Pre-Service English Teachers' Practicum Expectations and Attainments

İngilizce Öğretmen Adaylarının Staj Deneyimi Beklentileri ve Kazanımları

Ömer Gökhan Ulum*

Abstract: Practicum or internship is an undergraduate level course, generally in a particular study area, which is structured to give students assisted practical exercise of a formerly or simultaneously studied theory or field. Practicum in pre-service teacher education forms one of the biggest constituent of the professional development. Before starting the actual teaching profession, pre-service teachers practice and develop themselves through practicum. Thus, practicum has to bear the required features to respond to the needs of pre-service teachers. The quality of practicum, which is influenced by several determinants such as cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and practicum schools, plays a vital role in developing student teachers. Thus, finding out what student teachers expect from the practicum process and what they attain during this practice constitute the aim of this study. Based upon a phenomenological research design, this inquiry examines the experiences of pre-service EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers (N= 20) in their practicum process. Open-ended interview questions developed by the researcher were directed to the informants in order to discover the personal constructs of the respondents. The results of the study suggest that the theoretic knowledge and practices given in education faculties do not correspond to the real school settings. Related suggestions to improve the quality of the practicum are provided for the Turkish Council of Higher Education.

Structured Abstract: In the field of foreign or second language teacher education, transformations have been observed in that a socio-cultural approach stands at the core of the related field which regards teacher education as a complicated formative practice based on taking part in sociocultural learning contexts (Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Borg, 2006). These transformations in EFL teacher education have given way to a body of research dealing with what candidate teachers think, know, and believe (Borg, 2011). Thus, the research in the related field claims that teachers' experiences, content knowledge, assumptions, beliefs, and understanding of the practicum are highly influential (Johnson, 2006) in forming and clarifying the ways they teach (Johnson, 2009). Accordingly, EFL teacher education has been of great concern all over the world for decades. The related research also hints on the need of innovations in pre-service EFL teachers' practicum to enhance the quality of teaching and learning (Velez-Rendon, 2006). This necessitates teacher candidates to be educated to overcome the challenges in EFL teaching (Lu, 2002). Further, candidate EFL teachers have extra problems since they try to teach English while also employing this language as the medium of

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instruction. The practicum has long been the core of preservice EFL teacher education throughout the world and is vital to carry out EFL education reform (Stewart, 2004). School experience allows candidate teachers to form the relation between theoretical knowledge and classroom practices. However, comprehending the ways of teaching EFL appropriately demands more inquiry (Liu, 2005).

This study aims at finding out what pre-service EFL teachers expect from the practicum process and what they attain during this practice. The required data were gathered from 44 pre-service EFL teachers studying in the Education Faculty of Mersin University, Turkey. With the aim of investigating the issue, the study employed phenomenology— a scientific approach to portray the related consciousness or experiences of third persons by means of scientific principles with an anthropological origin. Thus, this method relates the third-person's perspectives with any available evidence to clarify the informants' cognitive states.

Table 1: Pre-service EFL Teachers' Practicum Expectations and Results

Practicum Expectations	Results					
			positive		negative	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Utilizing proper teaching methods	14	18.18	2	14.29	12	85.71
Proper learning environment	11	14.29	2	18.18	9	81.82
Putting theory into practice	10	12.99	-	-	10	100.00
Professional co-ordinating teachers	10	12.99	3	30.00	7	70.00
Providing classroom management	9	11.69	5	55.56	4	44.44
Student success	6	7.79	2	33.33	4	66.67
Support from teachers	5	6.49	2	40.00	3	60.00
Interaction	4	5.19	2	50.00	2	50.00
Student motivation	4	5.19	-	-	4	100.00
Peaceful atmosphere	2	2.60	2	100.00	-	-
Real classroom setting	2	2.60	2	100.00	-	-
Total	77	100.00				

As can be clearly understood from Table 1, majority of the informants expected to utilize proper teaching methods (18.18%) in the practicum. While a big number of them could not utilize the proper ones (85.71%), a small number of the participants were positive about the related issue (14.29%). Moreover, a big number of respondents declared to expect proper learning environment (14.29%). Accordingly, while a few respondents achieved the mentioned opportunity (18.18%), a high number of them (81.82%) could not have it.

