

A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: ON PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS¹

Nitel Bir Araştırma: Öğretmen Adaylarının Konuşma Becerileri Öğretme Algıları Üzerine

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ABSTRACT: Whereas research on teaching speaking English as a foreign language (EFL) to young learners commonly focuses on the issues from the perspectives of either the teachers or the students, the research on perceptions of pre-service EFL teachers on teaching speaking skills in a real class setting has remained an untouched area of research that has not gained significant attention. Therefore, the current study aims to explore pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching speaking skills to young learners. Additionally, this study aims to explore whether pre-service teachers have teaching speaking anxiety, if so, what the anxiety-provoking factors are in teaching speaking. Moreover, this study also attempts to find out what pre-service teachers' gains are in teaching speaking at a real class setting. The sample group in the study consisted of 48 pre-service teachers, at Necatibey Faculty of Education, Balıkesir University. A background questionnaire, interviews, reflection and essay papers were used to collect qualitative data. The results indicated that pre-service teachers perceived mainly three factors for students' lack of speaking skills in Turkish context such as 'English language teaching itself', 'English teachers' and 'methodology, materials and curriculum'. The study also concluded that pre-service teachers experienced teaching speaking anxiety, the sources of which were lack of experience in teaching speaking in real class settings, being unable to apply appropriate methodology, being unable use classroom discourse, being unable to increase students' motivation, interest and participation, as well as fear of making pronunciation, grammar and knowledge mistakes. It also concluded that teaching speaking skills at a real class setting gave the participants an invaluable experience as prospective teachers of English.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language, Pre-service Teachers, Teaching Speaking Skills, Perception.

¹ This paper is an extended and revised version of a paper entitled "A Speaking Project for Young Language Learners: From Anxiety Arousing State of Speaking in English to Having Fun with English" and presented at the VI. International Congress on Research in Education under the name of Quality, Assurance in Education: Policies & Approaches, 13-15 October 2016, at Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University, Rize.

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ÖZ: Çocuklara yabancı dil olarak İngilizce konuşmayı öğretme konusu üzerine yapılan araştırmalar genellikle ya öğretmenlerin ya da öğrencilerin algılarını ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlarken İngilizceyi yabancı dil olarak öğrenen aday öğretmenlerin gerçek sınıf ortamında çocuklara konuşma becerileri öğretme konusundaki algıları yeterince ilgi çekmemiş bir çalışma alanı olarak kalmıştır. Bu nedenle bu çalışma, İngilizce aday öğretmenlerin çocuklara konuşma becerilerini öğretme algılarını ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamıştır. Ayrıca, bu çalışma aday öğretmenlerin konuşma becerilerini öğretme kaygıları olup olmadığını, eğer varsa bu kaygılara yol açan faktörlerin neler olduğunu ortaya çıkarmayı hedeflemiştir. Bununla birlikte çalışma aday öğrencilerin gerçek sınıf ortamında edindikleri deneyimlerin neler olduğunu ortaya koymayı da amaçlamıştır. Araştırmaya Balıkesir Üniversitesi Necatibey Eğitim Fakültesinde okuyan 48 aday öğretmen katılmıştır. Araştırmada, katılımcıların demografik yapısını araştıran anket soruları, mülakatlar, duyu ve düşüncelerini yazdıkları deneme yazıları nitel veri toplamak amacıyla kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre, aday öğretmenler, çocukların yabancı dil konuşmadaki eksikliklerini eğitim sistemi, İngilizce öğretmenleri ve metodoloji, materyal ve müfredat olmak üzere üç temel faktöre bağlamışlardır. Bununla birlikte, araştırmanın sonucu, öğretmen adaylarının da konuşmayı öğretme kaygısı yaşadıklarını ve bunların nedeni olarak gerçek sınıf ortamında deneyimlerinin olmaması, uygun metodolojiyi uygulayamamaları, sınıf ortamına uygun söylem bulamamaları, çocukların motivasyon, ilgi ve katılımlarını arttırmada zorluk yaşamalarını, telaffuz, dilbilgisi ve bilgi hataları yapmalarını göstermişlerdir. Bununla birlikte gerçek sınıf ortamında İngilizce konuşmayı öğretmede kazanımlarının olduğunu belirtmişlerdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce, Aday Öğretmen, Konuşma Becerilerini Öğretme, Algı.

INTRODUCTION

Research results indicate that speaking is considered as a neglected skill in foreign language education and accepted as the most complicated and pivotal skill to acquire (Ur, 1996; Hughes, 2002; Shumin, 2002). Thus many studies focused on perceptions of either the teachers or the students on foreign language speaking skills (Nakatani, 2006; Ryan and Viète, 2009; Rios-Aguilar et al., 2010; Rao, 2010; Castañeda and Rodríguez-González, 2011; Aguilar and Rodríguez, 2012; Negishi 2012; Roskvist et al., 2014; Nitta and Nakatsuhara 2014; Kang 2015; Bukhari et al., 2015). However, while research on the perceptions considerably increased in the last decades, the research on the perceptions of pre-service EFL teachers has remained an untouched area of research that has attracted comparatively less attention (Çubukcu, 2010; Dinçer and Yeşilyurt, 2013; Ma, Wong, Lam, 2015). In other words, when compared research on the perceptions of students



and teachers, research on pre-service EFL teachers' perceptions, particularly on teaching speaking remain too limited to deduce from these studies.

As mentioned above, the studies conducted on perception of speaking skills either focus on the issue from the perspectives of teachers or from those of the students. For instance, the study conducted by Ma (2012) indicated that whereas Non-Native English speaking teachers (NNEST) had strong pedagogical strengths, they had linguistic weaknesses and on the other hand, while Native English speaking teachers (NEST) had strong linguistic strengths, they had pedagogical weaknesses. In a similar study (Rao, 2010) the strengths and weaknesses of NESTs were researched by the data taken from 20 Chinese EFL students' perceptions. The result revealed that native language authenticity, cultural familiarity and new methodological insights were among the strengths while teachers' classroom performance, their indifference to students' linguistic problems, and their negligence to students' learning styles were considered among the weaknesses. The perceptions of English language and communication abilities of NNEST students were researched in another study (Rajprasit et al., 2015) and it was found out that the students were in difficulty in productive skills, and their use of real English in real world was not improved, and last of all, the students had unrealistic language learning goals.

