



## Development of Pre-Service English Teacher Emerging Teacher Identity and Capacity in Field Experience

### Saha Tecrübesinde Ortaya Çıkmakta Olan İngilizce Öğretmen Adayı Kimliği ve Kapasitesinin Gelişimi

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**Abstract.** Teacher identity and capacity are constantly evolving constructs in the formation and development of which field experience (FE) in initial teacher preparation programs performs a pivotal role. The review of related literature unveils that more research is needed to scrutinize the place of FE in the development of pre-service English teachers' (PSETs) identity and capacity as teachers. For this reason, this qualitative case study is conducted in an attempt to explore the place of the context in which pre-service English teachers (N = 10) had their FE in the development of their teacher identity and capacity. Additionally, it investigates if any changes in the beliefs they had held about how English should be taught occurred after having completed their FE. The data was obtained from in-depth interviews, reflective journals, and metaphors created by the participants for the teaching profession. The findings revealed that the FE exerted impact on the development of the PSETs' emerging teacher identity and capacity, and changes took place in their views about how English should be taught after having completed the FE. The implications of the findings for initial English language teacher education are discussed.

**Keywords:** Field experience, Initial teacher preparation programs, Pre-service English teachers, Teacher capacity, Teacher identity

**Öz.** Hizmet öncesi öğretmen eğitiminin bir parçası olan saha tecrübesi, sürekli evrilmekte olan öğretmen kimliği ve kapasitesinin oluşumunda ve gelişiminde önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Literatür taraması saha tecrübesinin İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının öğretmen olarak kimliklerinin ve kapasitelerinin gelişimindeki yeri üzerine daha fazla çalışmaya gerek olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu nitel durum çalışması İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının (N= 10) öğretmen kimlik ve kapasitelerinin gelişmesinde saha deneyimlerini gerçekleştirdikleri bağlamın etkisini araştırmayı hedeflemektedir. Bunun yanı sıra, katılımcıların İngilizce nasıl öğretilemeli üzerine olan düşüncelerinde saha tecrübesinden sonra değişiklikler olup olmadığını da araştırmaktadır. Veri derinlemesine görüşme, yansıtıcı günlük ve katılımcıların ürettiği metaforlardan toplanmıştır. Bulgular saha tecrübesinin İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının kimlik ve kapasitelerinin gelişiminde etkili olduğunu ve saha tecrübesinden sonra İngilizce nasıl öğretilemeli hususundaki görüşlerinde değişiklik olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Çalışmanın hizmet öncesi İngilizce öğretmen eğitimi üzerine etkileri tartışılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Saha tecrübesi, Hizmet öncesi öğretmen eğitimi programları, İngilizce öğretmen adayları, Öğretmen kapasitesi, Öğretmen kimliği.

## Introduction

Identity is postulated not to be stable but rather dynamic (Kroger, 2015), to depend upon changing life conditions (Fadjukoff et al., 2016), and to be a means for apprehending the social and psychological world (Owens, 2006). In agreement with the unsteady nature of identity, identity construction is posited to be permanent re/balancing of self and other (Kegan, 1982). It is the identity through which one introduces himself/herself to the external world (Hammack, 2015). Similarly, teacher identity could be considered to be the medium by virtue of which teachers present themselves to the world outside of them. As a large number of research confirms (e.g., Brown & Heck, 2018; Karimi & Mofidi, 2019; Miller et al., 2017; Morgan, 2016; Wernicke, 2018; Yuan & Lee, 2015), teacher identity denotes the self-concept central to beliefs, values and shaping teachers' practices (Knowles, 1992). He and Lin (2013) contend teacher identity encapsulates teachers' perceptions concerning how they regard themselves as teachers. According to Clarke (2009), it is "giving an account of themselves" (p. 185). The formation of teacher identity is associated with teachers' cultural identity and believed to be individual-dependent, suggesting that personal experiences play a crucial role in the construction and shaping of teacher identities (Edwards & Edwards, 2017).

The fundamental role teachers have in student learning is unequivocal, and due to the overwhelming need for quality teaching, more emphasis is placed upon that role (Schutz et al., 2018). Teachers' instructional practices could be deemed to be the projections of their teacher identities and considered to significantly affect what and how students learn at school (Bullough Jr., 2015). Teacher identities are prone to change continually over time. Moreover, the shifts undergone in them are not only valid for those of practicing teachers, deriving from contextual and social factors but also for those of student teachers, to be rooted in pre-service teacher education they receive (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009).

