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ELT STUDENTS' REFLECTIONS ON READING AND WRITING COURSE AT PREPARATORY CLASS*

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Abstract

The study aimed to analyze ELT students' reflections on reading and writing course at preparatory class. Case study design and convenient sampling technique were used. Fifteen ELT students participated in the focus group interviews voluntarily in which a semi-structured interview form was used. The data were analyzed using content analysis. The students' reflections were grouped into four themes as objectives and outcomes, content and materials, learning experiences and evaluation process. The findings of the study indicated that the outcomes of the instruction in preparatory class mostly met the students' expectations, and the objectives of the course were reached. The majority of the students declared that they were satisfied with the content and materials. The students expressed their satisfaction with the classroom atmosphere, learning experiences and evaluation process. The research findings were discussed in the light of the literature, and recommendations were made for curriculum/syllabus designers, instructors and researchers.

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Anahtar Kelimeler Keywords: ELT students, preparatory class, prospective teachers of English, reading and writing course, reflection.

İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLİĞİ BÖLÜMÜ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN HAZIRLIK SINIFINDAKİ OKUMA VE YAZMA DERSİNE İLİŞKİN GÖRÜŞLERİ

Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümü öğrencilerinin hazırlık sınıfındaki okuma ve yazma dersine ilişkin görüşlerini incelemektir. Durum çalışması deseni ve kolay ulaşılabilir durum örnekleme tekniği kullanılmıştır. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formunun kullanıldığı odak grup görüşmelerine on beş öğrenci gönüllü olarak katılmıştır. Veriler içerik analizi kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Öğrencilerin görüşleri, öğrenme hedefleri ve çıktıları, içerik ve materyaller, öğrenme deneyimleri ve değerlendirme süreci olmak üzere dört tema altında gruplanmıştır. Araştırmanın bulguları, hazırlık sınıfındaki öğrenme çıktılarının çoğunlukla öğrencilerin beklentilerini karşıladığını ve dersin hedeflerine ulaşıldığını göstermiştir. Öğrencilerin çoğunluğu içerikten ve kullanılan materyallerden memnun olduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Öğrenciler sınıf ortamından, öğrenme deneyimlerinden ve değerlendirme sürecinden memnun olduklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Araştırma bulguları alanyazın ışığında tartışılmış ve program tasarımcılarına, öğretim görevlilerine ve araştırmacılara önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngilizce Öğretmenliği, hazırlık sınıfı, öğretmen adayı, okuma ve yazma dersi, görüş.

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading is an interactive process that involves the student and the text in print or electronic, and it is the cornerstone of all learning. Writing is a means that allows student to understand new concepts and share them with others and it includes a mental process. Reading lays a solid foundation for writing to

flourish, and writing reveals the influence of reading (Nazario, Borchers, & Lewis, 2010). Since reading and writing are two sides of the same coin, it is often believed that learning one makes it easier to learn the other (Tang, 2013).

The studies in reading and writing connections have three basic approaches as rhetorical relations, procedural connections, and shared knowledge (Tierney & Shanahan, 1991). The foundation of the rhetorical approach is that writing and reading are forms of communication, and readers and writers may learn more about the mechanics of communication as receivers and senders (Nelson & Calfee, 1998). The procedural approach views writing and reading as functional skills that may be used to achieve external objectives. The emphasis of this approach is on integrating writing and reading in academic assignments. To illustrate, how note-taking influences comprehension (Slotte & Lonka, 1999), how students synthesize texts while writing reports (Lenski, 1998), or how reading is employed in writing revision (Beal, 1996) may be considered in the procedural approach. The underlying assumption of shared knowledge is that writing and reading are collections of cognitive processes that rely on several language levels of knowledge representation (phonemic, orthographic, semantic, syntactic and pragmatic). These perspectives advocate that reading and writing are related because they are based on comparable or identical information representations, cognitive functions, contexts, and contextual limitations (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). As a result, writing and reading develop quite similarly.

A natural sequence and thematic connections are essential for teaching reading and writing in English Language Teaching (ELT) because they establish a strong and beneficial relationship that helps to learn the target language. This sequence cannot be created by the conventional segregated skills teaching method since teaching reading and writing separately prevents acquiring

necessary skills (Alhujaylan, 2020). In order to guarantee higher and more meaningful learning, it is required to integrate teaching reading and writing skills in ELT. The concept of integrated skill instruction is not new, and several scholars have long debated and approved it. Since the integrated skills teaching speeds up students' communicative skill development, it is considered as a natural learning strategy (Alhujaylan, 2020; Pardede, 2019; Pysarchyk & Yamshynska, 2015).