The practicum experience as an opportunity to professionally develop EFL pre-service teachers still remains unplumbed. Thus, this research area needs to be more inquired by the scientists in the related field. Canh (2014), for instance, utilized diaries by Vietnamese EFL pre-service teachers to see their practicum experiences during a 6-week time period. He found that these EFL pre-service teachers were highly prone to the practicum teachers' teaching style rather than trying to utilize the methods, techniques, and practices they had been taught at the university. In the present study, the EFL pre-service teachers did not mirror the practices of the co-ordinating teachers which they did not approve. However, they could not apply the theories they learnt at the university, since the actual classroom environment in the practicum experience were not reflecting the theoretic practices carried out at their faculty of education. Further, Hudson, Peter, Nguyen, and Thi Mai Hoa (2008) state that EFL pre-service teachers need both observations and micro-teachings during their practicum experience. They also hint on that EFL pre-service teachers may need specific features, customs, habits, and practices from their co-ordinating teachers to improve their future careers. Thus, they expect some support from their school mentors. They have particular expectations such as the enthusiasm, helpfulness, sincerity, knowledge, and communicative competence of the co-ordinating teachers. In the present study, such features were also demanded by the EFL pre-service teachers. Furthermore, an efficient practicum process should include constructive mentoring, particularly sharing experiences, preparing effective lesson plans, and supplying more opportunities for the students (Hudson, Peter, Nguyen, & Thi Mai Hoa, 2008), the lack of which were strictly criticized by the participants of the

present study. Besides, candidate teachers need a practicum mentor who clarifies the system requirements such as curriculum, school policy, and assessment, and an EFL teaching model such as delivery of teaching methods, preparing lesson plans, pedagogical knowledge such as classroom management, strategies of teaching, motivating learners, and handling with sudden problematic situations, and supplying the required feedback on the teaching performance. These requirements were also uttered by the EFL pre-service teachers included in the present study. The present study also clarified the requirements of an efficient practicum experience which necessitates a co-ordinating teacher to develop personal interrelationships and guides mentors to supply system requirements. The role of the model co-ordinating teacher is also an attribute of an efficient practicum. The most important of all, that the theoretic knowledge and practices are not able to put into practice in the real school settings is a significant problem that has to be solved since pre-service EFL teachers highly suffer from this matter.

Keywords: Pre-service EFL Teachers, Candidate Teachers, Mentoring, Practicum Experience, Practicum Practices

Öz: Staj veya çıraklık eğitimi genellikle özel bir çalışma alanına ait olan, aynı anda veya öncesinde çalışılmış bir teori veya çalışma alanının, pratik olarak desteklenip öğrenciye mezuniyet öncesi sunulduğu bir derstir. Staj öğrencilere pratik iş deneyimi sağlamak için tasarlanmıştır. Staj yaparak yaşayarak öğrenmenin önemini vurgulayan bir uygulamadır. Öğrencilerin bilgilerini gerçeğe yakın çalışma ortamına aktarabilecekleri yer staj okullarıdır. Staj meslek hayatında profesyonel deneyimin ve mesleki anlamda ilk etkileşimin sağlandığı yerdir. Hizmet öncesi öğretmen eğitimi uygulamalarından olan staj uygulaması mesleki gelişimin en büyük bileşenlerinden birini oluşturmaktadır. Öğretmenlik mesleğine başlamadan önce öğretmen adayları staj yoluyla pratik yaparlar ve kendilerini geliştirirler. Bu nedenle, staj, öğretmen adaylarının ihtiyaçlarına cevap vermek için gerekli özellikleri taşımalıdır. Staj okulu öğretmenleri, üniversite danışmanları ve uygulamalı okullar gibi çeşitli belirleyicilerden etkilenen uygulama kalitesi, aday öğretmenlerin geliştirilmesinde hayati bir rol oynamaktadır. Dolayısıyla, aday öğretmenlerin uygulama sürecindeki beklentilerini ve bu uygulama sonunda kazanımlarını anlamak bu çalışmanın amacını oluşturmaktadır. Fenomenolojik araştırma desenine dayalı bu çalışma öğretmen adaylarının (N = 20) staj sürecindeki deneyimlerini irdelemektedir. Araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen açık uçlu mülakat soruları, katılımcıların bilişsel yapılarını keşfetmek amacıyla katılımcılara yöneltilmiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçları eğitim fakültelerinde edinilen teorik bilgi ve uygulamaların gerçek okul ortamındaki uygulamalarla benzeşmediğini göstermektedir. Staj uygulamalarının kalitesini artırmak için gerekli öneriler Yüksek Öğretim Kurumuna yöneltilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngilizce Öğretmen Adayları, Aday öğretmenler, Staj, Staj Deneyimi, Staj Uygulamaları