## Literature Review

### Factors affecting teacher identity development

Numerous factors, one of which is prior life experiences, impact the construction and development of pre-service teacher identity. The study done by Bukor (2013) revealed that personal life experiences wielded influence on teacher identity development, and the analysis of teachers' personal life experiences could, thus, produce a far better understanding of their identity re/construction. Additionally, the way the teaching profession is perceived in the society could impinge upon the construction of pre-service teacher identity. To illustrate, negative representation of the teaching profession in society might endanger the formation of positive teacher identity (Pelini, 2017). The impact of participating in international programs on developing teacher identity of pre-service ESL teachers was investigated in a study the results of which demonstrated the conflicts arising from the differences between the education systems and teacher educators of home and host country influenced the development of participants' teacher identities (Trent, 2011). The study by Friesen and Besley (2013) yielded the positive correlation between first-year student teachers' personal and social identities and their teacher identities.

Teacher preparation programs are acknowledged to be crucial for pre-service teachers' identity development as teachers (Reeves, 2009). The courses offered at initial teacher preparation programs are considered to be effective in promoting professional practice, and critically reflecting on issues concerning practicum is maintained to exert effect on heightening pre-service teachers' awareness of their identities as teachers (Chua et al., 2018). In the research undertaken by Stenberg (2014), the influence of pre-service teacher education on the construction of first-year students' teacher identity is investigated. The findings in that study showed that lived learning experiences impacted on participants' emerging teacher identities as the positions in their teacher identities were substantially affiliated with stimulating student learning as orchestrators or encouragers. The related literature reveals that another factor affecting the construction of pre-service teacher identity is the implementation of action research. The research carried out by Yuan and Burns (2017) showed that through the medium of collaborating with teacher educators and other teachers taking part in action research, pre-service teachers' identities as teachers were positively developed. The

contribution of collating the effect of both the courses offered in initial teacher education programs and FE to the construction of pre-service teachers' emerging teacher identities is also stated in the literature (Yazan, 2018).

### **The impact of FE on the development of pre-service teacher identity**

Preparing pre-service teachers for an unknown future, full of diverse problems, is purported to be hard (Ulvik & Smith, 2011). However, FE could be seen as an essential component of the initial teacher education having a lot to contribute to equipping pre-service teachers with the knowledge and skills required to excel at English language teaching, and to contribute to developing their teacher identities. The research done by Cobb et al. (2018) revealed that using agentic means such as "situated knowledge", "codes of practice" and "a system of relations" with practicing teachers in teaching practicums aided pre-service teachers in establishing their legality as a teacher. In addition, the role played by FE in the development of pre-service teacher identity was examined in the research undertaken by Gallchóir et al. (2017). The findings showed the non-congruence in pre-service teachers' conceptions about what it was to be a teacher prior to completing FE and the alterations that occurred in them because of what they lived in FEs. Dividing teacher identity into two as "subject dependent" and "location dependent", the researchers confined their attention to how school placements advocated pre-service teachers in their journey to becoming a teacher, and thereupon in forming their teacher identities.

The dichotomy between theory and practice has long been one of the issues centered upon in the pre-service teacher education because considerable doubt exists as to the applicability of theoretical knowledge gained at teacher preparation programs in real teaching. Mismatches between university and school could remarkably lead to the formation of pre-service teacher identity (He & Lin, 2013). The study done by Nguyen (2017) reported the influence of the contradictions a PSET experienced in the placement school on constructing their teacher identity. It was reported in Nguyen's (2017) paper that the PSET confronted numerous contradictions encompassing the one between her own teaching approach and that of her mentor teacher. What was contemplated by senior pre-service teachers to be effective and work in real classrooms appeared not to work during their practicum in the research carried out by Trent (2010). This affected the re/formation of participants' teacher identity.

The controversies over how pre-service teachers position themselves as teachers and how they are positioned at placement schools dramatically influence the construction of pre-service teacher identity (Trent, 2013). Trent (2018) highlighted the significance of how pre-service teachers position themselves as teachers and their mentors position them in the development of their teacher identities in the context of paired practicum placements. Turnbull (2005) recommended that pre-service teachers become team members during their FEs as this could positively influence the construction of their teacher identities.

