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BECOMING REFLECTIVE TEACHER-RESEARCHERS: COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH IN AN EFL PRACTICUM¹

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Abstract

This qualitative study explored how collaborative action research (CAR), implemented as a community-based reflective practice during practicum, influenced EFL teacher candidates' reflectivity and personal and professional development. The study involved eight teacher candidates (five females and three males) selected through purposive sampling at a state university in Türkiye. CAR was integrated into the participants' practicum over a 12-week period, during which they collaboratively conducted an action research project in their practicum school. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and written reflective reports and analyzed using thematic content analysis involving open and axial coding. The findings indicated that participation in CAR supported a shift in the teacher candidates' reflections from predominantly descriptive accounts toward more analytical, critical, and evaluative reflection. Participants also reported development in problem-solving, critical thinking, research engagement, collaboration, and professional awareness. Overall, the findings suggest that embedding CAR into practicum can create a collaborative, inquiry-oriented learning environment that supports reflective practice and professional development. The study highlights the value of integrating structured collaborative inquiry into preservice teacher education rather than relying primarily on observation-based practicum experiences.

Keywords: Collaborative action research, Reflective practice, Preservice teacher education, EFL teacher candidates, Practicum.

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Yansıtıcı Öğretmen-Araştırmacı Olma Süreci: İngilizce Öğretmenliği Uygulamasında İşbirlikli Eylem Araştırması

Öz

Bu nitel çalışma, öğretmenlik uygulaması sürecinde topluluk temelli bir yansıtıcı uygulama olarak yürütülen işbirlikli eylem araştırmasının, İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının yansıtıcılıkları ile kişisel ve mesleki gelişimleri üzerindeki etkisini incelemiştir. Araştırmaya, Türkiye’deki bir devlet üniversitesinde amaçlı örnekleme yoluyla belirlenen sekiz öğretmen adayı (beş kadın, üç erkek) katılmıştır. İşbirlikli eylem araştırması, katılımcıların 12 haftalık öğretmenlik uygulaması sürecine entegre edilmiş ve bu süreçte öğretmen adayları uygulama okulunda iş birliği içinde bir eylem araştırması projesi yürütmüştür. Veriler yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ve yazılı yansıtıcı raporlar aracılığıyla toplanmış; açık ve eksenel kodlamayı içeren tematik içerik analiziyle analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, İşbirlikli eylem araştırmasına katılımın öğretmen adaylarının ağırlıklı olarak betimleyici düzeydeki yansıtıcılarının daha analitik, eleştirel ve değerlendireci bir niteliğe doğru gelişimini desteklediğini göstermiştir. Katılımcılar ayrıca problem çözme, eleştirel düşünme, araştırmaya katılım, iş birliği ve mesleki farkındalık alanlarında gelişim bildirmiştir. Genel olarak bulgular, İşbirlikli eylem araştırmasının öğretmenlik uygulamasına entegre edilmesinin yansıtıcı uygulamayı ve mesleki gelişimi destekleyen işbirlikli ve araştırma-sorgulama odaklı bir öğrenme ortamı oluşturabileceğini göstermektedir. Çalışma, öğretmenlik uygulamasının ağırlıklı olarak gözleme dayalı biçimde yürütülmesi yerine, yapılandırılmış işbirlikli araştırma-sorgulama süreçlerinin hizmet öncesi öğretmen eğitime entegre edilmesinin önemine dikkat çekmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İşbirlikli Eylem Araştırması, Yansıtıcı Uygulama, Hizmet Öncesi Öğretmen Eğitimi, EFL Öğretmen Adayları, Öğretmenlik Uygulaması.

INTRODUCTION

With the awareness of the crucial role of teacher research in every field of education, attention has been paid to the role of teachers as researchers in the context of English language teaching as well. What is more, besides the significance of gaining researcher identity, teachers are also expected to be reflective on their teaching experiences in their classroom practices to ensure personal and professional development in contemporary educational context. As indicated in the relevant literature, reflective practice is essential for teachers, and recent studies further emphasize its role in navigating the complexities of modern language classrooms (Beauchamp, 2014; Machost & Stains, 2023; Godínez

Martínez, 2021). This ongoing significance suggests that teacher education should continue to foster such practices through innovative models (Farrell, 2016; Mann & Walsh, 2013). As pinpointed by Yost et al. (2000), preservice teacher education programs designed to encourage a critical perspective and an intellectual shift in teacher candidates, as opposed to conventional ones, offer a personally valuable knowledge base and real-world teaching practices enhancing their reflectivity. Recent research has continued to demonstrate the importance of structured reflective opportunities during practicum, showing that reflection can support preservice teachers in examining their instructional decisions, professional positioning, and developing teacher identities (Zhu & Chen, 2022; Taşdemir & Gümüşok, 2023; Cabaroglu & Öz, 2025). Such findings reinforce the need to conceptualize reflection not simply as retrospective reporting but as an integral component of professional learning during initial teacher education.