Introduction

Practicum settings bear stress for trainees at different levels. However, candidate teachers and supervisors have the required potential to diminish or stop any kind of stress or anxiety (Çelik, 2008). Candidate teachers themselves can nurture anxiety as a result of their characteristics, assumptions, beliefs, troubles, and duties and the level of the anxiety may vary from trainee to trainee. Expecting high teaching performance from student teachers, for instance, may cause high stress (Murray-Harvey, et al., 2000; Fogarty & Yarrow, 1994). The faculty supervisor and co-operating teacher may also stand as the stress producing factors for the student teachers. The co-operating teacher carries out the actual classroom practices, while the supervisor deals with both academic and classroom settings (Guillaume & Rudney, 1993) in that they should both respond to student teachers' needs and problems (McNamara, 1995) by adapting them to the actual school setting, as well as assisting and encouraging them (Smith & Lev Ari, 2005). Providing the required motivation, giving regular feedback, and realizing the appropriate counselling are also some vital dimensions of the practicum experience in order to hinder or diminish anxiety (Kwan & Lopez-Real, 2005). The evaluation or assessment process of the practicum should be covered to the overall practicum process rather than testing the student teachers in the end of the practicum. Otherwise, it may cause high anxiety for the candidates (Murray-Harvey, et al., 2000). Further,

since candidate teachers do not have enough experiences of practicing the actual teaching, the co-operating teacher needs to support them to overcome problematic situations which result in stress. By promoting instant problem solving capability, student teachers get ready for the actual classroom setting. This capability is a kind of crisis management strategy which includes four aspects as defining, planning, confronting, and resolving the problematic situation accordingly (Çelik, 2008). Thus, finding out what student teachers expect from the practicum process and what they attain during this practice constitute the aim of this study.

EFL Practicum

Candidate teachers who learn how to teach EFL need mentoring to be professionally developed. They need to acquire peculiar teaching practices from both co-operating teachers and faculty supervisors to foster their professional skills (Hudson, Peter, Nguyen, & Thi Mai Hoa, 2008). In the field of foreign or second language teacher education, transformations have been observed in that a socio-cultural approach stands at the core of the related field which regards teacher education as a complicated formative practice based on taking part in sociocultural learning contexts (Johnson & Golombek, 2011; Borg, 2006). These transformations in EFL teacher education have given way to a body of research dealing with what candidate teachers think, know, and believe (Borg, 2011). Thus, the research in the related field claims that teachers' experiences, content knowledge, assumptions, beliefs, and understanding of the practicum are highly influential (Johnson, 2006) in forming and clarifying the ways they teach (Johnson, 2009). Accordingly, EFL teacher education has been of great concern all over the world for decades. The related research also hints on the need of innovations in pre-service EFL teachers' practicum to enhance the quality of teaching and learning (Velez-Rendon, 2006). This necessitates teacher candidates to be educated to overcome the challenges in EFL teaching (Lu, 2002). Further, candidate EFL teachers have extra problems since they try to teach English while also employing this language as the medium of instruction. The practicum has long been the core of preservice EFL teacher education throughout the world and is vital to carry out EFL education reform (Stewart, 2004). School experience allows candidate teachers to form the relation between theoretical knowledge and classroom practices. However, comprehending the ways of teaching EFL appropriately demands more inquiry (Liu, 2005). Mentoring has been regarded as one of the most necessary dimensions of the foreign language teacher education programs and nearly all student teachers believe that they will be able to efficiently transfer their mentoring experiences into the real teaching (Richards & Crookes, 1988). Student teachers previously had more time as students than as student teachers in that their experiences as students may positively affect their approach to teaching during practicum (Johnson, 1994). Since, candidate teachers may not be conscious of the impact of their prior experiences as students on the practicum, Bailey, et al. (1996) have proposed that foreign or second language teacher education programs should contain activities that stimulate candidate teachers to utilise their prior experience as students.