What is experienced in FE needs to be evaluated by critical dialogues between pre-service teachers and cooperating teachers, crucially important for the re/construction of both pre-service teacher and practicing teacher identity (Gratch, 2000). The discourse between cooperating and pre-service teachers exerts dramatic impact on pre-service teachers' identity construction, as was revealed in the research conducted by Santoro (1997). In that study, cooperating teacher's racist attitude towards pre-service teachers negatively affected their identity construction because participating pre-service teachers felt that they were not deemed to be a part of school.

Positive and/or negative emotions experienced in FE affect pre-service teachers' identity development (Song, 2016), as was also reported in the paper by Yuan and Lee (2016). In that study, being marginalized by mentors in FE adversely had a part in pre-service teachers' identities as teachers. The effect of the emotional facet of teaching practicum on pre-service teachers' professional identity development was reported in Zhu's (2017) study as well as the dilemmas pre-service teachers confronted in FE between either functioning as a part of the school or as an outsider. Within the context of FE, in the research conducted by Walkington (2005), the importance of reflective practice on experiences in FE was appreciated for the development of pre-service teacher identity.

## **On PSET capacity and its relation to PSET identity**

Teacher capacity is the knowledge and skills that a teacher has and puts into practice to varying degrees in the course of teaching. That is, teaching practices bear the traces of teacher capacity (Aduano & Heinrich, 2018; Claro et al., 2018). Pre-service teacher education programs perform an essential role in building pre-service teacher capacity by virtue of coursework and the valuable lessons the pre-service teacher will draw from the outcomes of their own and/or others' instructional practices in FE. However, teacher capacity keeps expanding following graduation owing to the professional development activities the teacher will participate in and the teaching experiences they will gain in the profession. For instance, the positive effect of engaging in professional development activities on developing teacher capacity is reported in a range of studies (e.g., Greenleaf et al., 2018; Johnston & George, 2018).

It could be alleged that FE plays a prominent role in building pre-service teacher capacity in view of the chances it offers of practicing teaching, observing mentor teachers' instructional practices, and thereby learning about how to teach. Since teacher identity, as is defined by Knowles (1992), is the self-concept tailoring teaching practices, a connection could be established between pre-service teacher capacity and identity in that they may shape each other reciprocally. In other words, pre-service teacher capacity built in FE contributes to the development of pre-service teacher identity which, in return, has a part in building pre-service teacher capacity.

## **Social constructivist theory and the construction of pre-service teacher identity and capacity in FE**

Developed by Vygotsky (1978), social constructivist theory prioritizes social context and culture in comprehending the experiences of wider community and constructing knowledge rooted in that comprehension (Derry, 1999). According to social constructivists, reality is formulated through a joint social activity. Learning is a social process, and congruent with this, knowledge is gained via social interaction and the shared culture (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010). In light of the premises of social constructivist theory, the connection between it and the development of pre-service teachers' emerging identities as teachers and their teacher capacity in FE could be disclosed. Because the pre-service teacher is learning how to teach during their FE interactions with their mentors, other teachers or administrators, and as either teaching students and/or observing their mentors' instructional practices, it can be attested that such joint learning significantly contributes to the formation and development of pre-service teacher identity and capacity.

Seeing the limited number of research into investigating the influence of FE on the development of PSETs' identities as teachers in the related literature, the present study targets extending the extant literature by seeking answers to the questions that have not been asked to PSETs heretofore. The research questions guiding this study are:

- 1) How did having FE affect the way the PSETs perceived themselves as teachers?
- 2) How did the context in which the PSETs had their FEs impact the construction of their teacher identities?
- 3) What changes, if any, occurred in PSETs' beliefs about how English should be taught as a result of having FE?

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design, Participants and the Context**

This research is designed as a qualitative case study. As is maintained by Creswell (2012), a case study is a detailed investigation into an event or individuals. In agreement with the definition of a case study proposed by Creswell (2012), this study aims to explore the place of FE, referring to the experiences of teaching and an

understanding of how schools operate PSETs gain in placement schools, in the development Turkish PSETs' teacher identity and capacity by using three different qualitative data collection tools. Participants featured in this study were 10 fourth-year PSETs studying in the department of English language teaching at a state university. All the participants were female and their mean age was 21.5. The participants had no prior teaching experience.

Purposive sampling was used in selecting the participants because the researcher was supervising them in a school experience course, and consequently, establishing close contact with them and their cooperating teachers until the completion of the course would be easier for her. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study prior to the commencement of the research and accepted to take part in the study.

