International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research (IJCER)

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To cite this article:

Çelik, H. & Zehir Topkaya, E. (2017). Pre-service English teachers' teaching-efficacy perceptions and their potential sources in field experience. *International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research, 4*(1), 12-24.

International Journal of Contemporary Educational Research
Volume 4, Number 1, June 2017, Page 12-24 ISSN: 2148-3868

Pre-service English Teachers' Teaching-efficacy Perceptions and their Potential Sources in Field Experience*

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Abstract

Field experience (FE) is a key component of pre-service English language teacher education enabling the early integration of pre-service teachers (PSTs) in real teaching situations. As a well-researched area, FE is known to increase PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions. Thus, to better understand how it does so in the Turkish context, this study examines senior PSTs' (N=145) teaching-efficacy perceptions and the potential sources of these perceptions in the course of FE. Adopting a pretest-posttest design supported by semi-structured interviews (N=30), the study showed a significant increase in the PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions from pre-test to post-test (p<.05). While the interview data indicated that *prior teaching experience, decreased sense of teaching anxiety, and increased confidence in professional self* were among the major sources of the increase in these perceptions, such sources as *untested teaching competencies* and *critical awareness of teaching and profession* had a negative impact on the PSTs' efficacy perceptions.

Keywords: Field experience, Pre-service English teachers, Teaching-efficacy, Teaching competencies

Introduction

For the last couple of decades, teaching profession and PST education have been extensively studied mainly because of the comprehensiveness of the profession and the challenges along the process of learning to teach (Caires, Almeida, & Vieira, 2012). In this context, FE, as a key component of PST education has also been a significant research concern within teacher education research. Despite having a variety of names such as *practicum, practice teaching, student teaching, field work, internship, teaching practice, or clinical experience*, some form of teaching experience is common to almost every second and foreign language teacher education program (Borg, 2009). Regardless of the name given, FE is considered as an integral, essential, and key dimension of pre-service English language teacher education where PSTs create a beginning sense of self as teachers (Clarke & Collins, 2007; Ronfeldt & Reininger, 2012).

Besides, FE is an opportunity for PSTs to experiment with planning and enacting a short sequence of learning experience under the careful supervision of a faculty advisor (hereafter FA) and a cooperating teacher (CT) at practicum school (Hollins, 2011). PSTs generally take responsibility for one or sometimes two classes for which they will have main responsibility to observe and assist CTs throughout the year. When PSTs teach in their CTs' classes, their FAs pay visits to the practicum schools, generally few times in a term, make classroom observations, provide feedback and assistance, and complete official university documents and reports. This overall structure shows how FE in almost every practicum school works (Rozelle & Wilson, 2012). Although the duration of FE varies considerably across nations, ranging from a few weeks to a year, it occurs most frequently towards the end of the teacher education program (Darling-Hammond & Cobb, 1995).

Within the Turkish teacher education system, FE, running simultaneously with the faculty-based courses in the senior year, is covered via the combination of consecutive school experience (hereafter SE) and teaching practicum (hereafter TP) courses. Taking place in the schools determined by the faculty and bureau of national education in the town in the fall-term for 14 weeks, the main purpose of SE is to provide PSTs with the

* This study has been produced from the first author's PhD Dissertation.

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opportunity to familiarize themselves with the profession, workplace, future colleagues and students, and daily tasks and routines of the profession which are mainly achieved through structured observation forms generally specified by the faculty. There might also be some occasions when CTs purposefully involve PSTs in teaching in order to reinforce their familiarization with the profession as much as possible. In TP, PSTs are generally assigned to other schools which are different from their SE schools with the aim of providing them with as many different school contexts, levels, and student groups as possible. Thus, through this rotation, they are expected to enrich their initial repertoire of teaching practice. In this phase, PSTs teach as much as possible and are involved in the routines of teaching more and frequently. Consequently, in both phases by working with a CT in real classrooms with real students, PSTs gradually familiarize themselves with the profession as they receive feedback, mentoring, and ongoing training from their CTs. Besides, FAs assigned by the faculty to guide PSTs throughout their FE also work collaboratively with CTs to guide and evaluate PSTs' professional learning and development in the process. In this regard, as Selvi (2012) highlighted, this contemporary view initiates a shift in our understanding of FE from a point of view where it is defined as an activity to apply theoretical knowledge gained through teacher education to a point where it is viewed as a central process providing PSTs with the social context to grow.

As the descriptions highlight, the rationale behind FE is to overcome the perennial theory-practice gap which has permeated the field of language teacher education (Johnson, 2006), and to have pre-service teachers apply teaching behaviors to "guarantee some level of technical expertise in the classroom" (Caires et al., 2012, p. 164).

Apart from fulfilling this essential function, "as a dynamic and continuous process of mutual interaction and adaptation amongst the newly arrived teacher and different members of that community" (Caires et al., 2012, p. 164), FE supports PSTs' awareness building about their own teaching, while they learn how to make informed decisions through systematic observation and exploration of their own and others' teaching (Gebhard, 2009). Therefore, it ultimately activates PSTs' professional maturity and development as they also build critical awareness of teaching and the profession.

