

A review of graduate research on reflective practices in English language teacher education: Implications

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The aim of this study is to advance knowledge and understanding about graduate research on reflective practices carried out in the field of English language teacher education in Turkey. Altogether the findings from 27 graduate theses were included in the final analysis. Seven themes emerged to guide educational stakeholders and future researchers on the further development of reflective practices in teacher education. This research on implications suggests both a long-term, collaborative, systematic and research-informed teacher education that develops teachers' understanding of reflective teaching, and also a longitudinal, repetitive and evidence-based research base to develop better understanding about reflective practices.

Introduction

The ongoing professional development of English language teachers has been high on the agenda of educational policy makers, teacher educators, researchers, and school principals, given the position of English as a second/foreign language in the global society. Therefore, apart from classroom teaching, language teachers are expected to actively engage in professional development activities to improve their teaching competence.

In the literature, professional development is conceptualised as a normative and long-term process which begins with teachers' early learning experiences and continues until they end their teaching career. According to Johnson and Golombek (2002), teachers as students in classrooms, as pre-service teachers in initial training programs and as in-service teachers in schools develop knowledge and beliefs with regard to the practice of teaching; and professional growth emerges from a process of reshaping these existing structures rather than simply transmitting knowledge to teachers. What's more, many researchers (e.g. Farrell, 2008; Van Manen, 1991) have indicated that at the very heart of this regeneration and transformation process is the notion of reflection, since it enables teachers to assess the origins, purposes and consequences of their work (Zeichner & Liston, 1987).

Tracing back to the ideas of Dewey (1933) and largely based on the model proposed by Schon (1983, 1987), reflection has become a buzz word in language teacher education over the past two decades. Defined as a process of noticing, analysing and taking action (Moore-Russo & Wilsey, 2014), a fast growing literature in various countries has asserted the positive impact of reflection on the quality of schools and professional growth of teachers.

Although it is not a standard practice in Turkey, the concept of reflective teaching has become a central theme in many studies, with theses and dissertations representing an important category in this research. Since no effort has been devoted to providing an

overview of these graduate education studies to date, the present study aims to describe the focus of graduate research on reflective practice in English language teacher education (ELTE). To be more specific, it aims to delve into the implications of these studies to disseminate insights from graduate reflective research in ELTE in Turkey, and to pinpoint potential research areas within the field. Considering that Turkey intends to better align its tertiary education to the standards of Western countries and reflective practice is viewed as one of the key elements of professional growth, establishing a knowledge base is of high value to guide the preparation and development of teachers. Against this backdrop, the following research question has been formulated to guide the direction of the study:

What does graduate research in Turkey reveal that can further the development of reflective practices in ELTE?

Finally, it is assumed that implications found from this study will be of interest to researchers and educators not only in Turkey but also in many areas of the world, as they provide a comprehensive account of ongoing debates in the international arena regarding the promotion of reflective practices in teacher education.

Conceptual framework

Reflection, reflective practice, reflective thinking or reflective teaching has become a popular discourse in the literature on teacher education and development (Calderhead, 1989). Indeed, it has been viewed as an ideal approach to improve the quality of teaching (Dewey, 1933; Schon, 1983, 1987). Dewey (1933), one of the key proponents of reflective approaches, defined reflection as “active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (p.9). According to Dewey, reflection often starts with a state of perplexity or hesitation, continues with finding solutions to resolve the doubt, and ends with the disposal of the perplexity. Furthermore, reflection requires the attitudes of open-mindedness, responsibility and wholeheartedness on the part of the practitioners. Van Manen (1977) expanded Dewey’s ideas and suggested that reflection takes place in three levels: (a) technical which focuses on the means to achieve a set of agreed-upon goals; (b) practical which refers to the analysis of beliefs and assumptions underlying these means and goals; and (c) critical which calls for the consideration of social and contextual factors to achieve a moral and ethical solution for all learners. Although these levels may seem in a hierarchical order, Calderhead (1989) argued against such kind of a perception since each of these types of reflection will be more suitable for different contexts in teacher education.

