

T.R.
BOLU ABANT İZZET BAYSAL UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING



EVALUATING THE PRACTICUM
FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF EFL PRE-SERVICE EFL
TEACHERS, MENTORS AND SUPERVISORS

MASTER OF ARTS

ASILGÜL SEİTBEKOVA KAMA

ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR

Prof. Dr. Abdullah COŞKUN

BOLU MARCH - 2024

APPROVAL OF THE THESIS

**EVALUATING THE PRACTICUM FROM THE PERSPECTIVES
OF PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS, MENTORS AND SUPERVISORS**
submitted by **Asılgül SEİTBKÖVA KAMA** and defended before the
Examining Committee Members listed below in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Department of English Language
Teaching, Institute of Graduate Studies of Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University in
28.03.2024 by

Examining Committee Members

Signature

Supervisor
Prof. Dr. Abdullah COŞKUN
Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University

.....

Member
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anıl Ş. RAKICIOĞLU SÖYLEMEZ
Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University

.....

Member
Assist. Prof. Dr. Yusuf ŞEN
Düzce University

.....

Prof. Dr. İbrahim KÜRTÜL
Director of Institute of Graduate Studies

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Asilgöl SEİTBKOVA KAMA

ABSTRACT

**EVALUATING THE PRACTICUM
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MASTER OF ARTS
ASILGÜL SEİTBKÖVA KAMA
BOLU ABANT İZZET BAYSAL UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAM
SUPERVISOR: PROF. DR. ABDULLAH COŞKUN**

BOLU, MARCH 2024

XI+149

This study evaluates the teaching practicum from the perspectives of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors. Employing a mixed-methods approach, it gathers and examines both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were collected from 82 pre-service teachers who participated in the teaching practicum course during the 2021 fall and 2022 spring semesters, using the Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Practicum Reactions Scale developed by Kazaz and Alagözlü (2020). This scale included 39 close-ended items and four open-ended questions. Data from the close-ended items were analyzed using SPSS 22, while responses to the open-ended questions were categorized based on their context. Semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom with seven pre-service teachers, five mentor teachers, and four university supervisors. Afterwards, the researcher transcribed the interviews. The analysis of the data reveals that the teaching practicum is highly valued for providing practical teaching experience within the classroom setting. Findings from both the questionnaire and interviews similarly emphasized the importance of translating theoretical knowledge into practice. However, issues related to timing, scheduling, and the completion of required practicum tasks presented certain challenges. Some recommendations were made to deal with such challenges.

KEYWORDS: Pre-service teachers, Practicum, Evaluation.

ÖZET

**ÖĞRETMENLİK UYGULAMASI DERSİNİN İNGİLİZCE
ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARI, UYGULAMA ÖĞRETMENLERİ VE
DANIŞMANLAR AÇISINDAN DEĞERLENDİRİLMESİ
YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ
ASILGÜL SEİTBEKOVA KAMA
BOLU İZZET BAYSAL ÜNİVERSİTESİ
LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ
YABANCI DİLLER EĞİTİMİ ANABİLİM DALI
İNGİLİZ DİLİ EĞİTİMİ BİLİM DALI
(TEZ DANIŞMANI: PROF. DR. ABDULLAH COŞKUN)**

**BOLU, MART 2024
XI+149**

Bu çalışma, öğretmenlik uygulaması dersini, İngilizce öğretmen adayları, uygulama öğretmenleri ve üniversite danışmanlarının bakış açılarına göre değerlendirmektedir. Karma yöntem yaklaşımı kullanarak hem nicel hem de nitel verileri toplamış ve incelenmiştir. Kazaz ve Alagözlü (2020) tarafından geliştirilen “Hizmet Öncesi İngilizce Öğretmenlerinin Öğretmenlik Uygulaması Tutum Ölçeği” kullanılarak 2021 güz ve 2022 bahar yarıyıllarında öğretmenlik uygulaması dersine katılan 82 öğretmen adayından nicel veriler toplanmıştır. Bu ölçekte 39 kapalı uçlu madde ve 4 açık uçlu soru yer almaktadır. Kapalı uçlu maddelerden elde edilen veriler SPSS 22 kullanılarak analiz edilmiş, açık uçlu sorulara verilen yanıtlar ise bağlamlarına göre kategorize edilmiştir. Yedi öğretmen adayı, beş uygulama öğretmeni ve dört üniversite danışmanı ile Zoom üzerinden yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiş ve bu görüşmeler araştırmacı tarafından yazıya aktarılmıştır. Verilerin analizi, öğretmenlik uygulamasının sınıf ortamında pratik öğretim deneyimi sağlama açısından oldukça değerli olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Hem anket hem de görüşmelerden elde edilen bulgular, teorik bilginin pratiğe dönüştürülmesinin önemini benzer şekilde vurgulamıştır. Ancak zamanlama, planlama ve gerekli öğretmenlik uygulaması görevlerinin tamamlanmasıyla ilgili sorunlar belirli zorluklara yol açmıştır. Bu tür zorluklarla başa çıkmak için bazı önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

ANAHTAR KELİMELEER: Öğretmen Adayları, Öğretmenlik Uygulaması, Değerlendirme.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

CHE	: Council of Higher Education
EFL	: English as a Foreign Language
ELT	: English Language Teaching
MoNE	: Ministry of National Education
MT	: Mentor Teacher
PST	: Pre-service Teacher
SPSS	: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TESOL	: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
US	: University Supervisor

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Abdullah Coşkun, for his invaluable counsel, unwavering support, and insights poised for real-world application throughout the course of this research. His indispensable assistance at every stage and continuous accessibility have played a pivotal role in the initiation and completion of this thesis. Without his guidance, this endeavor might not have commenced, let alone reached its conclusion. His exceptional mentorship along the academic journey has been outstanding, and I consider myself fortunate to have been under his tutelage during this challenging yet rewarding period. The professionalism and wisdom he shared have been of immeasurable value.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Anıl Ş. Rakıcıoğlu Söylemez for her invaluable contributions to the teaching profession during the sessions she conducted. Her insightful ideas, recommendations, and innovative perspectives have significantly deepened my understanding of the complexities of the teaching profession.

Special thanks to Assist. Prof. Dr. Yusuf Şen and my fellow student, Ece Türk, whose guidance and insights were instrumental in the refinement of this study.

I express boundless gratitude to my husband, for his unwavering support and belief in me more than anyone else. My gratitude is also shared with my mother, brother, and father-in-law for their uplifting words and steadfast support.

Furthermore, I extend my endless gratitude to my dear friend Anastariia. Her inspiring words and assistance with computer-related issues have illuminated various aspects of this research, which I deeply appreciate.

Each of these individuals has left an indelible mark on this challenging yet rewarding academic journey. I am grateful for the invaluable network of support that surrounded me.

1. INTRODUCTION

A growing interest in foreign language instruction is persistently fueled by economic, societal, academic, and empirical advancements (Peremin, 2019). Ulum (2015) claimed that in our daily lives, where communication holds immense importance, the imperative need for individuals to acquire proficiency in one or more languages and to engage with and understand diverse cultures has become unavoidable for every society. Aligned with these emphases, Güven (2015) asserted that, given the prevalence of global communication, English is taking on the role of the primary language for international communication.

In the contemporary world, characterized by constant technological advancements, ubiquitous gadgets, widespread internet accessibility, and daily engagement with social media, there is an increasing global demand for proficiency in the English language (Garrido & Alvarez, 2006). In line with the need to learn English, the significance of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is gaining considerable velocity in education, provoking the growth of demand for well-trained English language teachers; furthermore, global educational transformations, characterized by emerging teaching and learning methodologies, updated standards and assessments, inventive curricular approaches, and revamped school structures, have led to a redefinition of the responsibilities of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

In today's interconnected world, where English serves as a global medium, the exploration of teaching English is becoming a valuable endeavor within the broader educational framework, and research in English Language Teaching (ELT) addresses diverse topics, many of which are intricately linked to preparing English Language teachers (Peacock, 2009). The landscape is swiftly evolving in numerous nations, mainly due to the rising interest in studying EFL (Tatar, 2019). As stated by Cesur et al. (2021), education in every individual's lifespan is similar, and it advances from year to year, starting from early childhood when the role of the teacher is acted by parents to school age when real teachers educate the children at school. Consequently, universities must prepare good teachers who will effectively educate the young generation (Cesur et al., 2021).

1.1. Background of the Study

As Gan (2013) and Yuan and Lee (2014) highlighted, the practicum course is pivotal in teacher education, directly influencing pre-service teachers' beliefs and potentially shaping their future decisions. This critical phase allows teacher candidates to immerse themselves in the fundamental aspects of teaching within real-world classroom settings, where the guidance of university supervisors and mentor teachers is indispensable for a seamless transition into the teaching profession (Mau, 1997; Merç, 2015; Yan & He, 2010). Kırkgöz et al. (2016) emphasized that engaging in practicum activities, such as using the target classroom language and navigating classroom challenges, plays a crucial role in reinforcing or reshaping pre-service teachers' preconceptions.

Cohen et al. (2013) noted that the practicum, which includes fieldwork, student teaching, or mentorship, provides pre-service teachers with their most comprehensive immersion in the teaching profession as part of their training programs. During this critical period, pre-service teachers operate with a degree of independence, yet receive essential support and guidance from mentor teachers or university supervisors. Moreover, integrating academic coursework with hands-on classroom experience forms a fundamental part of their educational journey (Cohen et al., 2013; Graham & Thornley, 2000).

The teacher education framework is continually evolving (Coşkun, 2009), mirroring changes in educational standards, pedagogical methods, and societal expectations. At the core of this evolution is the practicum experience, a fundamental element of teacher education programs designed to link theoretical knowledge with practical teaching skills (Başkan et al., 2006; Merç, 2011). This hands-on experience is crucial for understanding the complexities of teaching, managing classrooms, and fostering effective learning environments (Celen, 2016; Coşkun, 2013; Gilliland, 2018; Kaelin, 2013; Lee & Loughran, 2000; Mau, 1997; Merç, 2015; Yan & He, 2010). Nevertheless, the nature and quality of practicum experiences can vary significantly across institutions, influenced by program structure, mentorship quality, and school partnerships.

Although the practicum offers many advantages, it also comes with its challenges. Pre-service teachers frequently encounter difficulties in applying

theoretical knowledge to practical situations, managing classrooms effectively, and meeting the expectations of mentors and supervisors (Chitpin et al., 2008; Kelchtermans & Hamilton, 2004; Merç, 2011; Smith, 2005; Tekin & Tunaz, 2023; Yin, 2019). Mentor teachers and university supervisors provide adequate support and feedback, balancing their instructional, mentoring, and administrative roles (Bekereci-Şahin & Gürbüz, 2022; Cook, 2007; Celen & Akcan, 2017; Coşkun, 2013). These challenges highlight the need for a systematic evaluation of practicum experiences to develop strategies for improvement.

Recognizing the diverse experiences within practicum environments, this study is motivated by the need to understand these variations from the perspectives of three main stakeholders involved in the practicum course. Pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors each play a unique role in the practicum process, offering distinct viewpoints on its effectiveness, challenges, and areas for improvement. Their collective insights provide a comprehensive understanding of the practicum experience, highlighting the alignment or misalignment between educational objectives and practical outcomes.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Most research studies conducted in the field of teacher training programs emphasize the importance of evaluation research as an essential instrument for enhancing the quality of these programs. This research provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the programs, identifies areas that require improvement, and informs future developments in practice-based learning initiatives (Celen & Akcan, 2017; Coşkun & Daloğlu, 2010; Duman & Karagöz, 2016; Erarslan, 2018; Kazaz & Alagözlü, 2020; Kızılçelik, 2015; Norris, 2016; Skinner & Hou, 2014). The evaluation aims to foster continuous improvement and ensure that practicum courses meet the evolving needs and expectations of stakeholders, ultimately leading to more impactful outcomes for participants and communities (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2017).

In his study, Çelik (2011) explored the state of teacher education programs across Turkey, highlighting the importance of establishing stronger standards for professionals in the teaching field. The researcher reported that with a substantial student population and a severe scarcity of educators across all educational tiers,

the focus on preparing teachers transitioned from enhancing the quality of teacher training programs to a priority of rapidly increasing the number of teachers. This shift led to reduced requirements for well-structured programs that prepare teachers and diminished expectations of teacher educators, prioritizing a short-term solution while neglecting the fundamental principles of teacher education and hoping that teachers would acquire the necessary skills and improve through on-the-job teaching experiences (Çelik, 2011). The problem reported in Çelik's (2011) study also highlighted the urgent need to re-evaluate the effectiveness of practicum courses within teacher education programs, pointing out the pressing challenges and changes these programs face.

Lange (1990) mentioned another concern regarding teacher professional development: the inertia stemming from historical practices, entrenched traditions, bureaucratic structures, and resistance to change. These issues, aside from the specific limitations in perception and context on the study of teacher education programs, have hindered teacher reformation. Alternatively, any teacher education program not revised in response to input from its interested parties may risk stagnation (Lange, 1990). On the other hand, Şendoğan Erdoğan (2020) stated that evaluative research must be incorporated into any program to attain the desired results by the program's conclusion, including determining whether the existing program is succeeding and, if not, identifying potential causes of dysfunction or failure. This requirement is particularly reasonable considering that the program in question is explicitly designed for the training of teachers, as optimizing school-based training, where pre-service teachers acquire knowledge through active observation and hands-on practice, is a fundamental imperative within the realm of teacher education (Mau, 1997).

Seferoğlu (2006) states that revisions to teacher education programs cannot be driven merely by student feedback. It is essential to remember that a significant portion of the practicum comprises assessments by pre-service teachers, in line with those of their university supervisors, whose feedback is a reliable source of information regarding how the program is performing (Celen, 2016). Furthermore, university supervisors are the decision-makers who can both influence and be affected by the program's efficiency. Additionally, mentors play an essential role in the practicum process, significantly influencing student teachers' development

into professional teachers (Celen & Akcan, 2017; Cohen et al., 2013; Çelik et al., 2023; Orsdemir & Yıldırım, 2020). Mentor teachers' authoritative position within the school enables them to positively shape the pre-service teacher's learning experience (Maphalala, 2013). Therefore, the feedback obtained from the three parties involved in the practicum (i.e., pre-service teachers, mentor teachers from the school where teaching practice is actualized, and university supervisors) is crucial for enacting changes in the training process.

Ultimately, the collective insights from various studies emphasize the critical role of evaluation research in enhancing teacher training programs, and such research not only sheds light on the effectiveness of these programs but also identifies areas needing improvement, thereby informing future developments in practice-based learning (Celen & Akcan, 2017). The challenges highlighted by Çelik (2011), including the shift from quality to quantity in teacher preparation due to demographic pressures and resource scarcities, underline the necessity for reevaluating practicum courses to ensure they uphold high standards and meet the evolving needs of the education sector. Moreover, the immobility described by Lange (1990) and the call for comprehensive evaluative measures by Şendoğan Erdoğan (2020) underscores the importance of continuous reform and the integration of evaluative research to achieve optimal outcomes.

1.3. The Aim of the Research

This research study seeks to evaluate the teaching practicum course, considering the viewpoints of EFL pre-service teachers (4th-year students), university supervisors, and English language teachers (mentor teachers). The research study mainly focuses on the effectiveness of the implemented practicum course in terms of the requirements and the stakeholders' needs. The results of the analysis, which will encompass both qualitative and quantitative data, will outline the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching practicum course from the perspectives of the pre-service teachers, university supervisors, and mentor teachers. In addition to identifying the advantageous elements and limitations of the course, participants will articulate their perspectives on enhancing the practice. These insights aim to offer practical recommendations for the teaching practicum course.

1.4. Objectives of the Research

The proposed research study encompasses qualitative and quantitative approaches, employing a scale and semi-structured interviews as research tools.

The measurement scale as a tool focuses on evaluating the practicum course from the pre-service teachers' perspectives. In contrast, semi-structured interviews focus on evaluating the target course from the perspectives of all three involved parties (i.e., pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors). The objectives of the study are as follows:

- to investigate pre-service teachers' viewpoints on the teaching practicum, course by assessing its strengths and weaknesses. Additionally, the study seeks to gather their expectations and opinions regarding the practicum, utilizing a combination of semi-structured interviews and a scale for data collection;
- to explore mentor teachers' perspectives about the advantageous elements and limitations of the practicum course, focusing on their insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the practicum along with their suggestions regarding the procedures;
- to examine the viewpoints of university supervisors regarding the positive aspects and constraints associated with the teaching practicum course. This involves exploring their insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the practicum, as well as soliciting their recommendations for enhancing the overall course;
- to interpret the collected data from qualitative and quantitative research procedures through appropriate analysis and to present relevant responses to the research questions;
- to propose meaningful and well-considered recommendations for the EFL practicum course, drawing on the data collected and analyzed within the framework of the research study.

Ultimately, this study aims to holistically evaluate the EFL practicum course through qualitative and quantitative methods to gather diverse perspectives from pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors. By analyzing these stakeholders' views on the practicum's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for

improvement, the study seeks to formulate targeted recommendations to enhance the practicum experience making it more supportive of the professional growth of future English language teachers.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The evolving domain of teacher education necessitates continuous evaluation to ensure that pre-service teachers' pedagogical frameworks and practicum experiences are both relevant and effective (Owen, 2007). The practicum, serving as a critical bridge between theoretical knowledge acquired in university courses and the practical application of such knowledge in classroom settings (Yin, 2019), is fundamental to the professional development of future teachers (Méndez López, 2020). The present study which intends to evaluate the practicum course from the perspectives of the EFL pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors is significant for several reasons.

Firstly, by employing qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, this research offers a comprehensive understanding of the practicum experience from multiple viewpoints. The integration of diverse perspectives ensures a holistic evaluation of the practicum, highlighting areas of strength and identifying opportunities for improvement. Such an approach is vital for bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and its practical application, ensuring that pre-service teachers are not only well-informed but also well-prepared to face the challenges of modern classrooms (Meijer et al. 2002).

Secondly, the significance of this study extends to its potential impact on teacher quality. By examining the practicum through the lenses of the directly involved parties such as the pre-service teachers undergoing the practicum course, the mentor teachers guiding them, and the university supervisors overseeing the process, this research contributes valuable insights into the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs. Implications suggested by this study could lead to enhanced teaching practices, ultimately benefiting student learning outcomes across educational settings (Celen, 2016).

Furthermore, the findings of the current study could contribute to shaping the rules, guidelines, and course content in the teacher training program in the context of the study. Understanding the subtleties of practicum experiences from

various stakeholders' perspectives can guide educators, administrators, and policymakers in making informed decisions that support pre-service teachers' professional growth, which in turn can lead to the development of more robust and responsive teaching practicum courses that are aligned with contemporary educational needs and standards (Gebhard, 2009).

Additionally, this research underscores the importance of mentorship and supervision in the professional development of pre-service teachers. By evaluating the roles and effectiveness of mentor teachers and university supervisors, the study highlights the crucial support systems (Koster et al., 2005) necessary for the successful transition of pre-service teachers into skilled and informed professionals (Vélez-Rendón, 2006). Identifying best practices and areas for development within these support systems can enhance the quality of mentorship and supervision, thereby enriching the practicum experience (Celen & Akcan, 2017).

Finally, this study contributes to the broader body of education research by enhancing the understanding of practical experiences in teacher education and offering a data set based on the direct experiences of key stakeholders. The results of this study may be valuable for future researchers, educators, and practitioners who are focused on studying and improving the teaching process of practicum courses. Additionally, these findings provide a foundation for further research, facilitating a continuous cycle of dialogue and research to advance teacher education.

In conclusion, this study's importance is multifaceted since it provides a detailed analysis of the practicum experience from various stakeholders' viewpoints, which may contribute to improving teacher quality. Additionally, it could influence policy and practice, potentially supporting the professional growth of main stakeholders in the field. This research also sheds light on the complexities and challenges associated with the practicum, which could be instrumental in enhancing the teaching practicum course's quality and effectiveness. Consequently, it may play a role in the ongoing development and refinement of practicum experiences and outcomes.

1.6. Conceptual Definition

Practicum is the significant stage of the education program, generally planned in the final year of the university education. The main actors of this process are pre-service teachers who seek to obtain and develop their preliminary teaching experience in an authentic ambiance (Hacıoğlu & Alkan, 1997).

Evaluating the practicum course: According to Owen (2007), the central question of a typical program evaluation involves understanding the program's necessities, determining the prerequisites to fulfill those needs, evaluating the program's current status, identifying avenues for enhancement, and exploring the potential transferability of the program's success to different contexts. The primary questions to be addressed are: What is the quality of this program? and Was the program effective?

Mentoring: In Aydın's (2016) definition, mentoring is described as the process in which cooperating/mentor teachers assist pre-service teachers in translating theoretical knowledge gained at the university into practical application within actual school environments.

A mentor teacher is an experienced practicing teacher in schools where pre-service teachers are assigned to practice teaching under the appropriate guidance and assessment of the mentor teachers (Aydın, 2016). A mentor is characterized as an educator who is responsible for facilitating teacher candidates, guiding them through the practicum by giving constitutive feedback on conducted lessons, most significantly being a collaborative partner for pre-service teachers and treating them respectfully in a friendly manner during the practicum (CHE & World Bank, 1998). Moreover, Ambrosetti et al. (2014) referred to a mentor teacher as "an associate teacher."

University Supervisor: A faculty member, duly qualified both academically and professionally, serves as a representative responsible for guiding pre-service teachers throughout the practicum (CHE & World Bank, 1998). This role includes executing planned program activities and evaluating the instructional encounters of individuals undergoing pre-service teaching within the Educational Faculties (Hacıoğlu & Alkan, 1997).

Pre-service teachers: The 4th year students who need practical teaching experience after having fulfilled the prerequisites and are eligible to participate in the teaching practicum as a graduate student in the teacher education program (Hacıoğlu & Alkan, 1997).



2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter begins by outlining the fundamental definitions of the practicum as described by various experts. Further, it delves into the evolution of the teaching practicum concept over the years. Additionally, the chapter clarifies the process and importance of evaluating practicum courses. It also provides a summary of relevant research in the field, categorizing the studies into two main groups: those carried out in Turkey and those conducted internationally. The concluding section links the reviewed literature to the objectives of this study, elucidating the interrelation.

2.1. Exploring the Definitions of Practicum

Recent research studies continue to emphasize the practicum's indispensable role in enhancing pre-service teachers' professional skills and careers. The practicum remains crucial in educational training, enabling pre-service teachers to acquire hands-on teaching experience and enhance their pedagogical competencies (Nguyen, 2009). Contemporary definitions of the practicum emphasize its function as a dynamic platform for student teachers to apply theoretical knowledge in authentic classroom settings, guided by the support of mentors and university supervisors (Anderson & Stillman, 2013; Izadinia, 2012; Lawson et al., 2015).

The practicum's role in the professional growth of pre-service teachers is well-documented, emphasizing its critical contribution to both teaching experience and pedagogical skill enhancement (Hascher et al., 2004; Kazaz & Alagözlü, 2020). Wallace (1991) characterizes the practicum as a valuable opportunity for student teachers to enhance their teaching abilities within a supportive school environment. Expanding on this, Woodward (1991) describes the practicum as a vital occasion for pre-service teachers to practically apply their teaching methods and skills, effectively bridging the gap between theory and real-world application. The statement is echoed by other scholars reporting that practicum as a phase enables the practical application of theoretical knowledge gained from university courses, facilitating a seamless integration of theory and practice (Cheng et al., 2012; Farrell, 2008; Meijer et al., 2002; Zeichner, 2010).

Leshem and Bar-Hama (2007) view the practicum as a pivotal stage for developing teaching competencies, offering hands-on experience, and fostering an environment conducive to skill enhancement. Furthermore, the practicum is seen as a measure of a student teacher's potential success or challenges in real classroom settings (Hascher et al., 2004). Gebhard (2009) outlines several key benefits of the practicum, including gaining real-world teaching experience, practicing university-learned concepts in actual classrooms, and developing lesson plans.

The practicum also serves as a platform for pre-service teachers to observe and learn from mentors, enhancing their teaching approach and making informed pedagogical decisions (Fanselow, 1988). Glazier (2009) and Ten Dam and Blom (2006) emphasize the practicum's role in familiarizing future teachers with complex teaching practices and providing a supportive environment for skill application. Throughout the practicum, student teachers engage in lesson observation, material development, and instruction, often supported by experienced educators (Lawson et al., 2015). They are encouraged to seek advice from mentors and university supervisors to contextualize their university-acquired knowledge within the classroom (Myles et al., 2006; Sim, 2006). The practicum goes beyond enhancing practical skills like teaching and classroom management, allowing pre-service teachers to reflect on the broader essence of their role. It encourages them to consider their impact on students, their ethical duties, and their contributions to education at large, fostering a deeper understanding of their profession (Field & Latta, 2001).

The practicum experience underscores the importance of mentorship and guidance in fostering the development of pre-service teachers into confident educators (Maphalala, 2013; Peremin, 2019; Terzi, 2022). It identifies challenges, including the need to understand classroom cultural dynamics and the necessity to adapt teaching practices to meet the unique needs of each school (Busher et al., 2015; Kabilan, 2013; Merç, 2011; Yuan & Lee, 2014). These difficulties highlight the crucial role of personalized mentorship in addressing such challenges (Pierce, 2007). Ensuring pre-service teachers receive this tailored support is vital for the effective enhancement of their teaching skills (Lawson et al., 2015; Wilkins & Lall, 2010).

In summary, according to the researchers, the practicum is a foundational component of teacher education, crucial for bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application. Furthermore, the relevant literature underscores the importance of mentorship, hands-on experience, and the ability to adapt teaching practices to meet classroom realities; furthermore, enhancing the practicum experience through focused mentor training and structured support mechanisms can further empower pre-service teachers to meet the challenges of today's educational landscape.

2.2. Teaching Practicum Before and Now

As stated by Gebhard (2010), in the past, practicum was mainly entrenched and enclosed by the limits of training, where pre-service teachers were instructed to practice teaching individually to improve proficiency in particular actions such as classroom language including the process of setting and asking questions, managing the waiting time, following the teacher talk limits and using praising expressions.

Over the last two decades, thanks to efforts aimed at broadening the approach to training pre-service teachers, the focus has steadily shifted toward fostering teacher development; in other words, university supervisors and mentor teachers viewing the practicum as a developmental endeavor aim to offer pre-service teachers opportunities to become conscious of their teaching methods and the personal principles and convictions that support them, along with understanding how to formulate and pursue their objectives for professional growth (Gebhard, 2010).

In line with other researchers, Crookes (2003) emphasized the significance of the role of practicum since it allows student teachers to appreciate their attitude to their principles and moral challenges. As noted by Gebhard (2010), the primary focus of the practicum is not only providing student teachers with the opportunity to engage in teaching with actual school students, but it also involves various activities, including self-observation during classroom teaching, observing the teaching practices of other pre-service teachers, and participating in discussions to give and receive feedback on teaching practices. Furthermore, integrated activities, with teaching at the forefront, facilitate reflection on teaching practices for pre-

service teachers, and through reflection, they comprehend the essence of teaching and associated behaviors (Freeman, 2002).

In conclusion, the approach to practicum has evolved significantly over the past twenty years, moving from a narrow focus on training pre-service teachers in specific skills to a broader emphasis on overall teacher development. Gebhard (2010) highlights this shift, noting that modern practicum aims to provide pre-service teachers with the chance to reflect on their teaching styles and the underlying values that guide them; moreover, modern practicum encourages them to set and achieve their personal goals for professional advancement. This evolution marks a crucial step towards preparing teachers who are not only skilled in classroom techniques but also deeply aware of their educational philosophy and committed to continuous growth in their profession.

2.3. Evaluation of the Practicum

The evolving nature of the ELT underscores the necessity for a dynamic and responsive approach to teacher education (Gebhard, 2010). Peacock (2009) highlights the growing integration of ELT within broader pedagogical frameworks, emphasizing the importance of incorporating structured evaluation mechanisms into the practicum, and such evaluations aim to assess the efficacy of practicum programs and facilitate necessary modifications, ensuring that they remain aligned with contemporary pedagogical demands and contribute effectively to the preparation of English language teachers.

A practicum program, as outlined by Weir and Roberts (1994), consists of planned educational activities executed within a specific timeframe. The purpose of evaluating these programs, as detailed by Norris (2009) and Patton (2001), encompasses accountability, recognition of program strengths and areas for improvement, and the provision of actionable insights to enhance stakeholder understanding and program effectiveness. Evaluation research, therefore, serves as a critical tool for exploring alternative practices and addressing challenges within established systems (Royse et al., 2010). As discussed by Owen (2007) and Royse et al. (2010), the need for evaluating a program stems from the wish to ascertain its quality or effectiveness, essentially determining if the program meets the standards of being considered “good”. Royse et al. (2010) highlighted that the term “good”,

frequently employed to characterize the effectiveness of programs, generally suffers from a lack of specificity and necessitates a more rigorous and exacting definition to convey the quality of program performance accurately.

