Contributions of Transnational Education Experiences of Pre-service EFL Teachers to their Professional Development

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Keywords	Abstract
	The notion of teachers' professional development has shifted from simply short-term in-service training to every kind of informal experiences, professional meetings or mentoring activities that promote growth and development of the teachers in the profession. Concerning this fact in mind, it is supposed that the transnational education experiences of pre-service teachers might also serve for their professional developments. Although the available literature revealed that the transnational education or short term mobility experiences somehow contributed to the professional development of pre-service teachers, it seems that in-depth studies uniquely focused on the perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers on the contribution of transnational education experiences to their professional development is scarce in number. Thus, the present study intended to examine the perceptions of pre-service EFL teachers qualitatively regarding the contribution of short term mobility experiences to their professional development. The data of the present study is gathered through two-round e-mail interviews with available participants, who are 19 pre-service EFL teachers enrolling in a foreign language teacher education program of a state university in Turkey. The gathered data is analyzed through semantic level thematic analysis of recurrent patterns in their e-mails and the findings were presented in frequencies and percentages adapting a hermeneutic approach. As for the trustworthiness of the findings, the themes emerged from the content analysis of the data were verified by another expert in the field. The findings of the present study revealed that transnational education experiences of participants contributed to their professional development in terms of some aspects including active learning and understanding educational policies and practice in other contexts, using inclusive practices and practicing in a collaborative environment and getting coaching/expert support to a great amount.

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I. Introduction

The recent paradigm shifts in the notion of teaching and learning, such as moving from traditional transmission-oriented education to more constructivist models or collaborative processes that foster active participation and interaction also lead changes in the notion of professional development. That is, while once professional development was identified as 'in-service training' that are usually short-term courses or workshops which "give teachers a broad general background in teaching and in their subject matter" (Turhan & Arıkan, 2009), nowadays it is considered as a long-term process that includes regular opportunities and experiences planned systematically to promote growth and development in the profession (Villegas-Reimers, 2003). Furthermore, professional development, as Ganser (2000) states, includes "formal experiences" such as courses, professional meetings or mentoring, etc. and "informal experiences" such as reading professional publications, watching documentaries or participating field trips related to an academic discipline, etc.

The professional development in the teaching profession becomes the vital issue due to the reforms in teacher education as well as the changing learning needs of the students, since it is believed that "teachers should become active agents of their own professional growth" (Schleicher, 2012:73) in order to meet the educational expectations of the 21st century learners. In connection with the teaching profession, the professional development is considered as "the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically" (Glatthorn, 1995, p. 41). In a very broader sense, professional development of teachers is defined as "activities that develop an individual's skills, knowledge, expertise and other characteristics as a teacher" (OECD, 2009). According to Day (1999; 4), professional development can be "… all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute through these to the quality of education in the classroom". As Day (1999) states, in practice, professional development for educators encompasses an extremely broad range of topics and formats, including expanding the content knowledge of the teachers especially on new methodologies and how to teach subject-area content; mentoring teachers in specialized teaching techniques; endowing teachers with new technological skills that can improve their teaching effectiveness; improving fundamental teaching techniques, such as how to manage a classroom; developing collaborations among others and teaching collaboratively; conducting action research to gain a better understanding of what's working or not

working; and developing leadership skills in teachers. Similarly, Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner (2017) identified seven characteristics of effective professional development approaches based on their extensive study, which examined studies of successful professional development models. As reported by the authors, the professional development should be a) content-focused, b) incorporate active learning utilizing adult learning theory, c) support collaboration, typically in job-embedded contexts, d) use models and modeling of effective practice, e) provide coaching and expert support, f) offer opportunities for feedback and reflection, and g) have sustained duration. In a similar vein, the British Council's (2015) continuing professional development framework for teachers affirms that the professional development activities should enlighten the teachers on "planning lessons and courses, understanding learners, managing the lesson, knowing the subject, managing resources, assessing learning, integrating ICT, taking responsibility for professional development, using inclusive practices, using multilingual approaches, promoting 21st-century skills, and understanding educational policies and practice".