Given the crucial role of reflection in the education of teacher candidates, reflection can be described as a process or action that involves recalling, thinking about, and assessing an experience; more specifically, it is a kind of a response to prior experience that entails conscious recall and analysis to evaluate and make decisions as well as plan and act (Richards, 1991). In another definition stated by Schön (1987), reflection refers to a conversation between doing and thinking that leads to increased proficiency.

According to Loughran (2004) and Bailey and Van Harken (2014), acculturating preservice teachers into researcher stance is likely to establish a connection between research and practice, enhancing theory and practice gap as well as promote reflection and inquiries on teaching practice. Within this concern, it is essential to incorporate research-based inquiry experiences into professional contexts of teachers and preservice teachers regarding the relevant issues and concerns in their classroom practices (Darling-Hammond 2001). In this regard, action research is recognized as a vital technique for professional development that encourages inquiry and problem-solving skills (Herndon, 1994). Recent research underscores that engaging in such systematic inquiry not only improves pedagogical skills but also sustains long-term professional impact (Edwards & Burns, 2022). Moreover, action research involves research and action requiring an iterative process of planning, acting, observing, reflecting, and replanning (Burns, 2005). More recent work similarly positions action research as a form of inquiry through which preservice teachers can generate knowledge from their own classroom experiences and develop a critical inquiry stance rather than merely applying externally prescribed pedagogical knowledge (Ginsberg, 2023; Burns, 2023).

Action research has become increasingly established within language teacher education as a means of connecting systematic inquiry, reflection, and professional learning (Sert & Jonsson, 2025). Within this broader tradition, collaborative action research involves teachers engaging collectively in systematic inquiry into their educational practices, allowing professional learning and reflection to develop through shared investigation and dialogue (Burns, 1999). It has been advocated that collaborative action research supports preservice teachers in developing a reflective mindset and producing useful knowledge (Qing-li et al., 2018). Empirical research has also shown that collaborative action research can support teachers' reflective practice by providing opportunities for shared inquiry, critical dialogue, and systematic examination of classroom experiences (Fathian & Farahian, 2021). Furthermore, contemporary literature highlights that CAR acts as a catalyst for professional identity construction by providing a collaborative and emotionally supportive environment (Yuan & Burns, 2017). Preservice teachers establish a community of practice within which they can draw conclusions from their experiences and behaviors by means of collaborative action research; in addition, they can then broaden their awareness by conversing and sharing ideas with their peers and colleagues (Richards & Pennington, 1998).

Recent studies have further highlighted the value of embedding collaborative inquiry within initial teacher education. In a CAR project integrated into an EFL practicum in Türkiye, Ceylan and Comoglu (2024) found that preservice teachers developed new perspectives on research, teacher identity, and professional development through sustained dialogic interaction, collective scaffolding, shared goals, and ownership of the research process. Similarly, recent research on preservice teacher action research suggests that inquiry-based engagement can create opportunities for prospective teachers to generate knowledge from their own practice and develop a critical inquiry stance (Ginsberg, 2023). These findings indicate that collaborative inquiry during practicum may provide a particularly productive context for connecting reflection, research engagement, and emerging professional identity.

Building on the growing interests and conceptualizations of teachers as reflective practitioners and inquiry-oriented professionals, this study views collaborative action research not merely as a methodological tool, but as a community-based reflective ecology situated within the practicum context. Based on Schön's (1987) notion of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, in this study, reflective practice is conceptualized as a dynamic process through which teacher candidates continuously interpret, evaluate, and reframe their teaching experiences in response to their classroom practices. However, it is clear that

reflection in preservice teacher education does not occur in isolation; in other words, it is socially mediated, dialogically co-constructed, and shaped by interaction of between teacher candidates and their peers, shared problems, and collective sense-making processes.

From this perspective, collaborative action research serves as a mediating tool that enhances reflection, inquiry, and professional learning simultaneously within a community of practice (Wenger, 2000). Thanks to engagement with joint problem identification, collective planning, and shared reflection cycles during practicum, teacher candidates move beyond individual and purely descriptive reflections toward more critical and evaluative reflectivity level. In that sense, it supports the fact that teachers are not only knowledge generators but also researchers of their own practice (Loughran, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015), where professional development emerges through systematic inquiry embedded in real classroom teaching contexts. In line with this, recent research suggests that inquiry- and reflection-oriented practicum experiences can move teacher candidates beyond passive implementation toward more active examination of their practice, professional positioning, and knowledge construction (Zhu & Chen, 2022; Ginsberg, 2023; Ceylan & Comoglu, 2024). Within this perspective, the embedded conceptual framework of collaborative action research within practicum was presented in Figure 1, below.