Methodology

This study aims at finding out what pre-service EFL teachers expect from the practicum process and what they attain during this practice. The required data were gathered from 44 pre-service EFL teachers studying in the Education Faculty of Mersin University, Turkey. With the aim of investigating the issue, the study employed phenomenology– a scientific approach to portray the related consciousness or experiences of third persons by means of scientific principles with an anthropological origin. Thus, this method relates the third-person's perspectives with any available evidence to clarify the informants' cognitive states. In short, this approach focuses on qualitatively interpreting how the informant conceives the world around. Accordingly, the data of the study were gathered through semi-structured interview questions formed by the researcher. Inter-coder reliability was conducted for the semi-structured interview questions. For the coding reliability of

the interview, Kappa Coefficient for Inter-coder Reliability was calculated and it was found that the coding process was highly reliable ($K = .889$, $p < .001$).

Findings and Results

This section clarifies the expectations of the candidate teachers from the practicum, as well as the results of these expectations. Further, samplings from the answers of the informants are given to illuminate the themes derived from the interview. Thus, Table 1 displays the expectations and results of the interview.

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- In the practicum, I thought I would teach to students who are successful and who are interested in research, actually students who are determined and motivated. However, when I first entered the classroom and asked about their wishes and goals, I was disappointed to see that they had no dream and goal. I was even more disappointed when I learnt that a 12th grade high school

literature student did not have the habit of reading a book. Their teacher also remained unconscious about this issue. However, I thought it should be better to start somewhere to have them like reading. Thus, every week, I suggested them some books to read. Except a few students, none of them were interested in the books I suggested. I gave them multiple-choice tests, but neither had they answered them all, nor had a look on them. The practicum developed me more than my university education actually did. Once again, I acquired the value of reading and research. In short, even I had great expectations from the practicum; I was disappointed throughout the practicum process.

- Before the practicum, we received theoretical information about the ideal methods for teaching English Language and had the opportunity to use it in our own classroom through micro-teaching sessions. This opportunity was a kind of rehearsal. In the real classroom setting, I saw that the situation was not that easy. A proper foreign language education could not occur, since the levels of the students were much lower than they should exactly be. Even as a pre-service EFL teacher, I was not satisfied with the language teaching process in the practicum school. I hoped that I would have the opportunity to apply the techniques, methods, and approaches taught us at the university. However, neither the physical environment nor the proficiency levels of the students were suitable for any activity. I think that this huge difference between our university education and the actual teaching practice at schools should be eliminated as soon as possible.

- During the practicum, my primary expectation was to experience the real school and classroom environments. Because, in our courses at the university, we were trying to design a lesson and carry out a micro-teaching presentation by imagining that we were in the real classroom environment. Thus, my expectation was met by the practicum practice. However, the relation between the co-operating teacher and students at the practicum school was not how I expected. Students and the teacher seemed to have developed friendship, but this relation destroyed the students' respect towards the teacher. Thus, there was a serious classroom management problem. At the beginning of the lesson, while the attendance was being taken, the students could not hear their names uttered by the teacher because they listened to music with their headphones. However, the teacher could not say and do anything about it. Yet, in the lesson, each skill was tried to be included. Frankly, I didn't think the lessons could be so effective and beautiful. Almost every student was trying to attend the lesson. They could say their thoughts on the subject in one or two sentences. The atmosphere was facilitating the participation of the students.