Concerning the wide-ranging definitions and characteristics in mind, it can be alleged that any formal or informal activity that fosters teaching profession is capable of granting teachers' professional development. Thus, in addition to the teacher education programs, which endow pre-service teachers with theoretical and pedagogical knowledge, the internationalization or transnational education (TNE) experiences of pre-service teachers might contribute to their professional growth as an alternative form of professional development, which will be inspected in the present study.

The consequences of economic, political, and societal concerns of globalization push leading universities to launch international cooperation as a way of broadening the academic experiences of their students and academic staff (Stier, 2004). Thus, "internationalization", which was introduced in the higher education research in the 1980s (Knight, 2008), and the 'student mobility' the core component of internationalization, has enshrined in the internationalization agenda of many universities (Sweeney, 2012) and consequently increasing student mobility becomes a strategic priority for the universities all around the world. Although the internationalization comes to the scene as a result of globalization movement these two concepts, globalization and internationalization, should not be considered as the same (Altbach, 2004). That is, while the former mainly related to economic, political, and societal issues, the latter is related to the international cooperation endeavors of the universities that intend to enhance their research and knowledge capacities

through mobility programs. The internationalization in higher education which is also known as "transnational education", often referred to as offshore education, typically involve "all types of higher education study programs, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based" (CoE, 2002).

It is worth noting the conceptual differences between international and transnational education notions that might confuse the readers. In a broader sense, an international education or a long-term mobility program aims to promote international understanding and cooperation, thus promote an affinity about the cultural and political opinions of host countries and "sets forth the pragmatic notion that one travels abroad in order to study what cannot be found in one's own country" (Gacel, 2002), whereas, TNE simply means borderless or cross-border educational provision from institutions in one country to students in another. In other words, TNE is the provision of award programs to overseas students that grounded on the delivery of our courses in various forms with partners abroad. According to Gacel (2002) "the greatest difference between the two ideas resides in the conception of the desired objectives and the motivation on which they rely".

Though various higher education institutions exploited TNE for their financial incomes, a great deal of higher education institutions all over the world have participated in TNE movements or internationalization initiatives as a non-profit-making activity for decades with the intention of promoting well-developed education systems and institutions, on the ground of compounding existing disharmonies. The TNE or the student mobility in a broader term has various benefits for the interested parties, especially for the students. As Sweeney (2012) claims the mobility programs have multifaceted and versatile gains for stakeholders, for instance, such programs contribute to the personal development, employability and enhanced degree outcome for the students; enhance the knowledge of the faculty and give them chances to work with international students; and also the institutions able to boost their reputation and international profile. Thus, many European universities have sought to enhance the quality of their offer by focusing on transnational mobility (Wihlborg & Robson, 2018) or stay abroad programs. Especially almost two decades after the initiation of the Bologna Process, the higher education institutions in Europe have established better and effective coordination and harmony through the student and staff mobility programs. The Bologna declaration, which is a joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education of 29

European countries, affirms the willingness of the European higher education institutions to promote cooperation as well as student and staff mobility in and to Europe (EHEA, 1999). Since then increasing and enhancing the value of temporary student mobility has been one of the major objectives of higher education policy across Europe (Teichler, 2009). Thus, although the history of international student mobility roots back to medieval universities (Rivza & Teichler, 2007:459), the number of internationally mobile students increased roughly to 3 million in 2009 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011), to 4 million in 2012 (Banks & Bhandari, 2012) and the number of students who drawn on the mobility program by 2019 almost tripled through the involvement of the new countries.

