlamına gelmektedir. Çatışmayı engellemek için danışman öğretmenine başvuran bir katılımcı verimli bir destek alamadığı için kuramsal bilgiye yaslanmaya karar vermiştir. Üniversitede öğrendiklerini uygulamaya karar veren bu öğretmen adayı için öğretmen etkinliği oluşturduğu yorumu yapılabilir. Bir başka öğretmen adayı ise durumu kabullenmekten başka bir şey yapmamıştır.

Son olarak, öğretmeyi öğrenmeyle ilgili kavramlar konusunda katılımcıların çokça gerginlik yaşadıkları belirlenmiştir. Bu gerginlikler genel anlamda kuram-uygulama, fakülte-okul ve bireysel öğretme yolu-danışman öğretmenin yolu çatışmalarından

kaynaklanmaktadır. Uygulama sürecinde öğretme konusunda yeni şeyler öğrenen aday öğretmenlerin bir kısmı kuramsal bilgiyle uygulama bilgisini buluşturamamakta ve bilgiyi sadece kuramsal bağlamda anlamlandırmaktadır. Katılımcıların çoğu danışman öğretmenlerin ilgisizliğinden şikâyetçidir. Gerginliklerini çözmek için onlardan yardım alamamaktadırlar. Bu katılımcılardan biri öğretmen etkinliği denebilecek bir kararla üniversitedeki sorumlu öğretim elemanından yardım almaya karar vermiş ve bu konudaki gerginliğini yenmeyi başarmıştır. Bu gerginlik konusunda Türkçe öğretimi programına bağlı kalmaya karar veren bir katılımcı öğretmen kılavuz kitabına yönelmiştir.

Çalışmanın ortaya koyduğu önemli bir bulgu ise hizmet öncesi öğretmenlerinin yardım istemedikleri takdirde yardım alamadıklarıdır. Yani okullardaki deneyimleri sırasında öğretmen adaylarına yardım teklif eden olmamıştır. Öğretmen adayları yardımı ancak talep ettiklerinde alabilmişlerdir.

Sonuçlar ve Öneriler: Öğrenci olmak ile öğretmen olmak arasındaki çatışma öğretmen kimliğinin oluşması açısından kritik öneme sahiptir. Öğrencilere katkıda bulunma ve öğretmeyi öğrenme de aynı şekilde bu sürecin önemli gerginliklerindendir. Öğretmen adayları bu gerginliklerden kurtulmak için bazı yollara başvurmaktadır. Ancak yardım istemedikleri sürece kendilerine yardım teklif edilmediği ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu durum öğretmen yetiştirme süreçlerinin verimi için çok önemlidir. Öğretmen adayları yardım isteme konusunda çekingen davransalar bile olası gerginlikleri giderme konusunda kendilerine sürekli destek sunulmalıdır. Bu, etkili bir fakülte-okul işbirliğiyle ve fakültelerdeki sorumlu öğretim elemanlarının donanımıyla doğrudan ilişkilidir. Gerginlikleri sürecinde yalnız bırakılan öğretmenlerin öğretmeye yönelik olumsuz duygu ve tutum geliştirme olasılığı onların gelecekteki öğretme süreçlerini olumsuz yönde etkileyecektir. Öğretmen gerginlikleri, gerginliklerle başa çıkma stratejileri öğretmen etkinliği yaratması açısından önemli fırsatlar olarak görülmelidir. Ayrıca bu gerginlikler ileride olumlu sonuçlar yaratacak öğrenme fırsatlarıdır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Öğretmen eğitimi, öğretmen gerginlikleri, başa çıkma stratejileri, öğretmen etkinliği.