In teaching integrated reading and writing in ELT, teachers have the opportunity to choose reading materials and writing assignments to complement each other. Using appropriate texts to read helps teachers to make students involve more in the writing process (DuBrowa, 2011). Students may not be able to write proficiently without the assistance of reading. In this respect, reading appropriate texts helps students see and learn how written language functions. Writing exercises allow them to practice the related vocabulary, sentence structure, and rhetorical devices (Nam & Seong, 2020). They may write about the topics that reading texts cover, or they may use reading texts as an inspiration for their writing. The ability to read critically is a prerequisite for academic writing because reading texts serve students as proof and support for their writing tasks. Moreover, students' writing processes reflect their knowledge-transforming paradigms (Rahmat, 2020). In conclusion, it is important to note that mastery in both reading and writing skills is facilitated by integrating them.

Reading and writing courses are commonly designed in an integrated way and the integrated reading and writing course syllabi are put into practice in the field of ELT, specifically at preparatory classes. In addition, syllabus design plays a crucial role in shaping students' learning experiences and learning outcomes. Traditionally, syllabi are created by educators and curriculum developers

without actively involving students in the decision-making process. However, it is increasingly recognized that students' voices and reflections are essential in designing effective ELT syllabi (Ahmadi & Hasani, 2018). The inclusion of students' reflections in the design or improvement of ELT syllabi is important to promote learner-centered education, enhance language learning outcomes, and foster a positive and engaging classroom environment (Flutter, 2006). By actively involving students in the decision-making process (Bovill, 2013a; Bovill, 2013b), educators can tailor learning objectives to individual needs, promote autonomy and ownership (Morgan & Streb, 2001), enhance relevance and authenticity (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006), encourage reflective practice (Rumenapp, 2016), and foster collaboration and communication (Bahou, 2011; Mitra, 2008).

When the literature was reviewed, integrated or segregated reading and writing course was investigated in some studies. Alhujaylan (2020) examined whether segregating reading and writing courses is a drawback in developing Saudi students' reading and writing proficiency at the graduate level. The study applied a pre-test and post-test research design with experimental (integrated) and control (segregated) groups and analyzed the perceptions of instructors. Nam and Seong (2020) used a survey with students and interviewed the instructors to investigate the teaching activities in integrated reading and writing courses and students' preferences in a Korean university. Rahmat (2020) carried out a quantitative study with 176 undergraduate students taking academic writing course in a public university in Malaysia. The study aimed to determine what students do when they read materials to prepare for their writing.

The studies also included improving reading and writing skills using different instructional methods. To illustrate, Miftah (2015) applied an action research to

enhance writing skill using writing process approach. Piri Ardakani and Lashkarian (2015) investigated whether mind mapping technique is an effective way to increase Iranian students' reading comprehension using a pre-test and post-test experimental design. Yulianti, Lestari and Yana (2019) applied an action research to improve students' reading comprehension through think pair share (TPS) technique. Ali and Ulker (2020) examined the effect of inquiry-based approach on university students' reading and writing skills. They used a pre-test and post-test experimental study design with the control group and found out that inquiry-based approach improved students' reading and writing skills significantly.

Mulatu and Regassa (2022) investigated practice and procedures applied by teachers to help learners with low reading skills through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teacher, and a questionnaire. Shah, Hussain and Rashid (2023) examined the difficulties and challenges that Pakistani public high school students had when learning how to write, and they also recommended some solutions based on their personal professional observations as teachers of English. Al Bloushi and Al Shuraiaan (2024) compared theoretically the product and process approach, their significance in teaching writing and how they are utilized in ELT classes. Albore, Woldemariam and Chali (2024) investigated the impacts of process-genre approach on students' writing strategy use when they write paragraphs.

In Turkish context, few studies have been carried out in terms of reading and writing course at preparatory classes. Canbay (2017) analyzed ELT students' reading habits and interests. Varol and Varol (2022) identified to what extent Turkish teachers of English teach reading comprehension strategies in their classes. Keyvanoğlu and Atmaca (2023) investigated foreign language writing anxiety levels of Turkish students at preparatory class.

After the literature review, it is observed that ELT students' reflections on their reading and writing course have not been investigated both in Türkiye and abroad. By valuing and incorporating students' voices, ELT syllabi can truly become a product of shared understanding and collaboration (Flutter, 2007), leading to more effective and meaningful language learning experiences (Bovill, Cook-Sather, & Felten, 2011). In this respect, it is crucial to comprehend ELT students' reflections on their reading and writing course for practical conclusions to keep enhancing the educational process. Instructors can better address different needs of their students and improve the efficacy of their teaching techniques by putting the recommendations of this study into practice. These changes may result in enhanced writing and reading abilities as well as more fulfilling educational opportunities. The study's conclusions may offer insightful information that may be applied to raise the efficiency of teaching reading and writing to ELT students. The present study is important because its conclusions will contribute to the foreign language teaching literature since reading and writing skills are the cornerstones of language learning. Therefore, the study aimed to analyze ELT students' reflections on reading and writing course at preparatory class. The following research questions were sought to reach the aim of the study:

- What do ELT students think about their objectives and outcomes in reading and writing course at preparatory class?
- What do ELT students think about the content and materials used in reading and writing course at preparatory class?
- What do ELT students think about their learning experiences in reading and writing course at preparatory class?
- What do ELT students think about the evaluation process applied in reading and writing course at preparatory class?