Thus, FE "with [its] steadily increasing levels of complexity and responsibility" (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001, p. 803) plays a very important role on PSTs' professional learning, professional identity development, learning to collaborate with significant others, i.e. FAs, CTs, students, and development of a critical eye towards evaluation of their teaching practices.

Teaching-efficacy Perceptions and FE

Being a central concept in current psychological theory (Housego, 1990), efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance (Bandura, 1994). As the foundation of social cognition theory, human motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment, efficacy relates peoples' beliefs that their actions can produce the outcomes they desire (Pajares, 1992). Thus, it is also linked to performance as it affects the amount of effort expanded, persistence at task, resilience if faced with obstacles, and perceived stress (Durgunoğlu & Hughes, 2010). Therefore, individuals who have high self-efficacy are known to put in sufficient effort that may produce successful outcomes, whereas those having low self-efficacy are likely to give up prematurely and fail on task.

Besides its use in psychology, efficacy has also been widely referred in teacher education research, and has been defined as "teachers' beliefs or convictions that they can influence how well students learn, even those who may be difficult or unmotivated" (Guskey & Passaro, 1993, p.4). Efficacy is also known to relate to teachers' feelings of their competencies, their actions, and the outcomes they achieve (see Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001 & 2007). Moreover, experience or performance accomplishments as referred by Bandura (1997, cited in Brown et al., 2012) are stated to be the most important factors in the determination of teaching-efficacy which is further known to be affected by such sources as; *mastery experiences, psychological and emotional states, vicarious experiences,* and *social persuasion* (see Brown et al., 2012). Mastery experiences are the strongest source of teaching-efficacy since a performance which has been successful increases teaching-efficacy perceptions and also contributes to the expectations from future performances. Furthermore, mastery experiences which have been gained particularly in FE have the biggest influence on the development and growth of PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions (see Hoy & Spero, 2005). Besides, teachers who do not expect to be successful with certain students possibly put forth less effort in preparation and delivery of instruction, and give up easily at the first sign of difficulty, even if they actually know the strategies that could assist

(Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2007). As part of psychology and emotions, *mood, emotions, physical reactions, and even stress* can also source teaching-efficacy perceptions negatively and positively as they can closely influence performance or perceptions of one's own performance. Additionally, vicarious experiences, in other words those that are gained through observation, affect the observer's (PSTs in our context) teaching-efficacy as well. In this regard, vicarious experiences are great potential sources of the development of PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions as throughout their FE they spend a great deal of time to observe others (CTs and peers) in action. Quite complementarily, social persuasion, which in PST education over the course of FE, is gained through feedback provided by CTs and FAs have a lot to offer to the development of PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions (see Brown et al., 2012). Last but not the least, teaching-efficacy is also known to have a link to teachers' confidence that they can design and implement teaching practices in a way to facilitate student learning (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). Thus, as can clearly be seen, teaching-efficacy is a multi-dimensional construct affected by the availability or unavailability of various sources facilitating or debilitating its emergence, growth, and consistency.

In this regard, increasing PSTs teaching-efficacy perceptions regarding their capabilities to execute the tasks associated with teaching in educational settings (Siwatu, 2011) is of primary importance in FE as undoubtedly pre-service teacher education programs all over the world aim to prepare qualified, competent, and efficacious teachers who can meet the needs of students with diverse skills and linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Cruz & Arias, 2007; Gebhard, 2009).

Therefore, as a common construct in teacher education research, teaching-efficacy has been researched in connection with teachers' behaviors in the classroom, the effort they put into teaching, the goals they set i.e. career plans, their level of planning and organization, approaches towards students' learning outcomes, achievement, and motivation (see Coladarci & Breton, 1997; Pajares, 1992; Poulou, 2007; Putman, 2012; Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, & Hoy, 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001; Turner, Jones, Davies, & Ramsay, 2004; Uztosun, 2016). Moreover, teaching-efficacy perceptions are also suggested to have a close relationship with the quality of teacher education (see Carr, 2013; Gurvitch & Meztler, 2009; Kraut, 2012; Tran, 2011; Turner et al., 2004) as it is the process whereby PSTs are provided with a very comprehensive coursework equipping them with the knowledge, skills, understandings, and dispositions which form the basis for their teaching-efficacy perceptions.

As for PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions, research has shown that FE is a source of their teaching-efficacy (see Martins, Costa, & Onofre, 2015) specifically stemming from successful experiences in FE (Karakaş, 2016; Li, 1999). However, as suggested by Caires et al. (2012), despite the growing knowledge about FE and becoming a teacher, some questions such as how PSTs experience their FE with regard to their perceptions of teaching-efficacy still remain unanswered. Relying on this motivation, this study aims to explore the extent FE affects senior PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions and the potential sources behind them.