A well-functioning program, according to Celen (2016), achieves its outlined objectives, fulfills its intended purpose, and satisfies the needs of its beneficiaries, which aligns with Owen's (2007) fundamental concerns regarding the quality of the program and its success in achieving objectives. These concerns guide evaluative research, focusing not just on the program's activities but also on the experiences and involvement of key stakeholders: pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors. Owen (2007) proposes a structured approach to defining the principles of program evaluation, necessitating an understanding of the program's objectives, stakeholder needs, strategic aims, stakeholder engagement, and performance indicators.

One of the approaches, the 'logic model', was detailed by Torghele et al. (2007) and subsequently supported by Royse et al. (2010). It serves as a fundamental framework for evaluating practicum programs, providing a systematic method for assessing their effectiveness and impact. This model outlines the program's resources, processes, outputs, and outcomes, providing a comprehensive view of its operations and effectiveness. According to Celen (2016), the logic model facilitates the evaluation of practicum programs by offering a clear structure to navigate the complexity of educational activities since it enables the identification and integration of various program components, from inputs like resources and staff to outputs such as engagement indicators and the volume of activities. The model also emphasizes outcomes, and the notable benefits received by stakeholders, including enhanced knowledge and practical teaching experience (Celen, 2016).

In summary, evaluating practicum programs in ELT plays a crucial role in aligning training programs within teacher education with educational objectives and adapting to the field's changing demands. Clarifying evaluation purposes and methodologies, along with engaging stakeholders and utilizing frameworks such as the 'logic model' (Royse et al., 2010; Torghele et al., 2007), are key steps in this process. These efforts aim to enhance the ongoing development of practicum experiences by reducing ambiguity in program performance assessment and

underscoring the value of outcome-focused evaluations for the professional growth of future teachers; moreover, this balanced approach seeks to ensure that practicum evaluations are effective and reflective of the broader goals within teacher education (Norris, 2009; Patton, 2001).

2.4. Practicum Research in Turkey

The current chapter examines the changing field of ELT practicum in Turkey, analyzing research studies from the last two decades. It starts with early studies on mentor teacher preparation and moves to recent findings on online learning and the concept of self-compassion among pre-service teachers. The chapter reviews the studies that have contributed to an understanding of the practicum experience, focusing on their methodologies, results, and broader implications. It also identifies both advances in pre-service teacher training and ongoing challenges that warrant additional research. This examination not only acknowledges the developments in the field but also suggests areas for future research to further refine the ELT practicum framework in Turkey.

Over the past two decades, the ELT practicum landscape in Turkey has undergone a transformative journey, characterized by significant research efforts aimed at enhancing the preparation and effectiveness of pre-service teachers, and this period of reflection and development was revealed in the study conducted by Okan and Yıldırım (2004), which shed light on the critical issue of mentor-teacher readiness. Their research revealed substantial gaps in the training and preparation of mentor teachers, underscoring a pressing need for the development of more rigorous and comprehensive training programs.

Coşkun and Daloğlu (2010) advanced this exploration by evaluating the effectiveness of teacher training programs. Their investigation uncovered a significant discrepancy between the perceptions of students and instructors regarding language proficiency and the necessity for augmented practical teaching experiences. This disparity highlighted the urgent need for curriculum adjustments to better align theoretical knowledge with practical teaching demands.

The discourse continued to evolve with the contributions of Busher et al. (2015) who conducted a comparative analysis of practicum experiences in Turkey

and the UK. Their study emphasized the crucial role of practicums in fostering meaningful relationships between student teachers and pupils, while also identifying a lack of sufficient support and a need for more challenging practicum experiences. These findings highlighted the variability in practicum quality and the necessity for a universally high standard of mentorship and practicum elaboration.

Merç (2015) investigated EFL pre-service teachers' satisfaction with teaching practicum. The results showed general satisfaction with grades but dissatisfaction with mentor teacher evaluations, report composition, and peer evaluations, highlighting a need for uniform evaluation criteria and addressing pre-service teachers' anxiety related to university expectations. Concurrently, Mutlu's (2015) study aimed to improve teacher preparation programs by examining the practicum challenges. This research identified classroom management as a primary concern for student teachers, suggesting a focus on enhancing practicum components to better prepare them for actual classroom situations.

Aydın's (2016) research investigated mentorship roles in ELT practicums at three Turkish universities. The findings of the study revealed that while mentors were seen as supportive, they lacked effectiveness in coaching and evaluating teaching practices. Alongside, Celen's (2016) study evaluated mentor teacher qualifications at a Turkish university. The findings of her study highlighted the significance of Ministry of National Education (MoNE) qualifications for mentors, noting the practicum's role in improving teaching skills and strengthening the relationship among mentors and pre-service teachers.

In the following years, studies conducted by Arıç (2016) and Şimşek-Rackelmann and Müftüoğlu (2017), brought a focused investigation into the impact of practicums on pre-service teachers' perceptions and pedagogical identities. They highlighted the substantial gap between theoretical learning and practical application, advocating for the extension of practicum durations and the incorporation of classroom management training.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as noted by Babanoğlu (2021), introduced a new set of challenges to the practicum environment. The shift to online learning necessitated a re-evaluation of practicum strategies to adapt to

technological advancements and maintain student engagement. This period underscored the critical importance of providing quality feedback, a theme further explored by Bekerçi-Şahin and Gürbüz (2022), and İlerten et al. (2022) who addressed the challenges of online teaching and the integration of technology into educational process.

Recent studies by Tekin and Tunaz (2023) as well as by Ceylan Çapar (2023), have contributed to a deeper understanding of the practicum experience, identifying both its positive aspects and challenges. These studies have brought attention to the importance of self-compassion for student teachers as they deal with the complexities of their practicum journey. By emphasizing self-compassion, this line of research adds a new perspective to the conversation on teacher preparation, suggesting a broader approach to evaluating and supporting pre-service educators.

As can be realized from the above literature, the research studies conducted in the target field from 2004 to 2023 have significantly enhanced the understanding of the ELT practicum in Turkey, in addition to revealing certain limitations and areas for further research. It is realized from the reviewed literature that despite the breadth of topics covered, there remains a notable gap in addressing the diversity of pre-service teacher experiences and the variability in support systems (school and university). Many studies have focused on program structure, mentorship quality, and the transition to online learning, yet research is scarce on the socio-economic factors (i.e., financial status and access to resources) that influence pre-service teacher experiences and outcomes. Furthermore, a lot of attention has been given to formal assessments and building teaching skills in teacher training programs, but not enough focus has been placed on understanding and integrating the viewpoints of pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors regarding the strengths, weaknesses, and improvement areas of the practicum course, as well as their specific expectations from such a program. It is also realized from the literature review that while there has been some recent recognition of the importance of self-compassion - being kind and understanding towards oneself in challenging situations - the broader spectrum of emotional responses that pre-service teachers experience about their professional and personal development has not been adequately acknowledged or supported throughout their training and practicum experiences. Additionally, many studies depend on data that participants

provide about themselves, which can lead to biased or imprecise information. Thus, there is a need for research methods that use a wider variety of techniques including longitudinal studies, which observe and collect data over a long period, and objective performance indicators, which are unbiased measures of a teacher's abilities and progress. These methods can help to confirm the accuracy of the research findings by providing more reliable and varied data. As the ELT practicum continues to evolve, future research should address these gaps, ensuring a more holistic and inclusive understanding of pre-service teacher education in Turkey.

2.5. Practicum Research in Other Countries

The field of ELT teacher preparation has undergone significant scrutiny and evolution over the past decade, evidenced by an array of research endeavors across diverse global contexts. These studies, ranging from Percara's (2013) foundational work in Argentina to the more recent investigations by Qiu et al. (2021) in China and Al Malki and Al-Hattali (2022) in Oman, have collectively sought to explore the complexities inherent in ELT practicums. The review of these research studies has shed light on the diverse challenges and opportunities that pre-service teachers, mentors, and educational institutions encounter as they strive to align pedagogical theories with practical teaching demands. Through examining aspects such as feedback mechanisms, community-based learning, mentorship roles, and the adaptation to digital platforms during a global pandemic, these studies contribute to a detailed understanding of how teacher preparation programs can effectively equip future educators. This chapter aims to integrate these insights, providing an overview of the shifting paradigms in ELT teacher preparation, with a particular focus on the significant role of practicums in bridging theoretical knowledge with the realities of classroom instruction.

Over the last decade, a series of investigations have explored the multifaceted nature of teacher preparation programs across various cultural and educational contexts, highlighting the evolving challenges and opportunities within the field of ELT. Percara (2013) delved into the specific aspect of supervisor feedback during the practicum in Argentina, underscoring the value of timely and oral feedback for pre-service teachers. This study illuminated the critical role of feedback mechanisms in enhancing teaching practices. Concurrently, Yang (2014) expanded the research scope by examining successful practices in community-

based learning within Australia's Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) program, identifying key elements such as in-depth analysis and cross-cultural dialogue as vital for effective learning experiences.

Vo et al. (2017) highlighted the discrepancies between expectations and reality in the effectiveness of ELT practicums in Vietnam, as perceived by pre-service teachers. This study particularly pointed out the lack of mentor support and difficulties in applying learned knowledge. Concurrently, Alamri (2018) focused on the unique challenges encountered by female EFL pre-service teachers in Saudi Arabia, advocating for collaborative efforts to improve the practicum experience. These findings collectively underscore the need for addressing the gap between academic preparation and practical teaching experiences.

In a parallel vein, Ren (2018) conducted a study in Hong Kong, focusing on the challenges encountered during the ELT practicum, shedding light on issues such as classroom management and the adaptation of teaching methods. Similarly, in the same year, Gilliland (2018) investigated the variations in teaching approaches within the ELT practicum in Thailand, contributing to the understanding of pedagogical diversity. While Ren's (2018) study pointed to the need for improved training and support in addressing common practical challenges, Gilliland's (2018) research emphasized the role of personal and environmental factors in shaping teaching practices. However, both studies highlighted the range of difficulties that pre-service teachers face, including the complexity of teaching in different educational contexts. Additionally, these investigations underscored the importance of personalizing teaching practicums to meet the unique needs and learning styles of pre-service teachers. Through their independent research, these studies highlighted the necessity for flexible and adaptable teaching strategies within the field of ELT.

Xu and He (2019) delved into the changing perspectives of pre-service teachers on assessment in China, revealing how these shifts influence teaching strategies and assessment practices. Concurrently, Lucero and Roncancio-Castellanos (2019) conducted a comprehensive study in Colombia, capturing the emotional journey and professional development of ELT pre-service teachers throughout their practicum. Their research offered valuable insights into the

psychological aspects of teacher training, emphasizing the emotional challenges and growth opportunities. Together, these studies enriched the discourse on the practicum experience, highlighting its critical role in the formation of teacher identity and the refinement of educational methodologies. By examining both the cognitive and emotional facets of teacher preparation, Xu and He's (2019) and Lucero and Roncancio-Castellanos's (2019) work collectively underscored the complexity and depth of the practicum's impact on future teachers.

Chaaban et al. (2019) explored pre-service teachers' perceptions of their roles within Qatar's educational landscape, shedding light on evolving teacher identities. Pratiwi (2020) broadened the scope of ELT practicum research by examining the shifting trends and themes over time, highlighting the field's adaptability. Similarly, Kabilan et al. (2020) delved into the unique challenges faced by ELT student teachers in cross-cultural teaching environments, emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity in education. Ariza-Quñones et al. (2022) focused on the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on ELT practicums, revealing how external crises can reshape educational experiences. Collectively, these studies illustrate the dynamic and multifaceted nature of teacher preparation, which is continuously shaped by both the evolving demands of global education and the specific challenges of local contexts.

In the context of the pandemic, Gustine (2021) examined the unique challenges faced by pre-service teachers in Indonesia during the online teaching practicum amid the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the critical need for enhanced support and training on digital platforms. In parallel, Lucero and Cortés-Ibañez (2021) investigated the conceptualization of the pedagogical practicum in Colombia, shedding light on the theoretical underpinnings and practical applications within the region. Khatib and Rahgoshay (2021) provided insights into the benefits and hurdles of the ELT practicum in Iran, enriching the discourse on teacher education with their findings. These studies collectively offer a comprehensive view of the shifts in teacher education practices globally, prompted by the pandemic's challenges. Through their research, the unique adaptation strategies and the evolving needs of pre-service teachers across diverse educational landscapes are brought to the forefront, underlining the importance of global collaboration and innovation in teacher preparation.

Recently, Qiu et al. (2021) conducted a study on the impact of practical training on pre-service teachers in China, highlighting the importance of experiential learning within the educational framework. Concurrently, Al Malki and Al-Hattali (2022) examined the challenges and opportunities encountered by pre-service teachers in Oman during the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on the need for adaptability and resilience in unpredictable circumstances. These investigations collectively underscore the critical role of practicums in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching application. They point out the necessity for teacher preparation programs worldwide to adapt and provide ongoing support in response to the evolving demands of education. The research findings from Qiu et al. (2021) and Al Malki and Al-Hattali (2022) add to the discourse on improving teacher education effectiveness, underlining the significance of hands-on training in developing skilled and flexible educators.

Ultimately, the comprehensive review of ELT practicum studies, both within Turkey and globally, offers a foundation for the current study's objectives, addressing pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors' perspectives on practicum courses. The extensive body of research, ranging from the foundational studies of Okan and Yıldırım (2004) to the more recent inquiries by Tekin and Tunaz (2023), and Ceylan Çapar (2023) in Turkey, alongside international contributions from researchers like Percara (2013) in Argentina and Qiu et al. (2021) in China, underscores the evolving nature of ELT practicums highlighting issues such as mentorship effectiveness, alignment between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching demands, and the integration of technology in teaching. By exploring the viewpoints and experiences of key stakeholders regarding the strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement within practicum courses, the present study aims to build upon the identified gaps and challenges, such as the need for more comprehensive mentor training, addressing socio-economic factors affecting pre-service teachers, and enhancing support for integrating feedback effectively. The synthesis of these findings will not only contribute to a more detailed understanding of practical experience but will also provide the basis for targeted recommendations for making the EFL practicum courses more effective and aligned with current educational standards and requirements.

3. METHODOLOGY

The current chapter presents the framework and methodology of the study, beginning with the research questions targeting the EFL teaching practicum course. It proceeds to describe the research context, shedding light on the study's location and the demographic details of participants who were pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors. Further, this section details the chosen methodological approach highlighting its compatibility with the study's objectives. It elaborates on the data collection instruments, such as surveys and interviews, detailing their creation and validation processes.

3.1. Research Questions

Pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors form the essential vertices of a triangle, and the practicum process is incomplete without the contribution of any one of these key stakeholders. This research aims to evaluate the teaching practicum course through the diverse perspectives of pre-service teachers, mentors, and supervisors, highlighting its strengths and areas for improvement in terms of content, resources, scheduling, and capacity to adequately prepare pre-service teachers for the English language teaching profession. Based on the aim and objectives of the current study, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ 1: How do pre-service EFL teachers perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching practicum course?

RQ2: How do mentor teachers perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching practicum course?

RQ3: How do university supervisors perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching practicum course?

RQ2: How do key stakeholders' opinions on the teaching practicum course align or diverge?

3.2. Research Context

The present study was carried out in 2022 at a state university located in the Black Sea Region, within the framework of the English Language Teaching

Program. As stated on the university's official website, the faculty is dedicated to training educators proficient in English language instruction and higher education teachers across various educational levels. The program includes a one-year English language preparatory program. The students who succeed in the English proficiency exam are allowed to enter the Department of Foreign Language Teaching. The ELT Bachelor's degree program that the department proposes includes eight semesters. Accomplishment of the program provides its students with a bachelor's degree in ELT. Graduates gain the opportunity to work as English language teachers at different schools, practice teaching in private schools, or proceed with their educational careers. The program aims to instruct student teachers with expertise in contemporary teaching philosophy, technical knowledge, and educational experimentation.

The final two terms of the ELT program (i.e., fall and spring semesters), include a practicum course. The practicum course includes lesson observations and conducting lessons in schools under the Provincial Directorate of National Education. Fall and spring semesters are organized as 12 weeks each semester and six weekly lesson hours in observation schools. Teaching Practice consists of 144 course hours in two semesters, 72 hours each semester. Each semester, under the guidance of mentor teachers, pre-service teachers are required to conduct lessons. During the practicum, pre-service teachers regularly seek guidance from their mentor teachers for each lesson plan and intended teaching session. Approval from mentor teachers is necessary for the materials and content proposed by pre-service teachers, mandating the sharing of lesson plans and subject-specific materials before actual lessons take place.

In the context of the present study, mentor teachers actively observe each lesson conducted by pre-service teachers, meticulously documenting their performance using a daily evaluation form. This practice is highly significant in promoting the professional growth of individuals in teaching practicum, representing a pivotal element in their educational progression. The mentor teachers' provision of constructive feedback on the performance of individuals in teaching practicum is crucial for the professional development of these pre-service teachers. Moreover, pre-service teachers receive feedback from their university supervisors throughout this procedure. The assistance and backing from the

supervisors play a considerable role in the professional advancement of pre-service teachers during the practicum. University supervisors actively observe the lessons conducted by pre-service teachers, offering valuable perspectives and constructive feedback. This involvement ensures that pre-service teachers receive comprehensive guidance and mentorship throughout their teaching experiences. The collaboration between pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors is crucial in shaping effective teaching practices and preparing teachers for future roles in education.

3.3. Participants of the Study

Participants in the current study included three main groups actively engaged in practicum: pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors.

3.3.1. Pre-service Teachers

Pre-service teachers, who are fourth-year students at a state university, must acquire practical teaching experience upon fulfilling the required prerequisites. These students, having met the necessary criteria, become eligible to participate in the practicum as part of their graduate studies within the teacher education program at the Faculty of Education (CHE & World Bank, 1998; Hacıoğlu & Alkan, 1997). The study encompassed 82 volunteer pre-service teachers, with a demographic breakdown of 27 individuals (32.9%) being male and 55 individuals (67.1%) being female, participating in the practicum course over two semesters. The average age among the pre-service teachers was 22.4 ± 1.4 years, with ages ranging from a minimum of 21 to a maximum of 31 years old, as shown in Table 3.1. This distribution and participation reflect a diverse yet focused group of individuals committed to advancing their pedagogical skills through practical application and experience in educational settings.

Table 3.1. Demographic Description of Pre-service Teachers

		n	%
Gender	Male	27	32.9
	Female	55	67.1
Age, Mean $\pm$ SD		22.4 $\pm$ 1.4	

Furthermore, seven pre-service teachers volunteered to participate in semi-structured interviews via the Zoom platform, contributing to the qualitative research study's data. Throughout the practicum course, each pre-service teacher developed lesson plans and delivered lessons with guidance from mentor teachers and university supervisors. In addition to teaching, they completed assignments focused on different aspects of the practicum and submitted reflective papers analyzing their lesson plans, teaching methods, and overall effectiveness in teaching practice. This approach was designed to improve their teaching strategies and foster reflection on their pedagogical abilities and flexibility in actual classroom environments.

3.3.2. Mentor Teachers

As reported by Babanoğlu (2021), mentor teachers are appointed by the MoNE due to their considerable experience as English language teachers, and their responsibilities during the practicum course include guiding groups of pre-service teachers. This guidance involves integrating pre-service teachers into classroom environments, observing their lessons, evaluating their performance, and collaborating with university supervisors for comprehensive performance assessments (Babanoğlu, 2021). Consequently, with the MoNE's approval, semi-structured interviews were conducted with five volunteer mentor teachers from different schools in a city in the Black Sea region. These interviews aimed to uncover their thoughts and opinions on the practicum course.

3.3.3. University Supervisors

The significance of university supervisors in evaluating the teaching practicum is pivotal, as they conduct an annual oversight of the program, guiding pre-service teachers throughout the practicum, and Bailey (2006) emphasized the crucial role of supervisors in facilitating pre-service teachers to apply what they've learned in their courses to real-world classroom situations. They offer essential guidance on connecting classroom theory with the hands-on challenges of teaching, and their feedback is pivotal in fostering reflective teaching practices. This support not only aids in the professional development of pre-service teachers but also facilitates their integration into the English language teaching profession. Reflecting this importance, the perspectives and insights of four volunteer

university supervisors from a university in the Black Sea region were gathered. Their opinions about the teaching practicum as a course were explored through semi-structured interviews conducted on the Zoom meeting platform.

3.4. Research Design

The current study utilized a mixed research design, specifically a quantitative-qualitative model, maintaining an equal balance between the two approaches (Gay et al., 2012). The research design for this study was structured to ensure a systematic investigation into the chosen research area. The process unfolded in a series, each contributing to increasing methodological reliability. The initial phase involved identifying the research area and setting the foundation for the study. A review of pertinent literature offered insights into existing research studies, methodologies, tools, objectives, and results.

The search was undertaken to identify a suitable tool to gather quantitative data, ensuring alignment with the research objectives. Subsequently, necessary authorizations were acquired, including approval from the ethics committee to safeguard the ethical considerations of the research. The development of semi-structured interview questions followed, a crucial step in gathering qualitative insights. The verification was conducted through interviews with two university instructors and two pre-service teachers to enhance the clarity of these question items. The interview questions were then subjected to further scrutiny. A university academic staff with expertise in teaching practicum contributed valuable feedback to ensure the clarity of the interview questions.

Once the interview questions were defined, the study continued and included interviews with mentor teachers, which required permission from the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). Concurrently, the quantitative data collection tool was applied with pre-service teachers, generating structured data for analysis. The subsequent stage involved conducting in-depth interviews, allowing for an exploration of participants' perspectives regarding the teaching practicum. The collected data, which included both quantitative and qualitative components, underwent thorough analysis. The quantitative data was analyzed using statistical methods, while the qualitative data was examined through thematic analysis. Additionally, feedback obtained from the qualitative phase of the study was

gathered and scrutinized to highlight areas of alignment and divergence among stakeholders' viewpoints. This detailed research design was crafted to ensure a methodologically rigorous and ethically responsible exploration of the chosen topic. The careful, step-by-step development of the process led to a deep understanding of the subject matter, thereby offering valuable contributions to the broader academic discussion.

3.5. Research Instruments

Gay et al. (2010) reported that quantitative research entails the collection and analysis of data that can be measured or counted using numerical values to portray, clarify, predict, or control the subject of concern. However, the quantitative research approach encompasses more than just the utilization of numerical data.

The current study utilized mixed research methodology to respond to the research inquiries and accomplish the objectives of the study. Quantitative data were gathered from pre-service teachers employing a scale featuring Likert-type items and open-ended questions, aiming to obtain both structured quantitative responses and additional insights.

In addition, in-depth qualitative data was gathered via semi-structured interviews with pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors. Creswell (2013) stated that qualitative research involves an investigative method where the researcher thoroughly examines a specific and constrained system, and this exploration encompasses a meticulous and extensive collection of data from diverse sources, aiming to offer a comprehensive and profound comprehension of the subject being investigated.

3.5.1. Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Practicum Reactions Scale

Having secured the requisite authorizations, the Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Practicum Reactions Scale (Appendix 1) developed by Kazaz and Alagözlü (2020) was employed to collect the quantitative research data. The scale comprises the following three dimensions: *General Evaluation of the Teaching Practicum Program* includes items from 1 to 5 to evaluate the overall content, mentor teacher, facilities, scheduling, and the program as a teaching experience (e.g., I rate the program as an educational experience to help me do my job better); *Specific*

Aspects of the Teaching Practicum includes items 6 to 15 to evaluate the relevance and interest of the content, effectiveness of the mentor teacher, manuals, handouts, and audiovisuals, applicability of learned content to the job, suitability of facilities, and the organization of the schedule (e.g., I will be able to apply much of the content I learned here to my job); and the last dimension is *Pre-service Teachers' Reactions to Professional and Personal Development*, which includes items from 16 to 39 related to the impact of the teaching practicum on the pre-service teacher's knowledge, skills, self-perception, and overall professional growth (e.g., Teaching Practicum provided me with the opportunity to observe at different class levels). The scale used a rating system that ranged from 'Poor' (assigned a score of 1) to 'Excellent' (assigned a score of 5) for one set of questions and from 'Strongly disagree' (scored as 1) to 'Strongly agree' (scored as 5) for another set of questions. The scale includes 39 close-ended and four open-ended questions.

Kazaz and Alagözlü (2020) performed exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses to assess the reliability and validity of the Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Reactions to Teaching Practice Scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for reliability was determined to be 0.98. Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Practicum Reactions Scale also comprised open-ended questions numbered 40, 41, 42, and 43. Responses to these questions underwent analysis through a mixed methods design. All responses to the open-ended questions were consolidated in a Word document under the four questions. After scrutinizing the types and content of the responses, related categories were identified. Subsequently, the qualitative data extracted from the open-ended questions were classified into various categories within an Excel document across four sheets. Finally, the number and percentage of items corresponding to each category were retrieved and presented, accompanied by relevant figures.

3.5.2. Semi-structured Interview Questions

The open-ended questions from the Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Practicum Reactions Scale developed by Kazaz and Alagözlü (2020) provided a framework for the researcher to develop the semi-structured interview questions (Appendix 2) for voluntary participants, including pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and supervisor teachers. Initially, a unified set of questions in Turkish was developed

for all qualitative study participants. Subsequently, interviews were conducted with two pre-service teachers and two university supervisors to gather their perspectives on the question items and ensure the clarity of the questions. As a result, the original set of questions was divided into three tailored sets: separate interview questions for pre-service teachers (e.g., What are the most advantageous elements of the practicum experience for pre-service teachers?), a separate set of questions for mentor teachers (e.g., In the context of the Teaching Practicum course, what are the advantages and limitations of the available resources?), and a set of questions for university supervisors (e.g., What are the strengths and weaknesses of the timing/scheduling of the Teaching Practicum Course?). To guarantee the clarity of the questions, two university academic staff members, who are experts in teaching practicum and hold PhDs in the field, reviewed them. Following the received comments, the questions were finalized.

3.6. Data Collection Procedures

After obtaining consent from the research ethics committee, the Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Practicum Reactions Scale was administered to 82 pre-service teachers in the quantitative phase toward the conclusion of the second semester to ensure their exposure to practicum experiences in both semesters. Face-to-face meetings were arranged, and the scale was distributed through in-person interactions. Out of the 100 hard copies of the measurement scale distributed, 82 were completed by the pre-service teachers. The process of completing the scale took 15-20 minutes.

Additionally, permission from the MoNE was obtained to conduct semi-structured interviews with mentor teachers. Further, the schedule for semi-structured interviews was arranged with the consent of seven pre-service teachers, five mentor teachers, and four university supervisors. Semi-structured interviews for the qualitative study were conducted through the Zoom meeting platform at a pre-arranged time with the participants. Every interview lasted from 20 to 35 minutes. The interview sessions were recorded with the participant's consent, facilitating subsequent transcription and interpretation by the researcher. The interviews were carried out in Turkish, the native language of the participants. In the study, participants are assigned codes: PST1-PST7 for pre-service teachers in

both the qualitative and quantitative phases; MT1-MT5 for mentor teachers, and US1-US4 for university supervisors in the qualitative phase.



4. RESULTS

This chapter outlines the methods used for analyzing the gathered data. It includes a statistical analysis of the Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Reactions to Teaching Practice Scale, as well as a review of responses to open-ended questions within the scale. Furthermore, the chapter examines the semi-structured interviews conducted with pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors.

4.1. Results of the Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Practicum Reactions Scale

In accordance with the first research question, 'How do pre-service EFL teachers perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching practicum course?', the study explored pre-service teachers' views on the practicum course, examined opinions about its strengths and weaknesses, and gathered insights and expectations through the use of the 'Pre-service Teachers' Reactions to the Practicum Measurement Scale.' The data obtained from the measurement scale was processed using SPSS 22. Counts (n) were used to present descriptive statistics for categorical data and percentages (%), while continuous data were represented as mean $\pm$ standard deviation ($M \pm SD$).

The measurement scale for collecting quantitative data included 39 close-ended items presented in three divisions: 1) General Evaluation of the Teaching Practicum Program, 2) Specific Aspects of the Teaching Practicum, and 3) Pre-service Teachers' Reactions to Professional and Personal Development. Subsequently, the responses are described in three tables and followed by the relevant explanations.