The student mobility programs can be grouped under two main categories as degree mobility and credit mobility in general; while degree mobility requires students enroll to complete a full degree or other qualification in a university outside their country of residence, credit mobility indicates learning mobility between institutions for short-term study (3 to 12 months) periods for which credits are obtained. To clarify the mobility terms more, it can be claimed that the degree mobility programs are long-term mobility programs, which offer graduate diplomas for their participants who move from their home country after completing their secondary level degree to acquire a higher degree in another country. On the other hand, the credit mobility programs offer a short-term stay abroad, usually one academic year of nine to twelve months duration (Fitzsimmonsa, David & Xiaodan, 2013; Golay 2006; King, Findlay & Ahrens, 2010; Murphy-Lejeune, 2002; Richardson & Munday, 2013). As for Teichler, Ferencz and Wächter (2011:27), the credit mobility means "mobility of a shorter duration (up to 1 academic year) which takes place in the framework of ongoing studies at a home institution. After the credit/temporary mobility phase, students return to their home institution to complete their studies". In the credit mobility programs, the credit for studies at the host institution is given in the student's home program, usually commensurate with amount studied (Richardson & Munday, 2013). Teichler and Steube (1991) outlined the main characteristics of these credit mobility programs as; (1) established arrangement between sending and receiving institution; (2) provide opportunity for regular exchange; (3) supporting organizational and educational structure; and (4) provision that student performance during study period abroad is recognized at the sending institution to some extent. Teichler's (2015 and 2017) comprehensive studies may provide for those readers who need further details on the types of student mobility. It should be noted that student mobility has various forms worldwide, out of which

this paper focuses on the one that is the most influential exchange program in the European region, namely, the Erasmus (+), which is a credit student mobility program.

It is expressed by the Council of Europe (2012) as well as by various researchers (Teichler & Steube, 1991; Teichler, Ferencz & Wächter, 2011) that student mobility is an opportunity for students to study abroad whilst undertaking their degree program-whether undergraduate or postgraduate-, which believed to enhance student's personal growth and competence building (Brandenburg, et. al., 2014; Cubillos & Ilvento, 2012; Douglas & Jones-Rikkers, 2001; House of Lords Select Committee, 2012; Jacobone & Moro, 2014; King, et.al., 2010; Messer & Wolter, 2007). For instance the findings of the first major evaluation study of the Erasmus program revealed that over three quarters of the participants' motivations for joining such a program were "learning a foreign language", "opportunity for self-development", "wish to enhance understanding of the host country", and "wish to improve career prospects" (Teichler & Maiworm, 1997). Confirming these motivations, Bracht, Engel, Janson, Over, Schomburg and Teichler's (2006) study revealed that transnational mobility programs strengthen foreign language competences as well as personal and social behavior of the participating students. Likewise, Messer and Wolter's (2007) study revealed that participation in student exchange programs is associated with higher starting salaries and a higher likelihood of opting for postgraduate degrees. On the other hand, findings of Leutwyler and Meierhan's (2016) study revealed that the mobility programs did not contribute to the professional developments of the participants for varying reasons.

In order to examine the effectiveness as well as the contribution of students' mobility program, specifically influences of short-term Erasmus mobility programs to the pre-service teachers, a number of studies (Aydın, 2012; Ersoy, 2013; Genç-İlter, 2013; Kahyaoğlu, 2016; Mutlu, 2011; Önen, 2017) have been conducted in Turkish contexts recently. Majority of these studies revealed that participating in short term TNE somehow contributed to the students' academic, social, cultural, cross-cultural, linguistic competencies as well as oral language skills even though some pitfalls have also been reported. For instance, besides gaining cultural and cross-cultural awareness as well as competence in using a foreign language, Aydın's (2012), Ersoy and Günel's (2011) and Ersoy's (2013) studies reported that such programs contributed to the professional developments of the participants in general. On the other hand, while the findings of Kahyaoğlu's (2016) study figured out that such programs did not make any contribution to the professional development of

International Journal of Current Approaches in Language, Education and Social Sciences

Contributions of transnational education experiences of pre-service   CALESS 2019, *1*(1) 1-19
EFL teachers to their professional development

students, Önen's (2017) study revealed that career (professional) development is the least important contribution of the program on the participants.