In the context of the current study, Turkish senior PSETs are to take a school experience course as a requirement of which they are placed in a primary, secondary or high school run by the Ministry of National Education. Pre-service teachers are to complete a half day at their placement school every week. The purposes of the course are

...supporting pre-service teachers in gaining knowledge of school administration, organization, and daily life in a school, exploring learning environments, joining extracurricular activities, observing experienced teachers' classroom practices, offering pre-service teachers the chance of practicing teaching, though limited, and helping them understand and internalize the teaching profession (Ministry of National Education, 2012).

In the fall term of the academic year 2018/2019, when this research was carried out, the participants were placed in a state secondary school in a suburban city by Provincial Directorate of National Education, authorized body for placing pre-service teachers in schools in the context of the present study. All the participants practiced teaching in their placement school. The assessment of PSETs' performance in FE is carried out by taking into account their success in completing the 14 tasks they are assigned at the outset of FE. The first seven tasks have to be submitted in the midterm exam week and while the rest until the end of the final exam week/s. Before the start of the study, the participants were informed about it and their consent for taking part in it was obtained. Additionally, ethical approval for this research was obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research Ethics Committee of the university at which the study participants were majoring.

## **Data collection tools and analysis**

### ***Reflective journal***

The participants wrote daily reflective journals when they went to their placement school. In these journals, they described their experiences in FE and critically evaluated them. Since the participants were at the school for 14 weeks, they made 14 entries. At the beginning of the study, they were told to write their journals in English, nevertheless, three participants asked the researcher if they could write their journals in Turkish because they would be able to better reflect on their experiences in FE in Turkish. Therefore, the researcher gave them permission to write in Turkish to make them feel comfortable when making entries. The entries will be used to support the findings obtained from the analysis of in-depth interviews.

### ***Metaphor production***

The participants were also asked to write a metaphor for the teaching profession every week in their reflective journals. This would provide both the participants and the researcher with the opportunity to explore how participants' perceptions regarding their profession changed on a weekly basis. At the end of FE, it was found that only three participants produced metaphors. In addition, the three participants who created metaphors to describe their conceptions of the teaching profession did not make up a metaphor for each

week. PSET 2 and 9 produced seven, and PSET 10 produced ten metaphors. The metaphors will be used to support the results pertaining to the effect of FE on the development of participants' teacher identities.

### ***In-depth interviewing***

In-depth interviews consisting of five questions were scheduled and the participants were telephoned to provide information about the date, time and venue of the interviews. Subsequent to the completion of FE, the interviews, each of which lasted 45-50 minutes, were conducted with the participants and recorded. They were transcribed verbatim and inductive content analysis was utilized for the analysis. Two coders coded the interview data to increase the reliability of the findings. They read the transcriptions a number of times, and then, started to code them. Subsequent to coding, categories were developed from the codes and themes were identified afterwards. Thereafter, the two coders discussed the discrepancies between the themes they developed and re-read the transcriptions recursively to reach a consensus. Member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was used to maintain the validity of the present study. The findings gathered from the analysis of the interviews were shared with all the participants to ensure the findings reflected what they had in their minds.

## **Findings**

### **Findings regarding the influence of having FE on how the PSETs viewed themselves as teachers**

The analysis of the responses of the participants to the question of to what extent completing FE affected the way they perceived themselves as teachers demonstrated that it had a marked effect on the development of their teacher identities in that they taught English for the first time, giving them the chance to evaluate their own teaching as teaching real students. The statements of the participants about practicing teaching express the strong feeling that provoked in their minds about their desire to teach English. The theme developed from participants' responses to this research question is, "Yes, I can teach English".

#### ***"Yes, I can teach English."***

The participants pointed out that even though they had had experiences of microteaching in earlier academic years, FE initiated real teaching for them. The lingering doubts they had had over whether they could teach English, when the time came, were dispelled as they began to teach in their placement school. Similarly, the participating PSETs had lacked confidence in being able to manage the classroom and in taking effective and prompt action against students' misbehaviors prior to commencing their FEs. Nonetheless, starting from the first lesson they taught, they realized that they were good at classroom management.