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

Qualitative research methodology and case study design were used to collect prosperous data and to explain concepts, facts and relationships between them (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In this context, the purpose of case study design is not to generalize but define the case (Patton, 2014). Case study design was preferred in this research to thoroughly analyze reflections of ELT students on reading and writing course at preparatory class, allowing them to express their thoughts, feelings, and observations about their learning experiences in a more personal and subjective manner.

2.2. The Current Context

As reading and writing skills are correlated with each other, in the current context, ELT students were taught reading and writing together at preparatory class. The students took reading and writing course in fall semester with nine hours a week. An appropriate course book was selected and used including both reading and writing skills. The course book included eight units and two different reading passages in each unit. Each passage had exercises about new vocabulary and comprehension questions with differing levels of cognitive domain of Bloom's Taxonomy. For out-of-class reading, the students were assigned to read a reader each month. After they had read the reader, their comprehension was assessed using different evaluation methods. Each time the evaluation method changed, and the students were informed about the method and the date. Some evaluation methods included onsite quizzes in the classroom, online quizzes, reading circle activities and reader assessment forms. The students' reading skills were also evaluated in midterms.

The course book included two different writing assignments in each unit. The topic of the first assignment was about the first reading passage and the topic of the second assignment was about the second reading passage. The writing part included some content, organization, and grammar exercises for the students to determine the content, to plan the organization and to use appropriate grammatical structures. After each reading passage in a unit, the related writing part was studied to prepare the students for the first writing assignment. Then the students were assigned to write their first assignment, which is the first draft. After the instructor checked the first draft, the students had to write their second draft. The instructor also checked the second draft. The students had to write their final draft and file all versions in their portfolios. The same procedure was applied for the second writing assignment after the second reading passage. The writing assignments included paragraph writing in the first four units and essay writing in the following four units. In each draft, students' writings were scored out of ten. The students' writing skills were also evaluated in midterms.

2.3. Participants

The participants included ELT students at preparatory class. Convenient sampling technique based on voluntariness was utilized. Five male and ten female students out of fifty-four students participated in the study voluntarily. Their average level of English was intermediate ranging from pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate when the study was carried out.

2.4. Data Collection Tool

The data about ELT students' reflections on reading and writing course at preparatory class were collected with focus group interviews using a semi-structured interview form. Focus group interviews are frequently used to

uncover the factors influencing participants' attitudes and reflections. Furthermore, unlike in personal interviews, participants can speak freely and ponder out loud, discuss opposing points of view with the group, and change their minds as the discussion progresses, just like in casual social settings (Krueger & Casey, 2014). Focus group interviews provide more in-depth information than individual interviews because of participant interaction (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011).

The research was carried out at the end of the first semester. The data for this research was collected via a semi-structured interview form developed by the researcher. To prepare the interview form, the studies obtained as a result of the relevant literature review were examined, and questions that could be used in the research were determined. An expert's opinion was taken regarding the questions in the draft interview form. The interview form was finalized in line with the expert's suggestions. After consulting the expert, the interview form included the following eight questions:

- (1) What would you like to learn in your reading and writing course?
- (2) After taking reading and writing course, what can you do that you couldn't do before?
- (3) Are you satisfied with the course book and other materials used in your reading and writing course? Why?/Why not?
- (4) Do you need extra materials in your reading and writing course? What kind of materials can they be?
- (5) Do you have problems in reading and writing course? If yes, what are they?
- (6) How do you think you can overcome these problems? What do you think your instructor can do to help you overcome these problems?

(7) What kind of classroom environment would you like in your reading and writing course? Are you satisfied with the current atmosphere? Why?/Why not?

(8) Are you satisfied with the evaluation process applied in your reading and writing course? Why?/Why not?

The interviews were carried out in English in three sessions with five students in each session and recorded after getting the students' consents. During the focus group interviews, when further explanation was required, the questions were expanded upon, and more data were gathered using probing questions in order to widen the students' opinions. It took approximately 45 minutes to complete each interview.

2.5. Data Analysis

In the research, the recorded data were transcribed and analyzed via content analysis. The goal of content analysis is finding codes, categories and concepts that can explain the research data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Employing content analysis helps researchers to define and characterize the data and make some implicit facts apparent. After becoming familiar with the collected data, a coding strategy was used. This strategy included the following steps: (a) finding keywords by reading and re-reading the information; (b) searching through categorized codes using a mind map to find emerging ideas; (c) grouping categories; and (d) identifying larger themes with a list of pertinent sub-themes and supporting quotes (Saldana, 2009). In this study, students' reflections on reading and writing course at preparatory class were grouped into four themes.