Schon (1983) further developed reflection and introduced the concepts of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, highlighting the time and context in which it takes place (Freese, 1999). Reflection-in-action occurs instantaneously while an action is taking place. According to Farrell (2012), this on his/her feet type of reflection refers to the ability to tackle with the unexpected upon facing it. Reflection-on-action, on the other hand, takes place after an action has been taken. It allows teachers to analyse their performance retrospectively and gain knowledge from their experiences (Leitch & Day, 2000). Apart

from these forms of reflection, Van Manen (1991) suggested a third type of reflection which is reflection-for-action. Reflection-for-action is informed by teachers' past experiences and informs their future actions. In other words, although teachers cannot predict what might happen in the future, this form of reflection can prepare them for different scenarios they may encounter (Moore-Russo & Wilsey, 2014).

These notions suggest that unlike routine action which is random and impulsive, reflective thinking makes teaching more systematic, deliberate and purposeful (Loughran, 2002). It acts as a compass which "enables teachers to stop, look, and discover where they are at that moment and then decide where they want to go (professionally) in the future" (Farrell, 2012, p. 7). It helps teachers become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and take responsibility for their own professional growth, since it gives them competence and autonomy to make decisions over their actions (Farrell, 2004). In view of all these benefits, reflective practice thus has been promoted as a core aspect of teacher education in general, and language teacher education in particular.

Reflective practice in second/foreign language teacher education

The field of language teacher education has undergone dramatic changes over the past four decades. Although there was a constant search for finding a single and ideal method to help students learn a foreign language until the mid-1980s (Brown, 2007), the shift from a positivist paradigm to constructivist perspectives about teaching-learning has resulted in a new knowledge-base of language teacher education highlighting the critical importance of the integration of the knowledge of self with context-specific pedagogy (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). In addition, it has been conceptualised that since every context is idiosyncratic in terms of its practitioners' and learners' needs about the target language, methods are prescriptive and they have limiting effects on the role of students and teachers. Therefore, Kumaravadivelu's (2001) post-method condition which views teachers as autonomous practitioners who make decisions by considering the social, cultural and political conditions of their environments has started prevailing in the field. According to Akbari (2007), it is the post method debate that has given rise to the now widely applied concept of reflective practice since teachers can "theorize what they practice or practice what they theorize" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003, p.37) through reflective thinking.

As envisaged by the post-method pedagogy, a reflective model seeks a balance between theoretical and experiential knowledge, unlike craft or applied science models which over-emphasise the importance of theoretical knowledge for the practice of teaching (Wallace, 1991). Reflective inquiry empowers language teachers with awareness of context-sensitive and location-specific pedagogy and enables them to understand why external prescriptions given by others may not work in their contexts (Kumaravadivelu, 2001). According to Farrell (2004) reflective teaching helps "teachers become more empowered decision makers, engaging in systematic reflections of their work by thinking, writing, and talking about their teaching; observing the acts of their own and others' teaching; and by gauging the impact of their teaching on their students' learning" (pp. 5-6). That is, reflective inquiry supports and encourages self-observation, self-analysis and self-assessment on the

part of teachers. Moreover, it gives teachers autonomy and emancipation (Calderhead, 1989). Given that the desired quality in the practice of language teaching would be attained with the help of such qualified, conscious and autonomous teachers, educating reflective practitioners has become the ultimate aim of language teacher education programs.

Methodology

As stated earlier, the purpose of this study was to analyse the implications found in graduate theses and dissertations with specific reference to reflective practice in pre- and in-service English language teacher education (ELTE) in Turkey. To this end, the present study adopted a qualitative research methodology as such a design centres on understanding the particular and the distinctive (Croker, 2009). A qualitative design enabled the researchers to delve deeper into details, thereby increasing the depth of understanding of the phenomenon under scrutiny. Accordingly, the researchers did not feel constrained by pre-established assumptions (Patton, 2002). Alongside interviews and observations as qualitative data sources, as in the present study, qualitative studies may also use written documents including excerpts, official publications, reports, personal diaries and so on (Patton, 2002). In such an endeavour, documents are selected on a purposeful basis in order to help researchers understand the problem and the research question (Creswell, 2009).