- During the practicum, I observed that the teachers were creating their own style according to the general level of each class, by adhering to different approaches. I learnt that when we utilise the theories written in the book, it may not always be enough. We should also focus on the facilities of the school and the level of the class. It is more practical to choose a teaching method according to the characteristics of the class.

- I was a little nervous in the beginning of the practicum. I could not predict how we would be met by the teachers and students at the practicum school. When we went to school to meet the teachers, they were so friendly. Likewise, students were also interested. They were very respectful towards us. I was aware that the English lessons at school would be much different than the presentations in our micro-teaching lessons at the university. I knew that more traditional methods were used in practicum schools. I clearly observed this during the practicum. I think that everything in the classroom is based on the teacher. Further, I expected the physical conditions of the school to be a little better. There were not enough extracurricular activities for students at the school. Fields for doing sports were limited, and the library and computer lab were insufficient. I expected the conditions to be better, but I could not find what I expected.

- I hoped to be able to observe children closely, to evaluate whether the school environment and theoretical knowledge match with each other, to find out the age group that I am

suitable for. Further, I figured out that pre-service EFL teachers should try their best to achieve something in impossible situations, observe a lot, and never give up.

- If only we had co-operating teachers who well motivated us. I would expect them to develop a more constructive perspective for the teaching profession. I would expect them to reach every individual child and create a good human profile in the eyes of every child. I would expect them to practice what they learned during their university years. I would expect them to be more well-groomed and meticulous. However, the co-operating teachers advised us not to be a teacher. They also told us that their salary is so low. They never reach every individual child. They only carried out the lesson with a few students.

- The practicum met my expectations. At first, I was very biased and anxious. I thought I would have hard times while communicating with children. I was worried about how to manage the class. Further, I was worried about not understanding and supporting the students. However, nothing happened as I thought. I think I have overcome these feelings. I learned how to treat children and how I should spend time with them. My co-operating teacher was very helpful and added a lot to my professional skills.

- What I hoped from the practicum was to closely observe the real classroom environment, and most importantly, to see how the teacher taught the subject to the students through teaching methods and techniques, and to grasp how the teacher managed crisis when he faced a problem with the students. Apart from these, I wanted to observe if students could really understand the lesson. When the practicum started, I had the opportunity to witness the communication between the teacher and the students in the classroom setting. The teacher's classroom management skill was well developed in the overcrowded class. The teacher successfully taught the target subject to the students in English, through visual aids, and various games and activities. In the classroom, if the noise got louder, the teacher was successful in stopping the students by using the required classroom management techniques. Since I was sitting among the students, I had the opportunity to know the students and experience their communicative skills. In short, in the practicum, I found everything I expected in terms of both closely observing the classroom, and the teaching methods and techniques applied by the teacher to explain the target subject.

- In the practicum, I expected to learn about how the teacher controlled the class, how she/he taught the lesson, the proper activities carried out, time management skill, and student involvement. Thus, it was a good experience for me to see how to teach well, what methods should be used, and one-to-one interaction.

- First of all, before the practicum, I was expecting such an environment where everyone in the teachers' room talked to each other and greeted each other, but was very little interaction among teachers, if any. I saw the teachers entering and leaving the teachers' room without any greeting in the morning. I was expecting a warmer environment, but that was not the case. I had my practicum in one of the best secondary schools in the region. Thus, I thought there would be teachers who did their job with love. I thought the students would be better because it was claimed as one of the best schools. The 8th graders were very naughty. All of them failed in the exams and quizzes. Almost all teachers complained about the 8th graders. The teachers were still applying the traditional teaching approaches. The school was not a well equipped one.

- What I hoped from the practicum was to learn about different teaching techniques and methods, and to witness the teacher student dialogues. What I found was that the teacher used traditional methods and techniques, and did not show enough care for the students.