2.6. Validity and Reliability

Description and detailed reports of the data, direct quotations from participants and explanations of the findings based on these quotations have a substantial impact on the validity of qualitative research (Wiersma & Jurs, 2008; Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In order to assure validity in this research, the data collection and analysis processes were explained in details and direct quotations from the students' own words were included. Some codes were used to indicate the students. For instance, the student who talked first was assigned the code "S1".

An expert in curriculum and instruction and qualified in qualitative research was consulted to assure reliability. First, the researcher determined the sub-themes and themes by reading and re-reading the students' opinions. Then the expert was asked to group the sub-themes into appropriate themes. The coding made by the researcher and the expert were compared and the consistency was tested. The reliability formula [Reliability= $\frac{\text{agreement}}{\text{agreement} + \text{disagreement}} \times 100$] proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used, and inter-rater reliability was calculated as 92%, exceeding the expected level (80%) recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Patton (2014).

3. FINDINGS

After the analyses, students' reflections on reading and writing course at preparatory class were grouped into four themes as (a) objectives and outcomes, (b) content and materials, (c) learning experiences and (d) evaluation process.

2.6. 3.1. Objectives and Outcomes

In terms of objectives, most of the students said that they wanted to learn different writing and reading techniques, write good paragraphs and essays

because writing is hard for them, and they wanted to get necessary qualifications to be good teachers. Only one student expressed about different cultures. Some of the students' reflections were as follows:

"I want to learn how to write better."(S1)

"I want to read short paragraphs." (S2)

"I love culture stuff, and if our reading topics are about something like that, I can improve my life, that will be awesome. Mostly, they are about this stuff, so I am okay."(S7)

"I want to reach ultimate qualifications so that I can be a good teacher." (S12)

"I want to learn my writing mistakes; my instructor always does this and this is really good for me to improve myself in writing. I want to learn how to write good paragraphs and essays." (S13)

In terms of outcomes, after taking reading and writing course in the first semester, the students mentioned that they could read different kinds of texts and books (readers), they acquired the skill to analyze a paragraph and an essay, they could use punctuation marks correctly, and they learned how to write some kinds of paragraphs and essays. Some of the students' reflections were as follows:

"I can read different kinds of books, and I can write an opinion essay." (S5)

"I have already learned how to analyze a paragraph and an essay. I can find the topic, supporting and concluding sentences in a paragraph. Moreover, I can find thesis statement, topic sentences in body paragraphs in an essay." (S9)

“In this course, I have learned how to use punctuation. Because I didn’t have to write in English before, I didn’t know anything about punctuation. I could just use full stop before taking this course.” (S13)

“I have learned how to write a paragraph and an essay in this course. Writing an essay was hard for me at the beginning, but now I can write an essay. But of course, I should continue to learn new things about writing.” (S15)

3.2. Content and Materials

The students were satisfied with the content. One of the students declared that he wanted to read some short texts. He expressed his opinion by saying, *“The book includes very long reading passages, so I am bored and confused while I am reading them. I want to read short reading passages.” (S8)*

In terms of the course book and other materials used in reading and writing course, some students were satisfied with them while a few of them were not. The students who were not satisfied with the course book and other materials were divided into two opposing groups. The first group thought that the readers were not hard enough while the second group thought that some writing topics were hard and boring. In fact, student dissatisfaction stemmed from the difficulty in writing and the easiness in reading. Some of the students’ reflections were as follows:

“I am not satisfied with the readers because in my opinion, the books aren’t hard enough for our language skills.” (S3)

“I am not satisfied with my course book because some writing topics are really hard and boring for me. I am not interested in these topics, so I couldn’t find what to write about them.” (S10)

"I am satisfied with the book because it's very useful, and we can learn a lot of things thanks to this book." (S11)

All the students expressed that they did not need extra materials other than the materials used in reading and writing course. The students also stated that the instructor already provided them extra materials, and they were satisfied with them because the materials were qualified and provided them better learning. Some of the students' reflections were as follows:

"I think we have enough materials for this course. Our instructor provides us extra materials, and I am satisfied with them because the materials are qualified." (S4)

"Our instructor provides us some extra materials such as some short notes from other books, and I am satisfied with them because they help us learn better." (S6)

"Our instructor sometimes opened other books on projection. She sent some PDFs to us. She gave us some assignments like reading books." (S11)

"Our instructor has already given us a lot of extra materials, so we can learn lots of things, and I am satisfied with them. We do not need any other extra materials." (S14)

3.3. Learning Experiences

In terms of teaching-learning process, most of the students did not have any problems in reading and writing course. However, a few of them declared that

they were not good at writing, and they needed to improve their writing skill. One of the students expressed that she had some problems in grammar while writing. One of the students said that he sometimes could not find anything to write in his essays. When they were asked how to overcome these problems, they gave some suggestions about the related problems. Some of the students' reflections were as follows:

"Sometimes I can't find anything to write. We can analyze more paragraphs or essays and give more examples about the topic during the course to overcome this problem." (S2)

"I'm not good at writing. I'm trying to do my best every time. The only reason is I write like I am talking. It must be formal. To overcome this problem, I have to write more essays than our instructor gives us as assignments. Well, she can help me to read my essays and correct my mistakes without any doubt." (S7)

"I have some grammatical problems in writing. I can study some grammatical structures. Our instructor always shows my mistakes to me, and also explains my mistakes. It will also help me to overcome this problem." (S10)

"I don't have any problems in reading and writing course." (S13)

All the students were satisfied with the current classroom atmosphere. One of the students offered to write in groups, and another offered to write essays/paragraphs together including all students in the classroom. In addition, one of the students recommended increasing the course hours. Some of the students' reflections were as follows:

"In our classroom, the population is approximately 18 students, not very crowded, and it provides efficient courses. I am satisfied with the current atmosphere." (S1)

"Sometimes we wrote some paragraphs together in the classroom, and this is very helpful for us because we can learn easier." (S5)

"I am satisfied with our current atmosphere because it's fresh." (S8)

"I think more course hours can be more effective to increase learning." (S12)

"To increase learning, maybe all class can write an essay or paragraph together." (S15)

3.4. Evaluation Process

All the students were satisfied with the evaluation system applied in reading and writing course. Most of them added that they learned a lot and improved their writing skill in the course. For evaluation process, only one student offered that all the students can choose their own books as readers. Some of the students expressed that having quizzes regularly was very useful. A student expressed clearly that she wanted easy quizzes and midterms. Some of the students' reflections were as follows:

"We have a good exam system like having quizzes frequently, and it's very useful because we can learn from our mistakes." (S1)

"At first I was really bad at writing, but now I'm better than the first time I started university thanks to the evaluation process." (S3)

"The easy exams and quizzes will be better." (S7)

"Writing an essay is a little bit hard during the exam. I can write a better essay as an assignment, but during the exam I don't know what to write." (S9)

“Instead of reading the same book as a reader for quizzes, each student can choose his or her own book, and they can read it, then they can summarize it for reading skill.” (S11)

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study explored ELT students’ reflections on reading and writing course at preparatory class to gain insight into their experiences and to reveal if any changes are needed in syllabus design and its implementation. The study employed convenient sampling technique and case study design. Fifteen ELT students at preparatory class took part in the focus group interviews willingly. The data were analyzed using content analysis. Four themes emerged after the analyses: objectives and outcomes, content and materials, learning experiences and evaluation process.

For reading and writing course, the students’ goals included reading different kinds of books and learning how to write paragraphs or essays because writing is hard for them. They wanted to learn new things, do their best to write good paragraphs and essays for their future teaching careers. Therefore, it can be concluded that they are aware of the objectives of reading and writing course because all of them want to improve their reading and writing skills.

After taking reading and writing course in the first semester, they reported positive outcomes, such as improved reading abilities, enhanced writing skills, and a better understanding of punctuation and paragraph/essay structure. These findings indicate that the outcomes of the instruction in preparatory class have met the students’ expectations, and the objectives of the course have been reached. Likewise, an experimental study proved that integrating reading and writing course rather than segregating them had a significant impact on students’ reading and writing proficiency over a short time. In addition,

interviewed teachers stated that integrating writing and reading courses could improve students' language learning outcomes in both skills (Alhujaylan, 2020). In this respect, teaching reading and writing together may have a positive effect on improving students' language skills.

The majority of the students expressed their satisfaction with the content of the course except one student who wanted to read short reading passages. In terms of the course book used in the course, some students found it useful but others wanted more challenging content. The reasons for dissatisfaction were different and opposing. To illustrate, while the readers were not hard enough for some students, the passages in the course book were hard and boring for a student because of their length. These opposing findings may have resulted from the difference in student proficiency as the participants' level of English proficiency ranged from pre-intermediate to upper-intermediate. The findings are in parallel with the literature. A study in Malaysia found out that students preferred to read only the materials that interest them (Rahmat, 2020). Grabe and Zhang (2013) state that students in academic settings confront a variety of challenges in integrating reading and writing such as long passages, a lack of fluency in reading and writing, low prior knowledge, a lack of expertise and practice. Combining these two skills for academic reasons, limited time and tasks with a lot of inference also cause difficulties for students as well (Grabe & Zhang, 2013).