Data collection

The data for this study were obtained through document analysis, a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents (Bowen, 2009). Document analysis makes it possible to analyse written documents about a specific research problem or targeted phenomena (Yıldırım & Simsek, 2013). Considering the comprehensiveness of graduate studies, especially in terms of the wealth of findings available in comparison to other published work, the specific focus of this study was on the related theses and dissertations as scholarly documents. The reason why the present research focus valued reflection in teacher education in graduate research grew out of its significance for teacher development (Sendan & Donuk, 2014). Moreover, reflective practice is triggered through inquiring into pre- and in-service teachers, as well as training them to become reflective practitioners (Loughran, 2002).

The first step of this procedure involves accessing the necessary documents. In line with the purpose of the study which focused on the implications regarding reflective practices in ELTE graduate research in Turkey, the Turkish National Dissertation and Thesis Database established by the Council of Higher Education was reviewed, focusing on the search terms “reflect”, “reflection”, “reflective practice” and “reflective teaching”. This database is a formal open-access repository which hosts — irrespective of the discipline or field of inquiry — all the dissertations and theses completed in Turkish universities. Our initial search resulted in 741 graduate studies with a reflection-related key word. These were subjected to a sifting process in accordance with our research goal, that is, we

excluded reflection research from other main disciplines and other fields of education, while we only included ELTE graduate research with a specific focus on reflective practice. Having excluded the off-topic search results, the ultimate selection comprised a total of 31 targeted theses and dissertations. While one of the related theses did not seem to offer implications, three of them did not have full access to readers. Therefore, the remaining 27 theses and dissertations were included in the final analysis. Table 1 provides an overview.

Table 1: Dissertations and theses focusing on reflective practices in ELTE

Study	Research aim	Context and sampling	Research design	Data collection	Data analysis
Oniz (2001), PhD	To report on an initiative in which three teacher educators participated in to develop their presentation styles through reflection	Three teacher educators	Action research	Journals, feedback sheets, interviews, field notes, memos	Qualitative analysis
Sire (2004), PhD	To identify and compare novice and experienced instructors' interactive decisions through their reflections on their teaching practices	Four novice and four experienced language instructors	Not specified	Video recording, stimulated recall technique, interviews, lesson plans, snakes and classroom maps	Content analysis, descriptive statistics
Sanal-Erginel (2006), PhD	To explore pre-service teachers' perceptions on becoming reflective practitioners	30 pre-service teachers	Action research	Journals, audio recorded reflective interactions and interviews, assignments, questionnaires, observations	Content analysis, descriptive statistics
Yesilburusa (2008), PhD	To report on an initiative in which three instructors participated in to develop themselves professionally	Three language instructors, 16 teachers and 200-230 students	Action research	Video-recorded lessons, audio-recorded post-observation conferences, reflective journals and student feedback cards	Content Analysis
Kuru-Gonen (2012), PhD	To explore pre-service teachers' perceptions about reflective reciprocal peer coaching practice and its effects on pre-service teachers' reflectivity levels	12 pre-service teachers	Mixed-method	The profile of reflective thinking attributes, reflective diaries, video recordings, questionnaire, focus-group interviews	Inferential & descriptive statistics, constant comparison

Study	Research aim	Context and sampling	Research design	Data collection	Data analysis
Tezgiden-Cakcak (2015), PhD	To explore for which teacher roles pre-service foreign language teacher education program at a public university in central Turkey prepares teacher candidates	275 pre-service teachers, 8 teacher educators, 4 emeritus professors	Qualitative case study	Document reviews, in-depth interviews and classroom observations	Constant comparison
Sayın (2013), PhD	To explore the impact of video recording as a reflective tool on teacher performance in speaking classes.	3 instructors and 56 tertiary students	Action Research	Observation checklists, questionnaires and examination scores	Not specified
Merc (2004), MA	To examine the problems as well as positive experiences pre-service teachers had during their practicum	99 pre-service teachers	Not specified	Written reflections	Constant comparison
Ozcalli (2007), MA	To understand the relationship between teacher efficacy and reflective thinking and to explore the impact of an in-service program on these variables	25 in-service teachers	Correlational and experimental	Questionnaires, interviews and teacher journals	Descriptive and inferential statistics, content analysis
Ozmen (2007), MA	To identify teachers' attitudes about and awareness levels of reflective teaching	117 in-service teachers	Not specified	Questionnaires, interviews	Descriptive statistics, Content analysis
Kirazlar (2007), MA	To identify teachers' reflective practices and to explore whether any change occurs in teachers' attitudes towards teaching profession when they are engaged in reflective activities	27 in-service teachers	Not specified	Questionnaires, diaries, notes and interviews	Descriptive statistics, Inferential statistics, Content analysis
Filiz (2008), MA	To explore teachers' attitudes towards reflective teaching practice	25 novice and 25 experienced high school teachers	Not specified	Questionnaires, interviews	Descriptive statistics, Inferential statistics
Korkmazgil (2009), MA	To examine how blogging may enhance pre-service teachers' reflectivity	12 pre-service teachers	Case study	Blog posts and comments, interviews, field notes	Content analysis
Ozdemir (2007), MA	To report on an initiative taken by a teacher to become a more reflective teacher	One in-service teacher and 30 students	Action research	Questionnaire, journals	Content analysis