Methodology

Design and Participants

For an in-depth and detailed examination of the research concern, the researchers adopted a pre and post-test, longitudinal data collection design through the combination of quantitative and qualitative means. The quantitative data were gathered through survey methodology, as the most cost-effective and practical method to collect data from a large sample (McCawley, 2009; Nunan & Bailey, 2009), and the qualitative data collection was realized through one-on-one semi-structured interviewing, as it yields rich, complex, and interesting data (Trumbull, 2005).

The sample was selected using convenience sampling (McMillan, 1996; Ross, 2005) which was made up of 145 PSTs enrolled at a state university in northwest Turkey. The PSTs who displayed diversity in terms of age, academic achievement, language skills, teaching motivation, and educational background spent the SE and TP phases in 12 practicum schools in the city center, and were supervised by the CTs in the schools and FAs at the faculty throughout their FE.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

For the quantitative data, *teaching-efficacy perceptions scale* was developed with reference to English language teachers' competencies determined by Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE) (see TED, 2009). The five competency domains, namely *planning and arranging English language teaching (ELT) processes, developing language skills, monitoring, assessing, and evaluating language development, collaborating with school-family and society, and gaining professional development in ELT,* included sub-competency domains changing between 2 and 7 items. For the scale's development, the sub-domains included in five teacher competency domains were turned into 22 statements, and were put on a 5-point Likert ranging from *very ineffective* to *very effective.* To assure its reliability, it was first piloted with a group of 3rd year PSTs (N=14) who were specifically asked to make notes on the comprehensibility of the items and the format. After making some alterations on the first version of the scale based on this initial feedback, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders (N=77) were asked to respond the scale to run reliability analysis which decreased the final version to 21 items. Proven to be reliable (α.77), indicating acceptable internal consistency (see Gliem & Gliem, 2003), the scale was ready for data collection which was realized before the PSTs began their FE in practicum schools and after they completed it. As for data collection, group administration (Dörnyei, 2003) was adopted to guarantee that administration happened under homogenous conditions, and as many respondents as possible were reached. As the participation was voluntary, in pre-test the sample (N=106) included 74 females and 32 males, while the post-test sample (N=98) included 66 females and 32 males.

As for the qualitative data collection, the researchers prepared a written list of questions to be used with the PSTs both to guide the interviews and also to give the researchers the freedom to probe for more information. To assure the content validity, initial drafts of the interview protocols were reviewed by both researchers (Zohrabi, 2013). Based on feedback and comments, the questions were revised for clarity and effectiveness to enable them to elicit what they were supposed to elicit. As another measure, frequent debriefing sessions (Shenton, 2004) were used between the researchers to discuss alternative questions, and also to test developing ideas and interpretations. Through the combination of review of initial drafts and frequent debriefings, the credibility of the interview protocols were established. Following these initial preparations, data collection was done towards the end of both SE and TP phases with the voluntary participation of 18 PSTs in the SE interviews and 12 PSTs in the TP interviews. Guided by the interview protocol, the interviews were tape recorded and complemented by field notes to ease data analysis.

Data Analysis

For the analysis of the quantitative data, descriptive and inferential statistics were performed. The implementation of the non-parametric tests as inferential statistics was based on the assumption that the disturbance of differences in two measures (pre and post-tests) is severely non-normal (McDonald, 2014). The detailed analysis of measures of skewness and kurtosis and the histograms also revealed that the scale had non-normal distribution.

As for the qualitative data, the interviews were initially transcribed and then were read several times to get a complete sense of the transcribed data (Creswell, 2009). The analysis was made through constant comparison method (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1994), in which concepts are called as basic units of analysis, while categories are explained as higher in level as and more abstract than the concepts they represent. While reporting the findings, the PSTs were given codes such as PST1, PST2, and so on to showcase how the indicators and sources were created.

Findings

In this section, the results obtained through the analysis of the scale and interview data are presented. In order to explore the PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions before and after FE, initially their overall efficacy perceptions were calculated, and an item by item analysis of the scale was conducted for both the pre and post-tests (see Table 1).

Table 1. PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions before and after FE