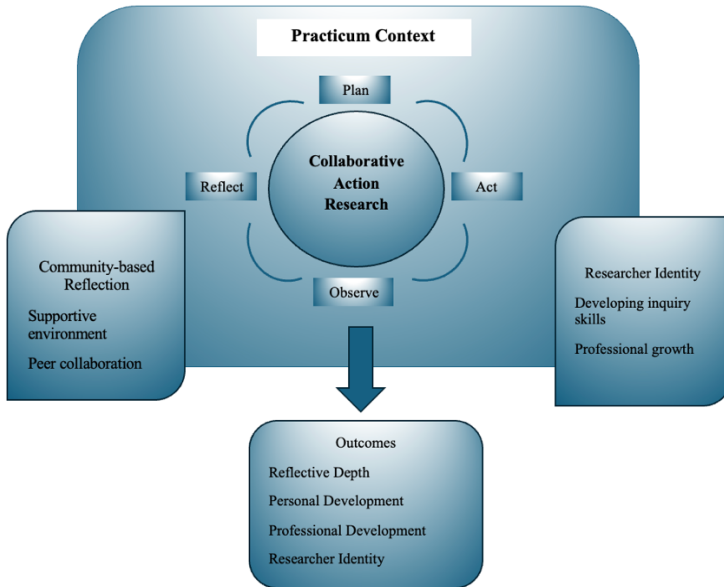


Figure 1. An embedded conceptual framework of collaborative action research within practicum

Within this concern, practicum is reconceptualized in this study not simply as a site for applying theoretical knowledge, but as an epistemic learning space in which reflective thinking, professional agency, and researcher identity are co-constructed through collaborative research engagement. Accordingly, this study explores how EFL teacher candidates experience collaborative action research as a community-based reflective practice during practicum and how this experience contributes to their reflectivity and personal and professional development. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the perspectives of EFL teacher candidates on their collaborative action research experience during practicum?
2. How does collaborative action research embedded in a practicum affect EFL teacher candidates' reflectivity?
3. How does collaborative action research embedded in a practicum affect EFL teacher candidates' personal and professional development?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore EFL teacher candidates' perspectives on their collaborative action research (CAR) experience and its impact on their reflectivity and professional development. In qualitative research, researchers are interested in "understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Participants and Research Context

The study included a sample of eight teacher candidates who undertake their practicum course in the final year of EFL preservice teacher education program administered at a state university with a centralized curriculum mandated by the national higher education in Turkish EFL context. The students' ages ranged between 21 and 23, and all of them voluntarily took part in this piece of research. The participants were selected through purposive sampling method, which enables the researcher to choose goals and particularly qualified respondents or participants while gathering the necessary research data (Fraenkel & Wallen,

1990). The participants’ profile was presented in Table 1, below.

Table 1
Demographic characteristics of the participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age
Anna	Female	21
Emily	Female	23
Sarah	Female	21
Laura	Female	22
Emma	Female	21
James	Male	22
Daniel	Male	23
Michael	Male	23

The participants of the study group were undertaking their practicum in the same state primary school to which they were assigned by the decision of ministry of national education in collaboration with the university. As collaborative action research is not placed as a separate course or integrated one to the any courses of the fourth-year teacher education curriculum, it was embedded to practicum process of the participating teacher candidates, and they were asked to conduct a collaborative action research as a group in their classroom practices at the practicum school during the spring semester of their practicum.

Data Collection Tools

To address the research questions, semi-structured interviews were employed as the primary data collection tool. These interviews allowed for a nuanced exploration of the teacher candidates’ perspectives on the collaborative action research (CAR) process. To supplement and triangulate the interview data, participants' reflective papers, documented throughout the 12-week practicum, were also collected. This dual-method approach aimed to capture a detailed account of how the CAR experience influenced the participants' reflectivity and their broader personal and professional development.

Data Collection Procedure

This study is ethically approved to be conducted with human participants by the Ethical Committee of the author’s institution (Approval Code: 2023/03-10), and all procedures were performed under the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. Before starting to collect data for the aim of the study, written consent forms were obtained from all the