Based on the pre-service teachers' responses to the 'General Evaluation of the Teaching Practicum Program' part, the percentages, frequency, mean, and standard deviation values are presented in Table 4.1. below:

Table 4.1. General Evaluation of the Teaching Practicum Program

Item	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent	Mean±SD
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
1. I rate the content of the teaching practicum (interest, benefit, etc.).	1 (1.2)	7 (8.5)	28 (34.1)	31 (37.8)	15 (18.3)	3.63±.92
2. I rate the mentor teacher (knowledge of subject matter, preparation, ability to communicate, etc.).	4 (4.9)	3 (3.7)	15 (18.3)	32 (39.0)	28 (34.1)	3.94±1.06
3. I rate the facilities of the teaching practicum (comfort, convenience, etc.).	5 (6.1)	11 (13.4)	30 (36.6)	19 (23.2)	17 (20.7)	3.9±1.14
4. I rate the scheduling of the teaching practicum.	0 (0.0)	16 (19.5)	25 (30.5)	26 (31.7)	15 (18.3)	3.49±1.01
5. I rate the program as an educational experience to help me do my job better.	1 (1.2)	5 (6.1)	22 (26.8)	26 (31.7)	28 (34.1)	3.91±.98

When analyzing the pre-service teacher's responses to the item, '*I rate the content of the teaching practicum (interest, benefit, etc.)*' the majority indicated 'very good' (37.8%), with an average rating of 3.63. Similarly, when evaluating the teachers' responses to the question, '*I rate the mentor teacher (knowledge of subject matter, preparation, ability to communicate, etc.)*' most respondents selected 'very good' (39%), resulting in an average rating of 3.94. In terms of *the teaching practicum facilities*, 'good' was the predominant response (36.6%), and the average rating was 3.39. As for *the scheduling of the teaching practicum*, 'very good' was the most common response (31.7%), with an average rating of 3.49. Lastly, pre-service teachers overwhelmingly rated *the program as an educational experience to enhance their job performance* as 'excellent' (34.1%), with an average rating of 3.91.

In conclusion, pre-service teachers' reactions to items concerning 'Content, Facilities, Mentor Teachers, and Scheduling' generally indicate a positive assessment of the teaching practicum. The content and mentor teachers received high ratings, with a majority expressing satisfaction, which means most pre-service teachers acknowledge the adequacy of the practicum content and appreciate the guidance provided by mentor teachers. Facilities were commonly perceived positively, and scheduling also garnered favorable feedback. Overall, pre-service teachers strongly viewed the program as an excellent educational experience, enhancing their teaching performance.

Table 4.2. displays the percentage, frequency, mean, and standard deviation values of the findings derived from the pre-service teachers' responses to the 'Specific Aspects of the Teaching Practicum' part of the scale.

Table 4.2. Specific Aspects of the Teaching Practicum

Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean±SD
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	
6. The content covered in the program was relevant to my job.	1 (1.2)	0 (0.0)	7 (8.5)	44 (53.7)	30 (36.6)	4.24±.71
7. The content covered in the program was interesting.	1 (1.2)	8 (9.8)	25 (30.5)	36 (43.9)	12 (14.6)	3.61±.90
8. The mentor teacher was an effective communicator.	5 (6.2)	2 (2.5)	13 (16.0)	26 (32.1)	35 (43.2)	4.04±1.12
9. The mentor teacher was well prepared.	5 (6.1)	6 (7.3)	15 (18.3)	22 (26.8)	34 (41.5)	3.90±1.20
10. If there were manuals about the practicum, it would be helpful.	0 (0.0)	7 (8.5)	15 (18.3)	40 (48.8)	20 (24.4)	3.89±.87
11. If there were handouts about the practicum, it would be helpful.	0 (0.0)	7 (8.5)	24 (29.3)	33 (40.2)	18 (22.0)	3.76±.90
12. If there were audiovisuals about the practicum, it would be helpful.	0 (0.0)	6 (7.3)	13 (15.9)	40 (48.8)	23 (28.0)	3.98±.86
13. I will be able to apply much of the content I learned here to my job.	1 (1.2)	5 (6.1)	14 (17.1)	32 (39.0)	30 (36.6)	4.04±.95
14. The facilities of the practicum were suitable.	0 (0.0)	3 (3.7)	17 (20.7)	43 (52.4)	19 (23.2)	3.95±.77
15. The schedule of the practicum was well-organized.	1 (1.2)	4 (4.9)	22 (26.8)	35 (42.7)	20 (24.4)	3.84±.90
16. I feel that practicum taught me to do my job better.	2 (2.5)	6 (7.4)	8 (9.9)	33 (40.7)	32 (39.5)	4.07±1.01

Pre-service teachers generally indicated agreement (53.7%) with the item, *'The content covered in the program was relevant to my job'* with an average rating of 4.24. The response to the item, *'The content covered in the program was interesting'* attained 43.9%, resulting in an average rating of 3.61. They strongly agreed (43.2%) that *'The mentor teacher was an effective communicator'* with an average rating of 4.04. Similarly, the item *'The mentor teacher was well prepared'* gained mostly strongly agreed (41.5%) with an average rating of 3.90. Regarding *the potential usefulness of manuals for the practicum*, 48.8% of pre-service teachers agreed, with a mean of 3.89. Regarding the item related to *the usefulness of handouts for the practicum*, 40.2% of pre-service teachers agreed with an average rating of 3.76. The most common response for the availability of *audiovisual materials related to the practicum* was agreement (48.8%), with a mean of 3.98. Considering *the applicability of the learned content to their jobs* the most common response among participants was agreement (39%), and the average rating was 4.04. They mostly agreed (52.4%) that *'The facilities of the practicum were suitable'* with a mean of 3.95. Regarding *the organization of the practicum schedule*, the most common response was agreement (42.7%), with an average rating of 3.84. Finally, in response to the item, *'I feel that practicum taught me to do my job better'*, 40.7% of pre-service teachers agreed, with an average rating of 4.07.

Most pre-service teachers' responses to the items regarding the 'Specific Aspects of the Teaching Practicum' part indicated their positive perceptions of the program of the practicum. According to the findings from the scale, the majority of pre-service teachers found the content relevant and beneficial to teaching. The data analysis suggests an agreement among pre-service teachers, indicating a favorable perception of the mentor's communication proficiency and readiness for teaching. The majority of pre-service teachers agreed that the provided resources, such as manuals, handouts, and audiovisual materials, were helpful. Additionally, a more significant number of respondents indicated that the learned content was applicable to their professional roles. Positive reactions extended to the suitability of practicum facilities and the schedule's organization. Overall, a significant portion of pre-service teachers believed that the practicum positively impacted their teaching performance.

Further, Table 4.3. displays the percentage, frequency, mean, and standard deviation values of the findings derived from the pre-service teachers' reactions to the 'Professional Growth and Personal Development' part with responses.

Table 4.3. Pre-service Teachers' Reactions to Professional and Personal Development

Item	Strongly disagree N (%)	Disagree N (%)	Not Sure N (%)	Agree N (%)	Strongly agree N (%)	Mean±SD
17. Teaching Practicum helped me deepen my knowledge about the teaching profession.	1 (1.2)	1 (1.2)	8 (9.8)	45 (54.9)	27 (32.9)	4.17±.75
18. I believe the Teaching Practicum is useful in terms of teacher candidates.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.2)	11 (13.4)	32 (39.0)	38 (46.3)	4.30±.75
19. Teaching Practicum provided me with the opportunity to observe at different class levels.	1 (1.2)	2 (2.5)	6 (7.4)	29 (35.8)	43 (53.1)	4.37±.83
20. Teaching Practicum provided me with the opportunity to practice at different class levels.	1 (1.2)	3 (3.7)	7 (8.5)	30 (36.6)	41 (50.0)	4.30±.87
21. Thanks to the Teaching Practicum I started to see myself as a teacher.	3 (3.7)	3 (3.7)	6 (7.3)	25 (30.5)	45 (54.9)	4.29±1.01
22. Teaching Practicum increased my self-confidence.	1 (1.2)	3 (3.7)	9 (11.0)	28 (34.1)	41 (50.0)	4.28±.89
23. Teaching Practicum helped me learn the duties of the school staff (School Principal, Vice principal, retainer, etc.).	2 (2.4)	4 (4.9)	16 (19.5)	34 (41.5)	26 (31.7)	3.95±.97
24. Teaching Practicum helped me gain the necessary knowledge and skills for teaching.	0 (0.0)	4 (4.9)	12 (14.6)	35 (42.7)	31 (37.8)	4.13±.84
25. I believe that the time allocated for Teaching Practicum courses in ELT departments is insufficient.	4 (4.9)	14 (17.3)	26 (32.1)	23 (28.4)	14 (17.3)	3.36±1.11
26. Via Teaching Practicum I liked teaching English more.	3 (3.7)	4 (4.9)	16 (19.5)	32 (39.0)	27 (32.9)	3.93±1.03
27. In Teaching Practicum I learned how to establish a good communication in teacher-student relationship.	0 (0.0)	2 (2.5)	13 (16.0)	35 (43.2)	31 (38.3)	4.17±.79
28. In Teaching Practicum I learned how to grade students.	0 (0.0)	7 (8.5)	16 (19.5)	30 (36.6)	29 (35.4)	3.99±.95
29. Teaching Practicum made me realize whether teaching profession was suitable for me.	0 (0.0)	3 (3.7)	9 (11.0)	31 (37.8)	39 (47.6)	4.29±.81
30. In Teaching Practicum my university supervisor helped me in all my problems about the lessons.	0 (0.0)	3 (3.7)	7 (8.5)	35 (42.7)	37 (45.1)	4.29±.78

31. I believe the reflective portfolio reports are assessed by the university supervisor objectively.	3 (3.7)	2 (2.4)	20 (24.4)	28 (34.1)	29 (35.4)	3.95±1.02
32. I believe there is healthy communication between the Faculty and Practice School.	2 (2.5)	7 (8.6)	11 (13.6)	35 (43.2)	26 (32.1)	3.94±1.02
33. Teaching Practicum gave me the opportunity to compare the characteristics of a good teacher with my own traits.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.2)	10 (12.2)	36 (43.9)	35 (42.7)	4.28±.72
34. In Teaching Practicum, I learned how a teacher can manage the classroom.	0 (0.0)	1 (1.2)	8 (9.8)	37 (45.1)	36 (43.9)	4.32±.70
35. In Teaching Practicum I learned how to prepare yearly, unit, and daily plan.	3 (3.7)	9 (11.0)	22 (26.8)	25 (30.5)	23 (28.0)	3.68±1.11
36. In Teaching Practicum I learned how to prepare exams.	3 (3.7)	9 (11.0)	12 (14.6)	32 (39.0)	26 (31.7)	3.84±1.11
37. In Teaching Practicum I learned how to prepare course materials.	0 (0.0)	4 (4.9)	8 (9.8)	38 (46.3)	32 (39.0)	4.20±.81
38. In Teaching Practicum, I learned how the National Education System operated.	0 (0.0)	4 (4.9)	18 (22.0)	37 (45.1)	23 (28.0)	3.96±.84
39. In Teaching Practicum I learned how to use deliberative rhetoric.	0 (0.0)	2 (2.4)	26 (31.7)	36 (43.9)	18 (22.0)	3.85±.79

Most pre-service teachers (54.9%) agreed with the item *‘Teaching Practicum helped me deepen my knowledge about the teaching profession’* with an average rating of 4.17. In response to the statement, *‘I believe Teaching Practicum is useful in terms of teacher candidates’* the most common response was ‘strongly agree’ (46.3%), resulting in an average rating of 4.30. Pre-service teachers strongly agreed (53.1%) with the item *‘Teaching Practicum provided us with the opportunity to observe at different class levels’* with a mean of 4.37. Similarly, for the statement *‘Teaching Practicum provided me with the opportunity to practice at different class levels’*, the most common response was ‘strongly agree’ (50%), and the mean was 4.30. A more significant number of pre-service teachers (54.9%) strongly agreed with the item *‘Thanks to the Teaching Practicum, I started to see myself as a teacher’* with an average rating of 4.29. Regarding the item *‘Teaching Practicum increased my self-confidence’*, 50% of participants strongly agreed, with a mean of 4.28. The item *‘Teaching Practicum helped me learn the duties of the school staff (School Principal, Vice Principal, retainer, etc.)’* elicited agreement from most participants (41.5%), with an average rating of 3.95. Similarly, for the item *‘Teaching Practicum helped me gain the necessary knowledge and skills for teaching’* the most common response was ‘agree’ (42.7%), with a mean of 4.13.

When asked about *the sufficiency of the time allocated for Teaching Practicum courses in ELT departments*, the most common response was ‘not sure’ (32.1%), with an average rating of 3.36. In response to the item ‘*Via Teaching Practicum, I liked teaching English more*’ 39% of pre-service teachers agreed, and the mean was 3.93. Regarding the statement, ‘*In Teaching Practicum, I learned how to establish good communication in the teacher-student relationship*’ the majority of respondents (43.2%) agreed, with an average rating of 4.17. When evaluating the item ‘*In Teaching Practicum, I learned how to grade students*’ most pre-service teachers (36.6%) agreed, with a mean of 3.99. Respondents strongly agreed (47.6%) with the item ‘*Teaching Practicum made me realize whether the teaching profession is suitable for me*’ with an average rating of 4.29. Similarly, with the item about *the support provided by university supervisors in Teaching Practicum*, 45.1% of participants strongly agreed, with a mean of 4.29. A smaller proportion of pre-service teachers (35.4%) strongly agreed with the item ‘*I believe the reflective portfolio reports are assessed by the university supervisor objectively*’ with an average rating of 3.95. When asked about the existence of *healthy communication between the Faculty and Practice School*, the most common response was ‘agree’ (43.2%), resulting in a mean of 3.94. Pre-service teachers predominantly agreed (43.9%) that *Teaching Practicum gave them the opportunity to compare the characteristics of a good teacher with their own traits*, with an average rating of 4.28. Similarly, for the item ‘*In Teaching Practicum, I learned how a teacher can manage the classroom*’, most participants (45.1%) agreed, with a mean of 4.32. Pre-service teachers agreed (30.5%) with the item ‘*In teaching Practicum, I learned how to prepare yearly, unit, and daily plans*’ with an average rating of 3.68. In response to the item ‘*In Teaching Practicum, I learned how to prepare exams*’ 39% of respondents agreed, and the mean was 3.84. The most common response to the question regarding *learning how to prepare course materials in Teaching Practicum* was ‘agree’ (46.3%), with an average rating of 4.20. In response to the statement ‘*In Teaching Practicum, I learned how the National Education System operates*’ 45.1% of pre-service teachers agreed, and the mean was 3.96. Finally, for the statement ‘*In Teaching Practicum, I learned how to use deliberative rhetoric*’ the most common response was ‘agree’ (43.9%), with a mean of 3.85.

In essence, the data collected from pre-service teachers regarding their experiences in the Teaching Practicum courses reveals a generally positive perception of the program's impact on their development as future educators. A significant majority of respondents acknowledged the practicum's role in deepening their knowledge about the teaching profession, enhancing their self-confidence, and providing them with practical teaching experience across different class levels. These responses underscore the value of the practicum in helping pre-service teachers envision themselves in the teaching role and in affirming their choice of profession. However, the feedback reflected in some items of the scale also points to areas needing improvement, such as the sufficiency of time allocated to practicum courses, the need for better communication between the Faculty and Practice Schools, and the perceived objectivity and fairness of the portfolio assessment process. Overall, the Teaching Practicum emerges as a critical component of teacher education, offering essential insights and skills while also highlighting the importance of continuous evaluation and adaptation of the program to meet the evolving needs of pre-service teachers.

4.2. Responses to Open-ended Questions

Pre-Service Teachers' Reactions to Teaching Practice Measurement Scale developed by Kazaz and Alagözlü (2020) includes four open-ended questions where pre-service teachers were requested to express their perspectives and comments in written form. Each of these four open-ended questions comprised three bullets to fill in. Initially, the comments and responses to the open-ended questions that participants wrote down were registered under a sole pile. Further, according to the content of the responses, they were classified into several categories (Gay et al., 2012).

Stated differently, the data retrieved from the open-ended questions were classified into different categories according to the related context. Moreover, the number and percentage of the items corresponding to each category were recovered for further elaboration. Pre-service teachers responded to the following open-ended questions:

1. Which parts of the Teaching Practicum were the most beneficial?
2. What are the weaknesses of the program?

3. What are the strengths of the program?
4. What would have improved the program?

Onwards, the analysis of the responses to four open-ended questions is presented chronologically, starting from the first question.

1. Which parts of the Teaching Practicum were the most beneficial?

Overall, 149 comments were received for the first open-ended question. The participants' responses were classified into five categories: 1) *gaining experience in teaching*, 2) *classroom environment*, 3) *communication with students and mentors*, 4) *preparing lesson plans and materials*, and finally, the last category, 5) *self-perception as a teacher*. Further, the responses in each category were calculated by percentage rate to reveal the highest and the lowest frequency (see Figure 4.1.).

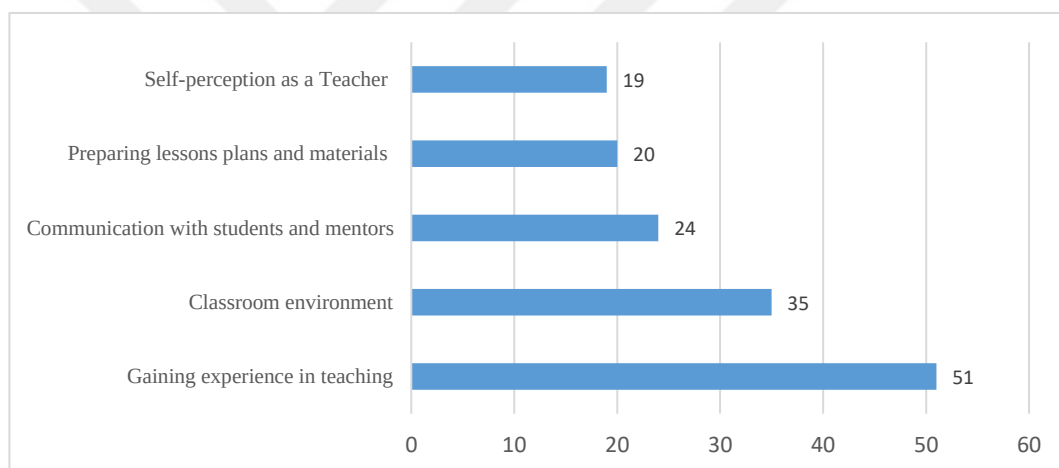


Figure 4.1. Which parts of the teaching practicum were the most beneficial?

As a result, the category '*Gaining experience in teaching*' emerged as the most frequent among participants' responses, constituting 34.22% with 51 responses. Representative responses include:

PST76: Having the opportunity to teach students face-to-face.

PST73: Gaining experience from teaching classes at different levels.

PST36: It helped us learn and practice what we learned throughout the university sessions in the classroom.

The category '*Classroom environment*' received 23.48%, based on 35 responses corresponding to the target category. Representative responses include:

PST81: Being able to observe the class environment.

PST42: Learned how to manage a classroom.

The category, '*Communication with students and mentors*' received 24 responses, accounting for 16.10% with the representative responses:

PST67: In developing relationships with students.

PST26: Boosting communication with mentor teachers and students.

The category '*Preparing lesson plans and materials*' garnered 20 corresponding responses, constituting 13.42% of the representative comments. Examples of representative responses include:

PST15: It is helpful to create lesson plans correctly.

PST65: I know how to be prepared for the lesson.

Finally, the category '*Self-perception as a teacher*' was revealed as the least frequent, with 12.75% and 19 responses. It included the representative responses:

PST41: I became a well-prepared pre-service teacher.

PST25: It helped me to see whether teaching is suitable for me.

Based on the analysis of responses to the first open-ended question, it can be deduced that pre-service teachers recognize the significant contribution of the practicum course to their development as language teachers. Initially, the practicum allows them to observe classroom dynamics, comprehend student psychology, and identify learners' needs and challenges, enabling the practical application of this knowledge. Pre-service teachers acquire valuable experience by teaching across various age groups and language proficiency levels. As articulated by a participant, '*Practicum helps us learn and apply theoretical knowledge from university sessions in a real classroom setting.*'

The practicum serves as a process that allows pre-service teachers to formulate lesson plans and deliver lessons under the guidance of mentor teachers and supervisors. Significantly, pre-service teachers can improve communication with mentor teachers and students. This contributes to the augmentation of their self-confidence, especially when seeking guidance from mentors in challenging situations. Their appropriate communication with school students assists them in managing the classroom, which was revealed as challenging for some pre-service teachers. For instance, one pre-service teacher stated, '*Due to the practicum, I*

realized the importance of using appropriate classroom/instructional language.' Ultimately, the findings from the responses to open-ended questions within the scale indicate that pre-service teachers acknowledge the practicum as a crucial period during which they determine whether the language teaching profession aligns with their interests and aspirations.

2. What are the weaknesses of the program?

Overall, 119 comments regarding the second open-ended question were received from the scale. Initially, the responses were registered under a sole pile. Further, according to the content of the responses, they were classified into seven categories: 1) *difficulties associated with tasks*, 2) *timing and scheduling issues*, 3) *weaknesses concerning the program of the practicum*, 4) *issues related to mentor teachers*, 5) *issues regarding the classroom environment*, 6) *monetary issues*, and finally 7) *collaboration between the university and the school* (see Figure 4.2.).

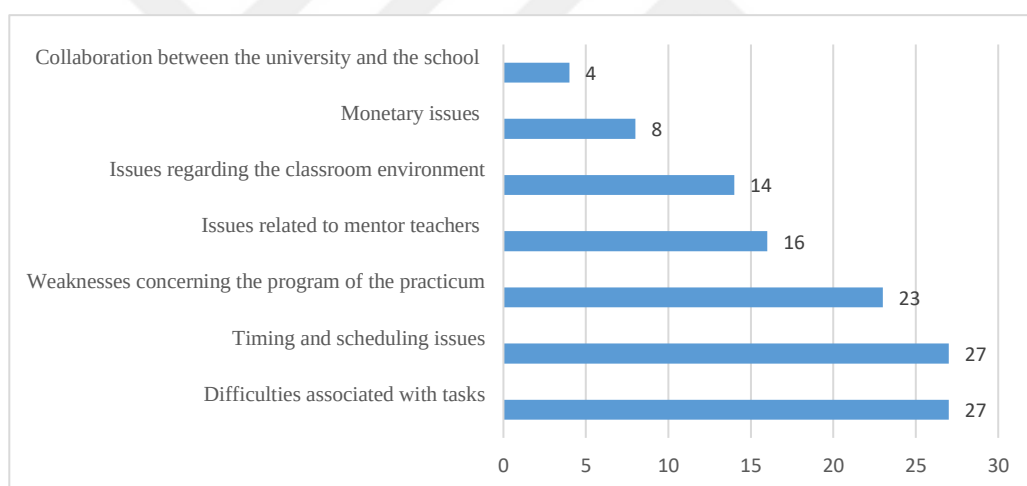


Figure 4.2. What are the weaknesses of the program?

While calculating the number and percentage of responses for the mentioned categories, it was revealed that two categories, 1) *difficulties associated with tasks* and 2) *timing and scheduling issues*, were the most frequent. Each category received 27 responses, constituting 22.69%. The comments regarding the '*Difficulties associated with tasks*' include:

PST60: Observation tasks are challenging.

PST46: Too many tasks took us away from actual teaching in the classrooms.

The category labeled '*Timing and scheduling issues*' included 23 comments pointing out that the time allocated for practicing teaching was perceived as too short with the representative comments:

PST75: The time of the program is too limited.

PST48: Too little time is allocated for the practicum.

In contrast, four comments regarding the same category indicated that the time allotted for the practicum course was too long. Representative comments include:

PST57: 12 weeks is too long.

PST44: The process is too long.

The '*Weaknesses concerning the program of the practicum*' category received 23 comments, constituting 19.32% of the total, with representative responses:

PST81: There aren't any standards for the program, which every supervisor applies.

PST57: In terms of discipline, it is a loose program.

The category '*Issues related to mentor teachers*' received 16 responses, constituting 13.44%. Representative responses include:

PST81: Some mentor teachers are not qualified enough for teaching.

PST16: There is not enough support from mentors.

The category '*Issues regarding the classroom environment*' included 14 responses, which comprised 11.76% of the whole with the representative responses:

PST77: Crowded classes - thirty students in one class.

PST15: Too many pre-service teachers in one class.

The category '*Monetary issues*' gained eight comments, constituting 6.72%. Representative responses include:

PST6: We do not get money for materials we use at schools.

PST39: We are not paid for commuting.

Finally, the category, '*Collaboration between the university and the school*' had four responses, constituting 3.36% and the representative responses include:

PST67: Relation between university and practicum school.

PST4: Weak communication between the school and the university.

The analysis of responses to the second open-ended question, addressing the program's weaknesses, highlighted that a significant challenge for most pre-service teachers revolves around the observation tasks assigned to complete during lesson observations. This challenge aligns with insights from semi-structured interviews, where participants described the task questions as excessively detailed and impractical. The findings indicate that these detailed tasks limited their engagement in actual classroom activities. Another significant challenge pertains to time management throughout the practicum, with numerous comments underscoring the need for more time to observe lessons and engage in teaching practices. The category '*Issues regarding the classroom environment*' identified challenges arising from allocating too many pre-service teachers to one class and overcrowded classrooms of around thirty students. This challenge was also echoed in interviews with pre-service and mentor teachers. Additionally, some pre-service teachers in the study highlighted weak collaboration between the university and the school, expressing concerns about the limited rights of pre-service teachers in practicum schools.

3. What are the strengths of the program?

Overall, 81 comments were obtained from the pre-service teachers regarding the question, 'What are the strengths of the program?' The responses regarding the target question were classified into such categories as 1) *contribution to the teaching profession*, 2) *strengths regarding experience in real-life school*, 3) *the content of the program*, 4) *interaction with students*, 5) *skills to develop lesson plans and materials*, and finally, the last category, 6) *teaching empowerment identity* (see Figure 4.3.).

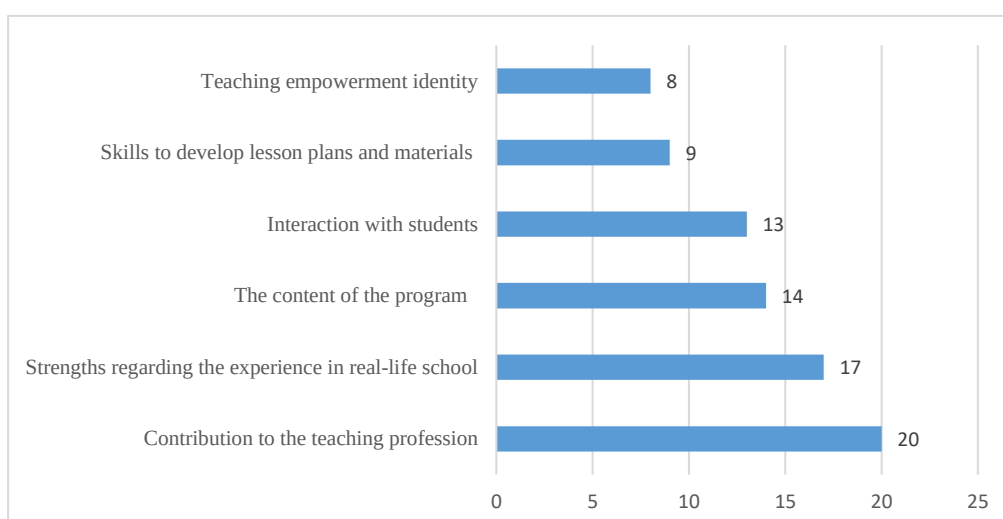


Figure 4.3. What are the strengths of the program?

The analysis of the responses revealed that the category '*Contribution to the teaching profession*' received 20 responses, constituting 24.69% of the whole, and was identified as the most frequent category in contrast to other categories. The responses regarding this category are as follows:

PST64: Being a teacher will be less difficult.

PST29: Learning how to use and improve teaching skills.

PST7: Gaining new skills.

The category, '*Strengths regarding the experience in real-life school*' collected 17 responses and comprised 20.99% with the representative responses:

PST68: Gaining knowledge about defining students' problems.

PST11: Chance to learn classroom management.

In the category, '*The content of the program*' 14 responses were collected, constituting 17.28%. Representative responses include:

PST82: Informative and educational parts serve their purpose well.

PST75: It helps to deepen the knowledge of English.

However, the category, '*Interaction with students*' received 13 responses, constituting 16.05%. Representative responses include:

PST50: It teaches how to communicate with students.

PST34: Building up a social bond with the students.

The category, '*Skills to develop lesson plans and materials*' was discovered as less frequent than the previous ones and obtained nine responses, comprising 11.11% of the whole with the representative responses:

PST67: Preparing materials according to age groups.

PST51: Preparing lesson plans.