In another study (Aguilar and Rodríguez, 2012), both the lecturers' and the students' perceptions were researched on the strengths and weaknesses when content and language integrated learning was implemented for the improvement of speaking skills. The result indicated that the lecturers having insufficient level of English and that local students' low proficiency level than the Erasmus students were considered as among the most important weaknesses. Another study (Castañeda et al., 2011) was conducted to find out the perceptions of the students on how to improve L2 speaking abilities. The result revealed that students perceived increased awareness in their own speaking skills by help of progressive speech draft submission and analysis of peers' samples. Furthermore, the result of another study carried out to find out teachers' English teaching beliefs (Shinde and Karekatti, 2012) indicated that pre-service teachers should have a special training on how to make their talk effective and relevant in classroom settings. Additionally, the study of Rajprasit, Pratoomrat, and Wang (2015) explored the perceptions of the Thai students in English language learning. According to the results, the students put forward some affirmative sets of beliefs such as "a) anyone can speak English if given the opportunity and the time to practice, b) studying in a country where English is spoken as a native language will increase their language proficiency, and c) they want access to information resources in English" (2015, 1).

As indicated, there have been a number of studies on the perceptions of foreign language speaking skills. Some of these studies were mainly conducted to find out the perceptions of NNESTs (non-native English speaking teacher) and NESTs (native English speaking teachers) (Ma, 2012; Wang and Lin, 2014; Lee, 2009); some of them were carried out to find out the perceptions of prospective English language teachers in general sense (Çubukçu, 2010; Demiröz and Yesilyurt 2015); and some of the others investigated the perceptions of cultural effects on language learning, particularly on speaking skills (Ma et al., 2015; Rajprasisit et al., 2015; Su, 2011); and some of the others were on methodological language learning (Aguilar and Rodríguez, 2012; Ryan and Viete, 2009).

To be brief, as the literature indicated many studies appeared from the perspective of either the teachers or the students, while no study focused on the perceptions of pre-service EFL teachers on how to teach speaking skills to young learners in a real class setting. As a final note, it should be confirmed that the studies given above are in the scope of either the teachers' or the students' perceptions of teaching/learning speaking, and that the perceptions of pre-service EFL teachers on teaching speaking skills has not been revealed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English language, as is the case in any other languages, is always changing, evolving and adapting to the needs of its users and the demands of a given social structure. Accordingly, such a changing and demanding social structure has always been effective in bringing foreign language teachers into the spotlight since it is proposed that the emerging needs of language learners be met promptly. For this very simple reason, the World English Speaking (WES) pre-service teachers (i.e. students enrolled in university-based teacher education programs) have a vital function in transmitting knowledge from native language to foreign/second language and vice versa.

The pre-service English teachers are believed to be generally incompetent in speaking English fluently, particularly in classroom discourse since they are considered as they lack academic oral practice (Gibbons, 2002). According to Schulz 'a major weakness in foreign language education is that numerous foreign language teachers in the schools have neither the communicative competence nor the confidence to use the target language as means of classroom communication' (2002, 291). A number of studies are also conducted to find out weaknesses of ELT students in speaking English for communicative purposes. These weaknesses are as such: lack of opportunities to use English and incompetency in linking speaking situations to real world English (Nunan, 2006); lack of governmental testing speaking skills (Farooqui, 2007); spending



less than two percent of students' school day in oral language development (August, 2002); scarcity of more complex issues, topics and structures in speaking English (Zhang and Alex, 1995); incompetency in speech production sub-skills such as vocabulary retrieval and choice of grammatical patterns, and sociocultural competence (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000); insufficiency of practice, participation and exposure (Songsiri, 2007); inappropriate syllabus designs, principles of teaching, types of tasks and materials, and speaking assessment (Bailey, 2005; Goh, 2007).

The literature reviewed on speaking skills undoubtedly indicated that in monolingual communities where the opportunity to receive, hear and use the target or foreign language could be limited, as in the case of Turkish context, in comparison with bilingual speaker of that language. Accordingly, the study of Oller and Eilers (2002) revealed that there was a clear and consequential relationship between the amount of time a learner spends hearing and speaking a particular language and their success with certain linguistic forms. Additionally, the pre-service teachers' ideas, beliefs and perceptions were all effective in improving speaking skills. For instance, one study indicated that pre-service teachers had negative ideas about speaking instructions in Turkey even though they thought that speaking was the most important skill (Dinçer and Yeşilyurt, 2013). In another study (Çubukcu, 2010), the pre-service teachers revealed that quality English language teachers should not only use various instructional methods in their classrooms but also they should satisfy the needs of students particularly in learning, motivation, and interests. Their perception on being an effective language teacher also indicated that they should have a good command of the target culture. Similarly, another study (Ma et al., 2015) explored perceptions of a group of student teachers by asking a research question such as whether the participants' perceptions on the types of language strategy use and culture strategy use change before, during and after studying abroad. The result revealed that three strategies in facilitating communication in English such as 'nodding and smiling', 'using formulaic language', and 'initiating familiar topics' were among the significant increases after study abroad programme. The study carried out by Demiröz and Yeşilyurt (2015) aimed to investigate the perceptions of prospective English teachers about effective language teaching. The result revealed that indirect correction in oral production was recommended rather than direct correction among pre-service teachers. In another study, the researcher (Aydin, 2006) aimed to explore qualitatively the sources of foreign language teaching anxiety among pre-service teachers in a simulated teaching setting. The results showed that lack of teaching experience, fear of making mistakes, personality and perceived level of low language proficiency, which are in some

sense related with speaking skills, were considered as among the sources of teaching anxiety. In another study, the perceptions of Thai students in English language learning were investigated. According to the results of the study, the students put forward some affirmative sets of beliefs such as “a) anyone can speak English if given the opportunity and the time to practice, b) studying in a country where English is spoken as a native language will increase their language proficiency, and c) they want access to information resources in English” (Wang and Rajprasit, 2015, 1).