participants. After that, the participants were introduced to collaborative action research method, which lasted for three weeks. The nature and principles of the collaborative action research were taught in detail providing sample research to enhance their understanding of how to conduct action research with their peers in collaboration during their practicum. During the three-week induction, participants were given opportunities to clarify their questions about collaborative action research. Afterwards, the participants were asked to observe their practicum classes for two weeks and find a classroom problem together for action research project. Based on their problem, they planned and conducted their collaborative action research for six weeks. In the meantime, they were also asked to write their reflective papers on their teaching practices during the practicum. At the end of the 12-week practicum, the participants were interviewed to explore their perspectives about the experience of collaborative action research with their peers at the practicum school, and how their reflectivity was affected after completing the research as well as regarding its contribution to their personal and professional development. To this end, five open-ended questions were designed by the researcher and administered to the participants in English during semi-structured interview sessions in person which was audio-recorded and took for about 20-25 minutes. Besides, the participants' reflective reports on their teaching practices for 12 weeks were gathered to examine to what extent their reflectivity enhanced through collaborative action research during practicum. The researcher was involved in the study context throughout the practicum period and facilitated the participants' initial orientation to collaborative action research. This sustained involvement provided contextual familiarity with the participants' experiences. At the same time, the analytical process was conducted systematically using multiple data sources and independent coding by two researchers to reduce the influence of a single researcher's interpretation.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data obtained from the semi-structured interviews and teacher candidates' reflective reports were analyzed through thematic content analysis using an iterative and recursive process involving open coding, axial coding, and thematic integration (Cohen et al., 2007). First, the interview transcripts and reflective reports were read repeatedly to gain familiarity with the data. During open coding, two researchers independently coded the data and identified meaningful units related to the participants' experiences of collaborative action research, reflectivity, and personal and professional development. The two researchers then compared their initial codes and discussed differences in coding decisions. Instead of calculating a statistical inter-coder reliability coefficient,

agreement was established through discussion and consensus. In the axial coding stage, related codes were grouped together into broader categories by examining conceptual similarities and relationships among them. The researchers then reviewed these categories in relation to the original data and collaboratively refined them into overarching themes. Final theme decisions were thus based on agreement between the two researchers and their consistency with evidence across the two data sources.

The analytical process was guided by the theoretical framework within which the study was designed: reflective practice and community-based inquiry. Although the initial coding was primarily inductive, these two theoretical perspectives informed were used to interpret and organize the emerging categories and themes.

Several procedures were performed to enhance the trustworthiness of the analysis. Firstly, the triangulation of the data-sources was achieved by comparing the evidence found in the semi-structured interviews and the participants' reflective reports. The analysis made extensive use of emerging interpretations that could be verified by the supporting evidence as opposed to those based on a single statement. Secondly, independent coding followed by discussion and attainment of consensus by the researchers served as a peer-review mechanism during the coding, categorization, and theme development. Thirdly, an audit trail was maintained throughout the analytical process by making records of initial codes, category development, and decisions made during the coding and theme construction, and returning to the interview transcripts and reflective reports during the finalizing of themes to confirm their presence. Lastly, excerpts from the participants' responses were included in the Findings section to establish the verifiability of the analytical findings and demonstrate the link between the evidence and conclusions.

FINDINGS

The analysis generated three major themes: (1) perspectives on collaborative action research, (2) enhanced reflectivity, and (3) personal and professional development. The themes, categories, and sample codes are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Themes, categories, and sample codes derived from thematic analysis		
Theme	Category	Sample Codes
Perspectives on Collaborative Action Research	Perceived usefulness	beneficial experience; meaningful practicum; effective learning

Becoming Reflective Teacher-Researchers...

Enhancing Reflectivity	Collaboration	teamwork; peer learning; shared responsibility
	Classroom impact	increased student participation; engagement; motivation
	Reflective depth	moving beyond description; critical evaluation
	Awareness	recognizing strengths and weaknesses
Personal and Professional Development	Action-oriented reflection	planning improvement; strategy development
	Problem-solving	identifying classroom problems; generating solutions
	Critical thinking	analytical thinking; multiple perspectives
	Research skills	inquiry skills; data analysis; researcher identity
	Collaboration skills	communication; negotiation; consensus building
	Professional identity	becoming a reflective teacher; confidence

EFL Teacher Candidates' Perspectives of Collaborative Action Research

Participants generally viewed collaborative action research positively, as it created conditions for collaborative learning, classroom-based problem-solving, and professional development. For example, Anna pointed out that the research process helped her bridge the gap between student engagement and professional growth, noting: *"The speaking club activity stressed the value of teamwork... I have been able to advance both my own teaching profession and the English proficiency of my future students"*. Another participant, Emma reported that collaborative action research enhanced professional development, as it *"improved productivity and communication among our peers"* and offered valuable insights into *"how to analyze and synthesize when trying to solve a problem in the classroom"*.

Furthermore, the candidates highlighted that this collaborative framework improved their analytical skills for the future careers. Daniel mentioned that the research made a *"significant contribution to our ability to critically analyze and develop solutions for issues that we will face"*, meanwhile, Michael summarized the practical success of the project by stating: *"Finding a problem as a group, talking about it, and then taking action was incredibly fruitful"*. In general, participants described CAR as a process of shared inquiry and not just as a research task, emphasizing mutual learning and responsibility, which implies that

collaboration was an essential component of their professional learning in practicum.