The analysis also revealed that the category '*Teaching empowerment identity*' was the least frequent with eight responses constituting 9.88% of the whole with the representative comments:

PST30: It made me think that I could be a good teacher.

PST25: It allows us to perceive ourselves as teachers.

It is important to emphasize that the categories of the first open-ended question were revealed to be slightly analogous to those of the third open-ended question. For instance, while analyzing the comments to the third open-ended question, it was revealed that the content of items was in similar patterns to the first open-ended question. For instance, in the comments to the category '*I gained experience in teaching*' in the first open-ended question the most beneficial parts of the practicum were discovered as the most frequent with the highest number and percentage rate, corresponding to the frequency of the category '*Contribution to the teaching profession*' of the third open-ended question, which also attained the most frequent responses.

Another finding that equates to the findings from the first and the third open-ended question analysis is the resemblance of the order of the categories regarding communication with students in the school environment. Both categories include interaction with school students, and in the frequency rate, the target category attained the third level in the first open-ended question and the fourth level in the third open-ended question. This category resemblance elucidates that pre-service teachers appreciate establishing a social bond with the students. Similarly, the category '*Strengths regarding the experience in real-life school*' includes comments implying that practicum enables pre-service teachers to be more comprehensive in the classroom environment. Moreover, as mentioned by one of the pre-service teachers, practicum facilitates an opportunity to gain classroom management skills, and they learn how to conduct lessons.

4. What would have improved the program?

Finally, the last open-ended question received 73 responses, marking the lowest among all questions. The items received for the target question were classified into six categories: 1) *revisions required in tasks and worksheets*, 2) *the process of the program*, 3) *mentor teachers' proficiency in practicum*, 4) *time allocated for the practicum*, 5) *school and university collaboration*, and finally 6) *more frequent meetings with supervisors* (see Figure 4.4).

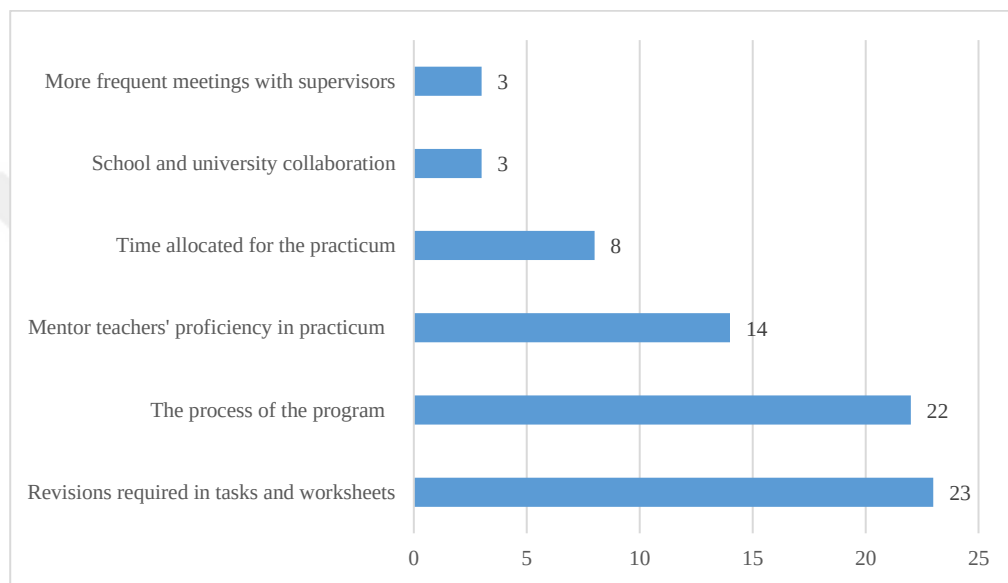


Figure 4.4. What would have improved the program?

The most frequent answers for the fourth open-ended question were in the category '*Revisions required in tasks and worksheets*', comprising 23 responses (31.51%). Representative comments include:

PST76: It would be nicer if the observation tasks were more manageable.

PST72: Instead of documents of observation tasks, the teacher could create a presentation at the end to give feedback.

PST34: Reports of the tasks could be less than the current amount.

The number of responses under the category, '*The process of the program*' slightly differs from the category '*Revisions required in tasks and worksheets*'. It obtained 22 responses, constituting 30.14%. The representative responses include:

PST57: The discipline in the practicum could be strengthened.

PST31: During the practicum, the practicum should be the only lesson.

PST27: It should be more pre-service teacher-centered.

The category '*Mentor teachers*' included 14 comments and formed 19.17% with the following responses:

PST34: Mentor teachers could be more integrated into the work process.

PST4: Mentor teachers' attitude.

Eight responses corresponded to the category '*Time allocated for the practicum*', representing a rate of 10.95%. Representative responses include:

PST79: More time at school would be better.

PST58: The practicum could last longer to gain more experience.

PST35: Six hours a week are not enough for practicing teaching.

Finally, the data analysis indicated that two categories received the fewest responses: '*School and university collaboration*' and '*More frequent meetings with supervisors.*' Each category received three responses, comprising a 4.11% rate each. The representative response for the category '*School and university collaboration*' includes:

PST19: Communication between the school and the university.

The representative response for the category '*More frequent meetings with supervisors*' include:

PST64: Fortifying the bond between supervisors and pre-service teachers.

The analysis of responses to the fourth open-ended question dealing with how the practicum program can be improved indicates that pre-service teachers expressed a preference for less detailed and complicated tasks, emphasizing a desire to focus on developing lesson plans and conducting lessons. Another notable response suggested the need for better integration of pre-service teachers into the school environment. While acknowledging potential challenges, the integration of pre-service teachers into the school and classroom is underscored as a crucial objective of the practicum. Additionally, a participant highlighted the potential for strengthening discipline in the practicum, suggesting that pre-service teachers would benefit from comprehensive instructions and effective supervision by both teachers and university supervisors. Another category, '*Collaboration between the school and the university*', attained less frequency than other categories. However, this issue was also mentioned in the second open-ended question, where pre-service teachers were requested to comment on the program's weaknesses. As commented

by one of the pre-service teachers, '*Practicum schools give candidates insufficient rights.*' This challenge could relate to discipline issues during the practicum, where pre-service teachers need effective supervision and guidance.

In summary, the analysis of pre-service teachers' responses revealed a significant impact of the practicum course on their journey to becoming proficient language teachers. It underscores the value of firsthand classroom experiences, from observing dynamics to engaging in direct teaching, which fosters a deeper understanding of student needs and enhances practical skills. However, the feedback also brings to light areas for improvement, such as the need for tasks that are less challenging and more focused on core teaching competencies like lesson planning and classroom management. Moreover, the call for better integration into school environments and the emphasis on discipline suggest a pathway to enrich the practicum experience further. Additionally, the desire for stronger ties between educational institutions indicates a crucial step towards ensuring that pre-service teachers not only gain essential teaching skills but also feel supported and valued within the practicum setting. These findings, reflecting both the strengths and challenges of the practicum, advocate for a nuanced approach to refining the program, aiming to align it more closely with the aspirations and needs of pre-service teachers while maintaining its foundational role in their professional development.

4.3. Interviews with EFL Pre-Service Teachers

This chapter delineates the interviews carried out with seven pre-service teachers, aiming to explore their viewpoints on the teaching practicum. It addresses the first research question: How do pre-service EFL teachers perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching practicum course? The information derived from these interviews plays a significant role in examining pre-service teachers' perspectives concerning the practicum course, along with their recommendations for enhancing the course. The semi-structured interviews with seven pre-service teachers were conducted based on nine questions. Onwards, the question items and the participant's responses to each of the nine questions will be presented in chronological order.

1. What are the most advantageous elements of the practicum experience for pre-service teachers?

The findings from the interviews pointed out that most participants perceived practicum as an advantageous course since it provides pre-service teachers with an opportunity to gain experience in teaching and apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts. Upon closer examination, PST1, PST3, and PST5 stated that owing to the practicum experience, they exhibit theoretical concepts in practical applications in the school environment:

PST3: The teaching practicum course allows us to apply the knowledge we acquired at the university in a real classroom setting. It allows us to identify and address potential challenges before starting our professional careers. From this standpoint, practicum is highly advantageous.

Further, PST4, PST6, and PST7 stated that owing to the practicum course, they gained experience in teaching a language:

PST6: We gain experience when seeking solutions to such questions as how to prepare a lesson, how to present it to students, and how to use time effectively. Practicum covers everything regarding these issues. Consequently, this course provides us with the most beneficial aspect, which is gaining experience.

PST2 mentioned that in virtue of the practicum course, they understood their potential to be language teachers. They stated that at the beginning of the course, they had such feelings as anxiety, stress, and uncertainty, but once they were situated in the classroom environment, those emotions were overcome:

PST2: During the practicum, I discovered I can be a teacher. Initially, there was nervousness, especially at the beginning of the last term, when I questioned my ability to teach in a classroom, and the uncertainty stressed me a lot. However, as I immersed myself in the environment and began teaching, I realized my capability. The experience turned out to be highly beneficial.

PST5 highlighted the benefits of the practicum, emphasizing the advantage of experiencing two different age groups by teaching in both a middle school and a high school during the practicum course in the following comment:

PST5: *In my view, one of the most valuable aspects is the opportunity to experience teaching at two different levels. For instance, in the first semester, we worked with middle school students; the following semester, we had a chance to engage with high school students. This exposure allowed us to gain insights into both levels of education, enabling us to decide which level we prefer for teaching.*

2. What are the weakest aspects of the Teaching Practicum Course from the perspective of pre-service teachers?

The qualitative analysis of the responses to the second question revealed five diverse elements that participants perceived as the weakest aspect of the practicum course. More specifically, two participants mentioned insufficiency of the length of practicum, as can be realized from the representative comment below:

PST1: *The duration needs to be increased; one year has passed quickly for us. Being in our final year posed challenges as we juggled exam preparations, studying, and practical training.*

PST1 and PST5 mentioned that portfolios and observation tasks were too time-consuming and challenging. The representative comment includes:

PST5: *There are numerous details in our practicum portfolio. Despite encountering these details in the classroom and experiencing them firsthand, transferring them to the portfolio promptly poses a significant challenge.*

Additionally, PST3 and PST4 mentioned the exceeding number of pre-service teachers in one class as a limitation during the practicum as can be understood from the following representative comment:

PST4: *There is a relatively high risk of communication gaps due to multiple pre-service teachers being assigned to the same mentor teacher. For example, one pre-service teacher might unintentionally duplicate a lesson or activity that another teacher has already covered. A potential solution could be assigning two pre-service teachers to one classroom. This would help us avoid redundancy in our lesson preparation.*

As assumed by one of the pre-service teachers (PST6), there was communication between the practicum school and the university, but there was still room for improvement as can be seen in the following response:

PST6: Communication is a crucial aspect, and actually, communication exists among the MoNE, the university, our university professors, the school principals, and teachers. However, this communication could be more assertive. There are varying expectations from some teachers or university professors, and this diversity sometimes leads to disagreements among us.

Finally, one participant (PST7) expressed uncertainty when identifying the weaknesses of the practicum; however, they highlighted the challenge of adapting to the practicum environment with the following comment:

PST7: It is challenging to adapt to the classroom environment and adapt to the school setting.

3. From your perspective, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the program content?

During the practicum course, pre-service teachers carry out observation reports encompassing a range of perspectives, such as material utilization, body language, instructional activities, textbook use, lesson delivery, error correction methods, and questioning techniques. Furthermore, they create lesson plans and educational materials for classroom presentations while engaging in self-assessment about their instructional deliveries.

Pre-service teachers gave diverse answers regarding the practicum content's strengths and weaknesses. The findings related to the strengths of the practicum's content are presented first. When delving into the details of the findings, PST1 perceived the reflection forms they employed throughout the course as strong content since they consistently reflected on their lesson plans and presentations. The comment is as follows:

PST1: In my opinion, the strength of the content lies in completing forms of reflection. I especially enjoy reflecting on what happened in class and what did not, and what changes I would make if I faced a similar situation. This three-step reflection process is my favorite. It constantly challenges us to revise lesson plans, evaluate classroom dynamics, and consider improvements for future lessons.

According to PST2, the strength of the program content was self and peer evaluation:

PST2: A strong aspect of the practicum is the opportunity for self-evaluation, complemented by peer evaluations. This process allows us to become more conscious of our mistakes and recognize our strengths. Viewing our performance through the perspective of our friends helps us identify areas for improvement, fostering a constructive self-evaluation.

PST3 mentioned that the strength of the practicum's content is in its capacity to enhance pre-service teachers' self-awareness through observation:

PST3: A significant strength of the program is its ability to increase our awareness during teacher observations. The program goes beyond simply telling us what to observe; it provides detailed explanations and highlights specific factors, promoting a comprehensive understanding of the subtlety of effective teaching. This approach gives us the knowledge to define critical elements in teaching practice and encourages a detailed and reflective approach to the observation process.

PST4 highlighted the seminars conducted at the university and their university supervisors' guidance as the strengths of the practicum content:

PST4: We attend seminars where our university supervisors actively support us in various aspects. Whether we face challenges during the practicum or encounter difficulties filling out practicum files, they offer guidance consistently, aiming to assist us in overcoming obstacles and making continuous progress.

PST5 stated that the program's strength encompasses providing pre-service teachers the opportunity to create materials and the reception of constructive feedback on their performance in the classroom:

PST5: One of the program's strengths is that it allows us to prepare learning materials. This process enables us to participate in the practical development of the material, promoting a more profound comprehension of the content. Additionally, the program emphasizes the importance of feedback by offering regular evaluations and constructive comments on the content we create. This dual approach enhances our ability to develop effective learning resources and encourages continuous improvement of our teaching experience.

Similarly, PST6 stated that the strength of the program's content is feedback:

PST6: Constantly improving our skills through constructive feedback after each lesson serves as a valuable mechanism for continuous improvement, allowing us to identify areas where we need to improve.

Finally, the PST7 mentioned the practicum's intensity in the following comment:

PST7: Initially, the teaching practice was characterized by its intensity, featuring robust and engaging activities. The methods employed for error correction and questioning were particularly effective. Furthermore, the use of body language was strong, contributing to the overall effectiveness of the teaching practice.

On the other hand, the analysis of the responses regarding the weaknesses of the practicum's content revealed that PST1 and PST3 perceived the tasks as the weakness of the practicum's content. The representative comment includes:

PST1: The observation tasks did not seem realistic, and we had difficulty completing them. Additionally, although we were expected to fill them out weekly, they did not align with the classroom activities on a week-by-week basis.

PST2 mentioned that developing materials posed significant challenges since quality resources were unavailable:

PST2: Preparing materials can be pretty challenging at times. For instance, the lack of a practicum fee poses a financial constraint, limiting our ability to create the materials we envision, even though excellent resources are available. This financial burden serves as a notable weakness in the practicum process.

According to PST4, the practicum file is the weakness of the practicum's content since mentor teachers who are supposed to answer a few questions in the file are not always engaged in filling them:

PST4: Some aspects of the practicum process possess weaknesses, especially when it comes to the responsibilities given to mentor teachers at the schools where we teach. For example, they need to answer specific questions about our performance, but unfortunately, some teachers are not willing to engage in this part.

PST5 mentioned that the weak point of the content is not being able to receive regular feedback on materials they develop and the methods they employ while teaching:

PST5: One significant weakness is the lack of consistent feedback on the materials we create and our questioning methods during the practicum. Regular and detailed feedback is essential to ensure our ability to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of our teaching materials and questioning strategies.

As for PST6, the weakness of the practicum content arises from insufficient assistance in developing lesson plans:

PST6: It would be more beneficial if we could receive additional assistance in preparing lesson plans. While we develop our lesson plans, the challenge arises because, despite thorough preparation, the plans can sometimes be vague. This is due to the limited familiarity with the students, as we have only observed them for a few weeks. Consequently, based on these relatively brief observations, our plans might need more specific details or be overly prepared.

Finally, PST7 found it challenging to comment on the weaknesses of the practicum's content. According to this participant, the textbooks they used during the course were a weak point.

4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of mentor teachers' practice in the Teaching Practicum Course?

The outcomes derived from pre-service teachers' responses to the fourth question are presented separately. The data analysis starts with an outline of the positive aspects of mentor teachers' practices as perceived by pre-service teachers. This is followed by the examination of the perceived drawbacks of their practices.

The qualitative analysis of the responses to the fourth question revealed that PST1 and PST6 perceived constructive feedback from mentor teachers as a strength of their practice. One of the representative comments is as follows:

PST1: Our mentor teachers continually offered valuable feedback, providing detailed information after each lesson. Their feedback included strengths and areas for improvement, which contributed to our ongoing professional development.

In comparison, PST2 and PST7 perceived the feedback that the mentor teacher used towards their students as a strong element. One of their comments is as follows:

PST7: Notably, even if students answered correctly during feedback sessions, my mentor teacher dug deeper by asking why, ensuring a complete understanding of the material. This approach effectively assessed students' understanding of the content. Overall, I was delighted with our mentor and could not identify any shortcomings in his mentoring.

Furthermore, PST3 and PST4 mentioned mentor teachers' subject knowledge as a strength of their practice as can be realized from the representative response below:

PST3: Mentor teachers with their wealth of experience, possess extensive knowledge in pronunciation and other various subjects, and observe their lessons enrich our learning process.

As mentioned by PST5, their mentor teacher was highly knowledgeable about the *Foreign Language Proficiency* tests:

PST5: In high school, our mentor teacher exhibited a profound comprehension of the YDT exam content, effectively equipping students with knowledge about the tests.

The data analysis about mentor teachers' weaknesses regarding their teaching practices revealed that two participants mentioned only the strengths of the mentor teachers' teaching practices, stating they had not noticed any weaknesses. However, three participants perceived the mentor teachers' approach in their practice to be weak. A representative comment includes the following:

PST4: The weakness of mentor teachers is associated with using outdated teaching methods, probably influenced by their older age and experience. They may not be as familiar with online or web-based resources, which reflects a potential gap in adapting to more modern learning approaches.

Additionally, PST1 mentioned that their mentor teacher offered minimal support regarding understanding the subject matter, communication, lesson planning, and guidance:

PST1: First, mentor teachers shared limited knowledge in various aspects. Furthermore, there was a lack of opportunity to consider students' characteristics concerning subject matter and communication during

lessons. Additionally, we faced challenges in developing lesson plans due to insufficient guidance from mentor teachers.

Similarly, PST7 stated that their mentor teacher did not contribute to the lesson planning process and considered this aspect as a weakness of their mentor teacher:

PST7: The mentor teacher did not contribute to the lesson planning process, which I consider a significant weakness. This lack of engagement and support not only disappointed me but also dampened my enthusiasm, highlighting a critical area for improvement in the practicum experience.

5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of a university supervisor's practice in the Teaching Practicum Course?

The analysis of the responses to the current question will be presented separately, as it encompasses both the strengths and weaknesses of university supervisors' practices from the pre-service teachers' perspectives. Based on the outcomes obtained from the responses regarding the positive aspects of the university supervisors' performance during the practicum, it was revealed that PST1, PST2, PST3, PST4, PST5, and PST7 highlighted their supervisors' in-depth subject knowledge, their ability to provide valuable feedback, and their excellent communication skills. The representative comments include:

PST1: In general, our university supervisor demonstrated excellent subject knowledge. We consistently maintained effective communication with them.

PST3: Our university supervisor provides valuable feedback highlighting the weaknesses we may overlook from our perspective. Their subject knowledge and feedback-giving skills are outstanding. Additionally, their communication skills are excellent.

PST5: Primarily, I find their strength stems from their subject knowledge. During our initial meeting, they offered excellent knowledge, showing strong expertise in subject matter and communication skills. They possess comprehensive strength in both subject knowledge and communication skills.

On the other hand, PST6 mentioned occasional delays in providing feedback, expressing concerns about the impact of these delays on defining areas for improvement promptly:

PST6: *While they offer feedback after observing our lessons, there are occasional delays, as experienced during my middle school practicum, where feedback was received after two weeks. This delay hindered my immediate understanding of areas for improvement. Additionally, irregular practicum meetings create communication gaps, leaving us uncertain about expectations and actions.*

Moreover, three comments about the university supervisors' practice weaknesses were identified. For instance, PST1 desired to get feedback for the final assignment:

PST1: *After the practicum, they reviewed our files and assessed us. I would have appreciated it if they had also informed us about the assessment results. While I prefer receiving feedback immediately after observation, I would have liked them to provide feedback after reviewing the tasks as well.*

PST5 and PST6 expressed a desire for more frequent meetings with university supervisors throughout the practicum course. A representative comment is as follows:

PST5: *The weaknesses include being unable to conduct meetings sufficiently throughout the semester. This issue is partly attributed to the clash between our school lessons and practicum days, making it difficult to schedule regular meetings.*

On the other hand, PST4 mentioned attending the seminars that are held every week to be challenging:

PST4: *Our supervisor conducts a weekly seminar in the mornings. Meeting online would likely be more convenient for us. My weekly commute to campus solely for the teaching practicum seminar presents a challenge. Simplifying this process could significantly ease the burden.*

Four participants did not comment on the weaknesses of the supervisors' practice. They stated they had not found any weaknesses in their supervisors' practice.

6. In the context of the Teaching Practicum course, what are the advantages and limitations of the available resources?

The analysis of the data received for the current item is also described separately. The explanation will commence with the advantages of the available resources from the pre-service teachers' perspectives.

When commenting on the sixth interview question, PST1, PST3, and PST6 mentioned the technological facilities as the advantages of the available resources. The representative comments include the following:

PST1: All the school facilities were excellent, with smartboards that significantly made our performance easier.

PST6: Every classroom was equipped with a smartboard, allowing online materials to be incorporated.

However, PST7 mentioned that the smart boards in classrooms sometimes were unreliable due to malfunctions in the representative comment:

PST7: Smart boards are available at all levels in the school, but their functionality is inconsistent. Our mentor teacher has warned about potential malfunctions of the boards. Therefore, they advised us to come prepared with alternatives when planning to use PowerPoint presentation slides, acknowledging that the smart boards sometimes might not work.

According to PST1, PST2, PST3, PST4 and PST6, having one practicum term in a high school and one term in a middle school allowed them to observe and practice teaching a language to students of different age groups. Some of the comments expressed are as follows:

PST2: Working in a different school this semester was highly beneficial. It provided us with the opportunity to experience diverse environments. Moreover, it helped me clarify my preferences regarding the school environment I would like to work in.

PST4: The most significant aspect is the opportunity to practice in both middle and high school during different terms. This experience is valuable because being familiar with different age groups is essential for us.

On the other hand, while examining the comments regarding the limitations of the available resources, it was revealed that, according to PST2, PST3, PST4,

and PST5, using paper materials was challenging since there were no conveniences for making color photocopies:

PST3: Having color prints during lessons would be more motivating for students. We have access to black and white printers, but unfortunately, we cannot obtain color prints. Consequently, we are required to cover some expenses ourselves. For instance, if I need to bring a poster to the classroom, I must print it from a stationery store.

PST5: For example, there is a shortage of resources in schools. We cannot make photocopies as needed and must find alternative means to duplicate materials for distribution.

Moreover, PST3, PST5, and PST6 mentioned challenges with an extensive number of students in the classrooms. One of the representative comments includes the following:

PST6: Some classes have over thirty students, which sometimes poses challenges during class presentations. The large class size can impact the effectiveness of presentations and create difficulties in maintaining student engagement and interaction.

7. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the timing/scheduling of the Teaching Practicum Course?

The practicum course is conducted over a minimum of two terms within a year. The fall and spring terms are each designed to span 12 weeks, with a weekly allocation of 6 class hours in the practicum schools. Therefore, the Teacher Practicum consists of a total of 144 instructional hours, with 72 hours in each of the two terms.

While analyzing the feedback received for the seventh interview question, it was revealed that according to PST3, PST5, PST6 and PST7, the timing and scheduling of the practicum course were ideal. Two of the representative comments are as follows:

PST3: The timing is a strength because it provides opportunities for communication with our teachers and allows us to choose hours that align with our availability.

PST5: *Having it for twelve weeks and dividing it into six hours of observation is a well-planned structure.*

Conversely, PST1, PST2, and PST4 expressed that the length of the practicum was insufficient. Two representative comments are as follows:

PST1: *The time was very short, and I find it tiring to be in the final year. Our third year could have been dedicated to observation, allowing us to go for observations without the pressure of teaching. This would have been valuable preparation for our final year, where we focused more on applying what we had learned. Additionally, dedicating the third year to observation would have provided more opportunities to observe teachers and gain practical experience, which is limited in the final year.*

PST2: *I am not sure if six hours are sufficient; it does not seem enough. As I mentioned, you cannot see everything in just 6 hours at school, which might pose challenges later. While six hours might not be enough, having more hours could be challenging due to our classes. Two days of twelve hours each might have been ideal.*

Finally, as deduced by PST6, a shorter practicum duration might result in less productive time spent with students. At the same time, a more extended period could pose challenges regarding pre-service teachers' manageability with final assignments and exams.

8. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Teaching Practicum course in preparing pre-service teachers for the English language teaching profession?

The data on the eighth question regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the practicum in preparing pre-service teachers for the ELT profession disclosed that PST1, PST2, PST3, PST4, PST5 and PST7 perceived practicum as a course that contributed to their teaching experience. The representative comments regarding teaching experience include:

PST1: *We have learned the distinction between teaching and teaching English. By conducting lessons, we had enough time to put theory into practice. I had the opportunity to observe classes taught by two different English teachers, and I could distinguish between those applying the communicative approach and others applying the classical method of teaching. One teacher exclusively used English during lessons, while the other occasionally switched to Turkish. These observations contributed significantly to my knowledge and experience in teaching English.*

PST2: *We acquire teaching skills throughout the process, but occasionally, they might not align with our expectations. Before starting the practicum, I had doubts about my ability to teach. However, thanks to the course, I gained confidence, and the experience solidified in my mind.*

PST5: *The strength stems from the solid education we received at our university, which equips us with a specific skill set for the teaching profession. We are well-prepared with valuable theoretical knowledge.*

Likewise, the strengths of the practicum in preparing pre-service teachers for the ELT profession, according to PST3, is that the practicum, as a course, offers insights into administrative functions and the overall operation of the school:

PST3: *Indeed, the practice of preparing us for teaching before our student cards expire is a strong initiative in instilling this sense of readiness. It offers us valuable opportunities to anticipate challenges, get acquainted with the school environment, understand administrative processes, and observe the dynamics of the school community. It provides a unique social situation distinct from our regular sessions, allowing us to grasp communication nuances, school operations, and adherence to rules and guidelines.*

As also stated by PST4, the practicum course's strength is exposing participants to aspects not covered in faculty-based teacher training sessions:

PST4: *A notable strength is that we are exposed to various aspects not covered in our teacher training sessions at the faculty. This semester, I had an opportunity to interact with parents, an experience we seldom encounter in our faculty training. Being in such real-world situations enhances our understanding of effective communication with parents. This is the program's strongest aspect.*

In a similar vein, PST7 stated that practicum as a course highlighted the significance of thorough lesson preparation in the teaching profession with the following comment:

PST7: *The most valuable lesson I learned from the practicum course is the importance of always being prepared for every lesson. For instance, assuming you know the present simple tense and going to class without reviewing is unacceptable.*

However, the comments regarding the current question comprised the weaknesses of the practicum in preparing pre-service teachers for the ELT

profession as well. Overall, three participants mentioned the weaknesses regarding the current question. PST3 mentioned limitations, mentor teachers, and financial support in the comment below:

PST3: Limitations in schools and dissatisfaction with mentor teachers create potential problems during practice. Although it is a practicum course, providing financial support to cover expenses for materials and meals can increase our motivation and ease the pre-service teachers' burden who cover these needs out of their pocket.

PST4 stated that one of the weaknesses of the practicum as a course could be the lack of flexibility provided by the administrative staff of the school to pre-service teachers:

PST4: Pre-service teachers encounter restrictions, such as being unable to access certain privileges like entering the teachers' room or making photocopies though we are not school students but pre-service teachers.

As stated by PST5, the weaknesses of the practicum in preparing pre-service teachers for the ELT profession included challenges in implementing English-only classes due to schools' resistance and lack of readiness for this approach. Furthermore, the same participant suggested enhancing pre-service teachers' technological skills before the practicum course:

PST5: An area for improvement is the gap between schools and the program of the practicum. Schools, unaccustomed to having lessons entirely in English, hinder our ability to conduct lessons solely in English. Pre-service teachers need better preparation for this mismatch. This gap between schools and the practical program is an area for improvement. Further, we need to enhance our technological skills before practicing teaching through sessions at the university. The shift to new-generation questions requires better preparation emphasizing creativity, and the current teacher preparation program must also address this aspect.