Study	Research aim	Context and sampling	Research design	Data collection	Data analysis
Tatis (2010), MA	To investigate the impact of keeping journals on teachers' teaching in general and teaching writing in particular	11 language instructors	Case study	Journals, interviews	Content analysis
Armutcu (2012), MA	To find out the content and structure of teachers' beliefs about reflective teaching and to monitor any changes in those beliefs during the practicum	28 pre-service teachers	Action research	Repertory grid data, reflective meetings, reflective journals and semi-structure interviews	Content analysis
Cingoz (2012), MA	To examine whether diary keeping influences teachers' reflectivity	15 pre-service teachers	Case study	Diary entries, interviews	Content analysis
Gokmen (2014), MA	To investigate whether collaborative journal writing and peer observation can contribute to teachers' reflectivity	7 language instructors	Action research	Semi-structured interviews, reflection forms, collaborative journals and field notes	Content analysis
Okumus (2014), MA	To investigate whether the EPOSTL (European Portfolio for Student Teachers of Languages) can contribute to teachers' reflective skills	24 pre-service teachers	Mixed-method	Questionnaires, interviews	Inferential statistics, Content analysis
Pektas (2014), MA	To report on the effects of a reflective thinking based advanced reading course on students' attitude, success and retention	34 pre-service teachers	Experimental	Questionnaire, Comprehension tests, interviews	Descriptive statistics, Content analysis
Gumusok (2014), MA	To investigate pre-service teachers' attitudes toward written self-evaluation and peer-evaluation processes. To examine the content and quality of pre-service teachers' reflections.	27 pre-service teachers	Case study	Self-evaluation forms, peer evaluation forms, video-recordings of post-teaching conferences and semi-structured interviews	Content analysis
Burhan (2015), MA	To explore the reflection types (reflection-in, on and for-action) teachers engage in through reflective practice-oriented online discussion forums,	9 language instructors	Qualitative research design	Background information questionnaire, RP-oriented discussions and interviews	Thematic analysis

Study	Research aim	Context and sampling	Research design	Data collection	Data analysis
Dagkiran (2015), MA	To explore whether instructors are aware of the implications of post-method era and how reflective they are. To find out the relationship between teachers' perceptions about post-method pedagogy and reflective teaching	347 language instructors	Survey study	Questionnaire	Descriptive and inferential statistics
Bener (2015), MA	To report on an initiation taken to promote reflection on teaching practice via the integration of reflective blog activities into a practicum.	18 pre-service teachers	Case study	Blog entries, surveys, interviews	Descriptive statistics and content analysis
Fakazlı (2015), MA	To engage instructors in reflective teaching practices through the use of reflective diaries, reflective video analysis, and reflective peer sessions and to find out their perceptions about these reflective teaching practices	8 language instructors	Qualitative research design	Questionnaire, reflective diaries, reflective video analysis, and reflective peer sessions, interviews	Descriptive statistics and constant comparison
Yesilcop (2015), MA	To investigate the reflective tools commonly used by instructors	10 language instructors	Case study	Questionnaire, interviews	Descriptive statistics and constant comparison
Ozsoy (2017), MA	To investigate the contributions of team teaching to teachers' reflective practices and professional development	5 language instructors	Case study	Journals and interviews	Thematic analysis

Of the 27 studies published between 2001-2017, seven were doctoral dissertations and 20 were master of arts theses. Sample sizes ranged from 3 to 347, and subjects included pre-service teachers, university instructors, teacher educators and in-service teachers working in primary, secondary and high schools. Most of the studies were qualitative and fell into the approaches of either case study or action research. The main data collection methods were interviews, questionnaires, and journals. Content analysis was the most commonly employed method of data analysis.

