

PERCEPTIONS OF EFL PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS ABOUT COOPERATIVE
LEARNING: A CASE STUDY IN A STATE UNIVERSITY IN TURKEY

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EBRU CAKMAK AKPOLAT

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Prof. Dr. Meliha ALTUNIŐIK
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nurten BİRLİK
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Perihan SAVAŐ
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bena Gül PEKER (GAZİ, FLE) _____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Perihan SAVAŐ (METU, FLE) _____

Asst. Prof. Dr. MÜge GÜNDÜZ (METU, FLE) _____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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Signature

ABSTRACT

THE PERCEPTIONS OF EFL PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS ABOUT COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Akpolat, Ebru

M.A., Department of Foreign Language Education

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Perihan SAVAŞ

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This study was an investigation into the perceptions and the experiences of EFL pre-service teachers of about cooperative learning strategy in their educational setting. The study also revealed if there were any differences between the 2nd grade and the 4th grade EFL pre-service teachers about the issue. The study was conducted with 148 pre-service teachers from the Foreign Language Education department in a state university in Ankara, Turkey. The main data collection instrument was a questionnaire. The key findings that emerged from the responses to the questionnaire included the strengths of cooperative learning strategy, problems of cooperative learning strategy, the suggestions of students about cooperative learning strategy and the benefits of the use of cooperative learning strategy for future career. The students also provided information about frequent use of cooperative learning strategy in their EFL department and reported the techniques implemented in their course of studies. The study underlined no significant differences between the perceptions of 2nd grade and the 4th grade EFL pre-service teacher.

Keywords: Cooperative learning, English Language Education

ÖZ

YABANCI DİLLER EĞİTİMİ BÖLÜMÜ ÖĞRENCİLERİNİN İŞBİRLİKLİ ÖĞRENME HAKKINDAKİ GÖRÜŞLERİ

Akpolat, Ebru

Yüksek lisans, Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bölümü

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Bu çalışma Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bölümü hizmet öncesi öğrencilerinin kendi bölümlerindeki işbirlikçi öğrenme stratejisinin kullanımı hakkındaki görüşlerini ve tecrübelerini araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Çalışma sonuçları 2. ve 4. sınıf öğrencilerinin konu hakkındaki görüşlerinde bir farklılık olup olmadığını da ortaya koyacaktır. Çalışma Ankara'daki bir devlet üniversitesinin Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bölümünden 148 öğrencinin katılımıyla yürütülmüştür. Temel veri toplama aracı ankettir. Öğrencilerin ankete verdikleri cevaplardan yola çıkarak oluşturulan temalar, işbirlikçi öğrenmenin güçlü yönleri ve zayıf yönleri, öğrencilerin konu hakkındaki tavsiyeleri ve işbirlikçi öğrenme stratejisinin kullanımının gelecekteki öğretmenlik kariyerlerine olan katkılarından oluşmaktadır. Öğrenciler ayrıca Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bölümünde işbirlikçi öğrenme stratejisinin sıklıkla kullanıldığı ve derslerinde kullanılan teknikleri hakkında da bilgi vermişlerdir. Çalışma, 2. ve 4. sınıf öğrencilerinin konu hakkındaki görüşlerinde herhangi önemli bir farklılık saptamamıştır.

Anahtar sözcükler: İşbirlikçi öğrenme, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi

To My Family
To My Husband

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Collaborative learning requires working together toward a common goal in general. The epistemological tenets of collaborative learning are mostly drawn from the U.S educator John Dewey in the early twentieth century and collaborative learning is seen as an approach to teaching that makes use of cooperative activities in terms of pair and small group work in learning contexts (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). The idea of collaborative learning is linked to co-operative learning and concepts found in learning organizations, learning communities and communities of professional learning. Therefore, pre-service teachers could adopt that perspective and work in teams to enhance their professional development in their area of profession. Lyman and Davidson propose the reason for why the pre-service teachers need to experience cooperative learning activities as learners in their departments in these words (2004, p. 83):

Colleges of education should make a special commitment to teaching both the rationale and technique of cooperative learning to undergraduate and graduate students...To have a chance of future implementation, cooperative learning must be modeled for the pre-service teachers and experienced by them as learners.

Nonetheless, the perceptions of the pre-service teachers about cooperative learning are very significant in the way that the effectiveness of the approach is dependent on those views. This study investigates the perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers about cooperative learning strategy in their educational setting. The purpose of this study is to provide a better understanding of the experiences of pre-service EFL teachers about cooperative learning in the scope of their department and their opinions about the issue.

Traditional methods to language teaching adopted a teacher-centered approach in which the teacher imposes knowledge on students and promotes competition among students. Nonetheless, there has been a change in this perspective in pedagogy towards a more student-oriented approach (Richards and Rodgers, 2001).

Sociocultural theory has had a great impact on those epistemological shifts in Second Language Teaching profession. The theory proposes the view that language learning is a semiotic process that has the socially-mediated activities in its core. Vygotsky (1978), who was an influential Russian psychologist with his ideas in the educational psychology field, argues social factors are essential in the development of elementary natural processes despite the fact that biological factors establish the prerequisite constituents for elementary natural processes to originate. He advocates that socio-cultural settings constitute the primary and determining factor in the development of higher forms of human mental activity such as voluntary attention, intentional memory, logical thought, planning, and problem solving. In addition, Johnson defines the epistemological stance of a sociocultural perspective as “a dynamic social activity that is situated in physical and social contexts, and is distributed across persons, tools, and activities” (2009, p. 1). He also states that this perspective on learning contrasts to behavioral and cognitive theories of learning in the sense that the sociocultural perspective regards sociocultural activities as the indispensable factor determining the formation of human cognition (2009). He also examines the sociocultural perspective with regard to its emphasis on the role of human agency in this developmental process and states that “learning is not the straightforward appropriation of skills or knowledge from the outside in, but the progressive movement from external, socially mediated activity to internal mediational control by individual learners, which results in the transformation of both the self and the activity.” (2009, p. 2). He proposes that cognitive developments is not simply a matter of replacement of skills and appropriation of the sociocultural resources and practices that are available to them in the environment but manipulation and internalization of those resources and tools with respect to previous experiences, individual needs, wants and expectations of the learners.

Adopting this epistemological stance has a lot to offer L2 teacher education and this perspective changes the way we think about teacher learning and the framework of language and language teaching (Johnson, 2009). Cooperative language learning approach is one of the current approaches to learning that stresses

the central role of social interaction to language learning. There exist different types of techniques and activities to establish a cooperative learning environment in the class such as Think-pair-share (Lyman, 1987), Roundtable (Kagan, 2003), Jigsaw (Aronson, 1978), Jigsaw II (Slavin, 1994) and Numbered heads (Kagan, 1994). Think-pair-share involves students' learning in three phases in which the students reflect on the subject matter individually, with their peers and discuss the issue with the whole class. The Round table refers to the contribution to the task by each member of a group in turns. In Jigsaw method, students are given different parts of the information. This promotes a higher level of interaction for students to complete and master the whole material. Numbered heads method requires each student to master the material. Each student is associated with a number and the students with the same number come together to find answers for the question of the teacher. Then, they answer when their number is called off by the teacher.

The cooperative learning encourages cooperation to reinforce the critical skills of the students and the communicative competence (Richards and Rogers, 2001). The use cooperative learning in classroom settings fosters the establishment of a social environment for the learners in which they negotiate the knowledge and construct the new together as a result of team efforts. The students have the chance to enhance their critical thinking skills by means of discussing the nature of the knowledge, the theories as well as the conditions (Danielewicz, 2001). It also assists the development of self-esteem in students (Webb, 1982) and leads to a higher level of interest, motivation and engagement in class activities (Sharan & Shachar, 1988). It is argued that the use of cooperative learning strategies in a learning context provides an environment for the establishment of caring and committed relationships between peers (Joliffe, 2007).