Enhancing Reflectivity through Collaborative Action Research

Analysis of the reflective reports indicated that participants began to move from descriptive reflection to analytical and evaluative reflection. Participants were able to identify both strengths and weaknesses in their teaching practice. For instance, Daniel highlighted how the collaborative framework encouraged a deeper level of critical inquiry, stating: *“Not only we learned from each other but also we reflected together... we learned how to critically approach the events and reflect on our experiences more deeply”*. This shared reflection helped candidates move beyond individual observations, fostering a more comprehensive awareness of the teaching process. Emily echoed this sentiment, noting that reflecting as a team *“increased my awareness of the need to think more comprehensively and critically as well reflectively”*. The process also supported candidates in identifying their personal and professional attributes. To illustrate, James found that the collaborative environment provided a unique opportunity for self-assessment: *“I had the opportunity to better observe and think about my own weaknesses and strengths, which contributed to my reflective thinking at the end of the day”*.

Together, the interview and reflective-report data indicate a qualitative shift in participants’ reflection. Their accounts moved beyond describing classroom experiences toward identifying pedagogical problems, evaluating alternatives, and considering future actions. Participants also frequently associated deeper reflection with peer interaction, suggesting that reflection developed through both individual and collaborative sense-making.

EFL Teacher Candidates’ Personal and Professional Development

The research data revealed that the participants had positive views about their experience of collaborative action research. What is more, they reported that such a research practice not only contributed to their personal development but also professional one. More specifically, conducting action research in collaboration with their peers at their practicum classroom enhanced their skills in terms of *problem-solving, critical thinking, reflectivity, open mindedness, research skill, and collaboration* which were the categories emerged regarding the teacher candidates’ development in both personal and professional domains. Each of

these categories were explicated and delineated with sample excerpts from the participants' responses and reflections below.

Problem-solving and critical thinking emerged as closely related areas of development. Daniel explained that identifying classroom problems contributed to their ability to "critically analyze and develop solutions," while Laura described considering different solutions as an opportunity to explore "a variety of thinking ways and perspectives." Participants therefore associated CAR with a more systematic and multi-perspectival approach to classroom problems.

The analysis of the participants' responses also revealed that their reflective thinking skills personally and professionally enhanced thanks to collaborative action research, which was exemplified with following excerpts. In this regard, Sarah observed that the experience was instrumental in identifying her shortcomings and strengths, stating: "*It was a supporting element for me to think about how I could compensate for my shortcomings and improve my positive aspects*". Similarly, James reported "*I had the opportunity to better observe and think about my own weaknesses and strengths, which contributed to my reflective thinking at the end of the day*". This indicates that CAR not only provided technical skills but also fostered the internal mechanisms necessary for becoming a reflective practitioner.

In addition to the aforementioned results, participants identified the outcome of collaboration being more openness to different perspectives. Laura explained how she learned to view issues "from a broader perspective," while Michael added that working collaboratively provided "a wider range of solutions than working alone". Besides, CAR enhanced participants' emerging researcher identities. Indeed, Sarah reported that doing research in a real classroom is "an opportunity to gain a researcher identity,". This shows that the process of inquiry influenced the participant's professional self-construction. Similarly, James reflected that the experience had a "*great impact on my professional development*" by improving his observation abilities within his own teaching context.

Last but not the least, the research findings also provided the evidence that the participants improved their collaboration skills through engaging in collaborative action research in their practicum. For instance, Emma noted that by sharing and benefiting from others' experiences, she could "*influence the outcome and gain perspective on myself*". Similarly, another participant Michael admitted that despite his initial prejudices about collaboration, the project proved that collaborative work provides a "*variety of solutions to classroom problems*" as he

could not do it on his own. He concluded that this experience taught him how to be prepared for future practice as he would engage in collaboration with others. Therefore, these excerpts taken from the participants' responses indicate that collaborative action research is a powerful tool that allows participants to become more cooperative, gain new insights into the essence of cooperation and teamwork, and be ready for future professional practice.

DISCUSSION

The findings are discussed in relation to the three research questions concerning teacher candidates' views of CAR, how it contributes to developing their reflectivity, and its impact on personal and professional development. For each part of these areas, CAR was generally perceived as a productive form of collaborative inquiry; however, the findings should be interpreted in relation to the particular practicum context and the self-reported nature of the data.