The included studies discussed reflection in six different ways. While the first approach centres on reflection as a means to achieve some goals (Kirazlar, 2007; Ozsoy, 2017; Oniz, 2001; Pektas, 2014; Sayın, 2013; Sire, 2008; Tatis, 2010; Yesilbursa, 2008), the second approach focused on reflective practice as an end to be achieved by some means (Bener,

2015; Tezgiden-Cakcak, 2015; Cingoz, 2012; Gokmen, 2014; Kuru-Gonen, 2012; Korkmazgil, 2009; Okumus, 2014; Ozdemir, 2007; Ozcalli, 2007). The third approach was concerned with the relationship between reflection and some variables (Dagkiran, 2015; Ozcalli, 2007). In the fourth approach, participants' attitudes and beliefs about reflective practice were examined (Artmutcu, 2015; Sanal-Erginel, 2006; Fakazli, 2015; Filiz, 2008; Kuru-Gonen, 2012; Gumusok, 2014; Ozmen, 2007). The fifth approach focused on the content of participants' reflections (Burhan, 2015; Gumusok, 2014; Merc, 2004) and the last approach investigates the reflective tools employed by practitioners (Yesilcop, 2015).

Data analysis

Being qualitative in nature, document analysis widely employs content analysis (Merriam, 1998). In this respect, implications found in the available theses and dissertations, brought together in the form of written documents, were content analysed by adopting an inductive approach. In an independent manner, at the outset, the researchers undertook independent readings and codings of the written content to generate common themes. This was followed by meetings of the researchers to identify agreements and disagreements and come up with a consensus for common pathways, thereby leading to final emergent themes through collaboration. After the coding was independently processed by the researchers, in the meetings the number of agreements and disagreements was identified. The intercoder reliability was calculated by using Miles and Huberman's (1994) formula ($\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{agreement}}{\text{agreement} + \text{disagreement}}$). This calculation generated 90% of similarity and agreement for the codes. For Miles and Huberman, intercoder agreement in qualitative data analysis should approach or exceed 90%. In the few cases where disagreements existed, the themes were either expanded or merged. Finally peer debriefing was employed to ensure the credibility of the themes developed and the method overall.

Findings and discussion

In response to our research question, "What does graduate research in Turkey reveal that can further the development of reflective practices in ELTE?" two main themes emerged: implications for practice and implications for future research. The first theme comprised four sub-themes: familiarising teachers with reflective procedures, promoting collaboration and partnership, establishing reflection as an integral part of second language teacher education, and creating online platforms. The second theme consisted of three sub-themes: conducting longitudinal studies, conducting follow-up studies, and conducting replication studies. Quotations are given from the included studies for validation.

Implications for practice

Familiarising teachers with reflective procedures

This theme involves acquainting pre-service teachers, in-service teachers or teacher educators with different reflective procedures (e.g. peer observation, collaborative journal

writing, video recording) to provide them with profitable experiences. Most of the included studies suggest that teachers can examine their assumptions, gain awareness about their practices, make appropriate decisions and evaluate their professional actions through the use of different reflective approaches in classrooms. For instance, Gokmen (2014) stated that training university instructors in the use of different reflection tools must be high on the agenda of professional development units of universities, to enable them to better address their students' needs. In like manner, Oniz (2001) stressed the importance of actively engaging teacher educators in reflective procedures, since change process starts with them. Kuru-Gonen (2012), on the other hand, provided a more specific example and suggested the promotion of reflective reciprocal peer coaching (RRPC) among teachers. Oniz (2001) stated:

It is suggested for teacher educators to encourage pre-service teachers engage in reflective practice throughout peer coaching... by letting pre-service teachers into peer coaching experience, we may help them learn to listen to each other, respect to others' opinions and share their ideas and feelings. RRPC practice might also be considered as an effective tool to sustain motivation for teaching and a potential to lower down anxiety in the teaching environment (p.130).