Olsen and Kagan (1992) offer five key components to foster a successful group-based learning: positive interdependence, group formation, individual accountability, social skills and structuring and structures. Positive interdependence is related to the awareness of the students that they need to work together effectively in order to complete the task successfully. Johnson and Johnson (2009) asserts that

this component of cooperative learning enforces the establishment of a feeling of responsibility for completing one's duty in the task and motivating other group members to complete theirs, too. They asserted that those responsibility forces increases when the components of individual and group accountability are included in the learning context in which both the overall performance of the group and the individual performance of each member is taken into account in assessment. Group formation is significant in promoting a successful cooperative learning environment by referring to the arrangement of the size, the members and the students' roles in a group. It is recommended that the groups are to be heterogeneous in terms of gender, achievement and ethnicity. In addition, the interaction patterns of the students need to be organized around some techniques like round robin and numbered heads for a successful cooperation.

1.2 Purpose of the study

This study was an investigation of the perceptions and the experiences of the pre-service teachers in a Foreign Language Education department in a state university in Ankara, Turkey. The purpose of the study was to provide a comprehensive picture of the perceptions and the experiences of the students regarding the use of collaborative study in their FLE department. The findings of the study may pose some implications for both the pre-service teachers and the instructors of the particular department. The students may raise awareness about their perceptions and the mismatches between their expectations and the current situation. They may realize that some of the disadvantages of cooperative learning may result from their lack of knowledge or guidance about its essential components. The instructors may use the results of the current research to develop empathy for the side of learners and present some suggestions for the improvement in the course design with respect to the insight gotten through study. The stakeholders of the program may consider providing training for the pre-service teachers and the instructors about cooperative learning to eliminate the problems resulted from the lack of information about its essential components.

1.3 Research questions

The present study attempts to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the EFL prospective teachers' opinions about cooperative learning?
2. According to the perceptions of the EFL pre-service teachers about their EFL department:
 - a. To what extent are cooperative learning techniques practiced?
 - b. What are the cooperative learning techniques practiced?

1.4 Significance of the study

The present study is considered to be significant with regard to following issues. First of all, there is a lack of research studies regarding the attitudes of pre-service teachers towards the use of cooperative learning and this study may be beneficial for contribution to the literature about the case. Secondly, the study displayed a comprehensive description of the case, which was the perceptions and the experiences of the pre-service teachers about the use of cooperative strategy in a Foreign Language Education department in a state university in Ankara, Turkey. Some challenges that the students faced during their course of studies will be enlightened and some suggestions regarding the solutions of the problems proposed by the students will be discussed. As a result, the students will develop an increased awareness about their needs and wants about the implementations. Accordingly, the study will raise the issues about the appreciation of some opportunities and encouragement for the developers of the program to incorporate some improvements to the situation.

1.5 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, a summary of the framework of the study was outlined. The sociocultural theory and its relation to cooperative learning were examined briefly in the first section. The purpose of the study, the research questions and the significance of the study were described. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the perceptions and the experiences of the pre-service teachers in a Foreign Language Education department in a state university in Ankara, Turkey. The study was

considered as significant in the way that it may pose some implications for the pre-service teachers, the instructors and the stakeholders of the program. In the second chapter, the relevant literature regarding cooperative learning will be examined.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study investigates the perceptions and the experiences of the pre-service teachers in a Foreign Language Education department. In this chapter, the sociocultural theory, the definition of cooperative learning, the models of the cooperative learning strategy and its objectives for the utilization in language teaching will be examined to provide a rationale for the use of cooperative learning in an educational setting. Next, the distinctions between cooperative learning and the collaborative learning will be analyzed. Then, the types of activities associated with cooperative learning, the prerequisite social skills for a successful cooperative learning implementation and the roles of students in a group work will be discussed. The benefits and possible challenges of the use of cooperative learning will be outlined. Finally, research on the perceptions of the students and the teachers in education in general as well as in EFL education will be reviewed.

2.2 Sociocultural theory

The epistemological principles of the sociocultural theory are mostly drawn from Vygotsky who was an influential Russian psychologist with his ideas in the educational psychology field in the early twentieth century. He argues that social factors are essential in the development of elementary natural processes; although, biological factors establish the prerequisite constituents for those processes to originate (1978). He suggests that socio-cultural settings aggregate the primary and determining factor in the development of higher forms of human mental activity such as voluntary attention, intentional memory, logical thought, planning, and problem solving. He also advocates that human beings do not act directly on the physical world but they make use of some intermediary tools to comprehend the world around them and themselves. These tools are called as artifacts created by humans with the influence of their culture and background. Whether symbolic or sign, those tools are subject to change in order to meet the needs of the society.

Vygotsky proposes two developmental levels to clarify the relations of developmental processes and the learning capabilities: actual developmental level and the zone of proximal development. He defines the actual developmental level as “the level of development of a child's mental functions that has been established as a result of certain already completed developmental cycles” (1978, p. 85). However, he argues that there exist some other factors that may affect the learning process and the capability of the individuals with the same mental development to learn under the guidance of a teacher can vary, which means their level of learning cannot be the same. He defines this difference as the zone of proximal development which refers to “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (1978, p. 86). He affirms that the zone of proximal development (ZPD) determines the mental functions of a child that have not been yet matured but in the process of maturation; therefore, it helps the depiction of a child’s mental development by providing information about what has already been achieved and what is in the process of maturation. Shayer (2002) claims that a crucial feature of learning in relation to ZPD according to Vygotsky is that learning provokes a variety of internal developmental processes which are able to function only when the children interact with people in the environment and cooperate with their peers. Both the level of development of a child and the instruction in the learning context influence the ZPD. It is also argued that the instruction in the class needs to offer tasks which are not below their intellectual level or exactly at their intellectual level. However, they should be above the intellectual development of the students, but not too much and in this way, the students are sufficiently challenged by the instruction and stimulated to try solving those tasks by new things and raise their intellectual level (Veer, 2007).

2.3 Definition of cooperative learning

Cooperative learning is a teaching approach that involves maximum amount of implementation of the cooperative activities in small groups and pairs in the classroom setting (Richards and Rogers, 2001).

The term has been defined as “a group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others” (Olsen and Kagan, 1992). It refers to teaching methods in which students work together in small groups to help each other learn academic content (Slavin, 2015)

2.4 Cooperative learning versus collaborative learning

Although the terms of cooperative learning and collaborative learning are used interchangeably in the literature, there are some distinctions between two terms (Gillies and Ashman, 2005). First of all, it is argued that the cooperative learning is a highly structured approach to learning whereas the collaborative learning is less structured (Panitz, 1997). It is also proposed that the cooperative learning is a structure of interaction designed to facilitate the accomplishment of a specific task while the collaborative learning serves as a philosophy of interaction in which students are empowered with more control on their learning (Panitz, 1997). Next, it is suggested that the cooperative learning suits better for use with elementary school children while collaborative learning is convenient for use with adults such as university students (Bruffe, 1995). It is also argued that the cooperative learning is more appropriate for the knowledge based on facts and formulas whereas the collaborative learning suits better for the knowledge of higher order thinking skills (Bruffe, 1995).

2.5 The basic features of cooperative learning

Larsen-Freeman (2000) suggests that cooperative or collaborative learning involves learning of the students from each other in groups. It is advocated that “But it is not the group configuration that makes cooperative learning distinctive; it is the way that students and teachers work together that is important” (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Thus, the teachers need to teach the necessary social skills to the students for them to be able to work together more efficiently.