9. How can the Teaching Practicum course be improved?

Finally, analysis of the responses to the ninth question indicated that PST1 and PST6 mentioned enhancing the communication between the practicum schools and the university. Their comments are as follows:

PST1: Challenges arise in the coordination between the university and the practicum school. Solving this problem requires a joint solution to eliminate the difficulties that arise. While acknowledging the inherent difficulties, it is essential to enhance communication and coordination for a more effective and streamlined process.

PST6: Improved communication is essential, and there is a need for regular weekly meetings involving schools, universities, and the Ministry of National Education. This integrated approach would create a more cohesive and synchronized system that addresses potential problems and promotes more effective teaching practice experiences.

Likewise, PST4 mentioned that pre-service teachers should receive better information about the school where they will practice teaching, including awareness of their rights:

PST4: Increased dissemination of information about the school where we will practice teaching is critical for us. This involves clearly understanding our rights and ensuring that school personnel, including the principal and teachers, are well-informed about pre-service teachers. This would contribute to a more integrated and supportive school environment, facilitating positive practical experiences.

On the other hand, PST1 first commented on the observation tasks. Furthermore, she suggested extending the duration of the practicum. She expressed the desire for inquiries about the teaching methods employed by mentor teachers before being assigned to them in the statement below:

PST1: The observation tasks are viewed as overly theoretical, lacking alignment with the main practicum themes. We suggest making tasks more realistic and closely related to the practicum's core themes. Additionally, there is a preference for introducing practicum in the third and fourth years, focusing on observation in the third year and practical training in the fourth year. We want our supervisors to inquire about the methods that mentor teachers apply at schools before assigning us to them; I think they can set a few criteria when choosing those teachers. This might allow us to select mentor teachers according to our preference regarding the teaching methods.

PST2, PST3, and PST7 mentioned mentor teachers while commenting on the current question with the representative comments:

PST3: The ability to evaluate or provide feedback on the mentor teachers we encounter in schools can serve as a motivating factor. Knowing that our constructive criticisms are acknowledged and can lead to positive changes creates a sense of empowerment and engagement in the practicum process, fostering a more collaborative and improvement-oriented environment.

PST7: The careful selection of mentor teachers is crucial to the success of the practicum. Collaborating with mentors who demonstrate excellence in their field, exhibit effective teaching methods, and serve as positive role models for individuals in teacher training is crucial. This ensures a supportive and enriching learning experience during the practicum.

Additionally, PST7 mentioned that informative meetings regarding the practicum procedures should be conducted before the start of both semesters. According to the participant, these briefings contribute to eliminating uncertainties in pre-service teachers' minds:

PST7: Our supervisor conducted a constructive briefing before going out for practicum the previous semester. Unfortunately, there was no briefing in the second semester of the practicum course.

PST6 advocated for commencing preparation activities for the practicum earlier than is currently experienced:

PST6: We could start preparation for teaching earlier by focusing first on developing and presenting lesson plans to our peers before we begin teaching in the classroom.

On the other hand, PST5 suggested that pre-service teachers should receive guidance on supporting students psychologically, offering practical advice to handle various issues:

PST5: We need more guidance on psychological support for students to address issues like bad habits and disinterest in lessons. Enhancing our ability to provide better guidance in these areas is crucial, considering the challenges students may face.

Finally, PST2 and PST3 expressed that receiving some financial support, such as covering travel expenses, meals, or printing costs for color materials, could positively impact the pre-service teachers' practicum experience.

PST2: There is a need for financial support, particularly for materials. The provision of some form of the fee would be essential for us.

4.4. Interviews with Mentors Teachers

To address the second research question, ‘How do mentor teachers perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching practicum course?’ the study explored the practicum course’s advantageous and limiting aspects from the mentor teachers’ perspective. It also focused on their recommendations for improving the practicum and gathered their insights into the practicum’s strengths and weaknesses through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five mentor teachers, and these interviews were structured around eight question items, as outlined in Appendix 3.

1. What are the most advantageous elements of the practicum experience for pre-service teachers?

The examination of responses to the initial question revealed that every mentor teacher emphasized the improvement in teaching skills among pre-service teachers within the classroom context. According to MT1 and MT3, the most significant aspect of the practicum for individuals in teacher training is the chance to observe and actively interact with students in a classroom environment. The representative comment includes:

MT1: The practicum’s most beneficial aspect for pre-service teachers is the opportunity to observe and communicate directly with students. Experiencing the classroom environment firsthand is crucial for thorough preparation beyond just online exposure and providing a clear understanding of the educational atmosphere.

Moreover, in the following comment, MT2 highlighted the improvement of teaching skills and subject knowledge as benefits of the practicum for pre-service teachers:

MT2: Throughout the practicum, pre-service teachers enhance their teaching skills by applying the subject knowledge acquired at the university. As mentors, we guide them throughout this process.

MT4 mentioned that establishing a dialogue with students is the most advantageous aspect of the practicum experience for pre-service teachers in the representative comment:

MT4: *The most significant advantage of the practicum is that pre-service teachers gain practical experience and establish one-on-one dialogues with students. Therefore, the most important benefit is establishing individual communication with students.*

MT5 mentioned the crucial role of the mentor teachers in the practicum course as can be realized from the following comment:

MT5: *Pre-service teachers gain valuable insight into their future roles as language teachers by observing experienced teachers and navigating real-life classroom situations. They benefit from the experience of mentors and learn to cope with the challenges that arise when teaching in the classroom. Feedback from mentor teachers during lesson presentations enables pre-service teachers to improve, and their overall development is further enhanced as they apply the lessons learned from these experiences.*

2. What are the weakest aspects of the Teaching Practicum Course from your perspective?

The results from the interviews regarding the second question about the weakest aspects of the practicum disclosed that according to MT1, initial placements to practicum schools might not align with pre-service teachers' initial expectations in the following comment:

MT1: *Despite the well-equipped schools and effective teaching opportunities in the city center, students may face challenges with their initial placements, particularly when they are assigned to schools with limited technological resources.*

In their comments, MT2 and MT5 pointed out the difficulty of heightened anxiety experienced by certain pre-service teachers at the commencement of the practicum:

MT2: *At the outset of the practicum, some pre-service teachers exhibit excessive anxiety, which may not be conducive to their overall performance and experience during the course.*

MT5: *One potential weakness is that an external observer in our classes might hinder pre-service teachers from fully demonstrating their potential. However, with time and experience, they overcome this anxiety and demonstrate their abilities more effectively, particularly after conducting several lessons independently.*

On the other hand, MT3 and MT4 mentioned the current teaching hours assigned for pre-service teachers in the following comments:

MT3: The number of teaching hours can be increased since pre-service teachers can only partially experience teaching due to insufficient hours. Pre-service teachers might need help figuring out what or how to teach. Personal difficulties can arise even though they have gained knowledge about teaching a language.

MT4: I would suggest increasing the frequency or extending the practicum duration by a few more hours, providing pre-service teachers with a more comprehensive and immersive experience.

3. From your perspective, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the practicum content?

Two responses to the question about the weaknesses of the practicum's content (i.e., material usage, body language, activities, textbooks, lesson delivery, error correction methods, questioning techniques, observation reports, creating lesson plans and materials, and conducting lesson presentations) were about the tasks and paper-filling procedures that pre-service teachers have to accomplish while observing lessons. MT1 and MT5 mentioned that tasks that pre-service teachers are required to complete cause various challenges that impact the observation process. Their comments are as follows:

MT1: The process of conducting observations is accompanied by the additional task of filling out some paperwork, a procedure that leads to delays and hinders the overall efficiency of the work. This administrative aspect can impede the execution of teaching activities during the practicum.

MT5: A notable weakness is the misalignment between the specific weekly tasks assigned to pre-service teachers and the actual teaching and observation activities. For example, they may receive a task related to evaluating a book for the week. Still, the assigned material might move away from using a textbook, creating a discrepancy between the designated task and the practical classroom situation.

MT3 mentioned another weakness of the practicum's content in the form of a request for university supervisors to visit pre-service teachers' lessons more frequently:

MT3: *I wonder if university supervisors could increase the frequency of their visits to schools and attend pre-service teachers' lessons more regularly. This would provide more consistent support and feedback to them.*

The same participant highlighted that pre-service teachers are engaged in one-on-one teaching, interactive educational games, and lesson preparation:

MT3: *I appreciate that pre-service teachers engage in one-on-one teaching with interactive educational games. Nevertheless, certain pre-service teachers lack readiness for their lessons. Enthusiasm is essential. When they are motivated, excellent outcomes can be achieved, but if the commitment is lacking, it does not yield positive results.*

The rest of the comments were revealed as the strength of the practicum content. MT4 assumed that the content of the practicum did not possess any weaknesses and that they did not encounter any challenges while mentoring pre-service teachers, as can be realized from the following comment:

MT4: *I did not observe any weaknesses in the content of the practicum. The pre-service teachers I mentored this semester consistently demonstrated readiness with lesson plans and conducted lessons promptly. They effectively utilized diverse materials, including videos and worksheets, in their lesson presentations.*

Three responses to the target question addressed the content of teaching practice. For instance, MT1 highlighted the opportunity for pre-service teachers to diversify their teaching methods in the following comment:

MT1: *Pre-service teachers can enhance and diversify their teaching methods through practical experience during the practicum. They gain insights into enriching their teaching practices by applying different approaches and strategies in the classroom.*

Another response about the strengths of the practicum content that comprised teaching practice came from MT2 with the comment as follows:

MT2: *As the weeks progressed, there was a noticeable improvement in their teaching skills, as well as their proficiency in preparing materials and conducting lessons, resulting in increased productivity.*

MT5 mentioned the strong knowledge of computer-assisted education that pre-service teachers possess in the following comment:

MT5: Pre-service teachers who come to the classroom with prepared lesson plans utilize their time efficiently, demonstrating proficiency in material preparation and effective knowledge presentation. Particularly in the area of digital awareness, they demonstrate in-depth knowledge of computer education.

4. In the context of the Teaching Practicum course, what are the advantages and limitations of the available resources?

The analysis of the responses to the fourth question showed that two mentor teachers pointed out the advantages of the available facilities in schools. For instance, MT3 mentioned that pre-service teachers should gain experience teaching a language in both a technologically well-equipped environment and an environment/classroom without modern tools:

MT3: In our schools, we are fortunate to have various facilities, including whiteboards and computers. However, not all schools are equipped with these resources. Disparities in facilities can pose challenges. Therefore, it is beneficial for teachers to experience diverse environments to adapt to different teaching conditions.

MT1, MT4, and MT5 highlighted the benefit of gaining teaching experience in both middle school and high school settings for each semester, as can be realized in the following representative comment:

MT5: The alternating practice of spending two semesters in two different schools with different age levels is valuable because teaching at these different levels presents distinct challenges. High and middle school students have varying potentials and behaviors, necessitating different approaches to classroom management. This arrangement is beneficial for pre-service teachers to understand teaching across different educational levels comprehensively.

However, MT4 mentioned the number of pre-service teachers assigned to one class as a limitation of the practicum in the following comment:

MT4: For instance, in a classroom with thirty-seven students, having six pre-service teachers brings the total to forty-three, which is significantly

crowded. The challenge is particularly evident when considering the interaction and management of such a large group within the classroom setting.

Additionally, MT1 mentioned a limitation related to dealing with large class sizes while practicing teaching in the comment below:

MT1: Pre-service teachers should experience both large and small class sizes. The only issue can be dealing with large class sizes while practicing teaching. Apart from that, I do not see significant problems.

5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the timing/scheduling of the Teaching Practicum Course?

The analysis of the responses to the fifth question disclosed that two mentor teachers pointed out the weaknesses of the timing/scheduling of the practicum course. For example, MT1 highlighted a limitation regarding the scheduling of the practicum, which coincides with exam weeks in both semesters, and the comment is as follows:

MT1: Practicum hours always coincide with our two exam weeks in both semesters. We have standard exams in high schools, so I may have to invigilate a physics exam. Of course, pre-service teachers will also gain experience in observing exams, but within a week, while they have to attend and observe six hours of classes, they might have to spend four hours taking exams. This automatically becomes a disadvantage for them.

MT4 mentioned that she had a class with thirty-seven students and with six pre-service teachers, the total number became forty-three, which made the classroom significantly crowded:

MT4: The optimal situation would involve either decreasing the quantity of pre-service teachers assigned to a single mentor teacher or increasing the number of class hours each pre-service teacher is involved in teaching. Such a modification would improve the overall quality of the teaching practice experience.

MT2 considered the timing and scheduling of the practicum course sufficient, whereas MT3 and MT5 expressed that it would be advantageous for pre-service teachers to have more time dedicated to practicing teaching:

MT3: *Although the idea of extending the duration of the practicum is sound, I think that practical limitations currently prevent its implementation.*

MT5: *While twelve weeks are considered appropriate for the time frame of the practicum, providing additional opportunities for pre-service teachers to practice teaching more would enhance their overall experience.*

6. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Teaching Practicum course in preparing pre-service teachers for the English language teaching profession?

When providing input on the current question, all five mentor teachers highlighted the positive aspects of the practicum in preparing pre-service teachers for a career in ELT. To illustrate, MT1 mentioned that, in addition to engaging with students and delivering lessons, pre-service teachers acquire an understanding of the school environment:

MT1: *Teachers observe and comprehend the communication channels between the school administration and teachers and the interactions among teachers. This observational phase prepares them to begin teaching with an awareness of these communication dynamics.*

MT2 suggested that pre-service teachers engage in a thorough reflection on both the weaknesses and strengths of their performance following the practicum:

MT2: *If our pre-service teachers engage in reflective practices, assess their strengths and weaknesses after completing their practicum, and consciously prepare themselves for the teaching profession, they can effectively address any identified weaknesses.*

As for MT4, the effective element of the practicum in equipping pre-service teachers for the profession of English language teaching lies in the practical experience acquired during the practicum:

MT4: *The practicum's effectiveness in preparing pre-service teachers for their prospective profession stems from offering practical experience and fostering opportunities to enhance effective communication and teaching skills. It enables them to translate their theoretical knowledge into practical strategies for delivering information to students within a natural classroom environment.*

MT5 mentioned that initially, pre-service teachers tend to use complex language. However, through observation, they realize the importance of simplifying their language to communicate with students. The comment is as follows:

MT5: When pre-service teachers initially come to school, they often communicate using more complex language, demonstrating their knowledge from an academic standpoint rather than a teacher's perspective. However, through observation, they realize the importance of using more straightforward language and basic sentences when interacting with students. This understanding helps them adjust their communication style better to match the student's level of language proficiency.

On the other hand, MT3 mentioned the textbooks used in schools as a concern while commenting on the target questions with the following response:

MT3: The effectiveness of teaching practices depends on the school and the textbooks used for English language lessons. The textbooks may need more detailed descriptions of lesson steps and stages, posing a potential challenge for students.

7. What are your thoughts regarding the number of teacher candidates you are responsible for as a mentor teacher?

The findings of responses obtained for the seventh question indicated that three mentor teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the number of pre-service teachers assigned to one mentor teacher. One of the representative comments is as follows:

MT1: With six pre-service teachers, it has become challenging for me to manage and organize guidance since making one-on-one communication has become more complex. Having four pre-service teachers under mentorship was considered ideal.

Likewise, MT5 explained that six pre-service teachers with one mentor teacher in the first semester caused a challenge. Their comment includes the following:

MT5: In the first semester this year, there were six pre-service teachers and one mentor teacher, which was a high number. Having all of them enter the classroom environment simultaneously limited the opportunities we could provide for them. With fewer pre-service teachers, they would have had more opportunities to teach and gain more experience. The number in my

case was reduced to four pre-service teachers in the second term, which seemed more appropriate to allow them more time to observe and practice teaching.

In a similar vein, MT4 stated that having six pre-service teachers is considered excessive, as it restricts the opportunities for each individual to participate actively in teaching:

MT4: Having six pre-service teachers is considered excessive because, when looking at the class schedule, it is apparent that on Monday, two pre-service teachers come, followed by two on Tuesday and two on Wednesday. While each day has a different set, they also have their session schedules. For instance, on Monday, I had six pre-service teachers, and ensuring that each pre-service teacher had sufficient opportunities for communication and teaching practice posed a challenge.

Conversely, MT3 noted that previously, twelve pre-service teachers were allocated to a single mentor teacher, a quantity deemed excessive. Presently, assigning six pre-service teachers to one mentor teacher is considered acceptable:

MT3: The current number of pre-service teachers assigned to one mentor teacher is acceptable. They come in groups of two or three every few days, which is now considered normal. In the past, there were cases when twelve of them were assigned to one mentor teacher, which was considered too many. Being one teacher in charge of twelve students was not an easy task. The current arrangement of six students is considered suitable.

8. How can the Teaching Practicum course be improved?

In response to the final interview question, MT1 proposed letting pre-service teachers choose their mentor teachers instead of being assigned by the university. However, it was noted that there was some uncertainty regarding the feasibility or potential challenges associated with this suggested approach:

MT1: Pre-service teachers may come at their discretion before the practice. At the university, they are assigned which school they will go to and mentor teachers they will be assigned to. Would it be better if they came to school by choosing their mentor teacher? I am not sure. Would it be possible? Will this lead to equal distribution? I wonder if other problems might arise.

On the other hand, MT3 suggested enhancing communication between school and university. The comment is as follows:

MT3: *The communication between mentor teachers and the university can be enhanced. For instance, mentor teachers can visit the university, where discussions and meetings can take place. Indeed, mentor teachers can attend the university for such interactions and discussions before the practicum starts. Over time, we might overlook our weaknesses, especially in teaching, and by implementing continuous reminders, we can remain more connected with the university and address our weaknesses. A stronger link between the university and the teachers is necessary.*

MT4 and MT5 suggested increasing the productivity of pre-service teachers either by reducing the number of pre-service teachers assigned to one mentor teacher or increasing the number of observation and teaching hours. The representative comment includes the following:

MT5: *Firstly, the number of lessons assigned to pre-service teachers for observation and presentation could be increased. Pre-service teachers can enhance their skills by engaging in more practice. The pre-service teachers' teaching skills could be significantly enhanced. They were encouraged to engage in more hands-on practice and with constructive feedback on their performances. Otherwise, pre-service teachers are mostly busy observing our lessons and taking notes.*

4.5. Interviews with University Supervisors

In line with the third research question “How do university supervisors perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching practicum course?”, the study examined supervisors’ perspectives on the advantages and challenges of the practicum course, along with their suggestions for enhancements. The investigation also concentrated on their recommendations for improving the procedures and delved into their observations regarding the advantages and limitations of the practicum through semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews with four university supervisors were conducted based on eight questions (Appendix 4).

1. What are the most advantageous elements of the practicum experience for pre-service teachers?

The following analysis is presented in accordance with the comments on the first question. According to US1, US3 and US4, the most advantageous element of the practicum experience for pre-service teachers is an opportunity to observe the authentic classroom setting:

US1: *From the pre-service teachers' perspective, the practicum course's most beneficial aspects encompass the opportunities to observe the authentic classroom environment where they will eventually teach. Additionally, this experience provides them valuable insight into all aspects of the school beyond students and classes, including school administration, official day activities, and an understanding of how the academic calendar works.*

US3: *The most beneficial aspects for pre-service teachers involve direct experiences within the school environment. This includes the opportunity to witness and immerse themselves in the conditions of the national education system, classroom settings, and teachers' working conditions in national education. It is crucial for them to evaluate whether they can engage in the teaching profession enthusiastically. Practicum is significant in helping them make informed decisions about their career path.*

In the following comment, US4 noted the chance for pre-service teachers to put into practice the theoretical knowledge acquired at the university in a real classroom setting:

US4: *The practicum course seeks to familiarize pre-service teachers with genuine classroom settings, bridging theoretical knowledge obtained from the university with practical application. While micro-teaching with groupmates in a controlled setting has limits, the practicum course immerses pre-service teachers in natural school environments, enabling them to engage with students in actual classrooms and implement authentic activities. This makes the practicum course particularly beneficial.*

Likewise, US2 mentioned that pre-service teachers engage in theoretical coursework at the university, and the practicum course provides practical application:

US2: *Pre-service teachers undergo theoretical courses at the university, and the practicum course provides them with opportunities to apply that knowledge in practice. However, it is essential to acknowledge that practical experiences may reveal shortcomings, as only some things align precisely with theoretical learning. Therefore, these experiences contribute to the knowledge and understanding of issues related to these practical challenges.*

2. What are the weakest aspects of the Teaching Practicum Course from your perspective?

While commenting on the weakest aspects of the practicum course, US1 expressed the view that pre-service teachers should encounter a wider variety of classroom environments and engage in increased teaching practice:

US1: A two-semester duration is insufficient for pre-service teacher training. The challenge arises from the considerable number of pre-service teachers, limiting their opportunities for practical teaching. The large group sizes result in reduced teaching assignments for each individual, hindering their ability to gain extensive teaching experience. Additionally, the substantial size of these groups poses challenges for mentors and faculty members in effectively observing and evaluating individual pre-service teachers' teaching practices.

US2 stated that he did not perceive significant weaknesses in the practicum. However, he highlighted the challenge of scheduling regular weekly sessions due to the busyness of pre-service teachers and university supervisors in the comment below:

US2: The practicum is generally vigorous without significant weaknesses. For instance, despite having six practicum hours and the intention of conducting separate sessions with pre-service teachers every week, the feasibility of weekly meetings is constrained. This limitation arises from the busy schedules of pre-service teachers and university supervisors. However, when we meet, we use the opportunity to exchange our experiences.

US3 highlighted the discrepancy between regulations mandating extensive teaching hours for pre-service teachers and their limited opportunities to observe their mentor teachers:

US3: Our pre-service teachers claim that they are unable to observe their mentor teachers sufficiently, and at times, not at all. They express the challenge of observing more experienced teachers in the profession while fulfilling their teaching duties. The tasks involve observation, form completion, conducting evaluations, and numerous observations. They frequently struggle to fulfill these tasks due to limitations in conducting observations. The regulation mandates an unrealistic number of teaching hours, making it difficult for pre-service teachers to fulfill these requirements. Reviewing and updating these regulations to establish a more practical framework is crucial. While pre-service teachers are consistently

involved in tasks such as preparing lesson plans, creating teaching materials, and conducting classroom teaching, it is equally important to provide them with opportunities to observe their mentor teachers during practicum. There is a necessity to guarantee that our pre-service teachers encounter sufficient opportunities for observation during their school visits.

Finally, US4 mentioned that challenges arise due to pre-service teachers' additional tasks and workloads, limiting the time available for teaching.

US4: From a program perspective, some of our colleagues, who are university supervisors, suggest that pre-service teachers should be provided with more teaching opportunities. However, a realization of this recommendation faces challenges as pre-service teachers, and we, the supervisors, have additional tasks and workloads. Due to constraints, we can only fulfill tasks to a limited extent, as exemplified by completing only four out of 12 tasks this semester.

3. From your perspective, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the program content?

While responding to the third interview question, US1 stated that the vital aspect of the practicum stems from granting pre-service teachers the chance to participate in language teaching practice, allowing them to observe and reflect on their and their peers' performances:

US1: The strength of the practicum stems from its content, which provides valuable opportunities for our pre-service teachers to participate in language teaching practices actively. Through this hands-on experience, they not only teach but also have the chance to observe themselves and their peers in action. This dual perspective fosters a more comprehensive and reflective learning experience, allowing for a deeper understanding and improvement of their language teaching skills.

Conversely, US1 identified the assessment process in relation to pre-service teachers as a weak aspect of the practicum's content. The comment is as follows:

US1: A weak aspect is the absence of an environment where observations are subjected to essential analysis or evaluation. In essence, we consistently assign high grades to pre-service teachers, and no one fails the course. This implies that all graduates are regarded as perfect teachers, which, in reality, is not true. This highlights a flaw in the university's assessment process, where evaluations may not accurately reflect the actual teaching capabilities of pre-service teachers.

US2 mentioned textbooks, material preparation, and multimedia tools in the comment, and the response is as follows:

US2: Pre-service teachers typically do not prefer using the textbook when reaching out to us. It is uncommon for them to say, "Let me teach the next topic from the textbook." Instead, they generally aim to demonstrate their skills in material preparation. They independently prepare their teaching materials and often incorporate multimedia tools into their presentations.

On the other hand, US3 stated that the practicum as a process contributes to the elevation of confidence and awareness among pre-service teachers in relation to the teaching profession. Their comment is as follows:

US3: Even if pre-service teachers cannot directly observe the schools they visit, they thoroughly grasp the teachers' correct behaviors through theoretical knowledge, guidance, and task content. In their final stages before graduation, there is an elevation in their levels of realization in teaching processes. Consequently, the theoretical knowledge accumulated over three or four years is applied practically. During this period, they notice occasional contradictions between theory and practice. This realization leads them to understand that theory is essential, but in real-life teaching, adapting to the specific conditions of the school is crucial. This awareness instills confidence as they navigate these challenges.

On the other hand, according to US3, the weakness in the practicum content arises from the challenges faced in acquiring sufficient observational experience:

US3: A notable weakness lies in the limited opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in observation. Due to various constraints, they may face challenges in obtaining sufficient observational experience, which may impact the depth and diversity of what they learn from the practicum.

Finally, US4 underscored the importance of pre-service teachers being discerning in selecting materials, highlighting the significance of meaningful content:

US4: Pre-service teachers frequently bring materials to classrooms, often sourced from the Internet. I consistently emphasize the value of the meticulous material selection, highlighting the significance of content and meaning relevance to the students' age and their language proficiency. For example, utilizing YouTube videos necessitates knowledge and skill in proper resource selection, considering all the factors.

4. In the context of the Teaching Practicum course, what are the advantages and limitations of the available resources?

While commenting on the fourth question of the semi-structured interview regarding the advantages and limitations of the available resources, US1 mentioned that pre-service teachers receive comprehensive information right from the start of the semester in the following comment:

US1: Our pre-service teachers receive comprehensive information right from the beginning of the semester. All necessary materials are provided at the start, ensuring they commence the term well-informed and acquainted with the system. Rather than a learn-as-you-go approach, we conduct thorough meetings at the outset involving pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and faculty members.

Additionally, US1 pointed out the limited exposure of pre-service teachers to diverse school types in the response below:

US1: The weakness is the limited exposure of pre-service teachers to various types of schools. They cannot conduct observation activities in distinct institutions such as vocational, religious, Anatolian, or science high schools. The primary hindrance is the insufficient time allocated for such comprehensive exposure, which prevents them from gaining a nuanced understanding of the unique dynamics and practices within each school type.

US2, US3 and US4 stated that the opportunity to practice teaching in a middle school for one term and in a high school for another is a perfect chance for pre-service teachers to observe and instruct students belonging to diverse age groups. A representative comment is as follows:

US3: It is advantageous for pre-service teachers to undergo one semester of experience in a middle school and another in a high school. This dual experience allows them to gain insights into both educational levels, providing a well-rounded understanding. It is a suitable approach since it ensures pre-service teachers acquire valuable experiences for their professional development.

While commenting on the current question, US2 mentioned a perceived lack of information despite the efforts made through WhatsApp groups:

US2: Faculty members are sometimes included in WhatsApp groups where extensive information is shared. For instance, receiving a lengthy Word document of thirty or forty pages may not pose issues if read thoroughly. However, highlighting and sharing the most important points in a separate information note would be greatly helpful to us. This approach could help reduce potential challenges.

US3 mentioned that some schools prevent pre-service teachers from entering teachers' rooms, potentially causing discomfort:

US3: When planning the construction of the school buildings, there was no consideration for collaboration with universities, where forty, fifty, or sixty pre-service teachers would attend for practicum. Such planning has not been undertaken within the National Education system, even for new school buildings. It is worth researching from this perspective. It can indeed be considered as a weakness.

While commenting on the current question, US4 emphasized offering pre-service teachers opportunities to observe multiple teachers' classes, highlighting the diverse classroom dynamics:

US4: I advocate for providing pre-service teachers the opportunity to attend at least two or three different teachers, as different classes entail distinct dynamics. Observing lessons conducted by various teachers would enhance the pre-service teachers' knowledge and experience in teaching and classroom management. This exposure would be beneficial, allowing them to witness diverse situations and approaches to managing different age groups.

5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the timing/scheduling of the Teaching Practicum Course?

When commenting on the fifth question, US1 expressed uncertainty, indicating hesitancy in her response:

US1: The teaching practicum could be extended in the second semester of the third academic year. However, the implementation of such an extension is uncertain, especially considering existing practice courses like micro-teaching. Speculating further on this matter is challenging, and I do not have a definitive answer.