Considering the growth in the number of global graduates and exchange-program students in recent years, the benefit derived by students from their TNE experiences merits investigation to further the participation, provision and appraisal of mobility opportunities for the higher education institutions. Hence, it is expected that the findings of the present study will contribute to understanding merits of such student mobility opportunities for professional developments of pre-service teachers by underlining areas, sharing effective practice and informing institution-specific actions.

While various aspects of credit-based student mobility programs (e.g. Erasmus+) at the university level are relatively well researched, studies on the contribution of such programs on the professional development of the pre-service teachers are rather scarce in number. Although some studies (Aydın, 2012; Ersoy & Günel, 2011; Kahyaoğlu, 2016; Önen, 2017; Vogt, 2016) mentioned the contributions of mobility programs on the professional development of pre-service teachers, it is observed in the available literature that the professional development of pre-service teachers seems to be even more neglected issue in most of the studies. Therefore, the present study intends to figure out pre-service English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' perceptions on the contribution of the student mobility programs exclusively on their professional developments. Regarding this aim, the present study sought to find an answer to the following research question; "what are the pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions concerning the contribution of their TNE experiences on their professional developments?"

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

The design of the present study is qualitative in nature that grounds a hermeneutic approach in figuring out a single case, which is the perception of the pre-service EFL teachers about the contribution of the TNE experiences to their professional development. The procedures and research process of the present study are summarized in Figure 1.
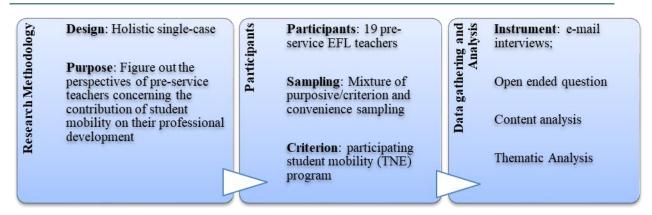
Figure 1. Research Design

2.2. Data Gathering Instrument

The data of the present study were gathered through two-round e-mail interviews that sought answers to a question concerning the contribution of student mobility program to the participants' professional development. Thus, in the first round, the purpose and expectations of the interview were explicated briefly and each participant asked one specific question: "what is/are the straightforward contribution of the Erasmus mobility program to your professional development as prospective foreign language teachers?" In the second round, participants were asked to clarify some points in their first e-mails, and also asked to add their final thoughts in case they have not mentioned in their first emails in order to prevent "a possible threat to validity in e-mail interviews which might occur if the participant was unable or unwilling to elaborate on the answer that was not clear in the original submission" (Hamilton & Bowers, 2006). Regarding the fact that the more structured the interviews tend to reveal the more reliable results, the interview question was highly structured and all interviewees were asked the same question in the exact same way in order to establish the consistency of the e-mail interviews. The validity "is not a property of the research tool in qualitative methods" (Kuzmanic, 2009) however it is associated with the entire research process, including data analysis and interpretation of the findings, thus, the researcher focused on the interview question in terms of its appropriateness for the topic and embeddedness in the research process (Flick, 2002). That is, the interview question is ratified by an expert in the field in terms of its comprehensiveness to collect the information needed to address the purpose and goal of the study. The data were gathered through e-mail interviews concerning that it would enable the participants to express their message clearly, as well as it was assumed that it would be a proper way to uncover information that is "probably not accessible using techniques such as questionnaires and observations"

(Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2010; 193). Additionally, participants were informed that "e-mail interview process is like answering an essay question" (Hamilton & Bowers, 2006) so that participants were led not to provide simple yes or no answers by emails.