Scale items	Pre-test		Post-test	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Total	**3.79**	**.47**	**4.02**	**.42**
1. making appropriate plans for English language teaching	3.69	.78	3.99	.63
2. arranging appropriate learning environments for English language teaching	3.81	.71	4.06	.53
3. using appropriate methods and techniques for English language teaching	3.80	.74	4.12	.65
4. using appropriate materials and resources for teaching process	4.01	.65	4.07	.61
5. using technological resources for language development	4.00	.78	4.04	.80
6. helping learners develop effective language learning strategies	3.85	.75	4.06	.64
7. encouraging learners to use English accurately and intelligibly	4.06	.67	4.14	.52
8. developing learners' listening skills	3.97	.70	4.04	.55
9. developing learners' speaking skills	3.76	.91	3.95	.72
10. developing learners' writing skills	3.94	.76	4.04	.69
11. making use of teaching practices by considering learners with special education and learning needs	3.36	1.02	3.61	.92
12. setting objectives for the assessment and evaluation of English language teaching practices	3.52	.83	3.93	.56
13. using appropriate assessment and evaluation tools and methods for English language teaching	3.65	.83	4.00	.54
14. interpreting and feeding results of assessment and evaluation back into learners' language development	3.77	.78	4.12	.52
15. reflecting results of assessment and evaluation on teaching to identify learners' language development	3.65	.75	4.11	.54
16. collaborating with families for the development of learners' language skills	4.00	.82	4.07	.66
17. collaborating with institutions, organizations, and individuals to help learners comprehend the importance of foreign language learning	3.80	.84	3.99	.75
18. identifying professional competencies for English language teaching	3.68	.80	4.09	.66
19. gaining personal and professional development in English language teaching	3.84	.80	4.08	.64
20. taking advantage of scientific research methods and techniques to gain professional development	3.75	.85	3.94	.74
21. applying research results to teaching practices to gain professional development	3.72	.80	3.97	.74

First and foremost, the PSTs were found to hold moderately high teaching-efficacy perceptions right before they started the SE phase of FE (*M*=3.79, *SD*=.47). A closer look into the item means and standard deviations in the pre-test showed that they perceived themselves efficacious with regard to *encouraging learners to use English accurately and intelligibly* (*M*=4.06, *SD*=.67), *using appropriate materials and resources for teaching process* (*M*=4.01, *SD*.65), *using technological resources for language development* (*M*=4.00, *SD*=.78), and *collaborating with families for the development of learners' language skills* (*M*=4.00, *SD*=.82). These items refer to the competency domains regarding developing language skills, planning and arranging ELT processes, and collaborating with school-family and society. Additionally, they were observed to have high efficacy perceptions about *developing learners' listening skills* (*M*=3.97, *SD*=.70) and *developing learners' writing skills* (*M*=3.94, *SD*=.76). Furthermore, on some other issues (see the items with the means changing between 3.65 and 3.85) such as *helping learners develop effective language learning strategies, gaining personal and professional development in ELT, arranging appropriate learning environments for ELT*, or *taking advantage of scientific research methods and techniques to gain professional development*, the PSTs were found to have moderate to moderately high teaching-efficacy perceptions.

On the other hand, the PSTs perceived themselves relatively less efficacious on *making use of teaching practices by considering learners with special education and learning needs* (*M*=3.36, *SD*=1.02). This result reflects the fact that the teacher education program for English language PSTs in Turkey does not offer any courses or training for teaching learners with special education and learning needs. The second item with the lowest mean score, i.e. *setting objectives for the assessment and evaluation of ELT practices* (*M*=3.52, *SD*=.83), seems to indicate the significance of practice and experience for developing assessment and evaluations skills, which are relatively challenging, as teachers need to test their competencies in various grades and skills groups.

It is only understandable then that the PSTs in the study felt less efficacious because of these untested skills prior to FE.

The post-test results, on the other hand, revealed an increase in the PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions (*M*=4.02, *SD*=.42). They had high efficacy perceptions regarding *encouraging learners to use English in an accurate and comprehensible way* (*M*=4.14, *SD*=.52), *using appropriate methods and techniques for ELT, interpreting and feeding results of assessment and evaluation back into learners' language development* (*M*=4.12 for both), and *reflecting results of assessment and evaluation on teaching to identify learners' language development* (*M*=4.11, *SD*=.54). As seen, after the FE, the PSTs were found to develop higher teaching-efficacy perceptions regarding the practical issues in teaching. Specifically, dramatic increases were detected in their efficacy perceptions related to assessment and evaluation knowledge and skills, which were the competencies they felt the least efficacious in pre-test. Thus, the findings overall indicate that the FE contributed to the PSTs' teaching knowledge and skills development almost on all teaching competencies. In addition, *identifying professional competencies for ELT* was found to increase from pre-test (*M*=3.68) to post-test (*M*=4.09), which could suggest that the PSTs' awareness regarding the competencies that they need to possess also developed throughout the FE. However, similar to the pre-test, the PSTs were found to perceive less efficacious for *making use of teaching practices by considering learners with special education and learning needs* (*M*=3.61, *SD*=.92).

As the overall means for pre-test (*M*=3.79) and post-test (*M*=4.02) differed, Wilcoxon signed-rank test was run to understand whether the change was statistically meaningful or not (see Table 2).

Table 2. Wilcoxon Signed-ranks Test for PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions before and after FE

Ranks	*N*	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	*z*	*p*
Negative Ranks	30	37.47	1124.00	-3.084*	.002
Positive Ranks	55	46.02	2531.00		
Ties	4				

*Based on negative ranks.

As the table shows, FE created a significant change in the PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions (z= -3.084, p= 0.002). Thus, it can be concluded that throughout the FE, in other words from the very beginning of SE to the end of the TP, the PSTs significantly developed positive and higher teaching-efficacy perceptions.
To further understand the potential sources for the PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions, the interview data were also analyzed. Initially, the findings for the SE phase are presented below (see Table 3).