Several conclusions can be drawn from this review of research. Firstly, it can be pointed out that research made mainly focus on the perceptions of teachers on a wide variety of issues on perception aforementioned above. Secondly, the research conducted mostly focus on the perceptions of students, particularly on lack of speaking skills and how to improve speaking skills, etc. Thirdly, the research conducted to find out the perceptions of pre-service teachers on teaching are confined to stimulated classroom settings. Thus, it can be stated that research on teaching speaking English as a foreign language (EFL) is mostly dealt with either from the perspective of the teachers or the students rather than that of pre-service teachers.

In conclusion, the present study was carried out under the guidance of several factors. As the literature reviewed above indicated that it seems impossible to reach conclusions in terms of pre-service teachers’ perceptions on teaching speaking skills. Secondly, while many studies appeared on measuring the perceptions of teachers and students, no study focused on developing a tool to measure the perceptions of pre-service teachers. The third reason is that no study focused on the affective states of pre-service teachers in a real class setting. Thus, in this paper, as the perceptions of pre-service EFL teachers were explored in terms of teaching speaking skills to young language learners, a more realistic outcome of teaching anxiety in teaching speaking at a real classroom setting would give researchers to develop quantitative scales in assessing anxiety. To be brief, the author intends to research perceptions of pre-service teachers on teaching speaking in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting.

Research questions

This study aims to find out answers to the following research questions: 1) What are pre-service EFL teachers’ perceptions regarding teaching speaking skills to young learners? 2) What are pre-service EFL teachers’ beliefs regarding the failure in teaching speaking skills to young language learners? 3) Did pre-service EFL teachers get anxious while practicing at a real class setting? 4) What are the anxiety provoking factors while practicing at a real class setting?

5) What are pre-service EFL teachers' gains and experiences in the process of teaching speaking skills at a real class setting?

METHOD

In order to carry out this research, a research proposal was presented to the dean of Necatibey Education Faculty of Balıkesir University, Turkey. The proposal included the whole procedure in detail in terms of its significance, purpose, methodology and tool of research. Soon after the approval was granted, the researcher informed the participants, who were taking Teaching English to Young Language Learners II course. Since the study involved interviews, reflections and essay papers, each of the participants were informed about the fact that their rights would be protected and that they would be also be informed about each of the procedures of the research. In this study, qualitative method was employed in order to decode the data gathered from the interviews, reflections and essay papers. It must be noted that this qualitative method can be considered as 'deductive orientation to qualitative research' (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2016, 257) since the participants answered five pre-defined questions enumerated in the data collection part.

1. Sample/ Participants

The sample group of the research consisted of 48 pre-service teachers of English studying in English Language Teaching (ELT) Department of Education Faculty of Balıkesir University. All of the participants had the courses Teaching English to Young Language Learners I and II through which they studied 2 credits of theoretical and 2 credits of practical issues. All participants were third year students at the ELT department. The mean age was 20.4, in the range of 17 and 28. Of the participants, 60.5% were females (29), whereas 39.5% consisted of male students (19). The participants were the graduates from Anatolian, Anatolian Teacher Preparatory and vocational high schools or the equivalent of some other language schools. All the participants excluding three students, one is American, two is from Turkic origin countries such as Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, were Turkish pre-service teachers of English at an advanced level. Before their participation, none of the participants were made to declare their own perceptions on teaching speaking to young language learners. After the participants' consents were taken both orally and in a written form, which indicated that they participated voluntarily, they were informed about before, during and after the process as well as the findings of the study about which the researcher thought that the findings would contribute to the participants' improvement as prospective English teachers.

2. Instruments

The data collection instruments were a background questionnaire, interviews, reflections and essay papers. The background questionnaire interrogated the participants' age and gender in English. In the interviews, reflection and essay papers, the researcher asked the participants about their opinions on the *specific speaking activities they conducted, how they attempted to teach speaking to young language learners, how they felt about their own speaking activities, the opinions before, while and after the activities and what should be done to promote teaching speaking for the young language learners* in English. Since the research was not carried out descriptively, but qualitatively, the perceptions of the participants were obtained through interviews, reflections and essay papers apart from background questionnaire. In other words, it must be stated that the participants' perceptions that were derived from the interviews, reflections and essay papers were used to obtain data qualitatively as it would be impossible to draw a conclusion in a descriptive and experimental research in natural settings.

3. Procedure

The study used a four-step procedure: instruction, practice, data collection and data analysis.

Step 1: Instruction

Teaching English to Young Language Learners I: In the Fall semester of 2015-2016 academic year, the class was lectured during 14 weeks on the topics such as *children learning a foreign language, learning language through tasks and activities, learning the spoken language, learning words, learning grammar, learning literacy skills, learning through stories, theme-based teaching and learning, language choice and language learning, assessment and language learning, issues around teaching children a foreign language and general revision*, all of which are the contents of *Teaching Languages to Young Learners* by Lynne Cameron (2010 on-line publication). The researcher lectures the participants in classroom settings. The main purpose of the class was to give detailed information to pre-service teachers on the theoretical aspects of teaching English to young language learners, which would also be considered as a basis for the following semester.

Step 2: Practice

Teaching English to Young Language Learners II: In the Spring semester of the 2015-2016 academic year, the class was lectured during 14 weeks. The course consisted of *teaching and learning of foreign language at primary level, how children of different ages learn languages, how children with individual differences think and learn, how to teach English to children, how listening and speaking skills can be taught, how reading and writing skills can be taught, English language teaching*

through songs, rhymes and chants, and through games, storybooks and technology, how teachers can manage classrooms, lesson planning and assessment, parental involvement, all of which are the contents of The Primary English Teacher's Guide (6th edition) by Jean Brewster, Gail Ellis, Denis Girard (2007).

It must be noted that this paper was the result of an on-going project entitled 'Let's Have Fun with English'^{**} which was conducted by Özge Özenci, a devoted English teacher of a Turkish Public school, Kayabey Secondary School in Balıkesir, Turkey, in the educational year of 2015-2016. The project was carried out on behalf of National Education, The Presidency of Strategy Development, under the title of "Innovation Awards in Education and Training 2015-2016", the aim of which is to develop, to disseminate and to award the original and contemporary approaches to learning and training. Apart from Kayabey Secondary School, The Karesi Province National Education Directorate and Balıkesir University, Necatibey Faculty of Education, English Language Teaching Department were the shareholders of the project. 120 students at Kayabey Secondary School in 5th and 6th grades participated in the project.