Regarding the first research question, the participants generally perceived CAR as a supportive component of their practicum experience. They especially appreciated the opportunity for collaborative inquiry and shared decision-making in dealing with problems emerging during the practicum. This finding resonates with Yuan and Burns's (2017) and Dikilitaş and Mumford's (2019) studies, which found that collaborative inquiry generated opportunities for professional exchange, co-learning, and engagement in classroom problems. Indeed, the idea aligns with Wenger's (2000) understanding of professional learning as participation in a community in which knowledge is constructed through interactions and shared practices. In this study, CAR appeared to provide participants with the space for engaging in a professional community as they collectively overcame emergent classroom issues instead of practicing teachers' traditional role of observing and teaching individually. Thus, collaborative inquiry may transform practicum experiences into professional learning environments, effectively reframing the understanding of field experience. This finding is consistent with prior studies highlighting the developmental potential of action research in preservice teacher education (Cabaroğlu, 2014; Morales et al., 2016). This interpretation also resonates with Öz (2025), who demonstrated that practicum constitutes a multidimensional developmental space in which EFL teacher candidates' experiences are closely intertwined with their professional learning and emerging teacher identities. However, unlike the aforementioned studies, the present study emphasizes that collaborative inquiry turns practicum into a professional community in which teacher candidates engage in shared meaning-making and decision-making processes facilitated by peers.

As regards the second research question, the findings revealed that participants' reflections tended to evolve from predominantly descriptive accounts towards more analytical and evaluative reflection. Throughout the CAR process, participants increasingly moved beyond describing events in their classrooms to identifying problems, examining possible causes, evaluating their own practices, and considering alternative actions. This finding is consistent with conceptualizations of reflection as a process that goes beyond description toward the critical examination of practice (Schön, 1987; Loughran, 2004; Farrell, 2015). It also supports recent research that emphasizes the value of providing reflective opportunities in teacher education (Godínez Martínez, 2021; Machost & Stains, 2023). Notably, reflection was not experienced as an exclusively solitary activity, as participants reported that peer dialogues and collaborative problem-solving offered additional perspectives through which they could reexamine their classroom experiences. Therefore, the study extends the reflective-practice perspective by illustrating how reflection can be enhanced when it is embedded within a collaborative inquiry process during practicum.

The third research question is related to the participants' associations between CAR and the aspects of their personal or professional lives. It was reported that CAR was associated with particularly problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, research engagement, and emerging researcher identity. These results can be related to similar findings concerning the implications of action research on participants as prospective teachers (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2015; Dikilitaş & Mumford, 2019). In this respect, the emergence of the researcher-oriented perspective can be considered as a crucial finding since participants began to describe classroom problems as issues that could be investigated systematically and collaboratively. In practical terms, this might indicate that CAR can serve as a tool for bridging the conceptual gap between university-based research and school-based teaching practice by providing these reflections as an integral part of professional development.

These findings should nevertheless be interpreted with caution as it was carried out with eight teacher candidates within a single practicum context. In other words, the findings therefore represent context-specific experiences rather than broadly generalizable outcomes. Moreover, both semi-structured interviews and reflective reports relied on participants' accounts of their own experiences and development. Although the use of two data sources allowed comparison across participants' interview and written reflections, both remain self-reported forms of evidence. Consequently, the reported development in reflectivity, problem-solving, collaboration, and researcher identity should be understood primarily as

participants' perceived development rather than as independently observed changes in classroom practice. Future research incorporating classroom observations, mentor or supervisor perspectives, and longitudinal evidence could examine whether these perceived changes are also reflected in participants' subsequent teaching practices.

CONCLUSION

This study examined EFL teacher candidates' experiences with collaborative action research (CAR) embedded in practicum and explored its perceived contributions to their reflectivity and personal and professional development. The findings suggest that CAR provided a structured context in which teacher candidates engaged collectively in inquiry, reflection, and professional learning. Participants described practicum not merely as an individual or procedural requirement but as a collaborative space for examining classroom experiences, addressing pedagogical problems, and learning with peers. A key contribution of the study is therefore its illustration of how practicum can function as a community-based, inquiry-oriented learning environment in which reflection is supported through collaborative engagement.

The findings also indicate that integrating CAR into practicum encourages teacher candidates to take a more inquiring stance toward their own practice. Participants associated the process of engaging in CAR with increased opportunities for reflection, problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, research engagement, and an emerging researcher identity. From a teacher education perspective, these findings have implications for considering the inclusion of opportunities for collaborative inquiry as an integral part of practicum, in addition to opportunities for observation and teaching experience as a means of connecting university-based preparation, practitioner-based experience, and inquiry, and positioning teacher candidates as active agents in their learning.

However, these conclusions should be considered within the boundaries of the study. The research involved eight EFL teacher candidates (n=8) from a single institutional and practicum context, which limits the transferability of the findings. In addition, although interviews and reflective reports provided two sources of qualitative evidence, both relied on participants' self-reported experiences. The findings therefore reflect participants' perceived developmental gains and should not be interpreted as direct evidence of changes in their classroom practice. Further studies are needed that include larger and more diverse participant groups and incorporate classroom observations, mentor or supervisor perspectives, and longitudinal or mixed-method designs to examine

whether such perceived reflective developmental gains transform into teaching practice change.