Table 3. Perceived sources regarding the PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions in SE

Teaching-efficacy perceptions	***Sources***	***Indicators***	***Participant codes***
Higher teaching-efficacy perceptions	Prior teaching experience	*Teaching friends or family members *One-on-one private tutorials *Voluntary teaching	PST3, PST4, PST6, PST7, PST8, PST9, PST17
	Faculty education	*Teaching knowledge and skills *Knowledge of resources for teaching *Self-confidence	PST5, PST7, PST15
Lower teaching-efficacy perceptions	Untested teaching competencies	*Lack of confidence in teaching (due to lack of teaching practice) *Teaching anxiety	PST2, PST10, PST11, PST12, PST14, PST16
	Critical awareness of teaching and profession	*Reflection on quality-teaching *Increased awareness on teaching knowledge and skills	PST12, PST15

As the table shows, the findings revealed that the PSTs hold both *higher* (*n*=10) and *lower teaching-efficacy perceptions* (*n*=8) which were explained by various reasons. For those who had higher teaching-efficacy perceptions, the primary source was *prior teaching experience* (*n*=7), which was acquired and developed through teaching family members or friends, one-on-one private tutorials, and voluntary teaching at the university's pre-school. For instance, PST6 stated that *"I have previous teaching experience which makes me feel confident." Faculty education* was perceived to be another source for high teaching-efficacy perceptions linked to teaching knowledge and skills, knowledge of resources for language teaching, and even self-confidence. While PST7 indicated that they were trained, and thus, had the knowledge of making use of technology in teaching, PST15 thought that teaching was going to be easy as they had teaching knowledge and skills thanks to faculty education.

For those who hold lower teaching-efficacy perceptions, the primary source was *untested teaching competencies* (*n*=6). The participants linked it to lack of confidence in teaching which resulted from lack of teaching practice. It was also found to cause teaching anxiety. PST2 said that "*I had no experience and had no idea of students. Yes, we have learnt lots of things at faculty, but I had concerns for how to teach."* Similarly, PST16 stated that *"In the beginning, I was anxious. Because the faculty education relies on knowledge, but does not provide us with the chance to practice."* As his words point out, his teaching anxiety was the result of inadequate teaching practice closely linked to not being able to test his teaching competencies. Secondly, lower teaching efficacy perceptions seem to stem from the PSTs' observations of their CTs and occasionally their peers while teaching, which was found to have created *a critical awareness of teaching and profession* (*n*=2) in them. For instance, PST12 stated how her perceptions on quality-teaching were clarified when she saw a CT who she did not want to be like. She said *"I saw how not to be a teacher. The CT seemed to be traditional, and did not even seem to be prepared for the classes. She used no extra materials, but only the course book. Now I ask... Will I be able to use what I have learned at faculty?"* In a similar vein, PST15's efficacy perceptions were challenged as she became more aware of her teaching knowledge and skills. She stated that *"At the beginning, I thought that it* [teaching] *was going to be easy, but now, I see teaching is a hard job. Some theories do not work in practice. Theory seems easier, but there is much out there* [in real classrooms]*".*

The data analysis of the interviews for the TP phase also showed that the PSTs' had higher (*n*=7) and lower (*n*=1) teaching-efficacy perceptions with several sources explaining the reasons for these perceptions (see Table 4).

Table 4. Perceived sources regarding the PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions in TP

Teaching-efficacy perceptions	***Sources***	***Indicators***	***Participant codes***
Higher teaching-efficacy perceptions	Decreased sense of teaching anxiety	*Diminished anxiety, hesitation *Emotional control	PST1, PST4, PST11
	Increased confidence in professional self	*Tested teaching competencies	PST1, PST9
	Prior teaching experience	*Teaching to friends, family members, etc.	PST7, PST8
	Faculty education	*Teaching knowledge and skills	PST3
Lower teaching-efficacy perceptions	Lack of teaching commitment	*Inadequate teaching practice *Un or underdeveloped teaching competencies (such as time management) *Inadequate emotional attachment to teaching	PST6

For those who held higher teaching-efficacy perceptions, *decreased sense of teaching anxiety* was the primary source. For instance, PST4 stated that *"My anxiety and hesitation diminished as I practiced. I am confident now. I learnt how to give simple, clear classroom instructions, check them, maintain eye-contact, monitor the class,*