In general, the project was carried out to reduce negative perceptions of students to English courses and to make them aware that learning English was fun as the title of the project suggested 'Let's Have Fun with English'. The other two purposes of the project were firstly to reduce students' anxiety in speaking and secondly to improve their fluency in speaking. In order to fulfil these purposes, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which was introduced into English language learning in the 1970's and early 1980's and which rose to prominence by (re)considering and (re)valuating its own purposes and diverging its approach from 'grammar translation' to 'use the language in real life', was employed as its motto included 'almost everything that is done is done with a communicative intent' (Larsen-Freeman, 1986, 132). Additionally, CLT is characterized by a 'focus on communicative functions' and 'a focus on meaningful tasks' through the use of 'genuine and realistic situations' with the adaptation of 'authentic materials' by creating 'a secure and nonthreatening atmosphere' for language learners (Li, 1998, 679).

English teacher informed the researcher about the demographic structure of the students. Correspondingly, it was noted that the school was located on a district where low-income families inhabited and that either both of the parents were working or they were divorced. The responsibilities of the students increased and they had to carry out the daily chores. Remarkably, the students were unable to find any financial support for their extra-curricular activities. In addition to these, because of the central exams of TEOG (Transition from

^{**}For more information on the project see <http://sgb.meb.gov.tr/www/egitim-ve-ogretimde-yenilikcilik-odulleri-2015-2016-ogretim-yili-saha-ziyaretine-kalma-basarisi-gosterenkurumlar/icerik/239>

Primary to Secondary Education) in Turkey, students had high anxiety levels and they assumed English courses difficult. Thus, they preferred memorizing grammatical rules and vocabulary in order to be successful in the central exams, which were based on multiple choices, rather than learning the language for communicative purposes. This project was conducted to improve the 5th and 6th grade students' speaking skills by the help of pre-service teachers of English.

As the shareholders, the researcher informed the pre-service teachers of Balıkesir University, Necatibey Faculty of Education, English Language Teaching Department who voluntarily participated in the project while they were taking Teaching English to Young Language Learners II course, which included 2-credit practice and 2-credit theory. In the theoretical part, the pre-service teachers were lectured about aforementioned issues concerning how to teach English to young language learners. And, in the practical part, they prepared a speaking practice for the students about the related subjects in the curriculum (see Table 1), went to the project school, presented a speaking activity by considering their previously gained theoretical knowledge in order to improve students' speaking skills in a real class setting, as the shareholders of above-mentioned project.

The 48 pre-service English teachers were grouped in pairs. Accordingly, each of 24 groups presented different speaking practices with respect to the following contents of the classes in each week. Each of the pre-service teachers was assigned to present a 15-minute speaking activity session in a real class setting. The number of participants and topics taught were shown in Table 1. The speaking activities were prepared both by the help of pre-service teachers and by the advice and opinions of English teacher. The researcher also gave opinions to pre-service teachers in the process of material preparation for speaking activities as she has been teaching Evaluation and Development of Foreign Language Teaching Materials Course for the last eight years.

Table 1. Number and Content of the Activities

Contents of the 5th class	Contents of the 6th class
1. Introducing Oneself (N=2)	1. Introducing Oneself (N=2)
2. My Town (N=2)	2. After School (N=2)
3. Hello! (N=2)	3. Yummy Breakfast (N=2)
4. Games and Hobbies (N=2)	4. A Day in My City (N=2)
5. Health (N=2)	5. At the Fair (N=2)
6. Movies (N=2)	6. Vacation (N=2)
7. Party Time (N=2)	7. Occupations (N=2)
8. Fitness (N=2)	8. Detectives at Work (N=2)
9. The Animal Shelter (N=2)	9. Saving the Planet (N=2)
10. Festivals (N=2)	10. Democracy (N=2)
11. Extended-Talk (N=2)	11. Extended Talk (N=2)
12. Conversation (N=2)	12. Conversation (N=2)

Speaking activities related with the contents above were as such:

1. *Investigative journalist*, a pair work activity, is for the 6th grade to interview one another about their vacations and detective stories (6. Vacation, 8. Detectives at work).
2. *What is your secret*, a pair work activity, is for the 5th grade to understand their individual differences in terms of games and hobbies and also to investigate the secrets of the students at a party (4. Games and Hobbies 7. Party Time).
3. *Following Directions*, a group or class activity, is for the 5th and the 6th grades to make the students explore their own city (2. My Town, 3. A Day in my City).
4. *Yes or no games*, a class activity, is a game for the 6th grade where only two words that students are not allowed to say yes or no (4. Weather and Emotions, 7. Occupations).
5. *Guess who and guess what*, a class activity for the 5th grade, is a game for guessing the name of the famous person and festivals (6. Movies, 10. Festivals).
6. *Debate*, a class activity for the 6th grade, is an activity for the students to develop their own argument and conclude with a class-wide debate (9. Saving the Planet, 10. Democracy).
7. *Dialogue*, a group activity for the 5th grade, is for students' interaction with each other in order to have a chat about their daily activities (1. My Daily Routine, 3. Hello!).
8. *Telephone Dialogue*, a pair work for the 6th grade, is a game for introducing themselves, ordering something, or shopping and etc. (1. After School, 5. At the Fair).
9. *Role play activity*, a group work for the 5th grade, is an activity where students role-play as doctors or trainers (5. Health, 8. Fitness).
10. *Rope of Death*, a class work for the 5th and the 6th grades, is a true or false guessing game (9. The animal Shelter, 2. Yummy Breakfast).
11. *Extended-Talk*, a class work for the 5th and 6th grades, is a basic speaking activity for asking WH-questions (what/who/where/why/how).
12. *Conversation*, a class work for the 5th and 6th grades, is a basic speaking activity on any kind of subject improving randomly that students are eager to speak.