Cooperative language learning approach stresses the central role of social interaction to language learning and promotes cooperation to enhance not only the

critical skills of the students but also the communicative competence (Richards and Rogers, 2001). The utilization of cooperative learning in language teaching includes the following fundamental objectives (Richards and Rogers, 2001, p. 93):

- to provide opportunities for naturalistic second language acquisition through the use of interactive pair and group activities
- to provide teachers with a methodology to enable them to achieve this goal and one that can be applied in a variety of curriculum settings (e.g., content-based, foreign language classrooms; mainstreaming)
- to enable focused attention to particular lexical items, language structures, and communicative functions through the use of interactive tasks
- to provide opportunities for learners to develop successful learning and communication strategies
- to enhance learner motivation and reduce learner stress and to create a positive affective classroom climate

Olsen and Kagan (1992) propose five key components to foster a successful group-based learning: positive interdependence, group formation, individual accountability, social skills and structuring and structures. Positive interdependence is based on the awareness of the team members regarding the issue that their success is dependent to each other, which means the only way to attain their goal, is to work together effectively. All the members in the group need to contribute to the task to succeed. It is suggested that this component of cooperative learning enforces the establishment of a feeling of responsibility for completing one's duty in the task and motivating other group members to complete theirs, as well (Johnson and Johnson, 2009). The teachers need to assign some specific roles for each student such as reader, recorder and summarizer to maintain this component. Group formation is a key factor to promote a successful cooperative learning environment with respect to arranging the size, the members and the students' roles in a group. It is recommended that the groups are heterogeneous in terms of gender, achievement and ethnicity. Individual accountability refers to sharing a sense of responsibility to one another for a productive work (Frey et al, 2009). Thus, it involves both individual and group accountability for the accomplishment of the task. It is asserted that the responsibility forces for students increases when the components of individual and group

accountability are included in the learning context in which both the overall performance of the group and the individual performance of each member are assessed (Johnson and Johnson, 2009). Social skills predisposes the ways of interaction of the students as members of a team. As mentioned above, students may need some explicit instruction about the nature of those skills to be able to use them. Johnson and Johnson (2009) state that “Unskilled group members cannot cooperate effectively”. Therefore, it is important that the students are taught about the interpersonal and group skills in order to cooperate effectively and they need to be motivated to use them as well. Structuring and structures is linked to the organization of student interaction in different ways such as round robin and timed pair share.

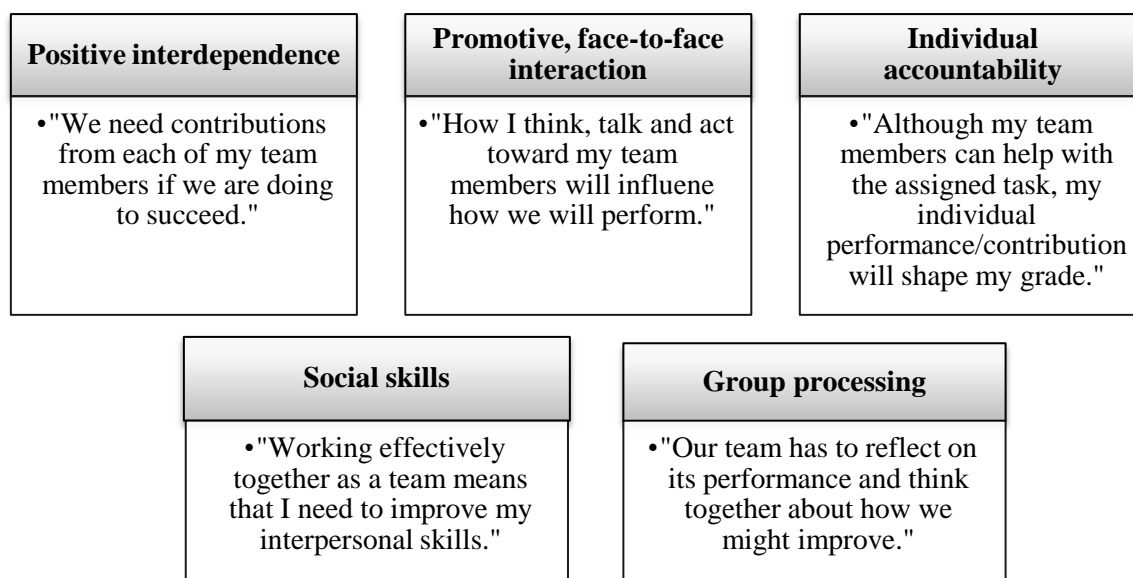


Figure 1. Johnson and Johnson’s model for cooperative learning

Johnson et al. (1998) propose a similar model for the description of the cooperative learning with some distinctions. The key components of the cooperative learning in their model involve positive interdependence, individual accountability and social skills accompanied by promotive face-to-face interaction and group processing which distinguish the model from the previous one. The model discusses that the positive interdependence is insufficient to foster a successful cooperative work by itself; however, the students need to engage in ongoing face-to-face interactions

during the task completion process. In addition, the students are supposed to reflect on their performance and discuss possible ways of improvements via group processing.

2.6 Cooperative learning and the social skills

Goodwin (1999) asserts that cooperative learning strategies can lead to successful learning for all learners regardless from the differences in ages, backgrounds and learning styles; however, it is not realistic to expect a good performance from the learners who have not yet been taught the prerequisite social skills. He proposes a four-level of cooperative skills, adapting from Johnson et al. (1993).

Table 1. Goodwin's four levels of cooperative skills adapted from Johnson et al. (1993)

Forming	Functioning	Formulating	Fermenting
Moving into groups with undue noise	Giving directions to the group	Summarizing	Disagreeing without criticizing
Staying with the group	Expressing support and acceptance towards ideas	Providing constructive feedback	Extending member's answers
Using quiet voices	Asking for help or clarification	Elaborating on a comment or an answer	Probing by asking questions
Encouraging others	Paraphrasing	Checking for understanding	Generating further answers
Looking at the speaker	Using humor to motivate group	Demanding vocalization to make implicit reasoning overt	Integrating ideas into a single position
Exhibiting self-control	Offering to explain	Asking members to plan out loud	Testing reality by checking out the group's work with the instructions.

Forming skills are related to the organization of the group and the standards for appropriate group behavior such as moving to one's own group with making any

noise or keeping eye contact with the speaker during his/her speech. Functioning skills are necessary in maintaining group activities and fostering effective working relationships between team members during the task such as expressing support for the ideas in a group or making use of humor to increase the motivation of the group. Formulating skills are key factors in stimulating higher levels of thinking, establishing a deeper level of understanding and the retention of the subject matter. Fermenting skills are essential to stimulate concepts regarding prior knowledge, conflicts in ideas and research for more information about the topic such as disagreement to an opinion by expressing your side of the position without using any unconstructive criticisms.

2.7 Types of cooperative activities

A variety of different forms of activities can be used with cooperative learning, which was proposed by a range of different educationalists. The present section outlines information about four widely used cooperative learning techniques in the context of this study.

2.3.1 Think-pair-share

This method adopted from Lyman (1981, 1987) involves students' learning through three phases of activities in sequence after the teacher poses a question to the students.

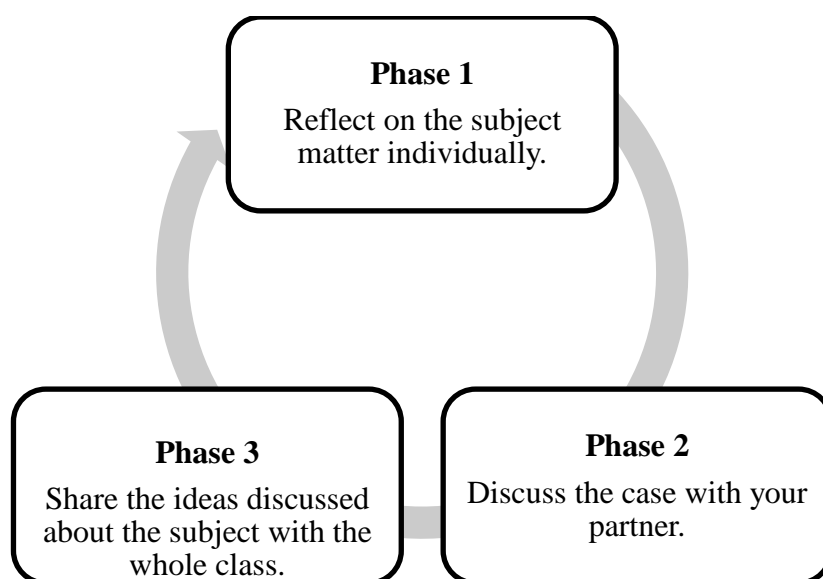


Figure 2. Lyman's model of Think-pair-share

The students need to think about problem alone for a while and pair with a partner to discuss their about the case together. Finally, they share the ideas gotten through the exchange of information with their partners with the whole class.

