

REPORT ON THE 7TH ELTER COLLOQUIUM HELD AT BILKENT UNIVERSITY

English Language Teacher Education and Research - June 16th-17th, 2017

1. Introduction

The 7th ELTER Colloquium took place on the east campus of Bilkent University in the Multi-purpose Hall of the Özel Bilkent Middle/Primary Schools on June 16th-17th, 2017. The colloquium was attended by over 30 participants from 17 different Turkish Universities, both state and private. As is customary in ELTER, participants were seasoned members of ELT teacher education programs who had been involved in research projects in their work contexts, independently, in teams, as supervisors, as consultants to nationally supported initiatives, or in conjunction with members of other academic establishments.

ELTER members reported on initiatives which they had planned and undertaken from ELTER 2016 (or before in some cases). After updating the meeting on progress in their previous ELTER research initiatives, they then worked in groups to research further the projects previously embarked upon, or to establish new teams wishing to create a new research focus. The meeting convened for one and a half days, with the first day starting in the afternoon of a Friday on which the outcomes of work over the previous year from four different research groups were presented and discussed. The meeting then welcomed Professor Kay Livingston, online in tele-conferencing format from the University of Glasgow, Scotland, for a presentation and discussion which set the tone and agenda for the meeting to brainstorm 'burning issues' in teacher education research. Professor Livingston has long been a supporter of ELTER and has graciously offered her time over the years to the organisation. In 2017 she was not able to join us in person at the meeting, but we hope to again have us with us at our coming meeting. Her input has always been a spur to creative and critical thinking for teacher education researchers, and this occasion was no exception. She traced out paths for us to consider in term of research needs.

The second day started with a presentation by Dr Olcay Sert, then from Hacettepe University but currently a Senior lecturer at Mälardalen University, Sweden. He gave a fascinating and innovative perspective on the implications of his work on classroom research for teacher education. This was then followed by group work where the newly formed or previously established research groups worked on and developed their research proposals and plans for the coming year, which were then presented in the afternoon of the second day. The other groups listened to the group presentations and then were provided with an opportunity to ask questions related to the proposals. Four group proposals were presented, and these are briefly summarised below.

The meeting was not focussed solely on professional concerns, but participants were also able to enjoy an evening together in a beautiful restaurant setting on the banks of Emir Lake, part of the campus of Middle Eastern Technical University (METU). This was kindly organised by our colleagues from METU and provided a further highlight to a successful ELTER meeting.

The meeting closed with an evaluation of the meeting, and the fixing of the next meeting to take place in Busra. A colleague was also given the opportunity to present the founding of the ILTERG initiative in the area of teacher education research.

2. **REPORTS FROM GROUPS WITH RESEARCH IN PROGRESS OR COMPLETED** Chair: Dr Sedat Akayoğlu

2.1 **Identifying the digital literacies of pre-service English language teachers in Turkey** (Sedat Akayoğlu, Nazlı Ceren Cirit, Kenan Dikilitaş, Sibel Korkmazgil, Müge Satar)

Increasingly digital and multimodal communication (Bezemer & Kress, 2015) coupled with the relevance of 21st century skills in education and particularly in teacher education makes exploration of prospective language teachers' digital literacy skills a timely research agenda. An investigation of their current digital skills and literacy practices can assist in identification of their needs, which could then guide initiatives to revise foreign language teacher education curricula. In the light of this need in the literature, the purpose of this study is to identify the state of digital literacies among preservice teachers

and explore the pedagogical purposes of use of digital tools. The research questions of this study are (a) what does 'digital literacies' mean to pre-service English language teachers, (b) how do pre-service teachers identify their own digital literacy, (c) what is the state of digital literacy of pre-service language teachers, and (d) for what specific purposes do pre-service teachers use digital tools in teaching English? The data was collected from 113 senior pre-service teachers enrolled in English Language Teaching Departments at three different universities in Turkey. As a result of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- The findings are based on opinions of the participants, some case studies should be presented in order to examine how they use digital tools.
- More data should be collected in other contexts in order to make a generalization about the digital literacy levels of pre-service teachers in Turkey.
- This study can be replicated with earlier grades of ELT programs and the groups can be compared in order to examine the changes throughout the undergraduate program.
- A follow-up study can be designed to find out to what extent these participants integrate digital tools into their classrooms.