and use the class space effectively. I could not do these in the beginning." As can be understood, as her teaching skills improved, it created a *decreased sense of teaching anxiety* supporting her higher teaching-efficacy perceptions. Similarly, PST11 said that *"I was scared in the beginning. When I first taught in the TP school, I could not keep the class silent, and was going to give up, and questioned my decision to become a teacher. I realized how teaching in a school was completely different. I began to learn better what students want, learnt more about them, and what to do with them."* Thus, it becomes clear that there is a link between professional learning, teaching anxiety and decreased sense of teaching anxiety. Complementarily, *increased confidence in professional self* (*n*=2) was also found to play a huge role on higher teaching-efficacy perceptions. For PST1, *"I had the opportunity to practice teaching techniques, and to see that I could establish interaction with the students. I felt happy, when they called me "teacher". Now, I can keep calmer, keep up with the lesson plan or mental plan in mind. Therefore, I think my teaching skills have developed. After the TP, I have seen that teaching is not that much difficult. I feel confident now."* As seen, having tested her competencies and seen that they worked, she developed teaching confidence. Similarly, PST9 who stated that she had not had a clear idea of teaching in the early days of the TP gradually developed more confidence especially for classroom management as she saw she could *"reach"* the students and know them more and better. Similar to the finding from the SE phase, *prior teaching experience* (*n*=2) emerged as a major source increasing efficacy perceptions. Lastly, *faculty education* was indicated as a source linked to efficacy perceptions. PST3 who thought that teaching was an easy job, and he could teach what he had learnt at faculty actually implied that teaching knowledge and skills which he acquired through the faculty education positively affected his teaching-efficacy perceptions.

As it was the end of the entire FE process, no one was found to hold lower teaching-efficacy perceptions directly related to teaching knowledge and skills, which was also detected in the quantitative data analysis (see Table 2). However, there was only one PST who explained his lower teaching-efficacy with his *lack of teaching commitment*. He stated *"... it is hard to practice what we have learnt here,* [at faculty], *at TP schools. For instance, I thought I could keep the students on track longer, but saw it was not possible. I also had problems in managing the time, but I had no chance to adequately practice. I am not sure if I am going to teach."*

Consequently, the PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions, which were found to reveal a statistically significant increase from pre-test to post-test, were observed to be positively shaped by various sources such as *prior teaching experience, faculty education, decreased sense of teaching anxiety,* and *increased confidence in their professional self*. On the other hand, the PSTs' lower teaching-efficacy perceptions, which were seen to almost diminish at the end of the FE, were seen to be mainly related to *untested teaching competencies, critical awareness of teaching and profession*, and *even lack of teaching commitment*, which could be an indirect reflection of teaching knowledge and skills-related issues. Therefore, the PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions are seen to develop and transform as the PSTs engaged in FE.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was carried out to understand whether FE contributed to the teaching-efficacy perceptions of PSTs and to find out about the underlying sources shaping these perceptions. To this end, a mixed-method study design was employed in which likely changes in teaching-efficacy perceptions were explored through a scale administered to the participants before and after the FE and the potential sources for these perceptions were investigated through face-to-face interviews.

Firstly, a statistically significant increase was found in the PST' teaching-efficacy perceptions at the end of the FE indicating that it was a contributory developmental process for PSTs' professional learning, i.e., developing positive efficacy perceptions. The detailed analysis of the quantitative data showed that in pre-test, the PSTs overall felt the most efficacious on those competencies related to planning and arranging English language teaching processes including *encouraging learners to speak English accurately and intelligibly*, *using appropriate methods and techniques* as well as *appropriate materials and resources* and *technological resources*. Thus, it can be said that since FE is designed to provide PSTs with opportunities to test their teaching competencies, to see which ones work, which changes or improvements they need to make and etc., it immensely contributes to the development of practical and instructional aspects of teaching in PSTs which is also supported by the results of some other studies showing that such skills as making use of instructional strategies to promote active student learning, getting through to most of students, teaching all students to high levels and responding to their needs, and giving simple instructions were the issues that graduates felt the most efficacious for (see Chacon, 2005; Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002a; Darling-Hammond, Eiler, & Marcus, 2002b; Gurvitch & Metzler, 2009; Karakaş, 2016; Poulou, 2007; Uztosun, 2016).

Secondly, the post-test results of the study showed that the FE had a considerable effect particularly on the PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions regarding *using appropriate assessment and evaluation tools and methods for ELT, interpreting and feeding results of assessment and evaluation back into learners' language development*, and *reflecting results of assessment and evaluation on teaching to identify learners' language development*. As can be understood, these perceptions are related to the competencies for monitoring, assessing, and evaluating language development, and they are relatively more challenging as PSTs need authentic and ongoing experiences to familiarize themselves with the complexity of assessment and evaluation of different skills in different levels. Despite the challenge and complexity lying behind development of these competencies, a detailed look into the studies carried out in PSTs' FE showed that almost none made a reference to if and how FE made any difference on PSTs' teaching-efficacy of assessment and evaluation competencies. Akbulut Taş and Karabay (2016), in their metasynthesis study of developing teaching skills through FE, also reported that PSTs' positive attainments on measurement and assessment were mentioned in very few studies. In this regard, this might suggest that the significant role that FE plays on the development of PSTs' assessment and evaluation competencies is unfortunately disregarded. That is the reason why in their study of measuring PSTs' perceptions of measurement and evaluation, Sabancı and Yazıcı (2017) openly suggested that over the course of their FE, PSTs need to be provided with opportunities to practice their teaching competencies regarding measurement and evaluation. Despite lack of emphasis on these significant competencies, the finding of the current study showing a clear change regarding the increase in the PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions shows that in cases where PSTs are provided with the context and opportunities to test their competencies, they begin to feel more efficacious even in relatively challenging and hard-to-develop skills. Therefore, this finding definitely calls for awareness building regarding standardization in FE in a way that it is restructured with the determination of untested teaching competencies and promotion of emphasis on their practice and development.