- I thought that the school's conditions would be insufficient, and observed that I was extremely right. On the other hand, I thought that the teachers would be professional, and I was right. The teachers of the practicum school were really adequate, knowledgeable, and skillful. Unfortunately, they did not have much opportunity to represent themselves in such a school. I

cannot deny that they added to my professional development. This was an excellent experience for a teacher candidate. It doubled my love and respect for the profession.

- The teaching profession, which I willingly chose, was very important to me. The practicum was my first experience in the field and I wanted to have a sincere relation with my students, but I couldn't. The students were active in the lessons and they were all respectful. However, they were a little bit unmotivated. There were separate groups in the teachers' room and they were not much getting on well with each other. Further, my co-ordinating teacher supported me professionally well.

- I thought that the way of teaching English in Turkish public schools would change to some extent, but I still observed Turkish-based English courses in the classical way. I saw that the lessons were still carried out through Grammar Translation Method. The teachers were counting the time to fill the 40-minute lesson. I expected that the co-operating teachers at the practicum school would be tolerant towards us, since we were candidate teachers, but nobody showed us any tolerance and respect. We were not even allowed to enter the teachers' room.

- I expected the practicum to contribute to my profession. I expected to see the different learning styles of different students and how they present learning difficulties. Thus, the internship taught me how to communicate with different students and made me see how students react to what, and what they expect from the lessons.

- First of all, I was really nervous when I went to the practicum school. I didn't know what to do and how to behave. In fact, I had teaching experiences. I made presentations in the 3rd class at the university. I taught to my friends through micro-teachings. Our university lecturers always told us not to use GTM, and strongly advised us to teach through communicative methods. Further, they told us to teach students particularly speaking and listening. When I first attended the lesson, I was really surprised. Because the teacher spoke only Turkish using GTM. I realized that every lesson is being handled in this way. In fact, what I learned at the university did not seem to work very well in this system. The English level of the students was very low and they were very indifferent to English. What are taught at the university remain only in theory. Besides, I saw how difficult it was to control the students. The school's facilities were really nice, though. It was a well-equipped school for students. However, the student profile was really bad. Children focused only on primary lessons such as mathematics and science. English was seen only as 'waste of time'.

- I expected to learn a number of matters from the practicum, such as how students are treated in general and when showing disrespect, and how they learn the subject. Actually, I met my expectations since I learnt a lot from this experience. I had my first lesson experience and saw that it was not that much as I was afraid of. Previously, I had thought I would be disappointed by the students, but I was not. However, I was disappointed by the co-ordinating teacher who did not care the students much, and who never did anything other than using the textbook. Further, I realized that there is a gap between the actual teaching in the real classroom environment and the training we receive at the university. The faculty members put forward some excuses for these differences, such as huge class sizes and lack of teaching materials. Another issue is that the wrong attitudes and behaviors of the co-ordinating teacher towards the students stand as a big obstacle before learning. The co-ordinating teacher frequently used bad words for the students, which highly demotivated them. The teacher also made discrimination among the students. The teacher consciously and often ignored some of the students.

- The practicum chance was really an eye opener experience for me. Firstly, I learned that the courses we took at the university could not be transferred to the actual classroom environment. Although we try to be an idealist teacher, the conditions of the school and the the students do not allow this. The conversations I had with my co-ordinating teacher and other teachers of the school confirmed this. My school was in a socio-economically disadvantaged area and all the students

were coming from socially and economically poor backgrounds. I also witnessed Syrian immigrant students experiencing great difficulties. They have hard times studying Turkish and their grades were low. I felt how difficult it was to teach to 40 or more students and frankly I was really nervous. It was very difficult to get their attention during the course. So, it was almost impossible to apply the teaching methods I learned on these students. However, I have to admit that the interaction between the teacher and students was so well. The teachers' room was peaceful and all the teachers gave us lots of valuable advices. Students' attitudes varied depending on the situation, but there was only one teacher who was very strict. I thought that I would not be like him in the future, because his words and behavior were not professional. Indeed, what I expected from the practicum and what I found in the end did not match in general. I learnt that it is hard to put the theory into practice.