When it comes to extra materials, all students appreciated the extra materials (notes from other books as hard copy, electronic materials, PDFs, assignments like readers) provided by the instructor. Therefore, they did not need any other extra materials for the course. Similarly, Korean students expected extra materials from their instructors. They preferred PPT presentations to explain grammar, the full text on a slide to analyze sentence structures, or

supplementary handouts for grammar instruction instead of relying just on the textbook (Nam & Seong, 2020). Mulatu and Regassa (2022) observed that Ethiopian teachers were dependent on the course book and they deduced the absence of supplementary reading materials from classroom observations. The finding of the current study reflects that the instructor serves as a “buffer” between language instruction and language learning by adapting and supplying extra materials in order to reach the objectives of the course, as Canniveng and Martinez (2014) suggested. Students have varied learning needs and preferences, and they may sometimes not find the themes in the course book engaging, so it is important for the instructors to use supplementary materials in the classroom. From this point of view, the instructors should choose and use the proper materials for reading courses in order to meet both the needs/demands of the students and the objectives of the course. The instructors should offer a range of reading topics to make the course more engaging, and they can diversify writing topics appropriate for their students with varying abilities and interests.

In terms of teaching-learning process, the students were content with the process. While some students did not face significant problems in the course, some of them struggled with writing, grammar, or generating ideas for paragraphs/essays. Likewise, Keyvanoğlu and Atmaca (2023) examined foreign language writing anxiety levels of Turkish students at preparatory class and found out that 43.3% of the students had high, 34.2% of them had moderate and 22.5% of them had low levels of foreign language writing anxiety. Moreover, the students with A1 level had the highest level of writing anxiety. The literature shows that the challenges faced by students in writing include lack of vocabulary, poor grammar, poor spelling, students’ readiness level, and lack of exposure to books and reading materials (Moses & Mohamad, 2019; Shah, Hussain & Rashid, 2023). In another study, lack of vocabulary was the

reason for difficulty in writing (Rahmat, 2020). Students studying a second language encounter several difficulties in educational environments. These difficulties include the requirement for academic vocabulary, the necessity to communicate effectively, and to integrate reading and writing abilities in order to acquire and present knowledge (Grabe & Zhang, 2013).

In the current study, the students' suggestions to overcome the problems included more analyses of paragraphs/essays, additional practice, and correcting their mistakes during the course. The ability to think critically may assist students to identify actions to solve their writing problems as well as reducing their anxiety. In this respect, the instructors may provide more in-depth analyses of paragraphs/essays to help their students struggling with writing understand paragraph/essay structure and generate content while writing.

The students were satisfied with the classroom atmosphere but recommended collaborative writing activities. On the contrary, Nam and Seong (2020) carried out a study to investigate students' preferences for the activities used by instructors in integrated reading and writing courses in Korean context, and the students preferred accessing online dictionaries in class and checking vocabulary; however, the least favorite activity was pair or group work in the class. These two opposing findings may be resulted from cultural differences. In Turkish context, the instructors may use collaborative activities with the entire class or in groups more often to promote peer learning and creativity. The literature reveals that face-to-face interactions of students improve their degree of social contact, which helps them create positive and cooperative attitudes (Van Zant & Kray, 2014). Increasing student engagement in the classroom may also help them achieve their goals by supporting and encouraging each other while sharing resources.

The students expressed overall satisfaction with the evaluation process. The evaluation process included onsite and online quizzes, reading circle activities, reader assessment forms, all writing drafts and midterm scores. Specifically, they found the quizzes helpful to learn from their mistakes. The satisfaction in the evaluation process may have resulted from the formative assessment utilized in preparatory classes. As stated in the literature, formative assessment involved five key strategies in preparatory class: (a) defining, communicating, and understanding learning objectives and success criteria with students; (b) creating engaging activities and tasks in the classroom that elicit evidence of students' learning; (c) giving feedback that advances learning; (d) empowering students to take responsibility of their own learning; and (e) empowering students to act as a resource for mutual learning (Wiliam & Leahy, 2015).

For the evaluation process, a student recommended choosing their own readers that they wanted to read and summarizing them. Islam and Mares (2014) suggest that teachers should regard students' choices during materials selection or adaptation process in language teaching. The recommendations made by the students may also be taken into consideration to include them as decision-makers in the educational process (Bovill, 2013a, Bovill, 2013b). Allowing students to choose their own reading materials may be more effective to motivate them read in English, which may also enrich the reading assessment process.

The most stunning finding of the study was that the students focused more on writing than reading in their reflections although the subject of the study was reading and writing course. A similar finding was attained in a study in Ottawa that highlighted the interconnection between reading and writing, with a focus on writing (Yin, 2015). As stated in the literature, compared to other language skills, writing can be the most challenging and complex language skill to learn

for language learners. Producing meaning in writing needs more time and effort than recognizing meaning in reading (Dixon & Nessel, 1983). Writing requires numerous cognitive processes, which makes it a challenging multiplex activity (Vasu, Ling, & Nimehchisalem, 2016). In language learning, students regard writing as the most difficult skill (Çelik, 2019). Although the participants of the current study are ELT students who had been learning English intensively since high school and who had taken the university entrance exam in language department, writing is still the most difficult skill for them because of its requirements like proper word choice or structural accuracy. In this vein, the instructors may be recommended to include more writing activities in the courses.