Step 3: Data Collection

Three instruments such as interviews, reflections and essay papers were used in order to obtain triangulation and to ensure trustworthiness and validity

of the data. The main purpose of using a background questionnaire in the study was to obtain information about participants' ages and genders. The researcher interviewed with each of the participants who presented a speaking activity in the class in each week. Before, while and after interview process, the researcher noted, recorded and coded the narrations of the participants. Then the participants wrote their own reflections after they completed their speaking activities. Last, the pre-service teachers who practiced teaching speaking in class wrote essays about their experiences after they finished their sessions. As indicated above, the main reason for using three different instruments were used was to make an analysis by comparing and contrasting data from three sources as regards trustworthiness and validity. The reason why the data were collected through three different types of instruments was because of the fact that '... a learner language is not a monolithic phenomenon but rather highly variable, raising important issues to do with what kind (or kinds) of learner language constitute the most valid data for the study of how learners learn (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2016, 4).

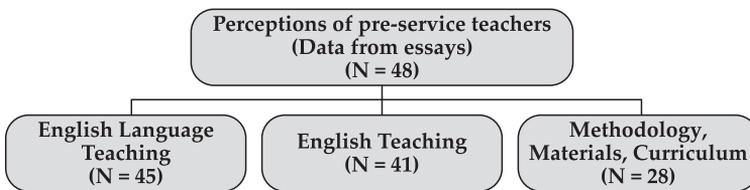
In the interviews, reflections and essay papers, the participants answered the following questions. The researcher begins with specific research questions, which are defined as 'deductive orientation to qualitative research' (Ellis and Barkhuizen, 2016, 257), sets out to prove them and ignores the other irrelevant themes which she comes across in the process. The researcher asks pre-service teachers the following questions on teaching speaking skills to young language learners in terms of foreign language education. The answers of the following questions were interpreted and discussed in pre-defined sections of the article, which depict the factors in teaching speaking skills. For instance, the 3rd question was discussed in the section 'Anxiety provoking factors'; the 2nd and the 4th questions were in 'Gains and experiences of pre-service English teachers'; the 5th question was in 'The ways of improving students' speaking skills'. Furthermore, the 1st question was interpreted and discussed in sections entitled the factors of 'English Language Teaching', 'English Teachers', and 'Methodology, Materials, Curriculum'. Last of all, all these questions were interpreted in the conclusion part as well as results and discussion.

1. *Can you give specific details about your speaking activity?*
2. *What did you learn from your speaking activity?*
3. *How did you feel about your performance?*
4. *What were your perceptions about your speaking activity?*
5. *What are your suggestions for improving speaking skills?*

Step 4: Data Analysis

The data from each source were analysed individually. The statements in relation to the perceptions of pre-service teachers experienced in teaching speaking skills to young learners were coded under certain themes as coding is the chief activity of the analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994) in a qualitative research. However, the statements on the experiences, inferences, performances, and suggestions of pre-service teachers were examined in details from each data source even though the main focus of the study was directly on the perceptions of teaching speaking skills. From those statements only the statements on the 'English language teaching itself' and 'English teachers' and 'methodology, materials and curriculum' were determined and underlined. Moreover, in order to understand how they felt while they were practicing teaching speaking, the affective statements were considered as they were the indicators of affirmative or negative responses which showed their emotional states. After this process was separately conducted for each of the data sources as well as for each of the pairs and then they were all compared and contrasted with all of the other participants. Then the data gathered from each source were transferred into three concept maps in which the statements were classified. After the comparison of the statements and numbers in the concept maps, it was found out that the data from the 'English language teaching itself', 'English teachers' and 'methodology, materials and curriculum' seemed similar. In other words, the triangulation indicated that the data obtained ensured validity and trustworthiness. Conclusively, the data in the concept map were combined and given in numbers and frequencies in the following section.

Figure 1. Sample Concept Map



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results indicated that pre-service English teachers thought that firstly, the 'English language teaching itself' secondly, 'English teachers' and finally, 'methodology, materials and curriculum' were among the three factors in teaching speaking skills.

The results revealed that pre-service English teachers (N=45) considered that 'English language teaching itself' in Turkey was the main factor in students' lack of speaking skills.

Table 2. The factor of English language teaching

English Language Teaching	Number (Frequency %)	
1. It is based upon theoretical knowledge rather than practical one.	36	31.58
2. It is based on written exams rather than oral ones.	28	24.56
3. It is based on a testing named Transition from Primary Education to Secondary Education System (TEOG), which enables students to take English exams in the form of multiple-choice rather than that of speaking test.	25	21.93
4. It is done in the over-crowded classes, which are not suitable for communicative language teaching.	19	16.67
5. It is done with students and teachers who are not exposed to authentic learning/teaching settings, as they do not usually have a chance to go abroad and practice their English.	6	5.26
Total	114	100

The following excerpt taken from the essay papers of one of the participants reveals that English language teaching itself is the main factor in students' lack of speaking skills:

In Turkey, in line with transition from Primary Education to Secondary Education System (TEOG), students take Central Written Exam for 6 different lessons (Turkish, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Revolution History and Kemalism, Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge, Foreign Language) according to the curriculum at the 8th grade. Thus, the students attempt to pass the multiple-choice exams. Therefore, they overlook speaking skills.

The results also revealed that pre-service English teachers (N=41) considered that English teachers were the second factor in students' lack of speaking skills.

Table 3. The factor of English Teachers

English Teachers	Number (Frequency %)	
1. Teachers are unmotivated, uninterested and inactive.	40	32.32
2. Teachers generally focus on grammar rather than on CLT or interactive teaching methods.	24	19.51
3. Teachers are lack of necessary knowledge and skill on contemporary approaches in teaching speaking.	17	13.82
4. Teachers do not allow students to make mistakes.	16	13.01
5. Teachers do not make students aware that speaking English is the most important skill in learning foreign language.	10	8.13
6. Teachers do not motivate students by positive reinforcement.	8	6.50
7. Teachers do not use technology in their speaking classes.	6	4.88
8. Teachers use technology to make the students be passive receivers.	2	1.63
Total	123	100

The following excerpt taken from the essay of one of the participants indicates that English teachers are the second factor in students' lack of speaking skills:

The greatest problem in teaching English to students in Turkey is that the teachers' insistence in teaching language through grammar rather than speaking. Teachers do not motivate students to learn English. They do not encourage students to speaking. For instance, until this time, none of my English teachers have told me that speaking English is one of the most significant skills in learning a foreign language. Most of the activities in class settings carried out were mostly on grammatical practice rather than on speaking. Similarly, the students are not made active participants but passive receivers. Yet again, we cannot blame anyone but the teachers themselves.