2.2 The contribution of the teacher evaluation by students to the professional learning and effective performance of the language teachers

(Burcu, Gaele, Hilal, Hui, Iryna, John, Simge, Şukran, Yasemin)

The presentation was based on a reading by members of the team of a selected bibliography which had been distributed after the ELTER 2016 meeting in Bolu. This group decided to continue working in this area on day two of the colloquium to be able to carry out a research design. During the year each member of the group had read a number of articles and submitted the salient points of each article to the group. This was then summarised in the presentation on the first day of ELTER 2017. The PowerPoint summarised some of the salient points from the reading under headings as follows:

2.2.1 Research Questions – ELTER 2016

What contribution, if any, does student evaluation of teaching in university language programs through anonymous questionnaires have on the professional learning and effective teaching performance of teachers?

- What are the characteristics of the systems currently in use in the targeted contexts?
- How do different stakeholders perceive the contribution of the performance system to professional learning and effective teaching?

2.2.2 Uses of Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET)

- Summative and/or Formative Purposes, Policing and Learning Purposes
- feedback to improve the quality of teaching, quality of courses and student experience;
- evidence for contract termination/renewal, promotion, recruitment decisions, career progress etc.;
- as a proof of quality insurance of teaching for institutions;

2.2.3 Contested Impact of SET

Worrisome - Negative impact of SET on teaching /curriculum delivery

- Does it change performance?
- Is teaching being rated? Or, teachers?
- Teacher Reactions?
- Personal Impacts on Teachers?
- Curriculum impact?

Encouraging - SET has a formative effect IF taken seriously

- Teacher Reactions?
- Improves curriculum?
- Modes of Application?
- Administrative use?

- As Information source?

2.2.4 The characteristics of SET systems in use

- Describing the Learning System in Use
 - the characteristics of the current system in use, dimensions to be selected carefully
 - analysis of content of what effective teaching is, supplemented by literature
- The Breadth of Focus - Constituents of Surveys
 - Course - Materials – Pedagogy – Teacher (teaching?)
 - Institutional level
- Factors affecting reliability
 - Can Students Evaluate?

2.2.5 Stakeholder Perceptions and Use of SET

The contribution SET to professional learning and effective teaching

- Non-professional Interpretation of statistical evidence – reliability
- Impact of timing – validity concerns
- Lack of Empirical Base to Claims Made for SET
- Teacher response to SET – scepticism, resistance, anxiety

2.2.6 Suggestions for Practice

- Stakeholders need to understand the benefits of SET for professional learning and effective teaching
- Performance should not to be purely based on teacher classroom behaviour in relation to student learning
 - Other forms of evaluation such as: self-evaluation, reflective journals, peer review of materials and classroom teaching
 - Feedback should be accompanied by counselling or improvement activities

2.2.7 Some Issues

- Instructors reach a plateau in career where habits ingrained – in early career change can be expected
- The effect of quality assurance fades away over time
- Slightly negative correlation between years of experience and student ratings
- Universities reach a stable plateau due to instructor turn-over rate, which impacts teaching standards

ISSUES AS A RESEARCH GROUP

Which lens to view SET through? Theoretical/ Analytical framework?

- Stakeholder Perceptions
- Current Practices
- Examples of Good Practice
- The Impact of SET
- The Uses of SET
- Contribution to Administrative Decision-making
- Etc.