2.3. Participants

The participants of the study were 19 pre-service EFL teachers who are studying in the foreign language teacher education program of a state university in the southwest Mediterranean region of Turkey and who have participated in a short-term student mobility program during their Bachelor's degree program. A mixture of two nonrandom sampling methods, namely, purposive/criterion and convenience sampling was adopted in the selection of the participants. That is, the sampling is purposive since "the researcher specifies the characteristics of the population of interest and then locates individuals" (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2015; 171) who can best inform the research question and enhance understanding of the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2009; Kuper, Lingard & Levinson, 2008) and who are "information-rich" and illuminative (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2015; 365). In other words, the selection of the participants in the initial phase was based on a specific criterion, which is having TNE experience during their BA program. Additionally, the selection of the participants is based on convenience since "the sample of participants is selected based on convenience and includes individuals who are readily available" (Christensen, Johnson & Turner, 2015; 170) in the research context. As for confidentiality concerns, all of the participants were informed about the ethical considerations including using anonymous names at the time of analysis for anonymity and voluntary participation through an informed consent form attached to e-mails. The demographics of the participants concerning their genders, the host institutions and host countries are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. *Demographic information about the participants*

Alphanumeric codes	Genders	Host Institution	Host Country
F1	F	Pädagogische Hochschule/ Linz	Austria
F2	F	Pädagogische Hochschule/Heidelberg	Germany
F3	F	Akcent College/Prague	Czech Republic
F4	F	University of Gdańsk	Poland
F5	F	Pädagogische Hochschule/Wien	Austria
F6	F	Trnava University	Slovakia

Alphanumeric codes	Genders	Host Institution	Host Country
F7	F	Klaipėda University	Lithuania
F8	F	Pädagogische Hochschule/ Linz	Austria
F9	F	Hispalis College/Madrid	Spain
F10	F	Pädagogische Hochschule /Heidelberg	Germany
M1	M	University Colleges Leuven-Limburg	Belgium
M2	M	University Colleges Leuven-Limburg	Belgium
M3	M	Presov University	Slovakia
M4	M	Trnava University	Slovakia
M5	M	Akcent College/Prague	Czech Republic
M6	M	Pädagogische Hochschule/ Linz	Austria
M7	M	Pädagogische Hochschule/ Linz	Austria
M8	M	Pädagogische Hochschule/ Linz	Austria
M9	M	Klaipėda University	Lithuania

As it is seen in Table 1, pre-service EFL teachers have visited various countries and participated courses in different hosting institutions within the frame of their TNE experiences. It should be noted that since the genders, host institutions and host countries of the participants were not among the variables that the present study has focused on, the demographics of the participants presented here merely to provide information concerning the demographic backgrounds of the participants.

2.4. Data Analysis

As for the data analysis, the researcher analyzed the submitted e-mails using Mayring's (2014) methodology for qualitative content analysis, which is a widely used method of analysis in qualitative research. The purpose of qualitative content analysis is to identify patterns of meaning across a dataset that provide an answer to the research question being addressed. Specifically, a semantic level of analysis was adopted in the theming of the recurrent patterns in the participants' responses to the question. That is, the themes are identified within the explicitly stated perceptions of the participants and anything beyond what a participant has written is not considered as the theme.

As for the themes in data analysis, a combination of Darling-Hammond, Hyler, and Gardner's (2017) characteristics of effective professional development and British Council's (2015) continuing professional development framework for teachers were

International Journal of Current Approaches in Language, Education and Social Sciences

Contributions of transnational education experiences of pre-service
EFL teachers to their professional development
CALESS 2019, *1*(1) 1-19

used as the core of the themes. The preliminary analysis of the data was handled by the researcher to uncover the main concepts and themes in the e-mails, and also by an expert researcher whose role was to minimize the possible fallacy in theming the outstanding concepts and patterns. Finally, the coded data is categorized and recombined to draw empirically-based conclusions through analytical generalizations and presented through the frequencies and percentages of the concurrent patterns by using alphanumeric codes (F=Female/M=Male + participant number) for each participant. Additionally, the rich or significant participant quotes were presented in the findings as to illustrate the perceptions of the participants thoroughly.