The results obtained from this study revealed that pre-service teachers (N=28) considered that 'methodology/materials/curriculum' were the third factor in students' lack of speaking skills.

Table 4. The factor of Methodology, Materials, Curriculum

Methodology/Materials/Curriculum	Number	Frequency (%)
1. The methodology (GTM) employed does not encourage students to speaking.	26	28.26
2. The materials distributed by the Ministry of Turkish National Education, which are full of unnecessary details and difficult topics, are not appropriate for speaking skills.	17	18.48
3. The time allocated for speaking activities is limited.	15	16.31
4. The curriculum is lack of contemporary approaches to speaking.	13	14.13
5. The materials are lack of speaking activities.	12	13.04
6. The materials are not designed to meet the demands of students.	7	7.61
7. Teachers are not provided with in-service training about the approaches, methods and techniques in order to improve students' speaking skills.	2	2.17
Total	92	100

The following excerpt indicates that the methodology applied, the material used and the curriculum developed were the third factor in students' lack of speaking skills:

Teacher: Good morning class!

Students: Good morning teacher!

Teacher: How are you today?

Students: Fine, thanks! And you?

Teacher: Thank you, sit down.

Ali tahtayı siliver oğlum! [In Turkish] (Ali, my son, clean the board please!)

The dialogue above summarizes the situation of English in an ordinary Turkish class. The teacher himself immediately changes his code and begins speaking in Turkish. In my opinion, students just memorize these routine greetings uncomprehendingly. The main reason why speaking skill is not improved in Turkish context is that it is taught just like any other courses such as maths, physics, chemistry, history, etc. The methodology applied and the materials used are not proper for communicative language learning. It is impossible to say that Turkish students do not know any English at all; they do, but just like the other subjects. Learning occurs only in grammatical forms, formulaic language, chunks or patterns rather than communicative purposes.

When pre-service teachers were questioned on their speaking activities whether students could speak fluently or not and what could be done to make them active participants and fluent speakers, most of them were on the opinion that students could speak acceptable amount of English but they are not fluent speakers. Yet again, they also added that the students were not motivated to speaking. And in order to make them active participants and fluent speakers, pre-service teachers thought that there are some certain ways to improve their speaking skills.

Table 5. The ways of improving students' speaking skills

The ways of improving students' speaking skills	Number	(Frequency %)
1. Motivating students by proper speaking techniques and methodologies.	48	25.67
2. Motivating students by songs, chants and drama.	34	18.18
3. Motivating students by authentic materials.	31	16.58
4. Motivating students by interesting subjects.	24	12.83
5. Motivating students by contextualized speaking activities.	20	10.69
6. Motivating students by establishing physical settings such as English classes, corridors and clubs.	12	6.43
7. Motivating students when they make pronunciation mistakes.	10	5.35
8. Motivating students by introducing them native speakers.	3	1.60
9. Motivating students by taking them abroad to expose them authentic English.	3	1.60
10. Motivating students by using innovative speaking teaching technologies.	2	1.07
Total	187	100

The extraction below suggested that a pre-service English teacher's perceptions were similar to those of Krashen's optimal input concept for acquisition, as in his own words, optimal input must be 'comprehensible', 'interesting and/or relevant', and must be in 'sufficient quantity' and must not be 'grammatically sequenced' (1987, 62-73). As for English as foreign language learning, as Bley-

Vroman indicated "Foreign language learning differs in degree of success, in the character and uniformity of the resulting systems, in its susceptibility to factors such as motivation, and in the previous state of the organism" (Bley-Vroman, 1990, 3-4). The following excerpt also reveals the importance of motivation, as does Bley-Vroman.

I attended the 6th grade class in the project school in hopes to teach the students some English. In order to get the students talking I thought it would be a great idea to pretend that I did not speak any Turkish so that the students will be forced to try and speak English with me. When I told the students that I am from abroad, that I am from America (by the way, you [researcher] know that I am a real American), they got extremely excited. In the class we made a potato salad in order to make the students use real English. I started to ask questions to get to know them; what their names are, where they live, what their favourite hobbies are, what their favourite football team, what they wanted to be when they grow up, what type of music they loved and etc. The students were nervous when they were being spoken to English. However, they were extremely excited and answered each question to the best they can. Then I asked them whether they had questions for me. Immediately after I asked this question, I was flooded with questions in English. The students and I had a great conversation in English. As an outcome, I learned that there is truly a major problem in Turkish education system in terms of input. Turkish students are learning English as a foreign language, however, only in the written form as the teachers only speak in Turkish. If the teachers were to speak only English while these children were young, the students would have a really high English level.

When pre-service teachers were questioned on their affective states after they presented their speaking activities, nearly all (N=46) revealed that they were anxious, worried, uneasy, apprehensive and fearful as it was their first teaching experience. Moreover, they stated that teaching anxiety was very evident in the process of activities as it shows the indicators of trembling hands and feet, sweating unreasonably and being unable to control the tone of voice. The table below shows the anxiety provoking factors among pre-service teachers.

Table 6. Anxiety provoking factors

Anxiety Provoking Factors	Number	(Frequency %)
1. Worried about teaching speaking in real class setting.	46	17.10
2. Anxious about being unable to apply appropriate methodology.	38	14.12
3. Uneasy about being unable to use classroom discourse.	31	11.52
4. Worried about making pronunciation mistakes.	28	10.40
5. Worried about making grammar mistakes.	27	10.03
6. Worried about making knowledge mistakes.	20	7.43
7. Anxious about preparing inappropriate materials.	17	6.31
8. Worried about presenting inappropriate activities.	15	5.57
9. Upset about being unable to increase students' motivation.	11	4.08
10. Worried about being unable to catch students' interests.	10	3.71
11. Anxious about being unable to use the time allowed efficiently.	9	3.34
12. Worried about being unable to manage class.	6	2.23
13. Worried about being unable to make students do the activities.	5	1.86
14. Fearful about being disliked by students.	3	1.15
15. Apprehensive about discriminating gender and religion.	3	1.15
Total	269	100

The extraction below revealed the anxiety provoking factors a pre-service teacher had experienced.