2.3 EMI Instructors' self-perception of their competency and the new regulations

This study aims to investigate the perceptions of EMI lecturers in Turkey regarding their competency to teach the content in English, the new regulations stated by HEC and the potential action plans to ensure the standards stated in the regulations. An online survey consisting of 19 Likert-scale items and 3 open-ended questions was prepared to collect the data and 67 EMI lecturers working in different universities participated to the study.

The preliminary findings revealed that EMI lecturers need professional trainings to teach the content in English and language proficiency should be re-considered in terms of both lecturers and students in EMI

departments. It was also found that most of the participants had no action plans to ensure the standards in the new HEC regulations.

2.4 Understanding and Improving Practicum Processes at Four Different Settings

(A. Cendel Karaman, Sumru Akcan, Betil Eroz, Alev Özbilgin, Anıl Rakıcioğlu-Söylemez)

This study reported the results of a teacher educator self-study exploring the dynamics of professional learning and mentoring among university supervisors, cooperating teachers, and prospective English teachers. Focusing on the improvement of the interactional quality in ELT teacher education programs in four different cities in Turkey, the research found that there is a need for co-constructing visions for professional learning early on in practicum among university supervisors and cooperating teacher.

3. BURNING ISSUES IN TEACHER EDUCATION RESEARCH Chair: Professor Gölge Seferoğlu Guest Speaker: Professor Kay Livingston, Glasgow University

Professor Livingston's talk, delivered from Glasgow through communication technology (SKYPE), encouraged us to look at the future of teacher education and the needs of those practising in the 21st century. She pointed out the key competencies for a teacher need to possess in an environment in which they have to deal with the complexity of change inherent in modern societies. Reviewing the aims of ELTER, Professor Livingston asked us to reflect on the originality, significance and rigour of planned research and to consider the research paradigm which would be the most impactful for our context, and the approach adopted. She connected us to the initiatives taking place across Europe and the commonalities in thinking with a view to supporting teacher development, although the characteristics of the individual contexts (structures, resources, policies, etc.) dictate the speed at which change can take place and the nature of that change. Professor Livingston emphasized the importance of working together collaboratively to create new knowledge linking this to the work undertaken by ELTER.

4. BRAINSTORMING OF BURNING ISSUES IN TEACHER EDUCATION RESEARCH Chair: Dr Tom Godfrey

The brainstorming session came up with 7 potential research area groups to which members could join order to develop a more detailed research project to be carried out over the 2017-18 academic year. A few extra suggestions were put forward. Members of the colloquium were then asked to align themselves with a group that represented an area of interest that they would like to be part of.

GROUP 1 – STRATEGIES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

Research related to the aims listed in the MoNE 2017 strategy document:

- Promoting higher standard teachers
- Developing lifelong learning for teachers
- Improving the perceptions of the teaching profession

What can be done to improve T. Ed. practices? Which areas do teachers need to focus on to develop themselves?

- Ask stakeholders for their opinions on how can change perceptions
- Data from teachers, academicians, etc
- Perhaps develop a model

GROUP 2 – IMPACT OF TPACK

- Impact of TPACK – Technological, Pedagogical, and Content Knowledge

GROUP 3 – STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE TEACHERS

Researching Student Perceptions of Highly Effective Teachers

- Following teachers who are graded highly and finding out why from students (from teachers themselves, too)

- *The effect of discourse on Teacher Evaluation by Students*
- Using VEO to analyse classroom, working with pre- and in-service teachers

GROUP 4 – STAKEHOLDER EXPECTATIONS AND REALISATION IN THE PRACTICUM

Researching expectations at beginning and frustrations throughout the practicum experience (loss of ideals, potential clash of expectations etc.)

- Interviews, bottom-up, qualitative (expectations from different perspectives)
- Over one year (interviews at end to see how expectations are met, etc.)
- student teachers, mentor, supervisors in 3 cities

GROUP 5 – THE USE OF VEO TO FACILITATE TEACHER LEARNING

In what way does the use of VEO facilitate professional development opportunities of student teachers? How does VEO, if at all, help student teachers be better decision-makers through this process?