- Thanks to the school experience, I spent a semester at a state school. The only thing I expected was that the school environment would be a more favorable environment for learning. However, the school was surrounded by high walls and security fences giving the impression of a prison rather than a school. Students were asked to buy extra textbooks as materials since they were not at the same level with the state delivered textbooks and workbooks. However, their financial state was not proper to buy these extra materials, which caused demotivation. Smart boards were not available in every classroom and there was heating problems, which caused students to study in extremely hot or cold classrooms. Students ran in the corridors before the lesson, shouted loudly and pushed each other constantly, which was a real mess. Most of them also used slangs and severely injured each other. Although most of the students wanted to participate in the lesson to have a word, they did not do it. Because, they were anxious about speaking since they could not pronounce English well. The teacher did not do anything to prevent this. Extra teaching materials were not used by the teacher. Further, I realized the importance of professional development to be a well equipped teacher. Children were all reluctant to learn English, which was a big obstacle.

- I understood that the practices in the actual school environment were different from those we did at the university. It was an instructive experience for me to discover the real learning environment. Observing that the co-ordinating teacher utilised very different practices in diverse classes allowed me to understand how important it was to use different methods and techniques according to the features of the students. In short, although I did not have many expectations from the practicum, I realised that the practicum experience was a very important step for developing my professional career.

- Before the practicum, I had not had much about it in my mind. However, the exam practices surprised me a lot. For instance, both English and Turkish instructions were given for the exam questions. Further, there were some shortcomings in the school facilities. For example, in some classrooms, there was a projection device, but in some classrooms it was absent. Besides, the classes were overcrowded. Although we gave lectures in English in our micro-teachings at the university, this was not the case in the practicum school.

Discussion and Conclusion

The practicum experience as an opportunity to professionally develop EFL pre-service teachers still remains unplumbed. Thus, this research area needs to be more inquired by the scientists in the related field. Canh (2014), for instance, utilized diaries by Vietnamese EFL pre-service teachers to see their practicum experiences during a 6-week time period. He found that these EFL pre-service teachers were highly prone to the practicum teachers' teaching style rather than trying to utilize the methods, techniques, and practices they had been taught at the university. In the present study, the EFL pre-service teachers did not mirror the practices of the co-ordinating teachers which they did not approve. However, they could not apply the theories they learnt at the university, since the actual classroom environment in the practicum experience were not reflecting the theoretic practices carried out at their faculty of education. Further, Hudson, Peter, Nguyen, and

Thi Mai Hoa (2008) state that EFL pre-service teachers need both observations and micro-teachings during their practicum experience. They also hint on that EFL pre-service teachers may need specific features, customs, habits, and practices from their co-ordinating teachers to improve their future careers. Thus, they expect some support from their school mentors. They have particular expectations such as the enthusiasm, helpfulness, sincerity, knowledge, and communicative competence of the co-ordinating teachers. In the present study, such features were also demanded by the EFL pre-service teachers. Furthermore, an efficient practicum process should include constructive mentoring, particularly sharing experiences, preparing effective lesson plans, and supplying more opportunities for the students (Hudson, Peter, Nguyen, & Thi Mai Hoa, 2008), the lack of which were strictly criticized by the participants of the present study. Besides, candidate teachers need a practicum mentor who clarifies the system requirements such as curriculum, school policy, and assessment, and an EFL teaching model such as delivery of teaching methods, preparing lesson plans, pedagogical knowledge such as classroom management, strategies of teaching, motivating learners, and handling with sudden problematic situations, and supplying the required feedback on the teaching performance. These requirements were also uttered by the EFL pre-service teachers included in the present study. The present study also clarified the requirements of an efficient practicum experience which necessitates a co-ordinating teacher to develop personal interrelationships and guides mentors to supply system requirements. The role of the model co-ordinating teacher is also an attribute of an efficient practicum. The most important of all, that the theoretic knowledge and practices are not able to put into practice in the real school settings is a significant problem that has to be solved since pre-service EFL teachers highly suffer from this matter.

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