Video recording is suggested as another reflective approach to be used by teachers as it allows teachers to critically observe, analyse and evaluate themselves. In Sayın's (2012) study, it is presented as an objective tool that enables teachers to closely examine and respond to their strengths and weaknesses. To illustrate,

I believe video recording will be very practical for self-assessment and reflection. It is known that, being very busy, teachers often refrain from time-consuming activities; however, video recording, as a less time-consuming way to self-reflect will enable them to see oneself like in a mirror in a critical way (p.145).

Richards and Lockhart (2007) noted that reflective approaches help teachers better understand instructional practices, given that teachers continuously collect data about their classroom activities, examine their practices and make critical reflections about their teaching based on the information obtained from that data. In other words, thanks to reflective procedures, teachers can go through an ongoing process of decision-making in which assumptions are examined, evaluated and changed if needed. According to Darling-Hammond and Bransford (2005), such kinds of systematic processes refine teachers' teaching, enhance their professional development, and results in enhanced student learning.

In contrast to the studies above, some in the extant literature (e.g. Edwards & Thomas, 2010) have viewed reflection as an innate capacity and opposed the idea that reflection can be taught. However, Kim and Silver (2016) argued that without being taught and guided about reflection, teachers often reflect in mechanical and uncritical ways. Therefore, in agreement with recent studies (e.g. Gelter, 2003; Turhan & Kırkgoz, 2018), the present study supports the view that reflection is a learned process which develops over time. Consequently, another important implication emerging from this study is that teachers

should be familiarised with different reflective tools to deal with different aspects of the teaching profession.

Promoting collaboration and partnership

In most of the included studies, collaboration is viewed as a value that can support the promotion of reflection among teachers and this theme focuses on the necessity of cooperation between different educational stakeholders (e.g. teacher educators, cooperating teachers, colleagues, administrators, curriculum developers, etc.) and institutions (e.g. schools, universities, etc.) to encourage the development of reflective practices.

In her study, Dagkiran (2015), for instance, discussed the benefits of collaboration between teachers, colleagues and administrators for the development of reflection and notes,

Turkish EFL teachers prefer engaging in more passive reflections such as thinking about their own beliefs and considering their strengths and weaknesses; however, professional development activities could trigger more initiative-taking reflective practices. ... Circulating articles and journals within the institution may lead teachers to gain insights from their colleagues and revise the way they teach. Similarly, administrators could allocate time for teachers to collectively meet and discuss what they could do to improve their teaching and may give advice on planning their reflective actions for continuous development (p.75).

In a similar vein, Gumusok (2014) highlighted the need for collaboration between teacher educator and cooperating teacher to engage student teachers in higher levels of reflection. She stated,

... guidance to student teachers for higher levels of reflection should not be only offered by supervisors, mentor teachers should also be involved in this process. Mentor teachers can provide models for student teachers by discussing their own practices through theories; social, moral, ethical and economic considerations (p.249).

These implications seem to be consistent with other research indicating that cooperation between different educational stakeholders and institutions enhances reflection. For instance, Weiss and Weiss (2001) indicated that school-university partnerships are highly influential in student teachers' acquisition of independent skills like inquiry, reflection, and analysis. Likewise, Clarke, Triggs and Nielsen (2014) drew attention to collegiality between supervisors and cooperating teachers and pointed out that assuming such shared responsibilities enhances the reflective dispositions of student teachers. Moreover, Cole (1997) emphasised the critical role of institutional support for the promotion of reflective practices in schools, to better improve teaching and learning. As a result, one of the emerging issues from these findings is that although reflection is perceived as a rather personal process, it can be strengthened through continuing communication between educational stakeholders.

Given that partnerships between individuals and institutions allow teachers to gain awareness about their professional learning, challenge their traditional perceptions about the practice of teaching, and make them feel that they are not alone in a journey full of complexities, one of the implications of the present study is to create a culture of shared responsibility, mutual support and cohesive relationships among educational stakeholders to encourage the reflective development of teachers.