- Data: Gazi, METU, Bog, NC METU
- Classroom interactional competence of student teachers
- Journals, observations, recording, interviews before and after with teachers participating in the project

GROUP 6 – ATTITUDES TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING TEACHER CAREERS

How do in-services teachers at different stages in their careers exhibit attitudes towards ongoing professional development? An inquiry into why some teachers are more open than others to involvement in an ongoing learning process

- Looking at the current practices with in-service teachers
- Look at best practice/ good teaching examples
- Relationship with CTs, candidates, plus supervisors
- Diverse and open group

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

1. Impact of students' feedback on pre-service teachers' practicum experiences
2. Meta-analysis of research practices in Second Language Teacher Education in the Turkish context
3. Teacher burnout
4. Ice breakers of pre-service and in-service teachers
5. Flipped classroom at pre-service level

GROUPS TO PRESENT (10 Mins)

- Purpose
- Research Questions
- Methods
- Timeframe

5. IMPLICATIONS OF CLASSROOM RESEARCH FOR TEACHER EDUCATION Chair: Assoc. Prof. Sumru Akcan. Guest Speaker: Dr Olcay Sert, Hacettepe University

Dr Olcay Sert introduced us to his work, connected to conversation analysis and classroom discourse, in a fascinating and motivating presentation. He pointed out the importance of classroom research for teacher education and how, if we know what we are doing in the classroom, then we can start teaching better. The classroom involves multi-tasking, instant decision-making, effective interaction – the question remains whether we can teach these factors to teachers and improve their Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC). He made us aware of the possibility of watching soundless behaviour in the classroom using modern technological tools.

In the same way that microscopic patterns emerge in heart cells (illustrated with a video), microscopic patterns emerge in the classroom while teaching. A combination of learning from Interactional Analysis,

Discourse Analysis, Critical Discourse and Conversational Analysis allows us to see the classroom in a new light with the help of Video Enhanced Observation (VEO). Classroom Interactional Competence (CIC) can be enhanced in the L2 classroom by a focus on maximising interactional space, shaping the learner contribution, effective use of eliciting and gestures, effective management of the use of L1, and managing insufficient language knowledge or competence on the part of learners.

VEO, a downloadable mobile app, can serve to record real classroom practice when installed in a non-obtrusive way in the classroom as the basis for critical self-reflection, evidence-based mentoring, or peer feedback practices. Dr Sert explained his IMDAT model (see his 2015 publication for a deeper insight – *Social Interaction and L2 Classroom Discourse*) and how focusing on micro-patterns through dialogic and critical reflection can develop CIC. The app has the possibility to tag moments in interaction, to measure time, to analyse activities, and provides the opportunity to review observed behaviour.

Experience with the VEO tool enriches reflection, and evidence suggests it is a powerful change initiator. The implications for research and practice were summarised, with potential for impact on practice in the areas of: data led teacher education; action research for teachers; visual, experiential, reflective and microscopic feedback; reflective practice and peer feedback; teacher language awareness and CIC. Participants were referred to the VEO project at <https://veoeuropa.com/>

Dr Sert later joined one of the research groups which decided to work on VEO as the basis for a research project in pre-service Teacher Education.

6. PRESENTATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL GROUP RESEARCH PLAN OUTLINES CHAIR: DR JOHN O'DWYER

6.1 GROUP 1 - Preparing Context-aware PTs

(Gölge Seferoğlu, Zeynep Ölçü Dinçer, Sibel Korkmazgil, Gözde Balıkçı, Gülden Taner)

6.1.1 Setting the scene

According to the goals of MoNE Strategy Document:

- 1st aim: «Educating high quality teachers»
 - Context aware
 - Well prepared for the potential workplaces
- 3rd aim: «changing the perceptions about teaching profession and enhancing the status of the profession»
 - To take remedial measures in order to address differences across regions and institutions
 - Years of service: SouthEast: 6.4 years, Aegean:14,2
 - Şırnak: 1.8 years İzmir: 15.6
 - Remedy: Employing teachers on short-term contracts
 - Remedial Measure: Teacher rotation and incentives/ financial/accomodation
 - TOP DOWN: Focuses on administrative issues and policies only

6.1.2 Purpose of the Study: Addressing the merging points of AIM 1 and AIM 3:

Short-term:

- Defining the current perceptions of PTs about working in different settings/regions as an EFL teacher.
- Increasing awareness to teach English in different regions & institutions
- Enhancing PTs' adaptation and coping strategies in their early career stages

Long-term:

- Developing suggestions for improving teacher (education) quality & efficient use of teacher workforce in high-priority contexts (teacher rotation)

6.1.3 Research Questions

- What are PTs perceptions regarding working as a professional EFL teacher in high-priority contexts?
- How confident/competent they feel to work in such contexts in their early career stages?

- What are the effects of a case-based training on PTs' perceptions in working in high priority contexts?

6.1.4 Methodology: Qualitative case study

Participants:

- PTs enrolled in practicum courses at 3 universities located in mid- Anatolian region (15 PTs from METU, Erciyes and Cumhuriyet)

Research Design:

- 5-6 representative teaching contexts across different regions
- Novice in-service teachers video-record their contexts, share experiences
- integrating these cases as a reference for discussion & promoting critical and reflective thinking to prepare context-aware teachers

Instruments:

- 1.Semi-structured interviews before&after training (1st & last week)
- 2.Pre-&Post-focus group interviews (in-class) for each case (b&a videos)
- 3.Reflective journals

6.1.5 Timeline

- **September – November 2017**
Designing the practicum, collecting videos, literature review
- **December – January 2017**
developing and piloting instruments
- **February – March 2018**
pre-training interviews
- **Mid-march – May 2018**
training & case focus group interviews each week
- **May 2018**
post interviews
- **June 2018**
data analysis and reporting

6.2 GROUP 2: Proposing a CALL syllabus for ELT programs in Turkey (Nazlı Ceren Cirit)

6.2.1 Purpose:

To develop and design a CALL/TELL syllabus for ELT programs in Turkey

6.2.2 Research Qs:

What are the needs, wants & lacks of ELT pre-service teachers in terms of CALL/TELL skills?
How are CALL/TELL skills being currently taught in ELT programs?
How are the needs of ELT pre-service teachers met with the current ELT syllabi?
To what extent does this syllabus work in practice?

6.2.3 Methods/Procedures:

Design-based research: "a systematic but flexible methodology aimed to improve educational practices through analysis, design, development, and implementation, based on collaboration among researchers and practitioners in real-world settings, and leading to contextually-sensitive design principles and theories (Wang and Hannafin, 2005, p. 6) Questionnaire /Structured interviews:

1. in order to identify needs/wants & lacks
2. Collection, content analysis and comparison of syllabi across ELT programs in Turkey
3. Evaluation of these syllabi to see whether they meet the wants and lacks of ELT pre-service teachers
4. Design and implementation of a CALL syllabus

6.3 GROUP 3 STUDENT PERCEPTION OF INSTRUCTOR EVALUATION

(John, Yasemin, Simge, Gizem, Sukran, Hilal, Iryna)

6.3.1 Purpose

- Gap in the literature on Student perceptions

6.3.2 Research Questions

- What are the characteristics of the systems currently in use in the targeted contexts?
- What contribution, if any, does student evaluation of teaching in university language programs through anonymous questionnaires have on the professional learning and effective teaching performance of teachers?
- How do different stakeholders perceive the contribution of the performance system to professional learning and effective teaching?