In conclusion, understanding and taking into consideration the reflections of ELT students on reading and writing course is essential to improve their learning experiences continually. Instructors of English may implement the recommendations made in this study which are appropriate in their context and they can enhance the effectiveness of their teaching methods and better meet the diverse needs of their students. In this way, they can make their instruction more effective by taking a student-centered approach. These implementations may also lead students to improve their reading and writing skills and have more rewarding learning experiences.

The current study has some limitations. First, there is a generalization restriction due to the nature of qualitative research methodology used in the study. Quantitative research methodology may be recommended to apply to be able to generalize the findings of the study. Second, the research included fifteen voluntary ELT students. Further studies may be carried out with more ELT students or with students learning English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) from other departments at preparatory classes, and the findings may

be compared. Finally, the findings are restricted to the students' reflections in the focus group interviews carried out for the study. Further research may collect longitudinal data periodically to expand the findings and to compare the changes in students' reflections.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Giriş

Okuma, öğrencinin basılı metninle etkileşim içinde olduğu bir süreçtir ve tüm öğrenmelerin temel taşıdır. Yazma ise, öğrencinin yeni kavramları anlamasını ve bunları başkalarıyla paylaşmasını sağlayan zihinsel bir süreç ve araçtır. Okuma, yazmanın gelişmesi için bir temel oluşturur ve yazma da, okumanın etkisini ortaya çıkarır (Nazario, Borchers ve Lewis, 2010). Okuma ve yazma aynı madalyonun iki yüzü olduğundan, genellikle biri öğrenildiğinde, diğersinin öğrenilmesinin kolaylaştığına inanılır. (Tang, 2013).

İngilizce öğrenen öğrenciler için İngilizce okumayı ve özellikle İngilizce yazmayı öğrenmek zor bir süreçtir. Okuma ve yazma dersi açısından yazmayı öğrenmek, İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümü öğrencileri için de zordur. Eğitim sürecini geliştirmeye yönelik pratik sonuçlar elde etmek amacıyla İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümü öğrencilerinin okuma ve yazma derslerine ilişkin düşüncelerini anlamak önemlidir. Öğretim görevlileri, bu çalışmanın önerilerini uygulamaya koyarak öğrencilerinin farklı ihtiyaçlarını daha iyi karşılayabilir ve kullandıkları öğretim tekniklerinin etkinliğini artırabilir. Bu değişiklikler, öğrencilerin okuma ve yazma becerilerini geliştirmenin yanı sıra daha tatmin edici öğretim fırsatları sunabilir. Bu açıdan çalışmanın sonuçları, yabancı dil öğretim alanyazınına katkıda bulunacaktır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, İngilizce Öğretmenliği Bölümü öğrencilerinin hazırlık sınıfındaki okuma ve yazma dersine ilişkin görüşlerini incelemektir.

Yöntem

Bu çalışmada, nitel araştırma yöntemi ve durum çalışması deseni kullanılmıştır (Merriam ve Tisdell, 2015). Çalışmaya hazırlık sınıfında öğrenim gören İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümü öğrencileri katılmıştır. Öğrenciler güz döneminde hazırlık sınıfında haftada 9 saat okuma ve yazma dersi almışlardır. Gönüllülüğe dayalı amaçlı örnekleme yöntemlerinden kolay ulaşılabilir durum örnekleme tekniği kullanılmıştır. Araştırmaya beş erkek ve on kadın öğrenci gönüllü olarak katılmıştır. Veriler odak grup görüşmesi ve yarı-yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Araştırmada kaydedilen veriler yazıya dökülmüş ve içerik analizi yoluyla analiz edilmiştir.

Bulgular

Analizler sonucunda, öğrencilerin görüşleri (a) öğrenme hedef ve çıktıları, (b) içerik ve materyaller, (c) öğrenme deneyimleri ve (d) değerlendirme süreci olmak üzere dört tema altında gruplanmıştır.

Öğrenme hedef ve çıktıları temasında, öğrencilerin çoğu farklı okuma ve yazma tekniklerini öğrenmek, İngilizce yazmak onlar için zor olduğundan iyi paragraf ve makale yazmak ve iyi bir öğretmen olmak için gerekli nitelikleri kazanmak istediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Sadece bir öğrenci farklı kültürlerle ilgili konular okumak ve yazmak istediğini ifade etmiştir. Öğrenme çıktıları açısından, öğrenciler ilk yarıyılı okuma ve yazma dersini aldıktan sonra farklı türde metin ve kitapları okuyabildiklerini, bir paragraf veya makaleyi analiz etme becerisi kazandıklarını, noktalama işaretlerini kullanabildiklerini ve bazı paragraf ve makale türlerinin nasıl yazılacağını öğrendiklerini belirtmişlerdir.