US2, US3 and US4 stated that the twelve-week practicum with six weekly lessons each pre-service teacher conducts is sufficient:

US2: The weekly practice sessions of six hours strike a balance that appears sufficient. This duration is neither too limited nor excessive. It is appropriate since, within this timeframe, there seems to be sufficient room to cover all necessary aspects. A well-structured and focused six-hour session can effectively accommodate all essential components.

US3: A span of twelve weeks, equating to six hours per week, is a robust seventy-two hours for one semester. Doubling this for two semesters results in a substantial one hundred forty-four hours. This allocation, if used correctly, is more than satisfactory. We find it commendable, and the outcomes from our observations generally leave us fulfilled.

US4 stated that in the fourth year, students are adequately prepared for the practical application course, and due to a lighter course load, students can be more motivated for practicum.

US4: Students are best prepared for the teaching practicum application course in their fourth year, and the lighter course load during this period enhances students' motivation for the practicum. In the second year, the focus is on theoretical courses, making micro-teaching less beneficial. In-class applications alongside method courses prove valuable in the third year. Therefore, having a practicum in the fourth year is the best option.

6. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Teaching Practicum course in preparing pre-service teachers for the English language teaching profession?

When commenting on the sixth question, US1 emphasized the importance of having standardized practice procedures for all pre-service teachers and assumed that this standardization would create a unified and equitable learning environment for all participants:

US1: When dealing with a group of 100 pre-service teachers, it becomes essential to establish a consistent standard in training methods. This uniform approach is necessary because each pre-service teacher engages with diverse schools, mentor teachers, and university supervisors. Implementing a standardized framework ensures that all pre-service teachers within the group receive a cohesive and equitable training experience, fostering a shared understanding and application of methods despite variations in their school and mentorship contexts.

According to US1, the strengths of the practicum stem from providing pre-service teachers with first-hand experience in the natural classroom environment:

US1: Practicum offers pre-service teachers direct experience in a natural classroom environment, introduces them to the experiences of mentor teachers, and allows them to observe their interactions with students. In addition, it provides insight into the functioning of school administration and the dynamics of educational processes, including problem identification and resolution. Pre-service teachers can witness mentor teachers solving problems and gain valuable knowledge about successful solutions and approaches when faced with challenges.

Three university supervisors expressed that the effectiveness of practicum courses in preparing pre-service teachers for the ELT profession stems from affording them the chance to witness and engage with genuine classroom environments. According to US2, pre-service teachers develop specific language teaching skills, as can be realized from the following comment:

US2: Pre-service teachers acquire the essential skills to develop lesson plans, carefully follow planned steps, and develop effective classroom behavior. They engage in reflective practices by assessing their performance, examining activities, assessing classroom language, and sharpening classroom management techniques.

US4 emphasized the critical importance of effective classroom management and content selection in the comment below:

US4: Our commitment to preparing pre-service teachers is evident in our comprehensive training program, which focuses on essential aspects such as classroom management and content selection. We emphasize the importance of careful preparation, including thoughtful planning and selecting instructional materials, to ensure they are effective when entering the classroom.

Additionally, US4 mentioned the significance of granting pre-service teachers constructive feedback, which contributes to enhancing their teaching experience:

US4: A notable strength is our capacity to offer constructive feedback to pre-service teachers regarding the materials they design, lesson plans, and lesson presentations. This feedback is a valuable tool in enabling them to identify areas for improvement in their teaching practices.

US3 mentioned the challenges they encounter while covering the course materials every week in the following comment:

US3: A weakness we encounter is the occasional inability to cover all the materials every week. For instance, the practicum course was conducted remotely in a semester, and attendance was not always feasible. Those who could not attend had to watch recorded videos later and submit their reflections on the discussed topics as assignments.

7. As a university supervisor, what are your thoughts regarding the number of teacher candidates you are responsible for?

The examination of the comments on the seventh question revealed that US2 and US4 considered the present number of pre-service teachers allocated to a single supervisor as satisfactory. In contrast, US1 stated that the number of pre-service teachers under the supervision of one instructor was high. This university supervisor mentioned the challenge of conducting multiple observations for each pre-service teacher in the following comment:

US1: Currently, one university supervisor guides a relatively high number of pre-service teachers, totaling 12. These students are divided into two groups, each consisting of six pre-service teachers. The notable increase in the number of pre-service teachers has posed challenges for the supervisor in conducting multiple observations of their lessons.

US3 perceived the number of pre-service teachers assigned to one supervisor as acceptable, acknowledging the challenge encountered during the assessment procedure:

US3: The department maintains an average of twelve pre-service teachers per instructor, which is reasonable. However, the assessment process is time-consuming since it includes daily and general evaluations for each pre-service teacher and feedback from mentor teachers calculated through online platforms. The process is laborious, prompting a search for more practical methods. The issue of separate practicum reports is raised, emphasizing the need for precise assessment criteria.

US2 and US4 perceived the number of pre-service teachers under their supervision as reasonable with the following comments:

US2: Twelve pre-service teachers are acceptable for effective supervision. However, exceeding this number could lead to challenges in providing comprehensive support and feedback to each individual.

US4: Having twelve pre-service teachers under supervision is quite acceptable, especially compared to the experience when I had to supervise sixty-five students. Although twelve people are feasible, it is crucial to stay within this number to ensure adequate supervision.

8. How can the Teaching Practicum course be improved?

Four university supervisors commented differently on the eighth interview question. US1 pointed out the paradoxical nature of the practicum and mentioned that resolving this issue requires careful course evaluation by mentor teachers and university supervisors:

US1: I am not an expert in it, but there is a notable paradox in the practicum; practicum is both a crucial and relatively permissive course for pre-service teachers to pass. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive evaluation by both mentor teachers and university supervisors to ensure a thorough examination and resolution of this discrepancy.

US2 highlighted the importance of the initial moments in a lesson, considering the first ten minutes crucial for engaging students. This supervisor suggested that pre-service teachers should be encouraged to choose appropriate content and examples when formulating lesson plans:

US2: As university supervisors, we should motivate pre-service teachers to meticulously choose content and examples when crafting lesson plans, focusing on enriching their learning experience. I advocate prioritizing crucial elements over comprehensive coverage in teaching programs and emphasize quality over quantity.

While commenting on the current question, US3 highlighted the need to improve assessment criteria for the teaching practicum course, suggesting that this process should be more explicit:

US3: *The assessment criteria require refinement for greater clarity. There should be a collaborative effort to establish more explicit criteria and, if necessary, solicit supervisors' input. Achieving standard or closely aligned evaluation criteria would enhance the coherence of our evaluations, facilitating a more streamlined and effective process.*

US4, from an alternative perspective, pointed out limited discussion of contents in sessions, emphasizing the importance of this stage:

US4: *We do not discuss the contents of the lesson presentation much in sessions. Selecting appropriate content is one of the stages I greatly value. Our methods instructors may have more knowledge about this subject, especially in the technical aspects, such as preparing lesson plans, framing activities, and writing them appropriately. Enriching our students' general knowledge is possible by diversifying the topics and themes in the course content.*

4.6. Stakeholders' Perspectives on EFL Teaching Practicum:

Alignments and Divergences

The current chapter seeks to respond to the fourth research question “How do the key stakeholders’ opinions on the teaching practicum course align or diverge?” through synthesizing and analyzing feedback from key stakeholders involved in a teaching practicum program, focusing on pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors’ perspectives, this research aims to identify best practices, challenges, and areas for improvement in practicum experiences. Through a comprehensive review of stakeholders’ comments on semi-structured interview questions, the analysis identifies common themes and divergent views regarding the program’s structure, content, resources, scheduling, and overall effectiveness in preparing pre-service teachers for the English language teaching profession. The stakeholders’ insights are categorized into strengths and weaknesses, with a particular emphasis on areas of alignment and divergence across different aspects of the practicum experience. This structured approach ensures a holistic understanding of the practicum’s impact on pre-service teachers’ development, highlighting areas of agreement and contention that inform suggestions for program improvement.

As mentioned previously, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven pre-service teachers, five mentor teachers, and four university

supervisors. The interviews were carried out based on several question items, slightly different for each stakeholder. However, the findings regarding alignment and divergence in stakeholders' comments are presented jointly along with interview questions below:

Question 1: What are the most advantageous elements of the practicum experience for pre-service teachers?

While discussing the first interview question about the most beneficial aspects of the practicum, pre-service teachers pointed out the advantages of the practicum experience, such as problem-solving, effective time management, self-discovery, and exposure to diverse teaching environments. They highlighted the valuable experience and insights gained across various educational levels. Conversely, mentor teachers focused on the importance of direct interaction with students and the hands-on experience provided by the practicum. They appreciated the role of mentorship in enhancing skills and the opportunity for pre-service teachers to engage with real classroom dynamics. Mentor teachers also noted the value of their feedback, considering it essential for comprehensive teacher development. Lastly, university supervisors also emphasized the importance of genuine classroom exposure and gaining a broad understanding of school operations. They considered the practicum a critical time for evaluating career paths and making informed decisions, effectively linking theoretical knowledge with practical experience.

➤ **Alignment of viewpoints regarding the most advantageous elements of the practicum:**

All stakeholders agree on the importance of real-world application and the integration of practical experience with theoretical learning. They also agreed on effective mentor guidance and the value of receiving and providing feedback that aligns with their viewpoints.

➤ **Divergences of viewpoints regarding the most advantageous elements of the practicum:**

Pre-service teachers focused more on self-discovery and managing diverse teaching levels, mentor teachers on skill development and direct student interaction,

and university supervisors on the broader implications for career and bridging theory with practice.

The analysis reveals a unified recognition of the teaching practicum's critical role in bridging theoretical knowledge with practical teaching experience, underscoring its essential contribution to the comprehensive development of pre-service teachers. This alignment across all stakeholder groups highlights the practicum's effectiveness in preparing future educators through a blend of real-world application, mentorship, and feedback mechanisms. Despite variations in focus among different groups, the collective feedback emphasizes the practicum's value in fostering professional growth and readiness for the teaching profession.

Question 2: What are the weakest aspects of the Teaching Practicum Course from the perspective of pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors?

➤ **Alignments of stakeholders' viewpoints on the weakest aspects of the practicum:**

The common views of pre-service teachers and university supervisors on the teaching practicum course uncovered discussions regarding insufficient duration and limited teaching opportunities. Two stakeholders highlighted the issue of insufficient duration and limited teaching opportunities. Pre-service teachers mentioned limited duration as a constraint, which was echoed by university supervisors who also cited insufficient duration and limited teaching opportunities. This shared concern suggests an alignment on the need for extended practicum periods and more opportunities for hands-on teaching experiences.

➤ **Divergences of stakeholders' viewpoints on the weakest aspects of the practicum:**

Pre-service teachers identify a range of challenges including portfolio challenges, and communication gaps among peers which occur due to the extensive number of pre-service teachers assigned to one mentor teacher, and varying expectations from mentor teachers and supervisors. Additionally, they struggle with classroom adaptation, indicating a need for better preparatory training and clearer communication channels with peers.

On the other hand, mentor teachers' concerns were more focused on limited technological resources and pre-service teachers' challenges such as anxiety caused by external observations and insufficient teaching hours.

University supervisors emphasized challenges in conducting observations due to the large number of pre-service teachers under supervision, suggesting a need for improved methods or tools for observation to enhance the feedback and guidance process.

While there is common ground regarding the need for more time and opportunities within the practicum, the unique concerns of each group illuminate the multifaceted nature of practicum challenges. Pre-service teachers concentrate on the educational and communication aspects, mentor teachers on resource and personal issues, and university supervisors on the structural and procedural dimensions of the practicum. Ultimately, it can be concluded that while there are shared concerns among the stakeholders, the diversity of their roles brings distinct challenges to the forefront. To address these issues comprehensively, a holistic approach that considers all stakeholders' viewpoints is essential for enhancing the effectiveness of teaching practicums.

Question 3: From your perspective, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the program content?

➤ **Alignments of stakeholders' viewpoints on the strengths of the program content:**

Pre-service teachers and university supervisors both recognized material preparation as a strength of the practicum course. Mentor teachers also highlighted proficient preparation and diverse materials as key strengths.

Pre-service teachers and mentor teachers appreciated the diversity of methods and effective feedback mechanisms which suggests an alignment in recognizing the value of varied teaching approaches and the importance of feedback in the learning process.

➤ **Divergences of stakeholders' viewpoints on the strengths of the program content:**

Pre-service teachers value the reflection process, self-evaluation, peer evaluations, and supportive seminars, emphasizing the importance of reflective practices and support systems in their training.

However, mentor teachers focus on pre-service teachers' readiness for lessons, developing lesson plans, and in-depth digital awareness, highlighting the preparation and technological aspects of the program.

University supervisors' emphasis was on active language teaching, hands-on experience, dual perspective observation, and theoretical knowledge application, pointing to a focus on practical teaching skills and theoretical foundations.

➤ **Alignments of stakeholders' viewpoints on the weaknesses of the program content:**

There is a notable alignment in recognizing the misalignment between tasks and actual classroom situations as mentioned by mentor teachers and the unrealistic weekly tasks noted by pre-service teachers. This indicates a shared concern about the relevance and applicability of program tasks to real teaching environments.

➤ **Divergences of stakeholders' viewpoints on the weaknesses of the program content:**

Pre-service teachers expressed concerns about financial constraints, mentor teacher resistance to updated methodology, lack of feedback on applied materials and methods, insufficient assistance from mentor teachers, and textbook weaknesses, pointing to areas needing improvement in support, resources, and instructional materials.

On the other hand, mentor teachers' concerns were more focused on the operational aspects, such as inconsistent university supervisor visits, which could affect the continuity and quality of mentorship and oversight.

University supervisors highlighted issues like limited observation opportunities, inflated evaluation grades, reliance on Internet-sourced materials, and insufficient emphasis on material selection, underscoring the need for more rigorous and comprehensive observation and evaluation practices.

The analysis highlights both agreement on key strengths and divergences in perceived weaknesses of the program content among stakeholders. This mix of consensus and variance underscores the challenges in fully meeting the diverse needs and expectations within the teaching practicum framework. Despite these differences, the common ground identified offers a solid base for further refining and improving the program, with an aim toward a more unified and effective approach to teacher education.

Question 4: In the context of the Teaching Practicum course, what are the advantages and limitations of the available resources?

➤ **Alignments of stakeholders' viewpoints on the advantages of the available resources:**

All stakeholder groups appreciated the opportunity to experience different school settings and age groups and highlighted the benefits of whiteboards.

➤ **Divergences of stakeholders' viewpoints on the advantages of the available resources:**

University supervisors highlighted the comprehensive informational meetings provided at the start and the availability of school facilities, highlighting the organizational and support aspects of the practicum.

➤ **Alignments of stakeholders' viewpoints on the limitations of the available resources:**

Both pre-service teachers and mentor teachers pointed out the issue of crowded classrooms and the high number of pre-service teachers per classroom, which complicates interaction and management, indicating shared concerns about the impact of class sizes on the teaching and learning environment.

➤ **Divergences of stakeholders' viewpoints on the limitations of the available resources:**

Pre-service teachers noted specific resource shortages, such as limited color prints and photocopy resources, and mentioned the challenge of large class sizes in

maintaining student engagement, focusing on the material and logistical constraints of their teaching practice.

On the contrary, mentor teachers' concerns were about the significantly crowded classrooms and the logistical difficulties of managing a large number of pre-service teachers, emphasizing the operational challenges in teaching and learning.

University supervisors highlighted limitations such as limited exposure to different types of schools, lack of dedicated space for pre-service teachers in schools, and restricted opportunities to observe a variety of teachers, pointing to structural and systemic issues within the practicum setup.

The stakeholders' views on the practicum resources show a mix of agreement and differences, highlighting the complexity of aligning resources with diverse needs. While there is a shared appreciation for the educational settings and tools, differing concerns about resource limitations and structural challenges underscore the need for targeted improvements. The alignment on issues like overcrowded classrooms points to a recognized need for enhancing the practicum environment. Streamlining these varied perspectives is crucial for optimizing the practicum, aiming to offer a comprehensive and inclusive experience for all involved.

Question 5: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the timing/scheduling of the Teaching Practicum Course?

➤ **Alignments of stakeholders' viewpoints on the strengths of the timing/scheduling of the practicum course:**

Some pre-service teachers appreciated the program's flexibility, and structure, and perceived the duration to be adequate. One of the mentor teachers also considered the scheduling reasonable, suggesting it generally meets the expectations for practicum timing. Similarly, university supervisors highlighted the balanced six-hour sessions, a twelve-week duration that they find reliable, and good preparation for the fourth year, indicating satisfaction with the comprehensiveness and structure of the program.

➤ **Divergences of stakeholders' viewpoints on the weaknesses of the timing/scheduling of the practicum course:**

Pre-service teachers' concerns included the actual shortness of the program, increased pressure during the final year, and insufficient observation hours, indicating a desire for a more extended and immersive experience.

According to mentor teachers, challenges included scheduling conflicts with exams and the impracticality of managing a large number of pre-service teachers, especially if considering extending the duration, pointing to logistical constraints within the existing schedule.

One of the university supervisors expressed uncertainty about the effectiveness of the scheduling suggesting that there may be room for reassessment or that opinions on this aspect are not universally positive among supervisors.

On the contrary, pre-service teachers expressed concerns over the duration and pressure, which is not directly mirrored by mentor teachers or university supervisors. This suggests a unique perspective from those directly undergoing the practicum, who may feel the need for a more in-depth experience.

Question 6: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Teaching Practicum course in preparing pre-service teachers for the English language teaching profession?

➤ **Alignments of stakeholders' viewpoints on the strengths of the teaching practicum course in preparing pre-service teachers for the English language teaching profession:**

All stakeholders agree on the importance of practical experience. Pre-service teachers valued practical application and diverse teaching methods, mentor teachers emphasized practical experience and reflective practices, and university supervisors highlighted direct classroom experience and the acquisition of essential skills. This alignment underscores the practicum's effectiveness in providing hands-on teaching experiences.

In a similar vein, mentor teachers and university supervisors recognized effective communication and reflective practices as strengths. This shared

viewpoint suggests that the practicum successfully fosters communication skills and encourages reflection on teaching practices.

➤ **Divergences in strengths of the teaching practicum course in preparing pre-service teachers for the English language teaching profession:**

Pre-service teachers specifically appreciated the enhancement of confidence in teaching, valuable real-world exposure, and a comprehensive skill set that instilled readiness and understanding of effective communication.

On the other hand, mentor teachers focused more narrowly on the benefits of reflective practices alongside practical experience and communication skills.

University supervisors highlighted the insights into mentor-teacher interactions, comprehensive training, and the provision of constructive feedback as unique strengths, pointing to a broader view of the practicum's benefits.

➤ **Alignments in weaknesses of the teaching practicum course in preparing pre-service teachers for the English language teaching profession:**

There was less direct alignment in the weaknesses identified, reflecting stakeholders' varied perspectives based on their roles and experiences.

➤ **Divergences in weaknesses of the teaching practicum course in preparing pre-service teachers for the English language teaching profession:**

Pre-service teachers cited school limitations, dissatisfaction with mentors, the financial burden of participating in the practicum, and gaps in technology skills, indicating concerns primarily related to resources, support, and preparation.

On the contrary, mentor teachers' concerns were related to textbook challenges and the need for adjustments in communication styles across different school types considering the students' language proficiency.

University supervisors stressed the need for consistent standards in teacher training methods and mentioned the challenge of covering all materials every week.

While there is a strong alignment among stakeholders on the value of practical experience and the development of communication and reflective skills, divergences arise in the identification of weaknesses. Pre-service teachers focused on immediate challenges related to support and resources, mentor teachers highlighted the adaptability issues, and university supervisors pointed to systemic weaknesses in training consistency for all pre-service teachers and the occasional inability to cover all the materials every week. These insights suggest areas for targeted improvements in the teaching practicum course to better prepare pre-service teachers for the English language teaching profession, including enhancing support and mentorship and ensuring consistent training standards for all pre-service teachers.

Question 7: How can the Teaching Practicum course be improved?

Alignments in Suggestions:

Both pre-service teachers and mentor teachers highlighted the need for improved communication between the university and schools. Pre-service teachers called for enhanced communication channels, while mentor teachers focused on better communication between universities and practicum schools through workshops and seminars. This shared emphasis underscores the recognized importance of clear and effective communication in supporting the practicum experience.

Mentor teachers and university supervisors both suggested increasing hands-on practice opportunities. This alignment indicates a consensus on the need for pre-service teachers to gain more direct teaching experience, aligning with the practical nature of the profession.

➤ **Divergences in Suggestions:**

Pre-service teachers' suggestions were comprehensive, covering a range of support mechanisms including realistic task assignments, strategic mentor selection, earlier preparation for teaching roles, weekly collaborative meetings for sharing experiences, psychological support guidance for students, and financial assistance. These suggestions reflect a desire for a more supportive, engaging, and financially accessible practicum experience.

On the other hand, mentor teachers focused on the selection process for mentor teachers and enhancing the practical aspects of the practicum through more hands-on practice opportunities. Their suggestions are targeted towards optimizing the mentoring process and the practical training components of the course.

University supervisors' recommendations include conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the practicum course, refining assessment criteria to set clearer expectations, and diversifying the topics covered in lesson plans developed by pre-service teachers. These suggestions aim at improving the overall structure and content of the practicum course to better meet educational goals and standards.

The convergence among stakeholders on the need for enhanced communication and more practical experiences highlights a common understanding of key areas for improvement. However, the divergences reflect the unique perspectives and priorities of each group. Pre-service teachers focus on support and engagement, mentor teachers on the practical and mentoring aspects, and university supervisors on course structure and content. To improve the teaching practicum course, a multifaceted approach that addresses these varied suggestions would be beneficial. It could include enhancing communication systems, increasing practical teaching opportunities, offering more targeted support services for pre-service teachers, carefully selecting and preparing mentor teachers, and regularly reviewing and updating the practicum assessment methods.

What are your thoughts regarding the number of teacher candidates you are responsible for as a mentor teacher? (question for mentor teachers and university supervisors)

➤ **Alignments Across Mentor Teachers and University Supervisors:**

Both groups align on the viewpoint that a smaller number of pre-service teachers to mentors or supervisors enhances the quality of teaching and observation experiences. This consensus underscores the belief in the value of personalized attention and detailed feedback for each pre-service teacher's development.

Similarly, there is a shared acknowledgment that reducing the number of pre-service teachers allows for better management, organization, and

communication within the classroom, indicating a common preference for depth in the learning and mentorship experience.

➤ **Divergences Across Mentor Teachers and University Supervisors**

Mentor teachers argued against higher numbers, citing the challenges of guiding six pre-service teachers at once and suggesting four as an ideal number. This stance is rooted in the practical difficulties of classroom management and the desire to maintain a conducive learning environment.

While acknowledging the challenges, university supervisors noted that supervising up to twelve pre-service teachers is manageable. This perspective is based on the capacity to offer comprehensive support and feedback, though it also recognizes the need for efficiency in assessment processes.

In conclusion, both mentor teachers and university supervisors recognize the significant impact that the number of pre-service teachers has on the quality of mentorship and educational outcomes. There is a clear consensus on the benefits of smaller groups, emphasizing effective management, personalized attention, and the value of in-depth learning experiences. However, divergences emerge in preferences for the optimal group size, with mentor teachers advocating for no more than four pre-service teachers to ensure manageable classroom dynamics and conducive learning environments, while some university supervisors believe in their ability to effectively manage larger groups of pre-service teachers up to twelve, highlighting a need for balance between personalized mentorship and the logistical realities of program capacities. This reflects a broader dialogue within education on finding the optimal balance between quality and capacity in teacher training programs.

In summary, the analysis of feedback from pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors on the teaching practicum program reveals a nuanced view of its strengths and weaknesses. Stakeholders with one voice recognize the value of practical experience, effective mentorship, and the critical role of communication and hands-on teaching opportunities in preparing pre-service teachers for the profession. While there is consensus on the importance of these elements, divergences emerge regarding specific areas of strength and concern within the program. Pre-service teachers emphasize the need for enhanced

support and more realistic task assignments, mentor teachers call for a focus on the practical and mentoring aspects, and university supervisors suggest structural improvements to the course content and evaluation methods. This feedback underscores the necessity of a holistic approach to enhancing the practicum, ensuring that it adequately prepares pre-service teachers by addressing the unique challenges and priorities identified by each group of stakeholders, thereby fostering a comprehensive and effective teacher education experience. It is noteworthy to indicate that most of these findings discussed related to the alignments and divergences among the perspectives of various stakeholders about the practicum course are in line with the findings of Celen and Akcan's (2017) study.



5. DISCUSSION

The present chapter examines the outcomes of the research study in alignment with the study's research questions and objectives. The discussion of findings is presented in a chronological sequence, commencing with the data concerning pre-service teachers' viewpoints on the teaching practicum course, followed by the results related to mentor teachers' perspectives, and concluding with the perspectives of university supervisors regarding the practicum. The data for analysis is categorized into two primary sections commencing with the advantages and proceeding with the disadvantages of the teaching practicum course from the perspectives of pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors. Further, the chapter will delve into the findings from stakeholders' viewpoints regarding the teaching practicum, focusing on areas of alignment and divergences.

5.1. Pre-service Teachers' Perspectives about the EFL Teaching Practicum Course

Numerous studies underscore the substantial impact of practicum experiences on the professional development of pre-service teachers (Kılıç & Acat, 2007; Kılınç & Altuk, 2010; Merç, 2015; Özder et al., 2013; Şahin et al., 2013). According to these studies, pre-service teachers serve as pivotal figures undergoing challenges and addressing issues related to teaching practice within the practicum course. Actively participating throughout the process, they are the individuals who discern the favorable aspects and constraints of the course.

5.1.1. The Strengths of the EFL Teaching Practicum Course from Pre-service Teachers' Perspectives

To address the first research question "How do pre-service EFL teachers perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching practicum course?" the findings of this study underscore the integral role of the practicum in teacher education programs, spotlighting its provision of hands-on experience as crucial for the development of pre-service teachers. This result is consistent with the conclusions of numerous studies (Ababneh, 2012; Ariza-Quñones et al., 2022; Çelik, 2011; Mirici & Çağlar, 2017; Terzi, 2022; Yin, 2019), which collectively

claim the practicum's effectiveness in nurturing key teaching competencies such as lesson planning, adherence to curricular standards, and classroom management (Al Malki & Al-Hattali, 2022; Kabilan et al., 2020; Pratiwi, 2020; Tekin & Tunaz, 2023; Yüksel & Özkanal, 2019).

The data collected from interviews, open-ended questions, and the measurement scale with pre-service teachers indicate that the practicum significantly boosts their self-confidence and teaching skills, effectively transforming initial apprehensions into professional assurance. Such a transformation is crucial for skilled classroom management and is supported by findings from Ulum (2020), highlighting the practicum's role in overcoming the challenges faced by pre-service teachers. Moreover, both quantitative and qualitative data gained from pre-service teachers' feedback in the frame of the current study, indicate that the practicum is an instrumental element in reshaping pre-service teachers' self-perceptions, boosting their self-assurance, and equipping them with essential pedagogical skills, thereby mitigating teaching-related anxieties and preparing them for future professional hurdles (Ceylan Çapar, 2023; Merç, 2015; Almendo Pasaribu & Harendita, 2018; Yedekçioğlu, 2017).

The data analysis gained from both the quantitative and qualitative phases of this study, involving pre-service teachers, revealed a significant correlation between effective student engagement and communication, and the overall success of the practicum, aligning with the findings of the study conducted by Busher et al. (2015), whose participants noted the development of positive teacher-student interactions during the practicum. These interactions are crucial for the practical application of theoretical concepts. However, İlerten (2022) and Al Malki and Hattali (2022) found that online practicum challenges, such as physical separation, often result in reduced student-teacher interactions, with lessons becoming more teacher-centric. Furthermore, as reported by one of the pre-service teachers, practicum encourages to adopt simple, effective teaching methods, challenging them to develop lesson plans and materials that correspond to learners' needs and interests. This approach, as Lucero and Roncancio-Castellanos (2019) noted, stems from the need for pedagogical flexibility and relevance, enriching language instruction to better align with students' requirements and interests.

Insights from semi-structured interviews with pre-service teachers highlight the positive impact of structured reflection on professional growth, underscoring the value of self and peer evaluations in fostering teachers' development. This reflective practice is essential for a comprehensive review of classroom interactions and teaching outcomes, fostering a culture of perpetual improvement and heightened self-awareness among pre-service teachers. This finding aligns closely with the research conducted by Çapan and Bedir (2019), which also emphasizes the critical importance of peer support mechanisms, including peer conferences and observations, within the practicum experiences of pre-service teachers. Contrastingly, Çelik (2008) found that peer observation significantly stressed pre-service teachers, causing feelings of inadequacy and increased anxiety.