6.3.3 Research design

- Qualitative research paradigm
- Interpretative, transactional
- Transformative

6.3.4 Data Collection

- Semi-structured Interviews (L1)
- Purposeful sampling (initial years & senior students)
- Personal-situated learning
- Semi-structured interview questions
 1. Think about a teacher who has positively affected you. What in your opinion makes an affective teacher?
 2. How do you feel about evaluating your teachers/instructors?
 - Do you think students should evaluate teachers?
 - Are you happy with the current tools used to evaluate teachers?
 - How else would you like to evaluate your teachers?
 3. What factors affect your evaluation of your teachers (Course grade, personal relationship, challenge, time on the course, etc)
 4. How far do you think your evaluation impact your teachers' teaching?

6.4 GROUP 4: The use of VEO to facilitate teacher learning in the practicum

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Betil Eroz Tuga, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sumru Akcan, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Cendel Karaman, Asst. Prof. Dr. Olcay Sert, Dr. Alev Ozbilgin, Dr. Nazli Gungor

6.4.1 Purpose:

to examine the contribution of VEO to prospective language teachers' professional development and teachers' language awareness

6.4.2 Research Questions:

1. In what ways does the use of video-enhanced observation facilitate the professional development of prospective language teachers?
2. How does video-enhanced observation contribute to the development of teacher language awareness?

6.4.3 Research Design

Setting: Participant prospective teachers are from METU, METU NCC, Gazi and Bogazici Universities. They attend school experience and practicum teaching courses during the 2017-2018 fall and spring terms.

Participants: 3 prospective language teachers from each university in Turkey and Northern Cyprus.

Sampling: Participants will be chosen based on the criterion-based sampling technique. The criteria are volunteering to invest extra effort in reflection and professional development, and being open to professional development.

6.4.4 Methodology: this is an exploratory case study

Data collection tools:

- a. critical self-reflection to be collected after each video-recorded microteaching performance in the practicum,
- b. stimulated recall interviews
- c. audio-recorded post observation feedback sessions

6.4.5 Timeline for the study

September & October 2017: training & orientation for all 4 teams and participants

November & December 2017: first round of VEO in the practicum

March & April 2017: second round of VEO in the practicum

June & July & August 2017: data analysis

September & October 2017: reporting the findings, results and writing the article

6.5 Group 5: Pre-service EFL teachers' observations and reflections on the use of 21st-century skills during practicum

(Anil Rakıcıoğlu Söylemez, Amanda Yeşilbursa, Selmin Söylemez)

6.5.1 Abstract

Education plays a crucial role in empowering global citizens with the skills necessary for successful adjustment to the 21st Century. Given that English is a vital tool in global interaction, English language teachers have particularly important contributions in preparing global citizens. The practice teaching components of teacher education programs help prospective English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers to reflect on, reconstruct and evaluate their beliefs about 21st-century teaching practices. However, to date, there has been little research in Turkey on the nature of the 21st-century teaching practices that prospective EFL teachers encounter during practicum and their role in shaping their teaching practices.

6.5.2 Research Questions

Hence, this descriptive case study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What are Turkish prospective EFL teachers' beliefs regarding the 21st Century skills they perceive necessary to teach in their practicum context?
2. How do the 21st-century skills practices observed by the prospective EFL teachers during the practicum match with their beliefs?

7. CLOSING SESSION: ELTER BUSINESS Chair: Dr Tom Godfrey

The meeting was brought to a close with an announcement and presentation of ILTERG (International Language Teacher Education Research Group) by Assoc. Prof. Gonca Ekşi. This project is funded by funded by Turkish National Agency and co-funded by the European Commission under Erasmus+ Key Action 2: Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices.

Feedback and suggestions from Participants for ELTER were obtained, and a decision as to the next colloquium's date and location was made. ELTER 2018 will be in Bursa at the University of Bursa. Those who had contributed to the success of the meeting were given hearty thanks and the meeting ended with the traditional group photo.