2.3.2 Roundtable

It is a simple structure in which each student in a group contributes something to the task in turns in their teams (Kagan, 2003). A paper and a pencil are passed around team mates by resulting in each student adding his contribution and idea to the paper related to the task. The students have the opportunity to co-construct the meaning with the help of their peers in a socially interactive environment. Structuring the task in this way fosters the equal contribution of all students task and makes it easier to reach the desired outcomes of the lesson. When this activity is undertaken orally instead of verbally, it is called Round Robin.

2.3.3 Jigsaw

It was developed by Aronson (1978). In jigsaw activities, the teacher divides the information into sections resulting in each member of a team having different parts of the information (Coelho, 1992). Then, each student having the same piece of information in the class forms expert groups and studies the material together so that they become experts of that topic in a way (Richards and Rogers, 2001). After they master the material, the students turn into their first original jigsaw groups and synthesize all the information about the whole task through discussions. They teach their pieces of expertise to their group mates.

The information gap activities are considered as jigsaw activities in pairs. The task is presented through partially complete information in two or multiple sets. The students need to ask questions to their partners in order to complete their set of missing information. These kinds of activities are intended to make students reach the information by negotiation and feedback through the process of information exchange (Purpura, 2004).

2.3.4 Numbered heads

This cooperative learning technique makes each student accountable for learning the material (Kagan, 1994). The students are numbered off in their groups

generally from one to four. The teacher poses a question and the heads come together to seek answer for the question. Then, the teacher calls of a number randomly and the students having that number raise their hands to answer the question. Since the students do not know which number to be called on, they all master the information and get ready. The students have the chance to review and discuss the subject matter with their peers cooperatively.

2.8 The roles of the students in a group

Joliffe (2007) suggests that for an effective cooperative learning environment in a classroom setting, each student in the group needs to have some specific roles and responsibilities such as recorder, participation checker, questioner and organizer. Figure 3 represents the possible role distribution for students in a group work









<p>Recorder</p>  <p>Function: Keeps an accurate record Checks everyone's understanding</p>	<p>Participation Checker</p>  <p>Function: Helps others to join in Ensures everyone gets a turn</p>	<p>Questioner</p>  <p>Function: Asks group members to explain and say more Asks for paraphrasing</p>	<p>Noise controller</p>  <p>Function: Checks on use of quiet voices One speaker at a time</p>
<p>Materials manager (gofer)</p> <p>Function: Collects materials returns them Keeps things tidy</p> 	<p>Organiser</p> <p>Function: Keeps everyone on task Watches the time</p> 	<p>Checker</p> <p>Function: Makes sure everyone has learned or completed the task checks for understanding and agreement</p> 	<p>Praiser</p> <p>Function: Praises individuals' contributions Helps celebrate achievements</p> 

Figure 3. Students' roles in a group work by Wendy Joliffe (2007)

Johnson and Johnson (2009) emphasized the importance of “means interdependence” which is a part of positive interdependence stressing the interdependence of the students with respect to resources, role and the task. They proposed that the teachers can divide the resources to group members and assign

some roles for each student such as reader and recorder as mentioned above to maintain a structured cooperative learning environment that will possibly result in higher achievement and productivity. The roles could be assigned based on the skills, interests and age of the students. A visual learner could be assigned to draw diagrams and pictures or the ones who have a good handwriting could be asked to be the writer of that group (Joliffe, 2007). The students should be observed during the task process to see if they fulfill their responsibilities.

2.9 Benefits and challenges of cooperation

The ability of pre-service teachers to cooperate with their peers in a classroom context leads to the accumulation of knowledge, experiences, skills and awareness of many issues and they learn through these resources (Singh and Richards, 2006). Therefore, the cooperative learning creates a social environment for the learners in which they negotiate the knowledge in their learning context and construct new knowledge together as a result of team efforts (Danielewicz, 2001). They have the opportunity to enhance their critical thinking skills by discussing the nature of the knowledge, the theories as well as the conditions. In addition, the cooperative learning leads to the development of self-esteem in students (Johnson and Johnson, 2009; Webb, 1982). All the students benefit from a collaborative learning environment through helping each other in the process of knowledge construction as opposed to a competitive one. The achievement levels of the students increase due to the supportive nature of these educational contexts, which results in boosting of self-esteem in all learners not only the superior ones assert that the learners display a higher level of motivation, interest and engagement in class activities in cooperative learning environments compared to the ones in which traditional methods are utilized (Sharan and Shachar, 1988). This contributes to the achievement levels of the students in turn. It is argued that the higher achievement in the course as a result of cooperation with peers leads to the enhancement of “motivation to learn, retention of knowledge, depth of understanding, and appreciation of the subject being taught” (Felder and Brent, 1996) Therefore, there seems to be a positive cycle regarding three features in a learning context:

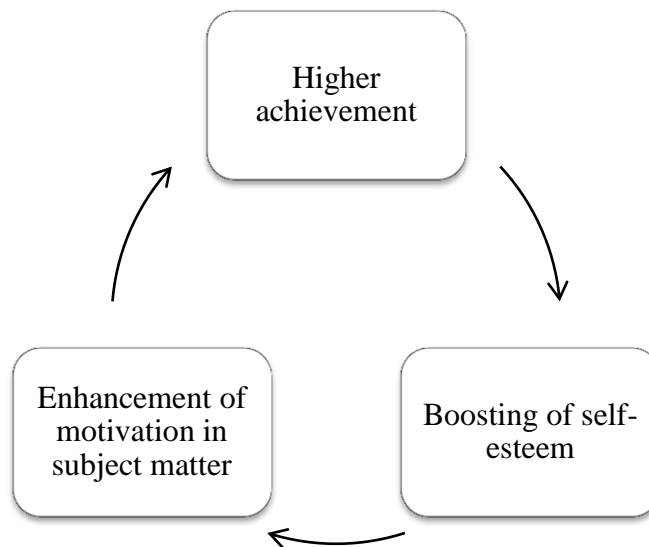


Figure 4. The positive cycle as a result of the use of cooperative learning

It is asserted that the use cooperative learning instead of traditional teacher-oriented approaches contributes to the development of interpersonal skills of the students with respect to establishment of caring and committed relationships between peers (Joliffe, 2007). It also promotes the sense of belonging to a community and mutual support by decreasing the level isolation.

The research showed that the use cooperative learning by the instructors is important in the sense that it promotes training for the next generation of teachers in effective and recent teaching strategies (Felder, 1997). Nonetheless, it is argued that it may raise some issues regarding the difficulty of implementation due to the discrepancy between the perceptions of the learners and the teachers (Phipps et al., 2001). Although the use of cooperative activities seem to improve student learning, it may have some challenges dependent on the conditions in teaching and learning context. Some of those challenges may result from the fact that the learners are not trained about the necessary social and group skills of effective cooperative learning or the teachers may lack information about the implementation of the five essentials of the strategy (Joliffe, 2007). Possible reasons for the challenges that might be faced during implementation of cooperative learning in an educational context are outlined as follows (Joliffe, 2007, p. 91).

- The skills of working together cooperatively are not explicitly taught. It is vital that students are taught these skills if they are to succeed.
- Learners need support with social and emotional skills and in particular emotional intelligence. In any classroom there will be students who display particular difficulties.
- Learners do not have the necessary communication skills to work with others.
- Teachers are not able to plan and manage talk effectively in the classroom
- Teachers do not understand the five key elements of cooperative learning and how to incorporate them into lessons.
- A staged approach to implementing cooperative learning is not adopted and being too ambitious too soon leads to a lack of success.
- Teachers lack support from colleagues: it requires cooperation amongst staff as well as amongst learners.
- There may be a lack of whole-school vision that sees cooperative learning as being at the very heart of improving learning and teaching.