Additionally, data gathered from scales, open-ended questions, and interviews indicate that the majority of pre-service teachers viewed the opportunity to develop instructional materials as a key advantage gained during their practicum course. This aspect of the practicum was highlighted for providing deeper insights into the curriculum and facilitating the creation of effective educational resources. Contrastingly, participants in Gan's (2013) study described the difficulty of creating lesson content, noting the significant amount of time and effort spent on crafting activities and preparing materials. They mentioned that the web and fellow student teachers were the primary inspirations for the tasks and materials incorporated into their lesson plans.

In line with the findings from interviews with pre-service teachers, mentor teachers have been identified as playing a pivotal role in their professional growth during the teaching practicum course. Pre-service teachers highlighted the detailed feedback provided by mentors after each lesson, which covered both strengths and areas for improvement. They praised their mentors for their profound knowledge across various subjects, including pronunciation, and for the enriching experience gained from observing their lessons. Overall, pre-service teachers expressed high satisfaction with the mentorship received, noting it as a significant contributor to their ongoing professional development. However, some shortcomings were identified, underscoring the critical importance of experienced mentor teachers in fostering the next generation of teachers. This finding is partially consistent with the result of the study conducted by Vo et al. (2018), where pre-service teachers'

interactions with mentor teachers varied greatly. In their study, while some pre-service teachers found their mentor teachers' guidance helpful, others dealt with mentors who were either detached or overly strict, limiting their opportunity to develop personal teaching styles.

According to some pre-service teachers in the present study, the practicum's structured format, encompassing its duration and the balance between observation and active teaching, ensures a meaningful and impactful teaching experience. Moreover, as highlighted in one of the comments, observations across various educational settings, coupled with interactions with two different school processes, enriched pre-service teachers' understanding of the broader educational landscape. Similarly, Filiz and Durnalı (2019) emphasized notable outcomes in their study, reporting that pre-service teachers primarily engaged in teaching practices within primary-level classrooms only. Eventually, they argued that this strategy did not sufficiently equip them as pre-service teachers for instructing across diverse educational stages. Drawing on the feedback gathered, the researchers advocated for the enhancement and diversification of course content across various educational levels to prepare pre-service teachers for their prospective teaching roles more comprehensively.

The quantitative phase of the current study supports the qualitative findings, with most pre-service teachers positively evaluating the practicum's content, mentorship, facilities, and scheduling. High ratings in these areas reflect an appreciation for the practicum's comprehensive nature and the mentorship's quality, while favorable views on facilities and scheduling underscore the supportive and well-organized practicum environment. These observations are consistent with findings from other studies (e.g., Çapan & Bedir, 2019; Erarslan, 2018; Lucero & Roncancio-Castellanos, 2019; Méndez López, 2020; Ulum, 2020), which have emphasized the critical role of content, mentor expertise, and the significant professional growth facilitated by the practicum experience.

In conclusion, as can be understood from the discussion above, the teaching practicum emerges as a foundation for preparing pre-service teachers for their future roles by bridging academic theory with practical classroom experience. It highlights mentorship, a diversity of teaching experiences, and reflective practices

as central to enhancing the educational journey, as supported by the positive assessments of the practicum's framework by the majority of pre-service teachers. This comprehensive examination affirms the practicum's critical impact on teacher readiness and efficacy. However, alongside these strengths, pre-service teachers also pointed out various challenges within the practicum, suggesting areas for further enhancement to ensure a balanced and holistic view of the practicum experience.

5.1.2. The Weaknesses of the EFL Teaching Practicum Course from Pre-service Teacher's Perspectives

The findings of the current study suggest that while the practicum provides invaluable hands-on experience essential for the development of pre-service teachers, there are areas that necessitate further attention and improvement (Özder et al., 2014). Concerns about the practicum's duration were frequently raised, with some pre-service teachers advocating for an extended period to gain more comprehensive hands-on experience and learning. The challenge related to duration was linked to being overloaded with final-year assignments. This challenge of balancing the demands of their final academic year, including exam preparations and practical training, underscores the need for a more thoughtfully structured practicum timeline that accommodates their academic and training requirements more flexibly. This finding aligns with other numerous studies (Celen, 2016; Hastings, 2004; Murray-Harvey et al., 2000).

A significant challenge echoed in responses to open-ended questions and interviews involves the observation tasks, where the detailed documentation of experiences does not always align with the actual events within classrooms. This discrepancy points to a need for a more adaptable and realistic approach to task requirements, ensuring they accurately reflect the pre-service teachers' experiences and learning. Similarly, in the study conducted by Busher et al. (2015), pre-service teachers expressed that certain tasks linked to the teaching profession seemed extraneous, often appearing as bureaucratic formalities rather than substantive exercises. They also noticed that observation tasks were repetitive, which made the lessons less effective and less impactful over time.

The data analysis clearly shows that some pre-service teachers see communication and support from mentor teachers as crucial areas needing improvement. Despite generally positive attitudes towards mentorship, the low level of engagement of some mentor teachers in the process of developing lesson plans and feedback provision was identified as a significant issue in the relevant literature, impacting pre-service teachers' growth by limiting their exposure to critical learning opportunities and support (Aydın, 2016; Başaran Uysal & Savaş, 2021; Bekerçi-Şahin & Gürbüz, 2022; Merç, 2015; Okan & Yıldırım, 2004; Tekin & Tunaz, 2023). The issue of inadequate mentor support was also identified in the research study by Busher et al. (2015), where pre-service teachers emphasized the necessity for more proficient guidance from mentor teachers, which frequently was not sufficiently supplied. However, in the study conducted by Celen and Akcan (2017), the efficiency of mentorship stood out as a strong point, with favorable interactions between mentor teachers and student teachers improving the educational experience. On the other hand, Rakıcıoğlu-Söylemez and Eröz-Tuğa (2014) suggested that mentor teachers should receive training in mentorship methods specifically designed to address the professional needs of pre-service teachers. Additionally, they advocated for recognizing the mutual benefits that mentoring provides to both mentor teachers and pre-service teachers during the teaching practicum.

Moreover, as informed in one of the comments in the present study, inconsistency in receiving feedback, particularly on teaching material development and the use of questioning techniques during lesson presentations, stands as an obstacle to pre-service teachers' professional development. This irregularity emphasizes the need for a structured feedback system that ensures ongoing and detailed feedback on pre-service teachers' performances and teaching strategies. This issue aligns with the observations made by Bekerçi-Şahin and Gürbüz (2022), whose participants reported that even in courses focused on practical learning, there was a notable absence of regular feedback for pre-service teachers which resulted in hindering the process of enhancing their teaching experience.

According to some pre-service teachers, the practicum experience is significantly challenged by difficulties in receiving adequate guidance for developing lesson plans, compounded by limited familiarity with students and

insufficient observation periods. These constraints underscore the need for more structured support and comprehensive mentorship in lesson planning. This particular challenge was also highlighted in the research conducted by Kabilan et al. (2020), indicating that pre-service teachers encounter difficulties when they receive the freedom to design their lesson plans, prompting them to explore beyond the traditional lesson plans offered by their mentors; however, there are moments when the input from mentor teachers necessitates adjustments to the originally designed lesson plans, leading to additional challenges for pre-service teachers.

The challenge of receiving timely feedback and maintaining frequent communication with university supervisors during the practicum is highlighted as a significant concern by some pre-service teachers. The delays in feedback and irregular scheduling of practicum meetings are deemed to result in uncertainties and hinder the ability of pre-service teachers to make timely improvements in their practices. This issue is also acknowledged by two university supervisors, who attribute the infrequent meetings to the overwhelming workload faced by both parties. Additionally, the challenge of observing more lesson presentations by pre-service teachers is exacerbated by the large number of students each supervisor is responsible for. Likewise, numerous studies highlight that feedback from mentor teachers often falls short of pre-service teachers' expectations, being described as inadequate, infrequent, and lacking in substance (Altan & Sağlamel, 2015; Celen, 2016; Mahmoudi & Özkan, 2016; Merç, 2015; Yavuz, 2011).

The data gathered from the interviews and open-ended questions with pre-service teachers revealed that overcrowded classrooms posed challenges to classroom management and individualized instruction, highlighting the need for strategies to manage large classrooms effectively. In his research, Coşkun (2013) examined stress during the English Language Teaching practicum from the perspectives of all involved parties and reported that large class sizes and the inability to foresee classroom issues acted as stressors that adversely affected pre-service teachers' classroom management abilities. The same issue is echoed in numerous other studies (Ariza-Quñones et al., 2022; Celen, 2016; Celen & Akcan, 2017; Çınar, 2010; Mahmoudi & Özkan, 2016; Merç, 2010; Sarıçoban, 2010; Tüfekçi-Can & Baştürk, 2018; Yavuz, 2011) where pre-service teachers voiced

concerns about overcrowded classes, which lead to challenges in managing the classroom and engaging students in lesson activities.

Although data from the measurement scale indicated that most pre-service teachers viewed the collaboration between the practicum school and their university positively, comments from open-ended questions and interviews suggested that some pre-service teachers see enhancing collaboration between schools and universities directly involved in the practicum as crucial. Many researchers also believe that this collaboration is essential for addressing emerging issues and improving the practicum experience (Alamri, 2018; Şimşek-Rackelman & Müftüoğlu, 2017; Vo et al., 2018). In the same vein, Busher et al. (2015) reported that pre-service teachers acknowledged the cooperative efforts between practicum schools and universities, yet expressed worries about deficiencies in their teaching practice due to failures in this partnership, especially when certain schools provided insufficient in-class training or mentoring support to develop the academic and teaching skills obtained at universities.

Some pre-service teachers also reported challenges in conducting lessons entirely in English in schools unaccustomed to English-medium instruction, underlining the importance of aligning pre-service teachers more closely with the language needs of their practicum schools. Furthermore, there is a notable concern regarding mentorship within teacher education programs, particularly highlighting a weakness among mentor teachers in their reliance on outdated teaching methods. This trend, likely influenced by the mentor teachers' old age and years of experience, points to a significant discrepancy between traditional teaching practices and the dynamic requirements of contemporary education. This finding corresponds to the findings revealed by other researchers, such as Aydın (2016) and Çapan and Bedir (2019) where pre-service teachers initially found observing mentor teachers to be valuable, as it offered them insights into effective teaching practices; however, dissatisfaction emerged among pre-service teachers due to the perception that the teaching practices demonstrated by mentor teachers were overly traditional. Similarly, Vo et al. (2018) revealed that during the practicum courses, pre-service teachers were frequently obliged to replicate the instructional approaches employed by their mentors in schools, which were commonly

traditional and centered on tests, hindering the implementation of more engaging and communicative pedagogical techniques acquired at the university.

Additionally, as mentioned by one of the pre-service teachers, there is a recognized need for the improvement of technological skills among pre-service teachers, reflecting the shift towards more innovative teaching methods. An analogous need was reflected by the participants of the study conducted by Celen and Akcan (2017). They also emphasized the importance of enhancing technology integration within teacher education and added that this requirement is not unique to pre-service educators but extends to those already in the field. According to Aydın (2013), Turkish EFL in-service teachers have a limited understanding of software, primarily using basic tools such as internet browsers, email, word processing, and presentation software. It is suggested that the challenges related to the use of instructional technology that these in-service teachers face could be greatly reduced, if not prevented, with thorough training provided at the pre-service level (Celen & Akcan, 2017).

Logistical and resource-related challenges, such as limited access to facilities and the financial burdens associated with obtaining teaching materials, underscore the need for more support and resources to alleviate the economic pressures faced by pre-service teachers. A similar finding was shared in the study conducted by Coşkun (2013), where pre-service teachers expressed worries regarding the significant expenses associated with developing materials for their lesson presentations and suggested the provision of financial assistance to help cover some of these costs.

In summary, the study underscores the teaching practicum as a pivotal component in the development of both practical skills and theoretical knowledge for EFL pre-service teachers, while also identifying several areas ripe for improvement. Issues such as the practicum's duration, mentor-teacher engagement, and feedback mechanisms highlight the need for a more structured and supportive framework. Moreover, enhancing guidance on lesson planning, strategies for managing large classrooms, and fostering collaboration among educational stakeholders are recognized as critical needs. Implementing strategic adjustments and maintaining support within the practicum can profoundly enrich the learning

experience, equipping pre-service teachers more effectively for their future educational roles. Additionally, updating mentorship practices to reflect current educational demands and incorporating technological proficiency into the teaching curriculum is vital for the modernization of teacher education and the efficacy of future educators. This approach not only addresses immediate concerns within the practicum but also aligns teacher preparation with the evolving field of education.

5.2. Mentor Teachers' Perspectives about the EFL Teaching Practicum Course

Guyton and McIntyre (1990) mentioned that cooperating teachers significantly impact pre-service teachers, serving as the most readily available teachers throughout the teaching practicum course. The semi-structured interviews conducted with mentor teachers centered around the second research question: "How do mentor teachers perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching practicum course?" Below, the findings derived from these interviews were explored, discussing insights obtained from the mentor teachers' perspectives.

5.2.1. Advantages of the EFL Teaching Practicum Course from Mentor Teachers' Perspectives

The qualitative exploration of the language teaching practicum underlines its significant contribution to the professional growth of pre-service teachers in the realm of language education. According to the findings, the practicum serves as a foundational platform, offering pre-service teachers invaluable insights through direct observation and interaction with seasoned educators in real classroom settings. This immersive experience is crucial for deepening their comprehension of effective pedagogical strategies, fostered by ongoing mentorship and feedback.

Moreover, the practicum's significance is further amplified by its provision of authentic teaching environments. This direct immersion into the classroom facilitates a hands-on learning experience, enhancing pre-service teachers' abilities to communicate effectively with students and manage classroom dynamics. Such experiential learning is identified as a foundation of the practicum, significantly contributing to the development of proficient teaching methodologies and fostering a positive educational environment (Busher et al., 2015; Merç, 2011; Kabilan, 2013; Yuan & Lee, 2014). Reflecting on Celen (2016), the study affirms the

practicum as an instrumental venue for advancing instructional skills, receiving constructive feedback, and nurturing relationships with mentors. The combination of these practicum components enriches pre-service teachers' educational journey, preparing them for forthcoming teaching roles by emphasizing the importance of mentorship, active engagement, and the development of personalized teaching styles.

Moreover, echoing Cesur et al. (2021), the practicum is depicted as an essential hands-on experience within authentic classroom settings, crucial for molding pre-service teachers' self-perception and fostering a sense of autonomy. Mentor teachers in the current study highlight the practicum's role in providing an understanding of the dynamics of school communication, equipping pre-service teachers with the knowledge to integrate smoothly into school communities and collaborate effectively with peers and administrators. Tekin and Tunaz (2023) support this view as well, showcasing the practicum's benefits in facilitating practical teaching experiences, observational learning, feedback reception, and the application of theoretical knowledge in tangible teaching scenarios.

As emphasized in the interviews, reflective practice is considered a critical foundation for professional development. Pre-service teachers are encouraged to engage in self-assessment and reflective contemplation, critically evaluating their teaching approaches and identifying areas for improvement, aligning with the findings revealed by Şahin (2023), who emphasized that reflective practice enables pre-service teachers to intellectually construct and actively develop their teaching identities through insights gained from their strengths and areas for improvement.

As the practicum progresses, an observable enhancement in pre-service teachers' instructional competencies becomes evident. This improvement, marked by increased confidence, the capacity to create educational resources, and effective lesson delivery, underscores the dynamic nature of their professional development. This result aligns with the findings of other studies which collectively affirm that the augmentation of teaching knowledge and skills over time significantly bolsters pre-service teachers' confidence and adaptability (Choy et al., 2014; Goh et al., 2009; He & Lin, 2013; Terzi, 2022).

One of the mentor teachers noted that at the start of the practicum, most pre-service teachers tend to use complex language to demonstrate their high language proficiency during lessons. However, as they progress through the practicum, they learn to utilize more appropriate and understandable language for classroom instruction. Eventually, through the practicum pre-service teachers come to realize the importance of using clear and accessible language in the classroom, which is crucial for ensuring effective student communication and understanding. This result is in line with Terzi's (2022) study, which found that pre-service teachers' confidence and awareness grew over time; furthermore, each participant reported enhancements in their capability to understand their students' needs and to design lessons and activities that effectively addressed those needs.

Additionally, it was found in the present study that the diversity of practicum experiences, including the opportunity to teach in varied educational settings, is immensely valued. This variety equips pre-service teachers to tailor their teaching methods to diverse classroom situations, enriching their pedagogical toolkit and management strategies. Regarding the practice of teaching in diverse educational environments, Celen and Akcan (2017) also highlighted a significant oversight in the national education system's approach to diversity, inclusion, and multicultural awareness. They advocated for an intensified focus on cultivating teaching skills for diverse classroom settings, stressing the need for these critical aspects to be directly integrated into the curriculum.

The feedback from mentor teachers on the EFL teaching practicum underscores the importance of addressing several areas to improve its effectiveness (Bekerci-Şahin & Gürbüz, 2022; Celen & Akcan, 2017; Örsdemir & Yıldırım, 2020; Percara, 2013; Xu & He, 2019). Key suggestions include extending the practicum duration to allow for a more comprehensive teaching experience, aligning observation tasks more closely with actual classroom activities, and scheduling practicum hours outside exam periods for uninterrupted learning. Additionally, addressing technological disparities and managing the number of pre-service teachers per classroom is crucial for enhancing the learning environment. These improvements aim to boost pre-service teachers' confidence, provide them with more practical teaching opportunities, and improve the overall quality of the practicum experience.

5.2.2. Limitations of the EFL Teaching Practicum Course from Mentor Teachers' Perspectives

In the discussion of the weaknesses associated with the EFL teaching practicum, mentor teachers provided insights that highlight several areas needing attention to enhance the effectiveness of the program.

The analysis of interviews with mentor teachers has shed light on several challenges that pre-service teachers face during their practicum experiences, alongside potential strategies for improvement. A prevalent issue identified by one of the mentor teachers was the initial anxiety experienced by pre-service teachers, which could be caused by the presence of external observers. As noted by Méndez López (2020), anxiety and stress can significantly impede pre-service teachers' ability to demonstrate their full capabilities; moreover, addressing this issue requires the implementation of confidence-boosting strategies and stress-alleviation measures to ensure a smoother transition into the teaching environment. Over time, as pre-service teachers gain more hands-on experience and take the lead in lessons, their confidence and ability to demonstrate their skills improve.

A consensus among most of the mentor teachers points to the inadequacy of teaching hours in the practicum course. This limitation prevents pre-service teachers from fully engaging in the teaching experience, constraining their exploration of diverse teaching methods and refinement of skills. The study by Alamri (2018) also highlights a comparable problem regarding the scarcity of chances for practical implementation, pointing out that the observation stage, despite its benefits, was predominantly theoretical leaving pre-service teachers with few opportunities for direct teaching practice or for trying out new and innovative teaching methods and designing activities.

Another concern reported by mentor teachers is the discrepancy between assigned observation tasks and actual classroom activities. To address these concerns, an extension of the practicum duration or an increase in teaching sessions has been suggested, aiming to create a richer and more engaging learning environment that enhances the pre-service teachers' skills, confidence, and competence in the teaching profession. The challenge regarding completing the portfolio was also echoed by Li (2016), who reported that a practicum portfolio,

including instances of lesson schematics, activity worksheets, and diverse pedagogical materials, in addition to personal reflections on instructional activities and goals for future classes, could necessitate a prolonged duration for pre-service teachers to complete in written form.

Other challenges, including the scheduling of practicum hours during exam weeks, have been identified as major obstacles to providing pre-service teachers with comprehensive classroom observation and teaching experiences. To enhance the educational process, it has been proposed that a careful rescheduling of practicum hours to prevent overlap with exam times could significantly improve the learning process. This adjustment aims to create a more conducive and uninterrupted learning environment, enabling pre-service teachers to engage more deeply with their classroom experiences. Tekin and Tunaz's (2023) study highlighted a similar challenge, noting that the practicum course overlapped with the school's exam week; moreover, pre-service teachers perceived this timing as counterproductive to achieving the practicum's objectives, viewing it as a waste of time due to the absence of engagement in meaningful activities and being confined to passive observation without active involvement.

As mentioned by one of the mentor teachers, technological disparities between well-equipped urban schools and under-resourced schools present another challenge, affecting the ability of pre-service teachers to implement modern educational technologies and adapt their teaching approaches accordingly. In environments rich in technology, pre-service teachers can utilize innovative strategies and digital tools to engage students. However, the lack of technological infrastructure in some schools necessitates alternative teaching methods to maintain educational quality. Sleeter (2008) advocated for enhancing the educational perspectives of pre-service teachers through direct experiences across diverse school settings, notably those with limited access to resources, emphasizing the importance of extensive observational exposure.

As reported by another mentor teacher, the assignment of multiple pre-service teachers to a single classroom complicates classroom management and interaction, particularly in already crowded settings. This situation diminishes the individual attention pre-service teachers can receive from mentors, reducing the

quality of mentorship and feedback. Adjusting the number of pre-service teachers per mentor and optimizing class hour distribution could significantly enhance the practicum experience. Furthermore, the challenge of providing timely, personalized feedback in crowded classrooms underscores the need for a refined structuring of practicum assignments and feedback mechanisms. A similar challenge was revealed in other studies (e.g., Ariza-Quñones et al., 2022; Celen & Akcan, 2017; Coşkun, 2013; Merç, 2004). However, a contrasting suggestion was set forward by Gurvitch and Metzler (2009) arguing that experiences in diverse classroom settings, particularly in environments characterized by larger student populations and limited resources, are essential for preparing pre-service teachers for a range of teaching contexts.

As one of the comments stated, the quality of teaching materials, especially textbooks, has a considerable impact on teaching effectiveness. The disparity in resources between private and public schools, particularly in resource-limited areas, necessitates adaptable strategies by pre-service teachers to supplement textbooks with multimedia, online resources, and hands-on activities to meet diverse student needs. Hence, it is essential for educators to thoroughly assess textbooks and make suitable modifications based on real instructional requirements, such as modifying certain materials, altering their organization, rearranging the order of topics, etc (He & Lin 2013; Ren, 2019). Similarly, in Sarıçoban's (2010) study, it was found that pre-service teachers faced issues with the textbooks, including insufficient exercises for pronunciation and translation, a deficit in activities to enhance speaking skills, inadequate opportunities for revision, and a lack of pair and group work activities, along with grading or overall skills development. Qiu et al. (2021) also discovered that students perceived language learning from textbooks as dull; consequently, pre-service teachers are recommended to extend beyond the textbook activities in their lesson plans, focusing more on addressing their students' needs and interests.

In conclusion, addressing the challenges identified by mentor teachers requires strategic solutions that enhance pre-service teacher preparation. Emphasizing confidence-building strategies, optimizing scheduling to prevent conflicts with academic commitments, acknowledging the importance of teaching materials, and promoting adaptability in teaching approaches are vital steps (He &

Lin 2013; Ren, 2019; Sariçoban, 2010; Tekin & Tunaz, 2023). Therefore, a thoughtful reconsideration of the practicum structure, scheduling, and activity balance is essential in the context of the current study for improving the learning and development of pre-service teachers, ensuring they are thoroughly prepared for their future roles in education.

5.3. University Supervisors' Perspectives about the EFL Teaching Practicum Course

As reported by Bonavidi (2013), university supervisors oversee pre-service teachers, pairing them with mentor teachers in specific schools during the teaching practicum. They also assist the candidate teachers in learning to teach within the school environment, emphasizing ethical conduct and social responsibility. To investigate the third research question, “How do university supervisors perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching practicum course?”, semi-structured interviews were conducted with university supervisors. The subsequent section delves into the findings derived from these interviews, offering the analysis of supervisors' assessments regarding the advantages and challenges of the teaching practicum course.

5.3.1. Advantages of the EFL Teaching Practicum Course from University Supervisors' Perspectives

The analysis of interviews with university supervisors underscores the crucial role of the teaching practicum course in equipping pre-service teachers with direct school environment experience. This immersion is not just about assessing their suitability for the teaching profession; it is also a crucial bridge connecting theoretical knowledge with practical application, echoing findings from other studies (Alamri, 2018; Atay, 2007; Kabilan, 2013; Tercanlioğlu, 2015; Yang, 2014; Yedekçioğlu, 2017). The practicum course, as highlighted by the interviews with university supervisors, stands out for its comprehensive benefits to pre-service teachers, particularly offering an authentic classroom engagement that is both unique and indispensable for learning. This real-world application significantly enhances their understanding and competency in teaching, effectively merging classroom theory with practice.

As reported by one of the supervisors, pre-service teachers highly value these practicum experiences for providing a clear insight into the actual challenges of teaching, which completely differs from theoretical teachings. This hands-on exposure is vital for them to assess their enthusiasm and commitment to the teaching profession, offering a solid foundation for their professional journey (Allen & Wright, 2014; Farrel, 2008; Mirici & Çağlar, 2017; Smith & Lev-Ari, 2005). Atay (2007) and Kabilan (2013) added that every action and performance carried out by pre-service teachers during the practicum course is supported and directed by university supervisors and mentor teachers, proving to be extremely beneficial for them.

University supervisors stress the importance of meticulously planning the practicum's timing and duration to maximize its effectiveness. The same issue is also shared with a considerable amount of studies conducted not only in Turkey (Aydın, 2016; Celen, 2016, Aykaç et al., 2015; Celen & Akcan, 2017; Coşkun, 2013; Kasapoğlu, 2015; Kiraz & Dursun, 2015; Köksal & Genç, 2019; Köse, 2017; Mutlu, 2015) but also in foreign countries (Alamri, 2018; Li, 2016; Peremin, 2019; Shah & Lu, 2013). Based on their findings, these researchers recommended extending the length of the practicum course in response to complaints and negative feedback received predominantly from pre-service teachers.

As reported in one of the comments contributed by a university supervisor, a teaching practicum course is designed to provide pre-service teachers with essential skills and knowledge, particularly emphasizing language teaching through the preparation and delivery of lessons. The use of multimedia tools in developing instructional materials aligns with current educational practices, making learning more interactive and engaging. This strategy diversifies teaching techniques, accommodating various learning styles and needs, thus enhancing educational accessibility and effectiveness. These findings concur with the findings revealed in the study conducted by Al Malki and Al-Hattali (2022), where pre-service teachers mentioned that through practicing teaching online, they acquired a variety of instructional strategies as part of their teaching skills, which resulted in the adoption of online evaluation methods and the utilization of online materials for support.

Key strengths of the practicum course, identified by supervisors, include detailed initial briefings, in-depth interactions with mentor teachers and faculty, and

a focus on developing critical teaching skills such as lesson planning, and classroom management (Celen & Akcan, 2017; Coşkun, 2013; Merç, 2010), and reflective practices (Akcan, 2010; Akcan & Tatar, 2010). These elements are deemed to be fundamental for fostering an adaptive and responsive pedagogy required in modern classrooms. Furthermore, the feedback mechanism established by supervisors is instrumental in the practicum experience. It provides not just corrective but also formative feedback, facilitating an environment of continuous improvement and professional development; on the other hand, the absence of constructive feedback from mentors and supervisors results in pre-service teachers losing their enthusiasm for continuing in the teaching profession (Tülüce & Çeçen, 2016).

In conclusion, the teaching practicum course stands as a fundamental element within teacher education programs, acting as a vital bridge that connects the realms of theoretical knowledge with the realities of classroom teaching. It plays a key role in sharpening pre-service teachers' skills, equipping them with the necessary tools to effectively regulate the challenges and fulfill the demands of the teaching profession. The comprehensive preparation that they undergo during the practicum course ensures that pre-service teachers approach their future roles in education with both confidence and a high level of professional competence (Ceylan Çapar, 2023; Almendo Pasaribu & Harendita, 2018, Ulum, 2020).

5.3.2. Limitations of the EFL Teaching Practicum Course from University Supervisors' Perspectives

The feedback from university supervisors on the language teaching practicum, combined with an analysis of its advantages and strengths, reveals a complex landscape of challenges within the course. This section aims to provide a nuanced evaluation of the practicum framework, pinpointing areas that are primed for strategic improvements.

University supervisors have identified several critical areas within the teaching practicum that necessitate enhancements to elevate the effectiveness of teacher education programs. A primary concern highlighted is the limited exposure of pre-service teachers to classroom environments. This concern was also shared by Alamri (2018), who highlighted different aspects of the practicum experience, where observations were criticized for their theoretical focus, lack of

comprehensive lesson planning processes, and in-depth discussions on applying these plans in real-life situations with experienced mentor teachers.

Additionally, the problem is exacerbated by the challenge of handling large groups of pre-service teachers, resulting in fewer chances for individual monitoring, observation of their lesson presentations, and provision of personalized feedback. Vo et al. (2018) also underscored the crucial need for improved support and feedback delivery from supervisors and mentor teachers during the practicum, emphasizing the essential role of high-quality mentorship in the educational development of pre-service teachers.