In the second week of FE, when I went to the school, I learned that my mentor was ill and the vice principal told me that I needed to substitute her. I was shocked at that moment because I was not prepared. She had not called me to let me know that she would not be at school. At first, I did not know what to do but there was a class waiting for me. I had no other chance. I had to teach English on my own to seventh-grade students. I went to the classroom, asked students where their teacher stopped last week, and then, I asked riddles to help them get ready for the two-hour English lesson. They really liked the riddles and almost all of them joined the lessons. I grouped them and saw that they were doing their best to complete the activities. I don't know how I can explain the happiness I felt in that lesson. I really taught English, I could do it. (Interview-PSET 4)

As well as the participants' responses in the interviews to the question of the effect of FE on how they perceived themselves as teachers, participants' entries in reflective journals involve their thoughts about how FE helped them see they could teach English.

Last week I had taught English and today when I went to school, students asked “Teacher, will you teach English to us today?” and I said “No”. They were really sorry. They said that they had enjoyed my lesson a lot and their English teacher was not as good at teaching English as me. One of them wrote an acrostic poem for me. I am really proud of myself. (Journal-Third week entry of PEST 8).

### **Findings regarding how the context in which they had FE impacted the construction of their teacher identities**

Participants’ responses relating to the effect of the context in which they had their FEs on the construction of their teacher identities revealed that the school in which they were placed had a profound impact on the construction of their teacher identities. Participants’ placement school was a school where refugee students as well as local ones received education, and where students’ socio-economic status was poor. The participants, therefore, believed that having FE in such a school was a real advantage for them because they had to overcome lots of obstacles they encountered during FE, which they would not have experienced if they had had it in a school located in the center of city and in which students’ socio-economic status is high. The PSETs also highlighted that the proficiency level of students in some classes was higher in comparison to that of others in other classes, and how English teachers approached poor language learners was strikingly different from their approaches to good language learners, which was incongruent to their sense of justice. The theme that developed from the content analysis of participants’ responses and the extracts supporting it are presented below.

#### ***The poorer the conditions are in the placement school the better a PSET learns what it means to be a teacher***

The theme that emerged from the analysis is that participants had a strong belief in the contribution of struggling with obstacles to comprehending the meaning of being a teacher. The conditions that were considered to be poor at the placement school by the participants include both physical conditions and the quality of teaching local and refugee students in the same classroom. The responses of the participants to the question of how the context impacted the construction of their emerging teaching identities indicated the difficulty in teaching approximately 35 students in narrow classrooms, hindering student engagement and teacher supervision.

The classes in our school were really crowded and it was almost impossible to monitor by walking around the classroom. I realized that it is really difficult to control students in larger classes. The students did not listen to the teacher and the only thing my mentor did was shout, and it did not work, either. (Interview-PSET 6)

The other severe hardship they faced in FE is related to teaching local and refugee students in the same class. They believed that since refugees’ mother tongue was not that of local students, they were neglected by English teachers who kept speaking in local students’ mother tongue rather than using English as the language of the classroom and using it to teach English. It was stated in the interviews and the reflective journals that refugee students were silent almost all day sitting at the back rows of the classrooms.

Today was very a tragic day for me. My cooperating teacher’s lesson was with sixth-grade students. We entered the classroom, the teacher greeted the students and they greeted her. She started the smart board and had the students do the activities. She spoke local students’ L1 but in the classroom there were refugee students, too. Their knowledge of local students’ mother tongue was limited. I am sure that they did not understand the teacher. Two of them slept till the end of the lesson and the teacher did not warn them to wake up and join the lesson. Actually, they ignored them. (Journal-Fifth week entry of PSET 5)

The researcher asked the participants to produce metaphors describing how they perceived the teaching profession on each day they went to their placement school till the end of FE to obtain more information about the impact of FE on the development of their teacher identities. Since the context where FE is completed has a great influence on the construction of teacher identity, the metaphors created by the three

participants will be presented under this subheading of the findings. Table 1 below displays the PSETs making up metaphors, the metaphors produced by them and the weeks in which the metaphors were produced.