I experienced a very extraordinary thing in my life. I was much more anxious than the students themselves as it would be my first real experience in a real classroom. I had many questions in my mind as whether I would be apprehensive in front of the students, as whether the materials we prepared would work or not and whether the students would respond me or not, and etc. I attempted to teach words inductively by using contextualized and authentic materials. Then I realized that their vocabulary knowledge is in a good state. However, it can even be improved. What was weird for me was that the students were all reacting too much to the religious matters. For instance, when I gave an example about pig, they reacted me by saying that they

were all Muslims and I should not have used that word. I felt that the students were not prepared in terms of cultural awareness even they were prepared for linguistic awareness.

When pre-service teachers were questioned on what their gains/experiences after they presented a speaking activity and participated in such a speaking project, they all revealed that they have gained invaluable experience and knowledge as prospective teachers of English.

Table 7. Gains and experiences of pre-service English teachers

Gains/experiences of pre-service English teachers	Number	(Frequency %)
1. I gained invaluable experience and knowledge.	36	22.64
2. I learned how to apply theoretical knowledge I had learned previously to practical one.	27	16.98
3. I learned how to encourage shy, anxious and unsafe students and to make them speak in English.	25	15.72
4. I learned how important individual differences in speaking English, as some of the students might be active/inactive, enthusiastic/anxious and ambitious/lethargic, etc.	20	12.58
5. I learned that teachers who were fair, open-minded, objective and tolerant were effective in improving speaking skills.	16	10.06
6. I learned that teachers who do not discriminate students were positively effective in improving speaking skills.	12	7.55
7. I learned how to prepare students in terms of linguistic, psychological and cultural awareness.	8	5.03
8. I learned that computer games and interactional web-based applications were effective in students' improving speaking skills.	7	4.41
9. I learned how inclusive students could willingly participate in the activities if positive reinforcement was provided.	5	3.14
10. I came to realise what my future life would be like as soon as I had the chance of practising with the real students in class settings.	3	1.89
Total	159	100

The extraction below indicated that a pre-service teacher gained invaluable experience as that experience would undoubtedly affect his/her teaching career in the future:

At the very beginning of my experience, I thought of myself that I did not have enough experience in teaching English. Moreover, I found myself insufficient in speaking activities. And, I never thought of myself as a good teacher candidate. Besides, I had a bad impression on our education system. That is to say, I had no good impressions of neither teachers, nor of students, and neither of education system,

which I have still been struggling to succeed in such a demanding system. When I entered into the class and began speaking practice, my bad impressions begin to disappear. Firstly, our speaking activity went far better than we had expected. This project enabled me to foresee my future as a teacher. I realized that being a teacher is my best choice of occupation.

CONCLUSIONS

The researcher of this paper reached mainly five main conclusions. Firstly, pre-service English teachers interviewed in this study revealed their perceptions on teaching speaking skills particularly on English language teaching, secondly, on English teachers, thirdly on the methodology applied, the materials used and the curriculum adopted in the process of before, while and after the project, fourthly, on the ways of improving students speaking skills, and finally on the anxiety provoking factors among pre-service English teachers while presenting a speaking activity in a real class setting.

Specifically speaking, the pre-service teachers evaluated 'English language teaching itself' in terms of teaching speaking to young language learners. For them, the causes that worsen the improvement of speaking skills were that English language teaching is mainly based on theoretical knowledge rather than practical one, on written exams rather than oral ones and on the central assessment which is based on multiple choice exams by a testing named the Transition from Primary Education to Secondary Education System (TEOG). Among the other two causes that weaken improvement of speaking skills were over-crowded classes which are not designed for CLT, teachers and students who are not exposed to authentic teaching/learning settings and a *cul-de-sac* class setting for communicative language learning

Secondly, the pre-service teachers criticized English teachers as being unmotivated, uninterested and inactive in the classes. They thought that English teachers focused on grammar rather than on CLT or interactive teaching methods, that they were lack of necessary knowledge and skills on contemporary approaches, and that they do not allow students to make mistakes. Moreover, they also stated that English teachers do not make students aware that speaking English was the most important skill in learning a foreign language. They also added that English teachers do not motivate students by positive reinforcement, do not use technology and if they use technology they use it for the purpose of making the students be passive receivers rather than active participants.

Thirdly, the pre-service teachers criticized the methodology applied, the materials used and the curriculum adopted by the teachers who took part in the

project. They thought that the methodology used does not encourage students to speaking. They also stated that the materials, which were distributed by the Ministry of Turkish Education, were full of unnecessary details and difficult topics that are not appropriate for speaking. Moreover, limited time allocated for speaking activities, lack of contemporary approaches in the curriculum, materials which are not designed to meet the demands of the students and teachers who are not offered or allowed to take in-service training about the approaches, methods and techniques were considered as the other causes that weaken speaking skills.

Fourthly, the pre-service teachers revealed that in order to improve students' speaking skills, motivation was the most important factor. They indicated the ways of motivating students as such by using proper techniques and methodologies, by using songs, chants, and drama, by using authentic materials and interesting subjects as well as contextualized speaking activities. They also stated that motivating students when they make pronunciation mistakes were considered as among the important causes that improve speaking skills. Additionally, they indicated the importance of establishing physical settings for CLT, introducing them native speakers of English, taking them abroad to expose authentic English, and using innovative teaching technologies.

Fifthly, the anxiety provoking factors among pre-service English teachers while presenting a speaking activity in a real class setting revealed that they had experienced a number of emotions such as fear, worry, apprehension and uneasiness, etc. Among the sources of teaching anxiety were teaching speaking in a real class setting, being unable to apply appropriate methodology, preparing inappropriate materials, being unable to use classroom discourse, making mistakes on pronunciation, grammar and knowledge. Furthermore, the pre-service teachers thought that being unable to increase students' motivation, unable to catch students' interests, unable to use time efficiently, unable to manage class and unable to make students do the activities were among the other anxiety provoking factors. The pre-service teachers also added that being disliked by the students and fear of discriminating gender and religion might also be considered as the sources of teaching speaking anxiety.