Together with the instructional issues mentioned above, another competency area where a slight increase over the course of FE was observed was *collaborating with families for the development of learners' language skills*. As in most cases, PSTs receive little or no formal training to work with families during their teacher education in Turkey. Despite this lack of experience, the participants of this study held high efficacy perceptions with regard to this competency even before they started their FE, which may indicate their positive dispositions (Unal & Unal, 2014) and their willingness to cooperate with families in learners' favor. The high perceptions even without the PSTs experience collaboration with families can indicate that they begin to assume professional responsibility and identity which clearly shows the FE's role on promoting the emergence of PSTs' identity growth. Therefore, as the research suggested (see Darling-Hammond et al., 2002b), PSTs need to be provided with knowledge and skills to learn how to establish empowering relationship with families which are one of the stakeholders for the success of education in schools.

On the other hand, the participants of this study displayed low efficacy perceptions regarding *teaching learners with special education and learning needs.* This result is in line with some other studies where low efficacy perceptions are linked to lack of content and pedagogical content knowledge resulting from faculty education, lack of practice, experience, and training to work with students with special education needs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002b; Giallo & Little, 2003; Jung, Cho, & Ambrosetti, 2011). For instance, with an emphasis on lack of experience and training on working with students with special needs, Jung et al. (2011) found that special education PSTs reported higher levels of efficacy and confidence in their abilities to support learners with special education needs. Similarly, Freytag (2001) in her study also detected the positive effect of coursework addressing inclusion. Thus, these results show the significance of educating PSTs on a specific skill and providing them with opportunities to practice it. Considering the fact that in Turkey all teachers including English language teachers have inclusive students in their classrooms, this specific finding of the current study underlines the urgent need to integrate courses into teacher education curricula of all subject areas to equip PSTs with the content and pedagogical content knowledge of working with learners with special learning and education needs as well as giving them the opportunities to put the knowledge and skills into practice in FE.

The qualitative data obtained through the interviews, on the other hand, revealed several factors underlying the PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions. First and foremost, *prior teaching experience* was the most significant source in SE, and this is actually understandable since it is the very beginning of FE, and great majority of PSTs naturally have untested their teaching competencies. Therefore, those who had tested competencies relied on their prior teaching experience which is clearly mentioned by Bandura (1994) as the source providing PSTs with mastery experiences sourcing their teaching-efficacy perceptions (also see Bandura, 1997, cited in Brown et al., 2012). Especially after PSTs experience mastery practice in authentic teaching settings, they feel that they are able to meet the authentic challenges in teaching successfully (see Gurvitch & Metzler, 2009; Putman, 2012). Besides and interestingly, the PSTs regarded *faculty education* as a source being secondarily important to them. Actually, some contradictions lie in that especially when the time PSTs spent in teaching education at faculty is

considered. As known, faculty education is a 4-year process the first 3-year of which is heavily spent by being engaged with the acquisition of content and pedagogical content knowledge which definitely establishes the basis of learning teaching profession. However, disregarding the role of such a significant process could unfortunately suggest that there might be some problems in PSTs' teaching competencies development as this finding may indicate that faculty education cannot fully help PSTs develop the necessary teaching competencies, such as teaching language skills and grammatical structures (Kömür, 2010), teaching intercultural perspectives (Polat & Ogay Barka, 2014), and even lack of opportunities for micro teachings and teaching practice (Seferoğlu, 2006). Thus, there seems to be a need to empower PSTs with teaching competencies as early in their faculty education as possible as they are so much important that they cannot only be left to the 4th year. To do this, short visits to real schools and classrooms starting from the first year at faculty need to be incorporated into teacher education programs. PSTs need to be given the opportunity to fully immerse in the real workplaces by job shadowing, deeper observations in the first years of the faculty education which have to be supported by theoretical courses and intensive microteaching opportunities as they develop pedagogic content knowledge and related skills at the faculty. And then under the supervision and support of the both faculty and school mentors, PSTs need to start teaching real students in real teaching environments. Only through such an intense and lengthened involvement, can teacher education programs prepare PSTs having stronger teaching-efficacy.