An issue emphasized by the supervisors is the regulatory requirement for extensive teaching hours, which significantly constrains pre-service teachers' opportunity to engage in observation and feedback assimilation. Factors such as time constraints and additional responsibilities limit their full participation in the program's diverse activities. This limitation disrupts the balance between active teaching and reflective learning, crucial for the effective integration of theoretical knowledge with practical teaching skills. Mirici and Çağlar's (2017) study shed light on the same significant challenge faced by non-ELT student teachers: the difficulty of translating theoretical knowledge into practical teaching skills within the confines of limited time frames in pedagogical formation certificate programs.

As reported by one university supervisor the current assessment system's inadequacies in evaluating pre-service teachers' competencies frequently result in undifferentiated high grades, which may not truly reflect individual abilities. This calls for a more detailed and realistic assessment approach, as advocated by Merç (2015) in his study where student teachers noticed a lack of standardization in assessment criteria, feeling that different groups were assessed differently based on supervisors' expectations and differences in teaching philosophy. However, Celen and Akcan (2017) reported that the Ministry of National Education (MEB, 2016) introduced an online element for evaluating pre-service teachers' performance. This initiative was designed to make the evaluation process more efficient and provide a more integrated practicum experience.

A further area of concern is the restricted variety of observational experiences available to pre-service teachers, limited by access to different types of

schools for observation. This constraint hinders their ability to gain a holistic understanding of the educational landscape, including the unique challenges and teaching methods employed across diverse settings. Similarly, Celen and Akcan (2017) highlighted the importance of pre-service teachers practicing teaching in various school environments to observe different experienced educators and acquire a range of teaching methodologies.

It can be concluded that while the practicum serves as a significant bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical application, there are critical areas that require attention and improvement. Addressing these identified weaknesses within the practicum is imperative for optimizing the learning and development of pre-service teachers. Enhancing exposure to classroom environments, improving mentorship and feedback mechanisms, revising assessment practices, and broadening the scope of teaching experiences are essential steps toward strengthening teaching practicum courses and preparing pre-service teachers for their future roles in education in a more effective way (Busher et al., 2015; Celen, 2016; Celen & Akcan, 2016; Mirici & Çağlar, 2017).

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The current chapter outlines the summary of the proposed study, detailing its implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research. This comprehensive overview aims to present the key findings, explore the practical and theoretical impacts of the study, identify the constraints encountered during the research process, and suggest avenues for further investigation.

6.1. Summary of the study

This study sought to evaluate the EFL teaching practicum course, its advantageous elements, and limitations from the distinct perspectives of EFL pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors, aligning with the following research questions:

1. How do pre-service EFL teachers perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching practicum course?
2. How do mentor teachers perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching practicum course?
3. How do university supervisors perceive the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching practicum course?
4. How do the key stakeholders' opinions on the teaching practicum course align or diverge?

The current study, through adopting a mixed-method research strategy, engaged a diverse participant base, comprising 82 pre-service teachers in its quantitative phase and a qualitative phase consisting of seven pre-service teachers, five mentor teachers, and four university supervisors, who volunteered for semi-structured interviews. The primary aim was to analyze and comprehend the practicum experiences as reported by the participants, utilizing both a specially designed scale, which included 39 closed-ended and four open-ended questions, and insights garnered from semi-structured interviews. The qualitative data gathered from the scale underwent analysis using SPSS 22. Responses to the open-ended questions within the scale were examined using a classification method, while the qualitative data from interviews were analyzed thematically. Moreover, insights from the qualitative phase of the research were collected and analyzed to underscore commonalities and differences in perspectives among the stakeholders.

The findings from the quantitative and qualitative phases of this study revealed that pre-service teachers hold a predominantly positive view of the EFL teaching practicum, recognizing its crucial role in advancing their professional capabilities and enriching their understanding of the teaching field. The practicum is lauded for its provision of valuable practical experiences, enabling pre-service teachers to engage in teaching across various class levels. This hands-on exposure not only bolsters their self-confidence but also fosters a sense of identity as future educators. Moreover, as noted by all stakeholders the practicum is recognized for enhancing pre-service teachers' understanding of school operational dynamics and equipping them with key teaching skills. Despite these strengths, the feedback underscores a need for refinement in several areas, including the extension of practicum duration, optimization of scheduling, the necessity for improved dialogue between university and practicum schools, and improvements in the resources available for teaching material development. Such feedback emphasizes the practicum's essential contribution to pre-service teachers' educational journey while simultaneously highlighting opportunities for programmatic improvements to better support their transition into the teaching profession.

The qualitative data highlighted two main strengths of the teaching practicum program. First, pre-service teachers valued the reflective aspects of the curriculum, such as completing reflection forms and peer assessments, which were commended for promoting a culture of continuous improvement, self-evaluation, and developing a critical approach to teaching. This focus on reflection supports pre-service teachers in critically assessing their teaching methods and experiences. Secondly, the analysis of the data revealed the significant role of the practicum in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and its practical application in real classroom settings. Responses and interview narratives revealed that pre-service teachers emphasized how the practicum provided essential hands-on teaching experiences. These experiences were instrumental in enhancing their understanding of classroom dynamics, and student psychology, and meeting the practical demands of language instruction, thereby contributing substantially to their professional development and preparation for the teaching profession.

The study also identified notable challenges, particularly in the realms of timing and scheduling and task-related difficulties, as elucidated by both pre-

service teachers' responses to open-ended questions and interview discussions with all stakeholders. Most of the participants requested a longer practicum duration and a slowing down of the program's speed to give pre-service teachers enough time for observation, lesson planning, and active teaching engagements. Such adjustments, as suggested by stakeholders, would significantly enhance the depth and quality of the practicum experience in the context of the current study. Additionally, the study identifies a notable concern in the evaluation process, where the lack of strict assessments results in uniformly high grades for pre-service teachers. This issue suggests an assumption that all graduates are adequately prepared to teach, which may not accurately reflect their teaching competencies. This observation points to a need for reconsideration and potential improvement of the university's evaluation practices.

The study also identifies mentor teachers and university supervisors in agreement on the practicum's benefits, notably the vital hands-on experience it offers pre-service teachers. This includes direct student interaction, the application of theoretical knowledge, and insights into the educational system. Both groups value mentorship and real-world teaching exposure for enhancing teaching skills and subject knowledge application. However, limitations identified by mentor teachers and university supervisors include placement challenges, pre-practicum anxiety, and insufficient teaching hours, suggesting the need for a more extensive practicum framework. Concerns also encompass large group sizes affecting individual teaching practice, scheduling conflicts, inadequate assessment criteria, and limited exposure to various educational environments. These issues highlight the necessity for structural improvements to deepen the practicum's impact on pre-service teacher preparation.

Lastly, by synthesizing and analyzing input from three main stakeholders in a teaching practicum program, this study revealed both convergence and divergence in opinions among pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors regarding the teaching practicum course. There is a consensus on the value of practical experience, mentorship, and the need for improved communication and hands-on teaching opportunities. However, perspectives diverge on specific aspects: pre-service teachers emphasize self-discovery and managing diverse teaching environments; mentor teachers focus on skill development and direct

student interaction; university supervisors highlight the broader implications for career readiness and integrating theory with practice. Despite these differences, the collective feedback underscores the practicum's critical role in bridging theoretical knowledge with practical teaching experience, indicating a unified recognition of its importance in preparing future educators, while also pointing out areas for enhancement to better meet diverse needs and expectations.

In conclusion, this research study offers a comprehensive analysis of the EFL teaching practicum, as viewed by pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors, demonstrating a concordant appreciation for its role in merging theoretical education with practical application in teaching. It reveals an alignment on the value of practical experience and mentorship, while also identifying divergent opinions on program duration, resource allocation, and evaluation processes, highlighting areas ripe for enhancement. The need to extend the practicum duration, improve resource availability, and refine evaluation practices to more accurately assess teaching competencies is emphasized. Addressing these points is crucial for bolstering the practicum's framework, ensuring that it more effectively prepares pre-service teachers for their future educational roles. This study not only confirms the essential role of the teaching practicum in professional development but also points to the importance of continuous improvement and dialogue to align the program with the dynamic requirements of EFL educators and learners. It can be suggested that by tackling the outlined challenges, the practicum can be optimized to further its vital contribution to the development of proficient and self-assured educators, thereby enriching the educational journey for both teachers and students.

6.2. Implications

Richards (2001) stated that the evaluation of a program serves as a valuable tool for acquiring insights into both the program itself and its implementation. This process aids in discerning specific elements that require enhancement. Likewise, the present evaluative study offered insights into the teaching practicum by eliciting perspectives from EFL pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors.

This research indicates that the teaching practicum course meets the expectations and needs of stakeholders. Participants generally reported satisfaction with various aspects of the practicum, such as its content, the facilities at practicum schools, feedback from university supervisors and mentor teachers, student interactions, the use of reflection forms, awareness-raising activities, seminars, and the diversity of school placements, including both high school and middle school environments. The findings highlight that the teaching practicum course significantly enhances pre-service teachers' practical skills, theoretical knowledge, self-evaluation capabilities, and exposure to different educational settings, thereby substantially aiding their preparation for the teaching profession. However, the study also identifies challenges faced by pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and university supervisors in certain aspects of the practicum, suggesting areas for further improvement.

The pertinent literature addresses stakeholders' diverse challenges (Alamri, 2018; Arıĝ, 2016; Cořkun & Daloĝlu, 2010). Based on the reviewed literature (Altan & Shagamel, 2015; Atay, 2007; Celen, 2016; Ceylan Çapar, 2023; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Kabilan, 2013; Lu, 2008; Merç, 2015; Özder et al., 2014; Richards, 2001; Yang, 2014; Yedekçioĝlu, 2017) and the findings of this study, the following stakeholder-informed recommendations are made for the specific context of the study:

1. Standardization of practicum procedures: Based on the comments received from one of the university supervisors, it is advisable to implement a unified standard for practicum procedures across all students to ensure consistency and quality, regardless of the high number of pre-service teachers. This approach would standardize the practicum experience, enhancing its effectiveness and equity. Moreover, a unified standard could facilitate easier assessment and adjustment of the practicum program over time, as feedback and outcomes can be more consistently measured against a common set of criteria.
2. Cross-institutional collaboration: Based on the feedback received from pre-service teachers and mentor teachers, it is recommended to encourage collaboration between various educational institutions to share resources, best practices, and experiences. This collaboration can provide a richer learning

environment, offering pre-service teachers a broader view of the teaching profession and preparing them for diverse challenges.

3. Curriculum expansion: To address feedback on lesson plan evaluations that focus on activities too narrowly, the study advocates for broadening the curriculum to include global educational perspectives. This expansion should cover international teaching methods, address global educational challenges, and explore cross-cultural communication, enriching pre-service teachers' knowledge base.
4. Diverse classroom observations: Drawing from the suggestion made by a university supervisor, this study recommends offering pre-service teachers opportunities to observe a variety of classes conducted by multiple teachers, exposing them to different teaching styles and classroom dynamics to enhance their teaching and classroom management skills.
5. Extended duration and practical coursework: Considering the constraints of the current two-semester framework, extending the practicum duration and adding more practical courses in the third year are recommended. These changes will provide pre-service teachers with more extensive classroom experience and a deeper theoretical and practical understanding.
6. Professional development workshops: To foster better cooperation between mentor teachers and the university, periodic professional development workshops are recommended. These workshops should cover the latest trends in language teaching, innovative pedagogical approaches, and effective mentoring strategies, benefiting both mentor teachers and university supervisors.
7. Task objectives refinement: Pre-service teachers expressed concerns that the observation tasks were overly theoretical and excessively detailed. The objectives in practicum tasks could be made more practical and closely tied to actual classroom experiences. To make these tasks less theoretical and more practical, the observation process could be simplified. Here are some suggestions on how the tasks could be refined:
 - First, the number of evaluation criteria present in the lesson evaluation sheets could be reduced to focus on key aspects of teaching effectiveness by using a standardized evaluation form that highlights

areas such as lesson planning, engagement strategies, and classroom management with a simple rating system.

- Second, multiple detailed criteria could be replaced by broader categories. For example, observations related to the teacher's voice, gestures, and eye contact could be combined under a general category.
 - Further, to improve the observation tasks' practicality and encourage pre-service teachers to think reflectively, tasks could be redesigned to prompt them to consider how they might apply observed strategies in their teaching (e.g., pre-service teachers can be asked to identify a teaching strategy they observed and explain how they would incorporate it into their practice). This approach would encourage active engagement and personal application of observed techniques.
 - Finally, the study suggests revising the observation task sheets collaboratively with mentor teachers. Since mentor teachers know the classroom best, their input can make sure the tasks match what happens in class. This collaborative approach would facilitate the alignment of the observation tasks with practical teaching activities, thereby decreasing potential discrepancies between the theoretical tasks and the actual teaching environment.
8. Pre-service teachers' rights and integration into the school environment: Informing pre-service teachers about their rights within practicum schools and enhancing school staff's awareness of these rights will facilitate smoother integration and a more supportive learning environment, particularly for pre-service teachers.
 9. Technology integration training: Incorporating training sessions on effectively integrating technology into language teaching can equip pre-service teachers with the skills to use digital tools for more interactive classroom experiences.
 10. Financial support for pre-service teachers: Investigating strategies to alleviate financial burdens on pre-service teachers, such as compensation for commuting and financial/material assistance for teaching materials, is crucial for reducing stress and enhancing their practicum experience.
 11. Post-practicum support system: Establishing a support system for pre-service teachers is important for transitioning into their professional roles, including

mentorship programs and continued access to resources, providing new teachers with ongoing professional development and support.

12. Time management workshops: Organizing workshops on time management and organizational skills will help pre-service teachers balance their responsibilities more effectively, addressing the challenges of juggling practicum and university obligations.

13. Professional networking opportunities for pre-service teachers: Establishing professional networking opportunities would connect pre-service teachers with education professionals, enriching their learning and professional development.

6.3. Limitations

This study was based on data collected from three distinct groups of stakeholders: pre-service teachers, mentor teachers, and supervisors. However, it did not include other relevant parties such as school principals, administrative staff, and students, who could provide valuable insights in future research endeavors. Another limitation is the relatively small sample size of participants, particularly those representing mentors from the MoNE and university supervisors. Additionally, this research was confined to the context of teaching practicum courses at the end of an academic year, which restricts the breadth of the findings. To overcome these limitations, future studies could adopt a longitudinal research approach. This would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the benefits, challenges, and opportunities for enhancing the teaching practicum course by incorporating perspectives from a broader array of stakeholders actively involved in the educational process.

6.4. Recommendations for further research

The present investigation recommends undertaking comparative analyses across different educational institutions to explore the nuances of teaching practicum courses both within Turkey and on an international scale. Employing a mixed-methods framework, further research studies could blend quantitative surveys for identifying broad trends with qualitative techniques such as focus groups to gain a deeper understanding. Through such an approach, it is possible to reveal a variety of practicum formats, instructional strategies, and viewpoints from

those involved, enriching our comprehension of what constitutes effective practicum execution.

In line with the relevant literature (Ceylan Çapar, 2023; Merç, 2015; Özder et al., 2014; Peacock, 2009; Richards, 2001), this paper also recommends the following:

1. Further research should broaden the scope of participants to include additional stakeholders, such as school principals, school administrators, and students. This expansion could be facilitated by a multi-stakeholder analysis model, employing semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and observational methods to capture a holistic view of the practicum experience from every angle.
2. Additionally, investigations into the practicum documentation required of pre-service teachers should also be a focus of future research, examining both the practicality and educational value of observation tasks. Through a case study methodology, such research could assess how these documentation requirements align with educational aims, and their impact on student workload and learning outcomes, and suggest enhancements such as streamlined templates, digital portfolios, or specialized applications to improve efficiency and relevance.
3. Moreover, forthcoming studies should delve into effective methods for collaboratively reviewing and updating the assessment and evaluation criteria used in teaching practicums. Organizing workshops or joint training initiatives could facilitate dialogue between university supervisors and mentor teachers, allowing them to revise and enhance these criteria together. This collaborative effort ensures the evaluation processes accurately reflect pre-service teachers' skills and achievements.
4. Finally, this study suggests exploring the long-term impacts of practicum experiences on new teachers. Specifically, studies could investigate how practicum training influences teaching efficacy, job satisfaction, and professional development within the first few years after graduation. This research could employ longitudinal methods to track the career paths of teachers, comparing those with varying depths

and qualities of practicum experiences. Such studies would provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of practicum programs in preparing educators for the complexities of teaching and how these early experiences contribute to their ongoing professional growth and stability in the education environment.



7. REFERENCES

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8. APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS' PRACTICUM REACTIONS SCALE (HİZMET ÖNCESİ İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN ÖĞRETMENLİK UYGULAMASI TUTUM ÖLÇEĞİ)

Dear Participant,

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled "Evaluating the Practicum from the Perspectives of Pre-service EFL Teachers, Mentors and Supervisors."

This study aims to evaluate the teaching practice course (practicum) from the perspectives of EFL pre-service teachers, mentors and supervisors. You are asked to submit your honest responses to this questionnaire about the practicum process. Your participation in this study will bring a valuable contribution to the study's findings. Your personal information will not be revealed, and this study involves no risk to you. I would like to thank you once again for your participation and cooperation.

A) Personal Information

1) Gender : () Male () Female

2) Age :

3) Practicum School :

In order to determine the effectiveness of the practicum in meeting your needs and interests, we need your input. Please give us your reactions, and make any comments or suggestions that will help us to evaluate the practicum.

Instructions: Please circle the appropriate number after each statement.

At the end of practicum training, as a teacher candidate--	Poor 1	Fair 2	Good 3	Very Good 4	Excellent 5
1. I rate the content of the teaching practicum (interest, benefit, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
2. I rate the mentor teacher (knowledge of subject matter, preparation, ability to communicate, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
3. I rate the facilities of the teaching practicum (comfort, convenience, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
4. I rate the scheduling of the teaching practicum	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX 1 Continued

5. I rate the program as an educational experience to help me do my job better	1	2	3	4	5
In relation to the Teaching Practicum	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Not Sure 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
6. The content covered in the program was relevant to my job.	1	2	3	4	5
7. The content covered in the program was interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
8. The mentor teacher was an effective communicator.	1	2	3	4	5
9. The mentor teacher was well prepared.	1	2	3	4	5
10. If there were manuals about the practicum it would be helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
11. If there were handouts about the practicum it would be helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
12. If there were audiovisuals about the practicum it would be helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I will be able to apply much of the content I learned here to my job.	1	2	3	4	5
14. The facilities of the practicum were suitable.	1	2	3	4	5
15. The schedule of the practicum was well-organized.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I feel that practicum taught me do my job better.	1	2	3	4	5
Pre-service Teachers' Reactions about Teaching Practicum	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Not Sure 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
17. Teaching Practicum helped me deepen my knowledge about teaching profession.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I believe Teaching Practicum is useful in terms of teacher candidates.	1	2	3	4	5
19. Teaching Practicum provided me with the opportunity to observe at different class levels.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Teaching Practicum provided me with the opportunity to practice at different class levels.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Thanks to the Teaching Practicum I started to see myself as a teacher.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Teaching Practicum increased my self-confidence increased.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Teaching Practicum helped me learn the duties of school staff (School Principal, Vice principal., retainer, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX 1 Continued

24. Teaching Practicum helped me gain the necessary knowledge and skills for teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I believe that the time allocated for Teaching Practicum courses in ELT departments is insufficient.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Via Teaching Practicum I liked teaching English more.	1	2	3	4	5
27. In Teaching Practicum I learned how to establish a good communication in teacher-student relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
28. In Teaching Practicum I learned how to grade students	1	2	3	4	5
29. Teaching Practicum made me realize whether teaching profession was suitable for me.	1	2	3	4	5
30. In Teaching Practicum my university supervisor helped me in all my problems about the lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I believe the reflective portfolio reports are assessed by the university supervisor objectively.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I believe there is healthy communication between the Faculty and Practice School.	1	2	3	4	5
33. Teaching Practicum gave me the opportunity to compare the characteristics of a good teacher with my own traits.	1	2	3	4	5
34. In Teaching Practicum I learned how a teacher can manage the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
35. In Teaching Practicum I learned how to prepare yearly, unit and daily plan.	1	2	3	4	5
36. In Teaching Practicum I learned how to prepare exams.	1	2	3	4	5
37. In Teaching Practicum I learned how to prepare course materials.					
38. In Teaching Practicum I learned how the National Education System operated.	1	2	3	4	5
39. In Teaching Practicum, I learned how to use deliberative rhetoric.	1	2	3	4	5
40. Which parts of the Teaching Practicum were the most beneficial? Comments: 1. 2. 3.					

APPENDIX 1 Continued

41. What are the weaknesses of the program?

Comments:

1.

2.

3.

42. What are the strengths of the program?

Comments:

1.

2.

3.

43. What would have improved the program?

Comments:

1.

2.

3.



APPENDIX 2: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS (ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARI İÇİN YARI YAPILANDIRILMIŞ MÜLAKAT SORULARI)

Bu araştırmanın amacı Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersini İngilizce öğretmen adayları, adayların uygulama için gittikleri okullardaki uygulama öğretmenleri ve üniversite danışmanlarının görüşleri doğrultusunda değerlendirmektir. Bu araştırma, programın ihtiyaçları ve bu ihtiyaçların karşılanması için gerekenler konusunda uygulanan programın etkililiğine odaklanmaktadır. Elde edilen veriler tamamen bilimsel amaçlı kullanılacak olup gizli kalacaktır.

1. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması programının öğretmen adayı açısından en faydalı yönleri nelerdir?
2. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması programının öğretmen adayı açısından en zayıf yönleri nelerdir?
3. Aday öğretmenler çok farklı açılardan (örneğin: materyal kullanımı, vücut dili, etkinlikler, ders kitabı, ders anlatımı, hata düzeltme yöntemleri, soru sorma yöntemleri) gözlem raporları hazırlıyorlar ve ders planları ve materyaller hazırlayıp ders sunumları gerçekleştiriyorlar. Ayrıca, kendi sunumları ile ilgili de öz değerlendirmeler yapıyorlar. Sizce programın içeriğinin güçlü ve zayıf yanları nelerdir?
4. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersindeki uygulama öğretmeninizin güçlü ve zayıf yönleri nelerdir? (örneğin; konu bilgisi, derse hazırlık, iletişim becerisi, geribildirim verme, ders planlama süreçlerine katkı)
5. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersindeki danışmanınızın güçlü ve zayıf yönleri nelerdir? (örneğin; konu bilgisi, iletişim becerisi, geribildirim verme, ders planlama süreçlerine katkı)
6. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinin olanaklarının güçlü ve zayıf yönleri nelerdir? (örneğin; okul olanakları, sınıflardaki olanaklar, öğretmenlik uygulamasıyla ilgili bilgilendirme olanakları, bir dönem ortaokul bir dönem lisede uygulama yapma olanağı).
7. Bildiğiniz üzere, öğretmenlik uygulaması, bir yılda iki dönemden az olmamak üzere yapılır. Güz ve bahar dönemleri her bir dönem 12 hafta olarak ve gözlem okullarında haftada 6 ders saati uygulanacak şekilde düzenlenir. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması her bir dönemde 72 saat olmak üzere iki dönemde toplam 144 ders saatinden oluşur. Öğretmenlik Uygulama dersinin zamanlamasının güçlü ve zayıf yanları nelerdir?
8. Öğretmen adaylarının İngilizce öğretmenliği mesleğine hazırlanmaları açısından Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinin güçlü ve zayıf yanları nelerdir?
9. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersi nasıl daha iyi hale getirilebilir?

APPENDIX 3: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MENTOR TEACHERS (UYGULAMA ÖĞRETMENLERİ İÇİN YARI YAPILANDIRILMIŞ MÜLAKAT SORULARI)

Bu araştırmanın amacı Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersini İngilizce öğretmen adayları, adayların uygulama için gittikleri okullardaki uygulama öğretmenleri ve üniversite danışmanlarının görüşleri doğrultusunda değerlendirmektir. Bu araştırma, programın ihtiyaçları ve bu ihtiyaçların karşılanması için gerekenler konusunda uygulanan programın etkililiğine odaklanmaktadır. Elde edilen veriler tamamen bilimsel amaçlı kullanılacak olup gizli kalacaktır.

1. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinin öğretmen adayı açısından en faydalı yönleri nelerdir?
2. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinin öğretmen adayı açısından en zayıf yönleri nelerdir?
3. Aday öğretmenler çok farklı açılardan (örneğin: materyal kullanımı, vücut dili, etkinlikler, ders kitabı, ders anlatımı, hata düzeltme yöntemleri, soru sorma yöntemleri) gözlem raporları hazırlıyorlar ve ders planları ve materyaller hazırlayıp ders sunumları gerçekleştiriyorlar. Ayrıca, kendi sunumları ile ilgili de öz değerlendirmeler yapıyorlar. Sizce öğretmenlik uygulama dersinin içeriğinin güçlü ve zayıf yanları nelerdir?
4. Öğretmenlik Uygulama dersinin olanaklarının güçlü ve zayıf yönleri nelerdir? (örneğin: okul olanakları, sınıflardaki olanaklar, öğretmenlik uygulamasıyla ilgili bilgilendirme olanakları, bir dönem ortaokul bir dönem lisede uygulama yapma olanağı).
5. Bildiğiniz üzere, Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersi, bir yılda iki dönemden az olmamak üzere yapılır. Güz ve bahar dönemleri her bir dönem 12 hafta olarak ve gözlem okullarında haftada 6 ders saati uygulanacak şekilde düzenlenir. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersi her bir dönemde 72 saat olmak üzere iki dönemde toplam 144 ders saatinden oluşur. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinin zamanlamasının güçlü ve zayıf yanları nelerdir?
6. Öğretmen adaylarının İngilizce öğretmenliği mesleğine hazırlanmaları açısından Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinin güçlü ve zayıf yanları nelerdir?
7. Uygulama öğretmeni olarak sorumlu olduğunuz öğretmen adaylarının sayısı hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
8. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersi nasıl daha iyi hale getirilebilir?

APPENDIX 4: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR UNIVERSITY SUPERVISORS (ÜNİVERSİTE DANIŞMANLARI İÇİN YARI YAPILANDIRILMIŞ MÜLAKAT SORULARI)

Bu araştırmanın amacı Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersini İngilizce öğretmen adayları, adayların uygulama için gittikleri okullardaki uygulama öğretmenleri ve üniversite danışmanlarının görüşleri doğrultusunda değerlendirmektir. Bu araştırma, programın ihtiyaçları ve bu ihtiyaçların karşılanması için gerekenler konusunda uygulanan programın etkililiğine odaklanmaktadır. Elde edilen veriler tamamen bilimsel amaçlı kullanılacak olup gizli kalacaktır.

1. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinin öğretmen adayı açısından en faydalı yönleri nelerdir?
2. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinin öğretmen adayı açısından en zayıf yönleri nelerdir?
3. Aday öğretmenler çok farklı açılardan (örneğin; materyal kullanımı, vücut dili, etkinlikler, ders kitabı, ders anlatımı, hata düzeltme yöntemleri, soru sorma yöntemleri) gözlem raporları hazırlıyorlar ve ders planları ve materyaller hazırlayıp ders sunumları gerçekleştiriyorlar. Ayrıca, kendi sunumları ile ilgili de öz değerlendirmeler yapıyorlar. Sizce öğretmenlik uygulaması dersinin içeriğinin güçlü ve zayıf yanları nelerdir?
4. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinin olanaklarının güçlü ve zayıf yönleri nelerdir? (örneğin; okul olanakları, sınıflardaki olanaklar, öğretmenlik uygulamasıyla ilgili bilgilendirme olanakları, bir dönem ortaokul bir dönem lisede uygulama yapma olanağı).
5. Bildiğiniz üzere, öğretmenlik uygulaması, bir yılda iki dönemden az olmamak üzere yapılır. Güz ve bahar dönemleri her bir dönem 12 hafta olarak ve gözlem okullarında haftada 6 ders saati uygulanacak şekilde düzenlenir. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması her bir dönemde 72 saat olmak üzere iki dönemde toplam 144 ders saatinden oluşur. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersinin zamanlamasının güçlü ve zayıf yanları nelerdir?
6. Öğretmen adaylarının İngilizce öğretmenliği mesleğine hazırlanmaları açısından öğretmenlik uygulaması dersinin güçlü ve zayıf yanları nelerdir?
7. Üniversite danışmanı olarak sorumlu olduğunuz öğretmen adaylarının sayısı hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?
8. Öğretmenlik Uygulaması dersi nasıl daha iyi hale getirilebilir?