Pedagogically, the study recommends that practicum design should offer teacher candidates opportunities for collaboratively identifying problems in the classroom, reflecting on their experiences through dialogue, and systematically exploring possible responses. By complementing observation and teaching, a CAR can add an extra collaborative inquiry dimension to the practicum. In the context of this study, this approach offered a promising way of connecting reflective practice, collaborative learning, and practitioner inquiry in preservice teacher education.

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GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Amaç

Öğretmenlik uygulaması, öğretmen adaylarının kuramsal bilgilerini gerçek sınıf ortamında deneyimlemelerine ve mesleki kimliklerini geliştirmelerine olanak sağlayan öğretmen eğitiminin önemli bileşenlerinden biridir. Bununla birlikte, öğretmenlik uygulamasının ağırlıklı olarak gözlem ve öğretim deneyimleriyle sınırlı kalması, öğretmen adaylarının sınıf içinde karşılaştıkları problemleri sistematik biçimde incelemeleri ve kendi uygulamalarından mesleki bilgi üretmeleri için yeterli fırsat sağlamayabilir. Bu bağlamda eylem araştırması, öğretmen adaylarının kendi öğretim deneyimlerini sorgulamalarına, sınıf içi problemleri belirlemelerine, olası çözümler geliştirmelerine ve uygulamalarını değerlendirmelerine olanak sağlayan önemli bir mesleki öğrenme yaklaşımıdır. Eylem araştırmasının işbirlikli biçimde yürütülmesi ise bireysel yansıtmanın yanı sıra akran diyalogunu, ortak problem çözme, farklı bakış açılarının paylaşılmasını ve ortak anlam oluşturmaya destekleyebilir. Bu çalışma, işbirlikli eylem araştırmasını öğretmenlik uygulamasına entegre edilmiş topluluk temelli bir yansıtıcı uygulama olarak ele almaktadır. Araştırmanın amacı, işbirlikli eylem araştırmasının İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının yansıtıcılıkları ile kişisel ve mesleki gelişimlerine katkılarını incelemektir. Bu doğrultuda öğretmen adaylarının işbirlikli eylem araştırması deneyimine ilişkin görüşleri, bu deneyimin yansıtıcılıkları üzerindeki etkisi ve kişisel ve mesleki gelişimlerine katkıları araştırılmıştır.

Yöntem

Araştırma nitel araştırma yaklaşımıyla yürütülmüştür. Çalışma grubunu Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinin İngilizce Öğretmenliği programının son sınıfında öğrenim gören ve öğretmenlik uygulaması dersini alan sekiz öğretmen adayı oluşturmaktadır. Amaçlı örnekleme yoluyla belirlenen katılımcıların beşi kadın, üçü erkek olup yaşları 21 ile 23 arasında değişmektedir. Katılımcılar öğretmenlik uygulamalarını aynı devlet okulunda gerçekleştirmiştir. İşbirlikli eylem araştırması katılımcıların 12 haftalık öğretmenlik uygulaması sürecine entegre edilmiştir. İlk üç haftada katılımcılara işbirlikli eylem araştırmasının temel ilkeleri ve uygulanma süreci tanıtılmıştır. Ardından öğretmen adayları iki hafta boyunca uygulama sınıflarını gözlemleyerek ortak bir sınıf içi problem belirlemiş ve bu problem doğrultusunda altı hafta boyunca işbirlikli eylem araştırması yürütmüşlerdir. Süreç boyunca kendi öğretim deneyimlerine ilişkin yansıtıcı raporlar hazırlamışlardır. Araştırma verileri, öğretmenlik uygulaması sonunda gerçekleştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ve katılımcıların yazılı yansıtıcı raporları aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Veriler açık kodlama, eksenel kodlama ve tematik bütünleştirmeyi içeren yinelemeli tematik içerik analiziyle

incelenmiştir. İki araştırmacı verileri bağımsız olarak kodlamış, kodlama kararlarını karşılaştırmış ve farklılıkları tartışarak uzlaşmaya ulaşmıştır. Analizin inandırıcılığını artırmak amacıyla veri kaynakları arasında çeşitleme yapılmış, bağımsız kodlama ve araştırmacılar arası değerlendirmeden yararlanılmış ve analiz sürecindeki kodlama, kategori ve tema geliştirme kararlarını içeren bir denetim izi tutulmuştur.