When the learners, the teachers and the institutions have a clear schema of the pre-requisite skills and the five essentials that govern cooperative learning accompanied by the awareness of its effectiveness on the teaching and learning process, those challenges might be decreased to minimum.

2.10 Research on Cooperation in Education

There has been a change in pedagogy towards a more student-oriented approach from a teacher-oriented perspective (Richards and Rogers, 2001) and cooperative learning is one of them. Although some of the teachers honor its effectiveness, it is argued that some refrain from using cooperative learning strategy due to its complexities because “particularly at the secondary level, there is a reluctance to incorporate cooperative learning into a repertoire of strategies” (Lyman and Davidson, 2004). The perceptions of the pre-service teachers about cooperative learning are very significant in the way that the effectiveness of the approach is dependent on those views as well. Although several studies exist in the literature about cooperative learning, the majority of them are related to its effects on achievement, self-confidence and the reduction of anxiety (Sharon, 1998; Sachs et al. 2003, Gömleksiz, 2007; Çokparlamış, 2010; Farrell, 2008; Bölükbaş, 2014, Ning and

Hornby, 2014; Slavin, 2015). The number of studies involving the beliefs and perceptions of students are limited. Table 2 outlines some of the recent studies regarding the perceptions of the teachers and students of cooperative learning.

Table 2. Recent studies about the perceptions of cooperative learning

Name of the study	Author(s)	Findings
University Students' Perceptions of Cooperative Learning: Implications for Administrators and Instructors	Maurice Phipps, Cindy Phipps, Susan Kask, and Scott Higgins, 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive attitudes towards cooperative learning • Ineffective in enhancement of motivation and time management
Urban elementary school teachers' perceptions regarding collaborative teaching practices	Sharon J. Damore and Christopher Murray, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive attitudes towards cooperative learning • It is utilized in particular schools.
Attitude of students towards cooperative learning methods at Knox Community College: A descriptive study	Keritha McLeish, 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative attitudes towards the strategy due to some fears • The strategy is utilized in particular college.
Students' experiences of active engagement through cooperative learning activities in lectures	Michael Cavanagh, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive attitudes towards the use cooperative learning • Effective in understanding of the content and maintaining interest to subject matter.

Phipps et al. (2001) investigated the perceptions of the college students of cooperative learning techniques, its role in motivation and its effectiveness on learning. The main data collection instrument was a questionnaire applied to more than 200 students in freshman, sophomore and junior levels with different disciplines such as health, psychology and economics. Their questionnaire was designed to measure the views of the students on the five essentials of cooperative learning. The findings indicated some contradictive results in the sense that the students' perceptions on the cooperative learning techniques were overall positive; however, they consider it as ineffective in terms of triggering motivation and time management. They concluded the reasons could be due the fact that the strategy requires more complex skills for task completion and it is the responsibility of the

universities to establish a paradigm shift in students' expectations if the active learning techniques are to be used instead of traditional ones.

Moreover, Damore and Murray (2009) conducted a study involving both general and special education teachers from 20 urban elementary schools regarding their perceptions on cooperative teaching. The main data collection instrument involved a survey which investigated the perceptions of the teachers about the strategy, its inclusion and the implications on its effectiveness. 92% of the teachers reported that some form of cooperative learning strategy was utilized in their schools. The results indicated that the teachers considered each construct of the cooperative learning as important and necessary in general and special education teachers had more positive attitudes towards the inclusion of cooperative learning practices than general education ones.

In addition, McLeish (2009) investigated the attitudes of students towards the cooperative learning at a community college with a participant profile from different departments such as business, social sciences and environmental sciences. The main data instrument was a questionnaire accompanied by follow up interviews with the students and the teachers. The majority of the students reported that they preferred to work individually not in groups due to some fears including possible low grades. The student and the teachers agreed that some form of cooperative learning strategies were being used in their departments.

Finally, Cavanagh (2011) investigated experiences of the students of active engagement through cooperative learning activities over a semester with more than 100 students in Mathematics department of a university. The main data collection instrument was a questionnaire. He concluded that the students honored the opportunities of cooperative learning and active engagement in class activities with regard to its effectiveness on the in-depth understanding of the content and maintaining interest during class sessions.

2.11 Research on Cooperation in EFL Education

The studies that focus on the perceptions of pre-service EFL teachers are limited in the literature since most of them investigated its effect on achievement.

The section starts examining some international studies and the national studies in Turkey regarding the opinions of students and teachers about the use of cooperative learning strategy in classroom settings. Table 3 represents some international studies about the case.

Table 3. International studies on the views of cooperative learning in EFL teacher education

Name of the study	Author(s)	Findings
Cooperation and collaboration in a Foreign Language Education Training Program: The LMR-plus model	Claudia Finkbeiner, 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive attitudes towards cooperative learning • Effective in dealing with difficult problems • Nice to share knowledge.
A collaborative writing approach: Methodology and students' assessment	Christopher Mulligan, Russell Garofalo, 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficial in learning • Issues related to increased stress, logistical problems, target language use, a conflict with personal learning style and of fairness
Collaboration between L2 and content subject teachers in CBI: Contrasting beliefs and attitudes	Yuen Yi Lo, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective for students' learning the English and the content. • A fair willingness to cooperate due to the extra responsibility

Finkbeiner (2004) conducted a study which aimed at investigating the views of the students about cooperation and collaboration in a Foreign Language Education training program in a German state university. The sample consisted of 104 students from the Introductory group students taking the introductory EFL course and the Advanced EFL students taking different courses from the department. The results revealed that both groups had positive attitudes towards the use of cooperative learning strategies in their department. The students reported they believed the cooperative learning was effective in dealing with difficult problems and they liked sharing their knowledge with others instead of holding back to themselves. There was a statistical difference between the attitudes of students towards cooperative

learning in groups indicating the advanced group had more positive views. The researcher linked this difference to the fact that the advanced group experienced more exposure to the cooperative learning strategy than the beginners.

Furthermore, Mulligan and Garofalo (2011) investigated the views of the students about their collaborative writing experiences with their peers from an EFL department in a private university in Kyoto. The findings of the study indicated that 79% of the pre-service EFL teachers considered the collaborative writing approach as beneficial to learning. Nonetheless, some of the students also reported some negative views with respect to increased stress, logistical problems, target language use, a conflict with personal learning style and issues of fairness. The most problematic issue was the unfairness in the sense that the learners thought their partners did not contribute to the task as much as they did and they got the same grade at the end despite this inequity.

The last study to be examined in the context of international studies involves a different side of the issue, the teachers' beliefs and attitudes towards collaboration. Lo' (2014) study investigated the attitudes of teachers towards collaboration between L2 and content subject teachers in secondary schools in Hong Kong, where the medium of instruction is English. The study included data through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews from 261 teachers in 13 distinct schools. Both groups of teachers agreed that cross-cultural collaboration was effective for the students to learn the content subject and the English language but the English language teachers displayed a stronger agreement. However, both groups of teachers reported a fair degree of willingness to collaborate to each other due the extra workload and responsibility.

There are also some studies related to perceptions of students and teachers about cooperative learning, which were conducted in Turkey. Table 4 represents some national research studies about the case being explored in the present study.