3. Findings

The findings, which were obtained through qualitative content analysis, are presented in line with the research question, which sought answers about the pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions concerning the contribution of the TNE experiences onto their professional development. The findings based on the content analysis of the transcripts of e-mail interviews were tabularized in line with the pre-determined themes and codes and presented with their frequencies and percentages in Table 2.

Table 2. *The themes and their quantiles*

Themes	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6	F7	F8	F9	F	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9	f	% (~)
Active Learning	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	19	**100**
Coaching/Expert Support	√		√		√			√		√		√	√	√	√					10	53
Collaborative environment	√	√			√	√	√	√			√	√		√	√	√				11	**58**
Content-Focused Feedback	√							√			√			√	√					5	26
Reflection	√																√			2	**11**
Models/ Modelling			√						√						√					3	16
Planning lessons and courses	√		√					√					√					√		5	26
Managing the lesson			√				√	√					√					√		5	26
Knowing the subject				√		√					√			√	√					5	26
Managing resources																				0	**0**
Assessing learning					√	√						√								3	16
Integrating ICT				√										√	√					3	16
Using inclusive practices	√	√			√	√		√			√	√			√	√	√	√	√	12	**63**
Promoting 21st-century skills	√				√												√			3	16
Understanding educational policies and practice.	√		√	√		√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	15	**79**
Practicing teaching in a multicultural classroom				√	√		√	√		√			√		√	√				8	**42**

As seen in Table 1, the content analysis of the gathered data revealed that all of the participants have chances to incorporate in "active learning" practices during their TNE experiences in host institutions. In other words, all of the participants engaged directly in designing and practicing teaching actively in the host institutions through various forms of teaching experience courses. On the other hand, the findings additionally revealed that only some amount of the participants (26 %) benefitted from their TNE experiences in terms of "planning lessons and courses", "managing the lessons" and "knowing the subject" as for their professional development.

Based on the findings, it is found that the secondly ranked (79%) contribution of the TNE experiences of EFL pre-service teachers to their professional development was in "understanding educational policies and practice". This finding illustrated that the awareness of the participants on up-to-date and relevant knowledge concerning regional, national, transnational and institutional education policies was triggered through their TNE experiences.

It is additionally found that the TNE experiences of EFL pre-service teachers have contributed to their professional development on "using inclusive practices" which was perceived by a great majority (63%) of the participants. That is, by means of their TNE experiences, the EFL pre-service teachers recognize and value the diversity among the students, and they grasp the importance of treating all learners equitably and with respect either through experiencing teaching in multicultural classrooms. Similarly, almost half of the participants (42%) declared that "teaching in multi-culture based classrooms" have contributed to their professional development although it is not mentioned among the pre-determined themes.

Another finding of the present study is that most of the participants (58%) perceived the "collaborative environment" that they incorporate during their TNE experiences have contributed to their professional development. They claimed that the collaboration either with their other peers or with the instructors in the host institutions such as sharing ideas about their teaching in job-embedded context have contributed to their professional development as teachers. In line with the contributions of collaborative environment, slightly over half of the participants (53%) stated that they got "coaching/expert support" from their instructors in their host institutions during their active learning processes and they believe that such support has contributed to their professional development.

On the other hand, the analysis of the findings revealed that none of the participants has benefitted from their short-term mobility in terms of "managing resources" aspect of professional development. As for the findings on this dimension of

professional development, it is found that participants did not experience any practical development especially in using materials effectively in the classroom with appropriate pedagogical strategies. Similarly, the second least (11%) stated perception on the contribution of TNE experiences of the participants is the "reflection" in teaching. The findings revealed that participants most of the participants were not provided built-in time for think about their teaching practices although they all incorporated in active learning activities through teaching practice sessions in real classroom environments. Although some of them (26%) stated that they received "content-focused feedback" from their instructors and peers, they did not have many chances to make a reflection about their teaching experiences. Additionally the analysis of the findings showed that short-term mobility of the participants did not contribute to their professional development in terms of "integrating ICT"(16%), "assessing learning" (16%), "promoting 21st century skills" (16%), and "models/ modeling" (16%) aspects.

4. Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

All in all, the findings of the present study illustrated that transnational student mobility programs have contributed to the professional developments of pre-service EFL teachers to some extents. For instance, it is inferred from the participants' perceptions that regardless of the unique characteristics of the host countries or the host institutions, the TNE endowed the pre-service EFL teachers' professional developments with active learning experiences. In other words, the findings of the present study signpost that engaging the pre-service teachers in a real classroom through teaching practice activities in different contexts foster their future profession positively. Another finding of the present study is that the TNE experiences of pre-service EFL teachers raised their awareness on the education policies of different countries and cultures. Likewise, such programs considered as contributive to their professional developments in terms of incorporating inclusive practices through which pre-service EFL teachers gain awareness on the diversities of learners regardless of their social, cultural, physical and linguistic backgrounds. Although the pre-service teachers have chances to meet students with different learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location, they generally do not have chances in their home countries to practice teaching in multicultural environments. Therefore, it might be claimed that incorporating inclusive practices in the host institutions and countries through their TNE experiences is one of the utmost advantages in terms of their professional developments. As Juma, Lehtomäki, and Naukkarinen (2017) claimed, incorporating

such skills in both pre-service and in-service teacher education enable all teachers to teach inclusively.

The present study additionally revealed that pre-service EFL teachers gained awareness in the variances in international, national and institutional educational policies through their TNE experiences, which in turn contributed to their professional developments. It is assumed that gaining such awareness on variances of educational policies employed in a different context might additionally influence their perceptions concerning schooling and education which impact on their activities and teaching in their future careers.

Although the focus of the present study is not to compare the host institutions in terms of their contributions to the professional development of the pre-service EFL teachers, the gathered data concerning the demographics of the participants additionally unveiled that the curricula of the host institutions play a vital role in their professional development.

The findings of the present study cohere with the results of some previous studies (Aydın, 2012; Brandenburg, et. al., 2014; Ersoy & Günel, 2011; Ersoy, 2013; Sweeney, 2012) in the field, which affirmed students' mobility and TNE experiences contributed to the professional development of teachers or pre-service teachers. Nonetheless, the findings of the present study should be interpreted with its limitations, especially concerning the generalizability of the findings, which were based on a limited number of participant perceptions. Moreover, the findings showed that not all aspects of the professional development -including managing resources, reflection, modeling and integrating ICT- have been satisfactorily fulfilled throughout the TNE experiences of the participants. In line with such pitfalls, it is observed that some of the findings of the present study somehow contradict with some of the existing literature (Kahyaoğlu, 2016; Leutwyler & Meierhan, 2016; Önen, 2017) that disapproves the relevance of exchange experiences for the professional development of teachers or pre-service teachers. However, it should also be noted that those studies in the literature did not directly focus on the correlation between professional development and TNE experiences.

The findings of the present study have some pedagogical implications as well. Concerning the findings of the present study, it can be claimed that there are variances in the teacher education programs among the host institutions in terms of teachers' professional development. Bearing these differences in mind, the mobility actions of the students should be organized attentively. Therefore it is suggested for the institutions; especially those educate pre-service teachers, launch mutual

agreements or reconsider their contracts concerning their institutional expectations. Additionally, the content analysis of the pre-service EFL teachers implied that the further studies might focus on unveiling the discrepancies among the hosting institutions in terms of their teacher education programs and their scopes in terms of the professional development of prospective teachers.

The last but not the least, as the present study and some others exposed the TNE experiences of students contribute to their professional development in various extents. However, there are some other factors that might affect the excellence of such actions. Therefore, future studies might focus on the relationship between professional development and TNE experiences of pre-service teachers and other possible variables.

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Contributions of transnational education experiences of pre-service **CALESS 2019, *1*(1) 1-19**
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