Table 1

Metaphors produced by the participants

PSET	Week	Metaphors
PSET 2	1	Being a teacher is suffering from headache.
	3	Being a teacher is getting used to headache.
	4	Being a teacher is being a friend of students.
	5	Being a teacher is fighting against any obstacle.
	6	Being a teacher is to open doors that are difficult to open.
	13	Being a teacher is to approach students with the compassion of a mother.
	14	Being a teacher is happiness despite all the difficulties.
PSET 9	1	Being a teacher is being unbiased.
	2	Being a teacher is being patient.
	5	Being a teacher is looking at matters from different angles.
	6	Being a teacher is being bewildered most of the time.
	7	Being a teacher is being warm-hearted.
	8	Being a teacher is being merciful.
	9	Being a teacher is being autonomous.
PEST 10	1	Being a teacher is pure love.
	2	Being a teacher is learning from every difficulty.
	6	Being a teacher is remaining passionate.
	7	Being a teacher is feeling valued.
	8	Being a teacher is learning from students.
	9	Being a teacher is being like a mother.
	11	Being a teacher is being well-planned.
	12	Being a teacher is to be active to activate students.
13	Being a teacher is recalling one's own experiences as learners.	
14	Being a teacher is being loved.	

As seen in Table 1, the participants did not create metaphors for all the weeks. The first two metaphors produced by PSET 2 show that she had problems with dealing with the noise students made at the beginning of her FE, yet she deemed being a teacher as the source of happiness irrespective of the difficulties of the profession in the last week of the FE. The metaphors created by PSET 9 demonstrate that the participant viewed teaching as a profession that required being unbiased, patient, and warm-hearted. This could be interpreted as the manifestation of the effect of the context on forming PSETs' identities as a teacher given the biased attitude of the cooperating teachers towards the refugee students. The metaphors created by PSET 10 also depict the crucial role played by the context in the formation of PSETs' teacher identity. On the day when she wrote the metaphor of being a teacher is being like a mother, she stated in her journal that she had been sick that day but had not reflected her problem to students, which she said resembled her mother's behavior, because her mother did not reflect her problems to her and her siblings even if she had health problems.

#### **Findings with respect to what changes in PSETs' conceptions of how English should be taught took place after having had FE**

Three PSETs stated in the interview that there occurred no change in their perceptions regarding how English should be taught whilst the others stated there took place some shifts in their beliefs. The participants expressing that their beliefs about teaching English did not change put forth that they had believed before the

start of FE that English needed to be taught to young learners through visual aids, games, songs, using only English, and total physical response activities, and following the completion of FE, they still held the same beliefs. The PSETs articulating the occurrence of a number of changes in their beliefs of teaching English emphasized that their own teaching experiences and observing their cooperating teachers' classroom practices led them to begin to think that what was learnt from the courses they had taken in the program did not work with teaching English in real classes. The analysis of the explanation the participants provided concerning the changes in their beliefs created two themes presented in the succeeding lines.

### ***The context in which you work determines how you teach***

The participants stated that their beliefs concerning how English should be taught partially changed accentuating that before having FE, they had held a strong belief in using solely English without uttering a word in their students' L1. Nevertheless, after the completion of FE, they indicated that they had realized the significance of taking into account students' proficiency level, and class size before determining if or not they would use merely English to teach English. In general, the participants supported the following view shared by one of the participants.

Before having FE, I had believed that an English teacher had to use just English in English lessons. My mentor used students' first language (L1) for at least 90% in lessons. I was unhappy about this at the beginning but then on each day I went to the school, I once again realized that it was almost impossible to speak English in our school because students' proficiency level was really low. If the teacher had spoken English in lessons, they would not have understood anything, because students had problems with learning English even when the teacher tried to teach English by speaking Turkish. (Interview-PSET 3)

The participants also stated the shift in their beliefs about using total physical response activities to teach English to young learners. They expressed in the interviews that they had believed before FE that English teachers needed to use activities in which young learners had to be not only cognitively but also physically involved; the school where they had their FEs, nonetheless, caused changes in their belief. Crowded classrooms which were small in size allowed limited space for teachers to walk around the classroom let alone enabling them to get students to be physically engaged in lessons. The journals included participants' comments about this issue.

Today, the teacher had the students work in pairs but she was standing in front the board and trying to monitor the students as they were working on the activity. It really did not work with the students because the teacher could not monitor students appropriately. She did not give feedback to them, they were asking questions to the teacher yelling "Teacher, Teacher", but the teacher did not answer most of the questions and actually ignored them. She rarely uses total physical response activities or pair and group work in lessons, and I think this is something caused by the size of the classroom. I really don't know what I will do in the future. We learnt in the courses at university that we had to use total physical response activities when teaching young learners, but I guess if my classrooms are that small in the future, I will not be able to use the activities in my mind. (Journal-The fifth entry of PSET 3)

### ***Unless the stage is yours, your dreams about teaching won't come true.***

The other theme that developed from the content analysis is pre-service teacher agency in FE. The participants expressed in the interview that they did not have agency in FE for teaching the lessons they taught in the way they had envisioned. The reason behind participants' lack of agency was the discrepancy between their approaches to how English should be taught and those belonging to their cooperating teachers. The participants, both in the interviews and journals, stated that the cooperating teachers wanted them to imitate their instructional practices. The statements of one of the participants in the journal epitomize the thoughts of others about this issue.