Table 4. National studies on the views of cooperative learning in EFL education

Name of the study	Author	Findings
Collaborative dialogue with student-teachers as a follow-up to teacher in-service education and training	Derin Atay, 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective in learning• Beneficial in terms of gaining awareness of their own classroom teaching, the opportunity to update theoretical knowledge, develop discussion and supervision skills and reflect on their teaching.
The effects of cooperative learning activities on student attitudes towards English reading courses and cooperative learning	Özlem Bayat, 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive attitudes towards cooperative learning• Effective in the development of management, social and academic skills• Effective in enhancement of self-esteem and self-confidence
Teachers' views towards the significance of cooperative learning in foreign language teaching	Veli Batdı, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Efficient in the development of social, cognitive and affective skills of students• Efficient in the reduction of anxiety and the formation of a safe interactive environment

Atay's (2004) study focused on the views of the students and the teachers about collaborative dialogue with student-teachers as a follow-up to teacher in-service education and training. The study included 20 teachers from public and private secondary schools and 20 pre-service EFL teachers who enrolled in FLE department in a state university in Istanbul. The participants were randomly paired as one teacher and one pre-service teacher. The students needed to attend the schools, observe the classes and meet with their cooperative teacher. The main data collection instruments were semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The teachers reported this process to be rewarding and both groups learnt something from

each other with respect to gaining awareness of their own classroom teaching, the opportunity to update theoretical knowledge, develop discussion and supervision skills and reflect on their teaching.

In addition, Bayat (2004) investigated the role of cooperative learning activities on student attitudes towards English reading courses and cooperative learning in the School of Foreign Languages at a public university in Turkey. It was a quasi-experimental study consisting of 40 students. The main data collection instruments were a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews with the students and the instructors. The students reported positive attitudes towards cooperative learning and indicated that they were willing to use cooperative learning in learning and teaching in their future studies. The students asserted that the use of cooperative learning decreased anxiety and enhanced their self-esteem and self-confidence. They also emphasized its effectiveness to encourage them being accountable for their own learning process. They also stated the cooperative learning contributed to the development of their management, social and academic skills.

Lastly, Batdı (2013) conducted a study on teachers' views towards the significance of cooperative learning in foreign language teaching. The main data collection instrument was a survey consisting of 72 teachers from different primary and secondary schools of Elazığ. The findings revealed that the teachers believed the cooperative learning was effective in the development of social, cognitive and affective skills of the students. The teachers also reported that the use of cooperative activities created a safe environment with reduced anxiety where the students had the opportunity to create knowledge through social interaction with their peers. The teachers opined that the cooperative learning enhanced the motivation of the students and increased enthusiasm to engage activities in the subject matter.

2.12 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, the relevant literature regarding cooperative learning was discussed. The sociocultural theory, the definition of cooperative learning, the models of the cooperative learning strategy and its objectives for the utilization in language teaching were examined to provide a rationale for the use of cooperative

learning in an educational setting. Then, the differences between cooperative learning and collaborative learning were analyzed. Afterwards, the types of activities associated with cooperative learning, the prerequisite social skills for a successful cooperative learning implementation and the roles of students in a group work were discussed. The benefits and possible challenges of the use of cooperative learning were also examined. Finally, relevant research on the perceptions of the students and the teachers in education in general as well as in EFL education were reviewed.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study investigates the perceptions and the experiences of the pre-service teachers in a Foreign Language Education department. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the theoretical framework and the case study approach adopted in the present study. Next, the research design of the study will be reviewed with respect to the features of the research setting, the profile of the participants, the data collection methods and analysis procedures. Finally, the ethical considerations taken into account throughout all phases of the present study will be examined.

3.2 Theoretical framework

The interpretive framework adopted in the current study is social constructivism in which the individuals try to develop subjective meanings of their experiences about the world they live in and work (Creswell, 2013). These perspectives are multiple and co-constructed through one's background experiences, culture and interaction with others in his/her social environment. The perspectives of the individuals about the issue or a situation are valued by the researcher that utilizes this theory.

There are three assumptions of social constructivism. Firstly, the advocates of the social constructivism believe that reality is constructed through human activity and the members of a society invent the properties of the world they live in (Kukla, 2000). Thus, it is not possible to mention the existence of any kind of reality before its invention by the society. Secondly, the social constructivists suggest that individuals create their subjective meanings of knowledge through interaction with each other; therefore, knowledge is socially constructed (Gredler, 1997). Finally, the last premise of social constructivism is related to the learning. It is assumed that the learning is a social product and meaningful learning occurs when the individuals actively engage in interactive activities rather than adapting a passive stance during the learning process.

This theory stresses the significance of active engagement of students to learning by having some first-hand experiences and its effectiveness on learning and retention of the knowledge in the context of the present study.

3.3 Case study approach

The present study adopts a descriptive case study approach aimed at shedding light into a deeper understanding and description of the perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers of about cooperative learning strategy in their educational setting. It is described as “an in depth study of a single person, event, community or group” (Kalof et al., 2008). In addition, Creswell (2013) defines a case study research as an approach “in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system or multiple bounded systems over time” (p. 97). The aim of a case study is to “engage with and report the complexity of social activity in order to represent the meanings that individual social actors bring to those settings and manufacture in them” (Stark and Torrance, 2005, p. 33). Case study assumes that the social reality is constructed through social interaction and it relates to the theoretical framework of social constructivism. The advantage of case study approach is that it focuses on a specific activity and tries to explore it with the use of multiple methods and data sources in order to reach an in-depth description of the case (Stark and Torrance, 2005). The descriptive case study approach was utilized since the aim of the present study was to describe a phenomenon in a real life context in which it is occurred (Yin, 2003). The case study as an approach was chosen since it enables the researcher to provide an in-depth understanding of the case which can be clearly identifiable and has boundaries (Creswell, 2013). The case that explored in the current study was the perceptions and the experiences of the pre-service teachers about the use of cooperative strategy in a Foreign Language Education department in a state university in Ankara, Turkey.

3.4 Research setting

The Department of Foreign Language Education of the university was founded in the fall of 1982. The FLE department in the university was the first one to offer graduate programs in English Language Teaching and English Literature in

Turkey. The department has been continuously making improvements in its curriculum from the beginning of its creation in order to accommodate the needs of the students and to keep up with the innovations in the field. The department includes German and French sections as well. The students have the opportunity to enroll in the Minor program offered by the German section or study in the elective courses offered by the French section. The graduates of the department are qualified to work in primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions. The staff of the department consists of 6 Professors, 2 Associate Professors, thirteen Assistant Professors, 6 Instructors, and thirty Research Assistants, who are enrolled in research in the areas of education, linguistics and literature. The FLE department has been implementing a B.A. program with the New Paltz campus of the State University of New York. The students enrolled in this SUNY program follow a different curriculum than those in the regular program of the department. They study three years in the state university in Turkey and one year accompanied by two summer sessions in the USA.

3.5 Participants

In the current study, the participants included 148 pre-service teachers from the Foreign Language Education department in a state university in Ankara, Turkey. The study consisted of 2nd grade students and the 4th grade students based on specific purposes. Firstly, the 2nd grade students were chosen since they took the ELT Methodology course in the spring semester in 2015 and had some background information about approaches to teaching English language. Secondly, the 4th grade students were selected because they took all the courses related to methodology and had to opportunity to implement several strategies in their teaching practices.

Table 5 represents the descriptive statistics about the profile of the participants which involved 90 second grade students and 58 fourth grade students. It points out that 80.4 percent of the total participants were female while only 19.6 percent of them were male.

Table 5. Profile of the participants

Grade		Frequency	Percent
2nd grade	Female	69	76,7
	Male	21	23,3
	Total	90	100,0
4th grade	Female	50	86,2
	Male	8	13,8
	Total	58	100,0

Despite the fact that the study did not seek for any grade related differences in perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers about cooperative learning, the results would reveal patterns emerged from data if any applicable.

3.6 Data collection methods

In the present study, the main data collection method was a questionnaire which consisted of three main parts: Demographic information section, Likert scale and open-ended questions (App. A). Before completing the questionnaires, the participants were informed about the aim of the study and asked to sign an informed consent form to participate in the study. The first section of the questionnaire asks for students to provide information about their age, gender and class. The second section involves a 30-item-likert scale which asks information about the perceptions of the students about cooperative learning in the undergraduate EFL teacher education program in their institution. They were supposed to circle the number which indicates their degree of agreement to the items in the instrument (“strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “agree”, “strongly agree”). The likert-scale items were designed to include some items which were reversed versions of each other semantically.