İçerik ve materyaller temasında, bütün öğrenciler genel olarak içerikten memnun kaldıklarını ifade ederken, öğrencilerden sadece bir tanesi kısa okuma parçaları okumak istediğini belirtmiştir. Okuma ve yazma dersinde kullanılan ders kitabı açısından bazı öğrenciler memnun olduklarını, bazı öğrenciler ise memnun olmadıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Ders kitabından memnun olmayan öğrencilerin bir kısmı, kitapların yeterince zor olmadığını, bir kısmı da bazı yazma konularının zor ve sıkıcı olduğunu dile getirmişlerdir. Bu konudaki öğrenci memnuniyetsizliğinin, bu öğrenciler için okumanın kolay ancak yazmanın zor olmasından kaynaklandığı söylenebilir. Öğrencilerin tamamı okuma ve yazma dersinde kullanılanlar dışında ekstra materyallere ihtiyaç duymadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Öğrenciler ayrıca öğretim elemanının kendilerine ekstra materyal sağladığını, bu materyallerin kaliteli olduğunu ve daha iyi öğrenmelerini sağladığını belirtmişlerdir.

Öğrenme deneyimleri temasında, öğrencilerin büyük çoğunluğunun okuma ve yazma dersinde herhangi bir sorun yaşamadığı görülmektedir. Ancak bazı öğrenciler yazma konusunda iyi olmadıklarını ve yazma becerilerini geliştirmeleri gerektiğini ifade etmişlerdir. Bir öğrenci İngilizce yazma konusunda dilbilgisi kullanımı ile ilgili bazı sorunlar yaşadığını; bir diğeri de bazen makale yazma sürecinde yazacak bir şey bulamadığını dile getirmiştir. Öğrencilerin tamamı mevcut sınıf ortamından memnun olduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Ayrıca öğrencilerden biri grup halinde yazmayı, bir diğeri ise sınıftaki tüm öğrencileri kapsayacak şekilde birlikte paragraf veya makale yazmayı önermiştir. Bir öğrenci ise, ders saatlerinin artırılmasını önermiştir.

Değerlendirme süreci temasında, tüm öğrenciler bu derste kullanılan değerlendirme sisteminden memnun olduklarını dile getirmişlerdir. Bazı öğrenciler bu derste çok şey öğrendiklerini ve çoğunlukla yazma becerilerini geliştirdiklerini eklemişlerdir. Değerlendirme sürecinde sadece bir öğrenci, tüm öğrencilerin kendi okuma kitaplarını kendilerinin seçmesini ve o kitabı özetlemesini önermiş ve bunun daha etkili olacağını belirtmiştir. Öğrencilerden biri, düzenli quiz yapılmasının çok faydalı olduğunu ifade etmiştir.

Sonuç ve Tartışma

İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümü öğrencilerinin okuma ve yazma dersine yönelik düşüncelerini anlamak, öğrenme deneyiminin sürekli iyileştirilmesi açısından önemlidir. Öğretim görevlileri, bu önerileri uygulayarak öğretim yöntemlerinin etkinliğini artırabilir ve öğrencilerinin farklı ihtiyaçlarını daha iyi karşılayabilir. Bu uygulamalar okuma ve yazma becerilerinin geliştirilmesine ve daha verimli öğrenme deneyimlerine yol açabilir. Bu açıdan, çalışmanın bulguları, İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümü öğrencilerine okuma ve yazma öğretiminin etkinliğini artırmak için kullanılacak değerli bilgiler sunmaktadır.

Mevcut çalışmanın bazı sınırlılıkları bulunmaktadır. Öncelikle çalışmada kullanılan nitel araştırma yönteminin doğası gereği, çalışma bulguları açısından genelleme yapılamaz. Araştırma bulgularının genellenebilmesi için nicel araştırma yönteminin kullanılması önerilebilir. Araştırma on beş gönüllü İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümü öğrencisini kapsamaktadır. Hazırlık sınıflarında öğrenim gören İngilizce Öğretmenliği bölümünden daha fazla öğrencinin veya hazırlık sınıflarında öğrenim gören diğer bölümlerden öğrencilerin katıldığı çalışmalar yapılarak bulgular karşılaştırılabilir. Son olarak bulgular, çalışma için gerçekleştirilen odak grup görüşmelerinde öğrencilerin belirttiği görüşlerle sınırlıdır. İleride yapılacak çalışmalar, bulguları genişletmek ve öğrencilerin düşüncelerindeki değişiklikleri karşılaştırmak için verilerin periyodik olarak toplandığı boylamsal çalışma deseni kullanılarak yürütülebilir.