Today, I taught likes and dislikes. I brought a reading passage to students to help them discover the form used in the constructions with likes and dislikes. After they had read the passage, they answered comprehension-check questions. Then, I asked students to focus on the sentences involving likes and dislikes to make them work out the rule for forming sentences with likes and dislikes. Suddenly, my mentor came to the board and wrote on the board like/dislike+Ving and said that it was the rule. I was shocked and did not know what I would do. At that moment, I realized that it was not my class, and I was just like an assistant. I could not make what I had in my mind about the lesson real. (Journal-The tenth entry of PSET 9).

## Discussion

The first research question was raised in an attempt to learn about how FE affected the way the participants perceived themselves as teachers. The findings as to this research question revealed that having FE helped them comprehend what being a teacher means and their growing doubts about if they would be able to teach real students and manage the classroom were resolved in that they experienced that they could teach real students and manage the classroom successfully. They even heard students saying “Teacher, you teach better than our teacher”, “Why don’t you teach us anymore?” etc. These findings appear to be in line with the studies having been undertaken to explore the influence of FE on emerging teacher identities of PSETs (Cobb et al., 2018; Yuan & Lee, 2015). To illustrate, changes in the pre-service teachers’ conceptions of the meaning lying behind being a teacher as a consequence of their FE were reported in Gallchoir et al.’s (2017) paper as well. The results indicate that FE occupies a noteworthy place in the construction of PSETs’ teacher identities due in large part to practicing teaching in real classrooms, which also means FE built their teacher capacity. Nonetheless, that is not to say that the courses offered in initial teacher preparation programs are valueless (Chua et al, 2018; Sternberg et al., 2014; Yazan, 2018). Both on-campus and school-based learning contribute to the construction of teacher identities of PSETs.

The responses of the PSETs to the research question of to what extent the context where the participants had their FE impacted the development of their teacher identities demonstrated that it caused tremendous impact upon the development of their teacher identities. The school in which the participants were placed was a secondary school where refugee and local English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) learners with poor socio-economic background received education. Students’ proficiency level was low and practicing teachers’ attitudes towards refugee students and local ones literally made the PSETs heighten their awareness of the importance of justice, what a teacher should never do or vice versa, because smooth seas never make skilled sailors. This confirms Song’s (2016) claim that negative and positive emotions experienced in FE affect pre-service teacher identity. In addition, these findings surface the potential impact of the emotional facet of FE (Zhu, 2017) on the development of pre-service teacher identity. All the handicaps coped with in FE afforded the construction of participants’ teacher identities and capacity. The PSETs are likely to be allocated to a school after graduation in which refugee students and/or students with low socio-economic background are educated. For this reason, having FE in such an environment and observing the classroom practices and instructional strategies of cooperating teachers supported them in gaining remarkable insights into what it is to be a teacher. The participants, most probably, would not have had a similar experience in a school where students with higher socio-economic background and with higher proficiency level receive education. The PSETs became aware of the importance of treating all students appropriately and fairly regardless of their nationality and socio-economic status, which developed both their teacher identity and capacity and could produce positive effects upon their teaching practices in the future.

One of the widely-held beliefs about initial teacher education programs is the disparity between the theoretical knowledge offered on campus and how teaching is conducted in real classes. Consistent with what was reported in the research done by He and Lin (2013) and Trent (2010), the findings in the present study also indicated the incongruences between what happened in the placement school and what was theoretically learned on campus, which contributed considerably to the re/construction of participants’ teacher identity and capacity. Even though the participants had always believed that English was to be used to teach English, their personal experiences in FE resulted in shifts in their belief of the necessity for using English, which parallels what is suggested by Edwards and Edwards (2017). They began to believe that students’ L1 could also be spoken in English lessons provided that their English proficiency level was low. Similarly, unlike what was emphasized in the courses they had taken regarding the use of total physical response activities when teaching

English to young learners, class size and available space in the classroom were conceived by the participants to be the factors negatively affecting the probability of using them in lessons. Consequently, the context of FE is highly significant for the changes that occur in the participants' beliefs about how English should be taught.