Finally, the pre-service teachers revealed their gains/experiences on participating such a kind of speaking project. They stated that they had invaluable experience and knowledge by presenting a speaking activity in a real class setting. They stated that they experienced a number of things such as what to do and what not to do in class, how to encourage shy, anxious and unsafe students in order to make them speak, how important individual differences were in speaking English, how significant the teachers' roles were

in improving speaking skills, how meaningful not to discriminate students and how important to make the students aware in terms of linguistics, psychology and culture. Moreover, the pre-service teachers had gains on how effective computer games and interactional web-based applications were, how inclusive students could be made active participants and how their future life would be like after their participation in a real class setting.

A summary of the results of this study is provided below. First, the results of this study contributed to the limited literature in the context of teaching speaking skills to young learners at a real class setting. Interestingly enough, none of the studies suggested that English language teaching itself was responsible for students' lack of speaking skills in terms of its theoretical and its exam-centred structure. The results of this study, which is similar with the study of Shinde and Karekatti (2012) indicated that students and teachers were not exposed to authentic learning/teaching settings, -if they were given the opportunity and time to practice-, as they do not usually have a chance to go abroad and practise their English, they would be better in speaking. The findings discussed in this study did not contradict to the results found in prior research in terms of satisfying the needs of students' motivation and interest (Cubukcu, 2010), and accepting that speaking was the most important skill in learning a foreign language (Dinçer and Yeşilyurt, 2003). Conversely, while Ma, Wong and Lam (2015) found that nodding and smiling, using formulaic language and initiating familiar topics were considered as facilitating strategies in speaking, this study revealed that adopting proper activities, techniques and methodologies, using authentic and conceptualized materials, and introducing students to native speakers of English were among the ways of improving students' speaking skills. However, the study is complied with the study of Aydın (2016) in terms of students' lack of teaching experience and fear of making mistakes. Even though this study seems apparently different from that of Aydın (2016) in the sense of its procedure as his study involved stimulated class setting and this study was conducted in a real class setting, they showed some resemblances in the aspects of increasing motivation and interest and preparing inappropriate materials. However, they also showed some contradictions in the aspects of losing time management, discriminating gender and religion, and being disliked by the students, and fear of negative evaluation. It must also be noted that the findings of this study resembles with that of Hayes (2009) in terms of teachers should use appropriate classroom methods and commit to teaching English and with that of Shinde and Karekatti (2012) in terms of pre-service teachers should have a special training on how to make their talk effective and relevant in classroom settings.

Some practical recommendations regarding the conclusions drawn from the study can be noted. It is commonly known that pre-service teachers attempt to improve themselves on the aspects of language learning/teaching both individually and academically. Thus, teacher trainers are required to provide them effective teaching methods. Because it is acknowledged that English teachers having near-native or native-like language (Medgyes, 2001) and having sufficient proficiency in speaking, standard accent and clear pronunciation (Banno, 2003) are generally considered as the three main criteria for being a good language teacher. Thus, pre-service teachers are required to adopt a classroom discourse in teaching speaking skills, which can be included in the curriculum of Teaching English to Young Language Learners I and II courses. Moreover, teacher trainers should also not only contribute to the development of the students' own teaching beliefs and visions but also knowledge of what and how to teach English language learners (Fairbanks, et al., 2010; Wang, et al., 2010). Thus, teacher trainer should teach effective teaching speaking methods for CLT.

The study was restricted to 48 pre-service teachers of English enrolling at a state university in Turkey. Moreover, the scope of the study was confined to the qualitative data obtained from interviews, reflections and essay papers. The data included Turkish EFL teachers' perception on teaching speaking skills to young language learners in a real class setting. To be brief, the data obtained from this study is limited to the factors as mentioned previously. Thus, further research focusing on the EFL teachers' perceptions of teaching speaking skills to young language learners is warranted. Moreover, another further research with native and non-native teachers of English may also be conducted in order to find out the perceptions of pre-service English teachers. Relatively, it is also obvious that more research is necessary for curriculum development including pre- and in-service teaching programs regarding teaching speaking to young language learners and developing classroom discourse.

As far as pedagogical implications are concerned, it must be noted that the discussion so far has demonstrated that teaching speaking anxiety plays a key role in facilitating language teaching among pre-service English teachers. Even though the participants were 3rd year of student teachers of English who are more familiar with teaching speaking skills and with a wide range of strategies in teaching speaking, they, however, reported having teaching speaking anxiety while giving lessons to young language learners. On one hand, this suggests that the English language education programme might not have sufficiently raised pre-service teachers' awareness to teaching speaking anxiety and the ways to overcome it. In short, teaching speaking anxiety provoking

factors should be pre-defined and pre-service English teachers should be made aware of overcoming such an anxiety. Secondly, English language teaching programmes as well as teaching speaking to secondary school students should be revised in accordance with the objectives of teaching speaking. If CLT is to be applied, then the strategies and the techniques used should be changed accordingly. And, thus English language teachers should have in-service training on CLT or interactive teaching methods. Thirdly, the attitudes of English teachers to young language learners should be rehabilitated directly in order to make the learners be active participants rather than passive receivers. Fourthly, the course books, which are not appropriate for speaking activities, should be revised and also additional speaking materials such as CDs and DVDs or else QR Reader, should be added to material pack prepared by the Ministry of Education. Lastly, in the curriculum of English language departments, a course entitled 'Classroom Discourse' should be included urgently, because, as a researcher, I had the idea that one of the anxiety provoking factors of teaching speaking is that the pre-service English teachers do not have sufficient classroom discourse while giving the course. Overall, English language teaching, which is on theoretical knowledge rather than practical one, on written exams rather than oral ones and on the central assessment which is based on multiple choice exams by a testing named the Transition from Primary Education to Secondary Education System (TEOG), should be (re)evaluated and (re)vised by considering the principles of speaking skills.

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