As for the TP phase, the PSTs reported to have higher efficacy perceptions welded from *decreased sense of teaching anxiety* and *increased confidence in their professional self* because of the frequency and quantity of practicing in which the likely role of reflection and learning in action cannot be disregarded. In support to this finding, *untested teaching competencies* resulting from lack of teaching practice and confidence in teaching skills were found to be a major source for lower teaching-efficacy perceptions for some PSTs. These two related findings further indicate that although frequent practicing is a key to test competencies and develop confidence, it is not enough on its own. Rather, teaching practice enriched with reflection is a must, and this is ultimately needed to enable PSTs to develop confidence in their teaching-self as part of their identity construction (see Karakaş, 2016), develop teaching knowledge and skills, and also develop spontaneity and flexibility in their teaching performance (see Caires et al., 2012). Therefore, the invaluable role of reflection in PSTs' education over the course of FE calls for immediate feedback from their CTs, whose support is known to make a difference on PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions (see Caires et al., 2012; Hoy & Spero, 2005; Smolleck & Mongan, 2011) and also peers as they teach in practicum schools. In this regard, the contributions of these two parties on PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions validate the role of vicarious experiences as sources of PSTs' teaching-efficacy (see Bandura 1994; Bandura, 1997, cited in Brown et al., 2012). Besides, PSTs also need to provide themselves with self-feedback through reflective diaries which enable them to make a further critique of their teaching practice, and this should definitely be followed by teaching the same lesson in another class of the same level. Thus, this gives PSTs the chance to practice a revised and improvised version of their teaching which is vital to support their learning and development in action. Research also shown that continuing to engage in teaching practice, particularly the one enhanced with reflection, either on a daily basis or over an extended period of time, PSTs are seen to improve to become capable of interpreting and assessing their teaching performance, thus teaching-efficacy (see Putman, 2012). Faculty also has a significant role to support this reflection on teaching as faculty teachers definitely need to create opportunities for PSTs through regular weekly reflection sessions which are necessary to encourage their deeper thinking and evaluation of their FE practices, and act accordingly in their following teaching practices in schools and even their future teaching practices in profession.

Last, but not the least, a surprising result of this study was that the PSTs were found to develop *teaching awareness* regarding the quality and standards of quality-teaching as they reflected on their own teaching experiences and observed their CTs' and peers' instructional practices, which were found to have a negative effect on their perceived teaching-efficacies. Thus, gaining and developing efficacy in teaching is a matter of one's own ongoing practice as well as observation of others' practices which provide PSTs with accumulation of improved and renewed knowledge. Therefore, as research showed, teaching and learning to teach is far more complicated than PSTs might assume (see Grijalva & Barajas, 2013). In this regard, similar to the other findings of the current study, the role of increased teaching awareness on teaching also calls for earlier and longer involvement of PSTs with quality-teaching practice in real classrooms and with real students.

In the light of the results and discussions above, it can be concluded that FE obviously contributes to PSTs' development, professional learning, and ultimately increases their perceptions of teaching-efficacy, which is multidimensional and complicated as it is clearly seen to be a combination and also an ultimate result of a number of issues such as *faculty education, teaching knowledge and skills, teaching practice, confidence in professional self which is known to come through testing teaching competencies*, and also *increased awareness*

regarding teaching both through critiquing one's own teaching and others'. Therefore, similar to the studies briefly referred above, the increase in the PSTs' teaching-efficacy in this study can also be linked to the integration and interaction of various issues sourcing the PSTs' higher teaching-efficacy perceptions. On the other hand, if it is the vice versa case, which means that PSTs are not provided with adequate opportunity to engage in teaching practice (also see Uztosun, 2016), test their teaching competencies, reflect on their in and out-of-class work, they can ultimately result in lower teaching-efficacy perceptions. Moreover, the increase on the PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions regarding *interpreting and feeding results of assessment and evaluation back into learners' language development* and *reflecting results of assessment and evaluation on teaching to identify learners' language development* also deserve attention as it is obvious that practice made a difference on the increase in the PSTs' teaching-efficacy perceptions in assessment and evaluation. In this regard, PSTs need to be provided with opportunities to test and develop their teaching competencies in assessment and evaluation (also see Sabancı & Yazıcı, 2017). Hence, the FE process can clearly be seen to have a pivotal role on how PSTs construct and develop their teaching-efficacy perceptions.

Therefore, relying on the findings and discussions, the results could primarily suggest that FE is the key mechanism providing PSTs with appropriate and authentic teaching practice and also giving them the chance to see if and how what they learn at faculty works in real teaching and if and how the realities and challenges of teaching in schools are addressed through faculty education. In this regard, the results also show the undeniable role of faculty education for educating PSTs who have adequately and effectively developed teaching competencies and who can also reach high-quality teaching. However, as can be inferred from the emphasis put on testing teaching competencies, the results also suggest that pure and sole theory is never enough. That is, PSTs need to be provided with more authentic opportunities to test their teaching competencies. Therefore, FE could be longer and thicker in nature not only to support the development of teaching competencies, but also to support the development of teaching awareness and confidence in professional self. Last but not the least, as all these do not naturally develop on their own, the findings call for strong and stable harmony and cooperation between faculty and schools for a better and high-quality PST education.

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