The last section of the questionnaire includes 9 open-ended questions in order to reveal further information about the attitudes of students towards cooperative learning in the classroom setting and the nature of practices regarding cooperative strategies in their institution. This process was to strengthen the in-depth of data collection by providing further information about their own unique experiences.

A Cronbach’s Alpha test was computed to find the reliability of the questionnaire and it was found out to be 0.889.

3.6.1 Pilot study

Firstly, a pilot study of the questionnaire was conducted in the department with 15 participants (App. C). Before completing the questionnaires, the participants were informed about the aim of the study and asked to sign an informed consent form to participate in the study. The questionnaire in the pilot study included a section in which the participants decided if the meaning of each item was clear to them. The participants were supposed to circle the number which indicated their degree of understanding of each item (“yes”, “partially”, “no”) and make some comments about their opinions about the clarity of its meaning. This section was added in order to examine the meaningfulness and clearness of each item in the questionnaire and apply adjustments if necessary.

A Cronbach’s Alpha test was run to establish the reliability of the questionnaire in the pilot study. The reliability of the questionnaire was found out to be 0.77. In addition, the statistics gathered from the meaningfulness part of the questionnaire revealed that the participants believed 23 items out of total 30 items in the likert-scale were clear in terms of meaning with 100% agreement. Remaining seven items had a clearness level of 80% and above (App. D).

3.7 Data analysis procedures

The participants were asked to select from four possible options (“strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “agree”, “strongly agree”) for the second section of the questionnaire to indicate their level of agreement to the item. These four responses were assigned values of 1, 2, 3 and 4 accordingly. The collected data from the Likert scale section were analyzed via SPSS analysis. The software provided quantitative information in terms of frequencies and percentages related to the responses to the items. In addition correlation coefficients were computed for items that were negative forms of each other semantically and the results were discussed in terms of significance. Moreover, a one way ANOVA test was computed in order to find the differences between 2nd and 4th grade participants in terms of their perceptions about the cooperative learning strategy with respect to their mean scores from the test and the mean scores for each question.

The third section of the questionnaire included 9 open-ended questions in order to determine attitudes of the participants towards cooperative learning with further qualitative information and the nature of practices regarding particular strategy in their institution. The answers to the open-ended questions were gathered and coded by two raters. During the coding process, the researchers used memoing method to increase the credibility and the reliability of the data analysis process via reflective notes regarding the codes. After each researcher completed their coding process, cross-checking was applied to increase the inter-rater reliability of the analysis. When each researcher completed checking one another's coding, themes were discovered. Categorical aggregation was to be used in order to reveal some patterns in the texts and natural generalizations were established accordingly to create a thematic outline of the in-depth description of the case. Triangulation during the data analysis phase was held by having multiple coders, crosschecking and memoing processes in order to increase the reliability and the trustworthiness of the study.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Present study obeyed the codes of ethics throughout the research process regarding beginning of the study, data collection, analysis and report of the study.

First of all, current study was not conducted until the Ethics Review Committee approval. The researcher developed an informed consent form in which it was explicitly stated that participation to the study was voluntary. In addition, the participants were not deceived in any part of the research. Open and full information about the research study was given in the form by indicating the purpose, duration, methods, possible benefits and potential risks of the study. Moreover, the current study did not contain any questions that would bother or threaten students in any possible way. Furthermore, the anonymity of the participants in the project was protected to eliminate the issues that could arise regarding confidentiality. The individuals were associated with numbers during the data analysis and reporting process to protect the identity of the students. Table 6 outlines a summary of the data collection methods and analysis procedures.

Table 6. The research design of the study

Research Questions	Data Collection Methods	Data Analysis Methods
1. What are the EFL prospective teachers' opinions about cooperative learning?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Likert scale items ➤ Open-ended questions (items 1, 2, 4, and 8) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Frequency, percentages, Pearson correlation, ANOVA ➤ Tables and graphs ➤ Qualitative descriptions
2. According to the perceptions of the EFL pre-service teachers about their EFL department :		
a. To what extent are cooperative learning strategies practiced at the EFL department of the university?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Open-ended questions (items 3, 6 and 7) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Frequency and percentages ➤ Tables and graphs ➤ Qualitative descriptions
b. What are the cooperative learning strategies practiced at the EFL department of the university?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Open-ended questions (items 5 and 9) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Frequency and percentages ➤ Tables and graphs ➤ Qualitative descriptions

3.9 Limitations of the study

One of the limitations of the study was that interviews with the instructors about the case could not be done due to the time limitations. A second limitation was the short duration of data collection and limited number of participants in the study. A further study which underpins the same subject with a broader participant profile for a longer time period is suggested. In addition, data collection with the teachers in the department is also very well-advised to have deeper insight about the case.

3.10 Concluding remarks

In this chapter, the theoretical framework and the case study approach adopted in the present study were discussed. Next, the research design of the study was reviewed with respect to the features of the research setting, the profile of the participants, the data collection methods and analysis procedures. The main data collection instrument was a questionnaire consisting of likert-scale items and open ended questions. The quantitative data were analyzed with the use of SPSS analysis and the descriptive statistics were computed. The qualitative data were analyzed through coding process and categorical aggregations were established. Finally, the ethical considerations taken into account throughout all phases of the present study were examined.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This study investigated the perceptions and the experiences of the pre-service teachers in a Foreign Language Education department. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a detailed description of the results of the study. The findings were presented both quantitatively and qualitatively. The key findings that emerged from the questionnaire are categorized under sections which correspond to the two research questions of the study.

4.2 Demographic data

The questionnaires were applied to a total number of one hundred and forty eight (148) students in the FLE department. The participants consisted of ninety (90) second grade and fifty eight (58) fourth grade pre-service teachers. In particular, the current study consisted of one hundred and nineteen (119) female and twenty nine (29) male participants. Table 7 indicates the distribution of the participants by gender and grade.

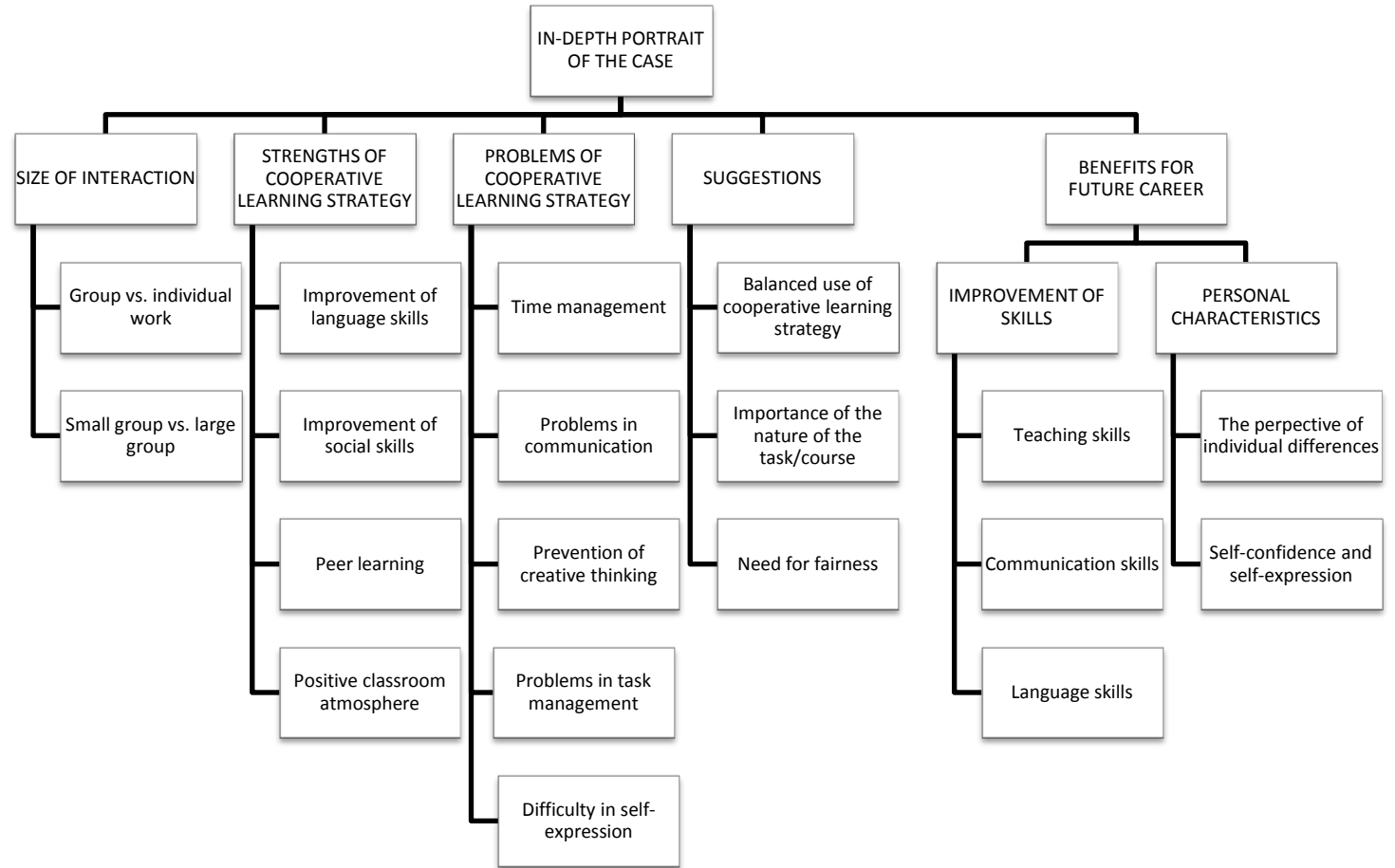
Table 7. Frequency of participants by grade