The theme regarding the need for having autonomy for the PSETs to transfer their teaching plans into practice may be found to be essential in understanding how the participating PSETs were positioned in the school. It is obvious that the participants were not autonomous in conducting their teaching in that even though the participants viewed themselves as a teacher in the school, the practicing teachers deemed them as just pre-service teachers who were not qualified enough to teach independently and would be temporarily with them and students at the school. As a result, they might not want to grant autonomy to them, rather, wanted them to parrot their teaching style, which adversely influenced participants' identities as teachers and their teacher capacity. Likewise, the study done by Nguyen (2017) reported that the contradictions between cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers with regard to their approaches to effective teaching had a part in the development of PSETs' teacher identities. In the same vein, Santoro's (1997) research yielded that cooperating teachers' negative attitudes towards the pre-service teachers made them feel like they were not a member of the team, which exerted effect on their teacher identity. As is stated by Turnbull (2005), acknowledging pre-service teachers as team members could prompt them to make a greater effort to contribute to the wellbeing of their placement school, which can decisively influence their teacher identity and capacity. Another point worth to note is the significance of the existence of constructive dialogue between the per-service teacher and cooperating teacher (Gratch, 2000). Providing they talk to each other about what encourages or demotivates them at school, it is highly likely that they can convert FE into a real learning environment not only for the pre-service teacher but also the cooperating teacher.

Supposing that FE was eliminated from initial English language teacher preparation programs, would pre-service teachers be ready for the first year of teaching? Considering the uneasiness felt by beginning teachers due to un/foreseeable problems, the answer to this question is obviously "No". Therefore, FE seems to be an important step in the construction of PSETs' teacher identities as they start to understand what it means to be a teacher and to have the wonderful feeling evoked by being valued by students. Furthermore, it carries considerable weight in building PSETs' teacher capacity. Thus, the length of FE should be increased so that PSETs can complete more than one FE in diverse schools providing education at different levels. In doing so, they may raise their awareness of the fact that their identities as teachers are prone to develop permanently and changing conditions have a lot to do with the development their teacher identity and capacity.

Strong relationship between PSETs, their university supervisors and cooperating teachers could stimulate the development of PSET teacher identity and capacity. To that end, at the outset of FE, PSETs could be asked to verbalize their expectations and dreams they want to fulfil such as the desire to teach independently from how cooperating teachers have used to teach English. Thus, they can experience the great pleasure deriving from the professional autonomy, which could promote the formation of their teacher identities and building their teaching capacity. Moreover, PSETs, cooperating teachers, and university supervisors may come together at regular intervals to critically evaluate the effect of FE on PSETs' professional learning, which could enhance the development of their teacher identities and capacity. PSETs want to be viewed as a colleague at placement schools working to accomplish the common goal of enhancing student learning instead of being perceived as a person not belonging to the school but someone who will be in the school for half a day for 14 weeks, which certainly has a negative influence on the development of their identities as teachers. PSETs and their university supervisors may ask cooperating teachers to try to view PSETs as their colleagues through explicating them the facilitative effect such a change in their attitude would produce on the development of PSETs' identities as teachers.

## **Conclusions**

The current study set out to investigate the impact of the experiences in FE upon the construction of emerging PSET professional identity and teacher capacity. In view of the findings, it could be asserted that FE performs a vital role in shaping teacher capacity and identity of PSETs who undergo diverse experiences in different contexts. Hence, personal experiences in FE are to be thoroughly examined to broaden existing

knowledge of the impact of FE and personal experiences on the development of pre-service teacher identity and capacity. Further research is needed in different contexts to be able to compare and contrast the results in this study and the ones in other contexts inasmuch the context in FE has a tremendous effect on the development of pre-service teacher identity and capacity. The results to be presented by future research might lead to the production of a list of dos and don'ts in FE to aid pre-service teachers in making the most of it. Further research thus can serve as a learning tool for all stakeholders in FE. This study suggests that the first meeting to be held by the pre-service teacher, university supervisor and cooperating teacher in FE should be based on what is revealed in the investigations into its effect on pre-service teacher identity and capacity.

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