Establishing reflection as an integral part of ELTE programs

This theme focuses on the need for revising the curricular content of ELTE programs to provide pre-service teachers with earlier and continuous opportunities to practice reflection. Although reflection is not a common practice in Turkish teacher education programs, pre-service teachers are asked for weekly reflections when they start their practicum in the final year of their education. However, in her study, Tezgiden-Cakcak (2015) emphasised the importance of training student teachers for reflective practices, starting in the earlier years of their professional preparation and not delaying it until the last year of the undergraduate programs when the practicum starts. Merc (2004) also shared similar ideas and stated that practicum doesn't necessarily guarantee the development of reflective dispositions in student teachers. Gumusok (2014) summarised the situation succinctly,

Reflection or reflective practices may be introduced to student teachers earlier in the programs. Besides, they may get involved with reflective practices more than they normally do. Regardless of the content of the courses, they can be practising reflection through diaries, discussions and video recordings to increase awareness on their teaching so that they could easily perform reflection during their first professional teaching (p.249).

Since reflection is a progressive and learned process (Gelter, 2003), such discussions, in essence, refer to the developmental nature of reflection and indicate that reflective qualities are not developed within a short timeframe; rather, they require long-term and continual practices. Therefore, the quantity and quality of reflective experiences in teacher education programs serve as a foundation stone for developing student teachers into reflective practitioners. In a similar vein, Senese (2017) pointed out that teacher educators should encourage pre-service teachers to practise reflection many times in different ways to help them develop reflective habits of mind.

In view of all these observations, this study highlights the necessity of making reflective practices an integral part of professional preparation programs, through which student teachers can internalise the merits of reflective teaching and make it part of their professional careers. Therefore, it suggests engaging pre-service teachers in theoretical readings and discussions, action research projects, microteaching experiences or school-based programs from the early days of their professional preparation, to cultivate the idea of reflectivity in them.

Creating online environments

This theme refers to creating online spaces and helping teachers sustain their reflective practices in out-of-school settings. As part of an increasing interest in the use of technology to improve instructional practices, several graduate studies suggested that teachers can have the chance to exchange their ideas through online environments and provide each other with professional support. For instance, Bener (2015) indicated,

Findings from this research project revealed the benefits of providing an online space for pre-service teachers where they could voice their thoughts and feelings, and interact with others. Blogs were also used by the participants to share their concerns about being unsuccessful at teaching and to give or receive emotional support (pp.139-140).

In her study, Ozmen (2007) also highlighted the importance of creating virtual spaces through which teachers can interact with others and share experiences. Consistent with above suggestions, the extant literature has shown that electronic environments like blogs (e.g. Yang, 2009), and discussion forums (e.g. Jones & Ryan, 2014) help in improving reflectivity in teachers.

We believe that engaging in reflective actions through such kind of platforms translates beyond the school settings into internalised reflective habits. Thanks to online spaces, teachers build communities of practice and do not feel isolated in their jobs since they can express their feelings, tell about their practices and share their thoughts with like-minded colleagues. Dialogues with teachers in those platforms help them think, discuss, share, support and reflect on their actions. In other words, online environments may serve as an alternative avenue for teachers to become familiar with different perspectives in different parts of the world, see things differently and question their beliefs in light of new considerations. Therefore, this study suggests creating virtual spaces and encouraging teachers to build and engage in such environments to promote continuous reflection in out-of-school settings.

Implications for future research*Conducting replication studies*

This theme refers to the repetition of graduate studies to investigate whether the results obtained in the original studies hold true in different contexts or for different participants and it is stressed in almost all of the studies. Questioning whether the findings of her study can be applied to different settings and participants, Filiz (2008), for instance, stated that,

The present study focused on the attitudes of 50 EFL teachers towards reflective teaching practice... Further research might be done with a higher number of EFL teachers. Besides, all of the EFL teachers participating in this study were high school teachers. The attitudes of EFL teachers who teach at primary, secondary or university levels might be different from that of the subjects of the present study (p.87).

Similarly, Kuru-Gonen (2012) suggested her study be replicated to further the generalisability of her research findings,

... the results of the study cannot be generalised to other pre-service teachers in different education contexts and programs. Replication of this study on RRPC in different teacher education contexts and programs may help to compare the effects of RRPC on reflectivity or other aspects. (p.131)

Despite being a recurring theme in almost all of the graduate studies, Lindsay and Ehrenberg (1993) indicated that replication is rarely practised due to the concern over its lack of novelty and originality, which are the most looked-for features in academic environments. However, unlike the common view, Makel and Plucker (2014) highlighted the need for replications since they help verify the accuracy of prior studies, overcome the limitations of previous research, and increase the credibility and generalisability of research findings. Concurring with the latter researchers, we also advocate the conduction of replication studies, especially in countries like Turkey where reflective practice is not the dominant paradigm in teacher education, because such studies can add confidence in research findings by corroborating or disproving, and can help develop and extend understandings about reflective practices. As a result, in alignment with Spector, Johnson and Young (2015) who encouraged researchers to carry out replication studies to provide a more scientific knowledge base to transform educational practices, we suggest future researchers replicate the included studies to better and further understand the practice of reflective teaching.