Bulgular

Analiz sonucunda üç temel tema ortaya çıkmıştır: işbirlikli eylem araştırmasına ilişkin görüşler, yansıtıcılığın gelişimi ve kişisel ve mesleki gelişim. İlk tema kapsamında öğretmen adayları işbirlikli eylem araştırmasını genel olarak yararlı ve anlamlı bir öğretmenlik uygulaması deneyimi olarak değerlendirmiştir. Katılımcılar gerçek sınıf ortamında karşılaştıkları bir problemi birlikte belirlemenin, farklı çözüm yollarını tartışmanın ve ortak kararlar almanın mesleki öğrenmelerini desteklediğini ifade etmiştir. İş birliği yalnızca görev paylaşımı olarak değil; akran öğrenmesi, farklı bakış açılarından yararlanma ve ortak sorumluluk üstlenme süreci olarak değerlendirilmiştir. İkinci tema kapsamında görüşme ve yansıtıcı rapor verileri, öğretmen adaylarının yansıtıcılarının ağırlıklı olarak betimleyici anlatımlardan daha analitik, eleştirel ve değerlendirmeye niteliğe doğru geliştiğini göstermiştir. Katılımcılar sınıfta gerçekleşen olayları yalnızca betimlemek yerine kendi öğretim uygulamalarındaki güçlü ve zayıf yönleri belirlemeye, sınıf içi problemlerin nedenlerini değerlendirmeye, alternatif çözüm yollarını dikkate almaya ve gelecekteki öğretim uygulamalarına yönelik stratejiler geliştirmeye başlamıştır. Akranlarla gerçekleştirilen tartışmaların farklı bakış açılarını görmelerine ve kendi deneyimlerini yeniden değerlendirmelerine katkıda bulunduğu belirlenmiştir.

Üçüncü tema kapsamında işbirlikli eylem araştırması özellikle problem çözme, eleştirel düşünme, araştırma becerileri, iş birliği ve mesleki farkındalıkla ilişkilendirilmiştir. Katılımcılar, sınıf içi problemleri sistematik biçimde tanımlama ve farklı çözüm seçeneklerini değerlendirme sürecinin problem çözme ve eleştirel düşünme becerilerine katkıda bulunduğunu belirtmiştir. Gerçek sınıf ortamında araştırma yürütmenin araştırma becerilerini geliştirdiği ve bazı katılımcıların kendilerini kendi uygulamalarını araştırabilen öğretmen-araştırmacılar olarak görmelerine katkı sağladığı görülmüştür. İş birliği sürecinin ayrıca iletişim kurma, farklı görüşleri değerlendirme, uzlaşma ve ortak karar alma becerilerini desteklediği belirlenmiştir.

Sonuç ve Tartışma

Araştırmamızın bulguları, işbirlikli eylem araştırmasının öğretmenlik uygulamasına entegre edilmesinin öğretmen adaylarına yapılandırılmış bir sorgulama, yansıtma ve mesleki öğrenme ortamı sağlayabileceğini göstermektedir. Özellikle katılımcıların yansıtmalarının betimleyici düzeyden daha analitik ve değerlendirici bir niteliğe yönelmesi, işbirlikli sorgulamanın yansıtıcı uygulamayı destekleme potansiyeline işaret etmektedir. Akran diyalogu ve ortak problem çözmenin bu süreçte önemli bir rol oynaması, yansıtmanın yalnızca bireysel bir süreç değil, sosyal olarak yapılandırılan bir mesleki öğrenme biçimi olarak da ele alınabileceğini göstermektedir. Bulgular ayrıca işbirlikli eylem araştırmasının üniversite temelli öğretmen eğitimi ile okul temelli uygulama arasında bağlantı kurabilecek bir yaklaşım olduğunu düşündürmektedir. Öğretmen adaylarının sınıf problemlerini araştırılabilir sorunlar olarak ele almaları, onları yalnızca öğretimi uygulayan kişiler olmaktan çıkararak kendi uygulamalarını sorgulayan ve bu uygulamalardan mesleki bilgi üreten öğretmen-araştırmacılar olarak konumlandırabilir. Bununla birlikte, çalışma tek bir kurumsal ve öğretmenlik uygulaması bağlamında sekiz İngilizce öğretmen adayıyla yürütülmüş ve kullanılan iki temel veri kaynağı da katılımcıların öz bildirimlerine dayanmıştır. Bu nedenle elde edilen bulgular doğrudan gözlemlenen sınıf içi değişimlerden ziyade katılımcıların algıladıkları gelişimi yansıtmaktadır. Gelecek araştırmalarda sınıf gözlemleri, mentor veya uygulama öğretmeni görüşleri ve boylamsal veriler kullanılarak algılanan gelişimin sonraki öğretim uygulamalarına ne ölçüde yansıdığı incelenebilir. Sonuç olarak, işbirlikli eylem araştırmasının öğretmenlik uygulamasına entegre edilmesi; yansıtıcı düşünme, problem çözme, eleştirel düşünme, iş birliği ve araştırmaya katılım süreçlerini destekleyerek öğretmen adaylarının yansıtıcı öğretmen-araştırmacılar olarak gelişimlerine katkı sağlayabilecek bir yaklaşım sunmaktadır.

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