Conducting longitudinal studies

This theme emphasises the need for carrying out research studies in a longitudinal fashion. Implemented between 8 weeks to 16 weeks, over half of the included studies emphasised the need for conducting longer-term studies, for several reasons such as obtaining more sound and richer data, producing more profound changes in participants' developmental progress, and gaining further insights into student teachers' reflective journeys. An example of how a longer term implementation process would influence the developmental process of reflection is provided by Cingoz (2012),

The current study is a case study which attempts to explore the journal keeping experience of 15 pre-service English language teachers during a semester-long study span. Such a period of time is not sufficient to assert that this journal keeping experience might help them nurture an ability or habit of reflection (p.80)

Discussing that an extended period of time would add more depth and breadth into his study, Ozsoy (2017) pointed out,

Due to time constraints ..., it was not possible to extend the data collection process of the study to one school year, which would have provided a more complete, in-depth, and richer understanding of the teachers' reflective practices throughout their team teaching experience (p. 118).

This theme is consistent with that of Barnett (2003) who stated that effective professional development activities need to take place over extended periods of time. Just as the acquisition of any new skill calls for an ongoing process of continual efforts, reflection also develops over time and through use. Ryan (2005) explained that short-term exercises or courses are not sufficient to develop reflective habits in teachers. Therefore, another important implication of this study for further researchers involves carrying out longitudinal studies to provide teachers with ample opportunities to practise it for several times in different ways to develop a reflective mindset.

Conducting follow-up studies

This theme focuses on carrying out further research to investigate the effects of studies on participants' future instructional practices. Some of the included studies indicated that it would be just a naive guess whether the teachers would put their intentions into practice in their future classrooms without follow-up studies. For instance, Yesilbursa (2008) noted,

... It would be interesting to return to the field one year after the study to see how sustainable the reflection and change that have taken place has been. For example, will Bookworm still be utilising group work in her reading course? Can Biker still prevent himself from elaborating excessively on language? Does The Brit think more about the language aspect of her teaching? More importantly, are all three still engaging in reflective practice? (p. 205).

Finding answers to these questions seems impossible without further investigation. In alignment with such concerns, Akbari (2007) aptly stated that the notion of reflection has been embraced by educators without adequate reflection and such a tendency doesn't ensure an automatic transfer of what is learnt to real teaching settings. Since it is unlikely to find sound evidence as to the effectiveness of their studies, we thus suggest future researchers conduct follow-up studies in order to examine how their prior implementations direct participants' future practices. In this way, they can fully understand the impact of undertaken activities to arrive at far-reaching conclusions about their studies.

Concluding remarks

This study attempted to provide a clear picture of what graduate research implies about reflective practices in ELTE in Turkey. The findings revealed the need for a collaborative, systematic and research-informed teacher education system which can (a) cultivate the idea of reflectivity in teachers starting from the very early years of their professional career; (b) collaborate and establish partnerships with different educational institutions; (c) engage teachers in different types of reflective procedures; and (d) support teachers' reflective activities in out-of-school settings. The findings also highlighted the importance of a longitudinal, repetitive and evidence-based research base to develop better understanding about reflective practices.

However, although the present review included studies within a particular context, the implications derived from those studies were in line with several individual research studies conducted in different parts of the world to investigate the reflective trends in teacher education as discussed above. In this respect, the implications of the study can go beyond the immediate context of the data and afford different educational stakeholders and research communities with substantial points of reference to use in the design of research studies and teacher education programs. Moreover, the findings of the study can be used to provide guidance and direction for future practices and research since further work needs to be done to better improve current reflective practices and establish reflective models, which put teachers at the centre of their learning, as the standard practice in settings where teachers are still equipped with predetermined knowledge and prescribed skills.

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