Gender	Grade	Frequency	Percent
Female	2nd grade	69	58,0
	4th grade	50	42,0
	Total	119	100,0
Male	2nd grade	21	72,4
	4th grade	8	27,6
	Total	29	100,0

Table 8 points out information about the age distribution and GPA of the participants of the study. The majority of the students correspond to the age range between 20 and 24.

Table 8. Age and GPA distribution of the participants

Age range	Percentage (%)	GPA	Percentage (%)
<20	14,9	2.00-2.49	4,7
20-24	80,4	2.50-3.00	22,3
>25	2,7	>3.00	70,3
Not applicable	2,0	Not applicable	2,7



4.3 STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING

This section provides information about the perceptions of the EFL pre-service teachers of cooperative learning, which is the first research question of the study. Figure 5 outlines a thematic representation of perceptions of pre-service EFL teachers about cooperative learning strategy. The key findings that emerged from the responses to the likert-scale items and the open-ended questions (items 1, 2, 4, and 8) included five main themes with respect to the size of interaction, strengths of cooperative learning strategy, problems of cooperative learning strategy, the suggestions of students about cooperative learning strategy and the benefits of the use of cooperative learning strategy for future career. The results of the descriptive statistics of the likert-scale items are included in Appendix E and Appendix F. The results of the open-ended questions in the form of tables are included in Appendix G.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Size of interaction

The findings of the study revealed some patterns for the choices of the students regarding the size of interaction during the course of activity. It included the dilemma between two pairs of interaction: group vs. individual working and small group vs. large group. Following two sections will discuss the results regarding the choices of participants between these features.

4.3.1.1 Group vs. individual working

The participants indicated their preference to work individually or in a group (App. A, open ended question 2). The results are summarized in table 9.

Table 9. Students' preference of the type of work

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Group work	30	20,3	20,3	20,3
Individual work	76	51,4	51,4	71,6
Dependent on the situation	38	25,7	25,7	97,3
No answer	4	2,7	2,7	100,0
Total	148	100,0	100,0	

The responses of the students indicated that only 20.3 percent of the participants preferred group working in classroom setting while 51.4 percent of them chose to work individually. The rest of the participants pointed out that it was dependent on the situation, which means if the problems related to group working were fixed they would be favor of it. The reasons for students to refrain from group working included problems in time management and group dynamics, unequal responsibility and contribution to the task completion, unfair grading, difficulty in self-expression and the feeling of limitation by others in terms of creative thinking and freedom in time/space.

The participants complained about the difficulty in time management and arrangement during group working activities by stating:

“I would prefer to work on my own because I can do my work whenever I want. I don’t have to cope with others.

Participant 144, fourth grade

“...when I study on my own, I do better and also it takes less time to finish the assignment. For example, in writing assignments, I do my homework more quickly than I do with them because we have different ideas. It is hard to come to a common idea, sometimes.

Participant 67, second grade

Participant 55 pointed out the problem of unequal responsibility during the process of task completion and unfair grading with these words:

“I prefer to work on my own when we present something because the others don’t do their duties. They rely on me. I prefer to work on my own or with a partner. I don’t like sharing the same grade with others.”

The results also pointed out that the majority of the students did not prefer inclusion of more group activities in their course of study with approximately 60 percent agreement, which indicates a high level of negative attitude towards the issue (App. A, open ended question 4). Table 10 outlines the responses of the participants.

Table 10. Students' perceptions on the usage of more group activities

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	32	21,6	21,6	21,6
No	87	58,8	58,8	80,4
Dependent on the situation	21	14,2	14,2	94,6
No answer	8	5,4	5,4	100,0
Total	148	100,0	100,0	

Some of the participants stated that they did not prefer more group work activities to be included into their course of study because the current situation was sufficient for them. However, others believed that the strategy was already being over-used in the department and this situation led to some problems including time management and under-emphasis of the importance of individual work as well. They proposed a balanced-use of the technique by taking into account the triangle of the nature of course, task and individuals.

“I think it is just ‘right’ now. More group activities will decrease productivity.”

Participant 94, fourth grade

“I think it is enough. It takes a lot time and it’s tiring. We have to work whole week because it’s hard to find a suitable time for each group member.”

Participant 22, second grade

“I think it is enough because the students also need to work alone and need to know how to deal with some problems while working alone.”

Participant 82, second grade

“Group activities are necessary to a classroom environment. This is beyond any doubt but over cooperating after some time may be very tedious.”

Participant 74, second grade

“It depends on the course and the assignment because for some lessons, group working may not be useful.”

Participant 131, fourth grade

Approximately 21.6 percent of the participants showed a positive attitude towards the incorporation of more group activities into their courses. One of the participants explains her reasons for the particular attitude in these words:

“I prefer to work in a group because when I’m studying alone, I generally procrastinate. However, group work makes me responsible; therefore, group work is more useful for me...It’s easier to do in a group and it’s more disciplinary.”

Participant 50, second grade

The view that the work is better organized when working in groups was advocated by the 43.2 percent of the participants in the likert-scale item, too. Others also advocated the group works but with a different perspective:

“I prefer to work in a group in order to combine more than one effective idea or discuss several ideas to find the best one...I feel enjoy while doing group activities with my friends.”

Participant 2, second grade

“I want to work in groups because generally I am distracted by the things around me when I am studying alone. However, when I see that there are other students who study with me, I am encouraged by them.”

Participant 54, second grade

4.3.1.2 Small group vs. large group

The results indicated that the majority of the participants tended to prefer working in small groups compared to large groups (App. A, open ended question 1). Table 11 outlines the results regarding the preference of the participants on group size. The results revealed that more than 93 percent of the participants preferred working in small groups.

Table 11. Students' preference on group size

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Small group	138	93,2
Large group	4	2,7
None	6	4,1
Total	148	100,0

The reasons behind this obvious attitude lie under the fact that there are problems in the management of group dynamics in large groups in terms of time, work division, decision making process, social relationships, self-expression and task coordination. Figure 6 outlines the characteristics of small and large groups reported by the students.

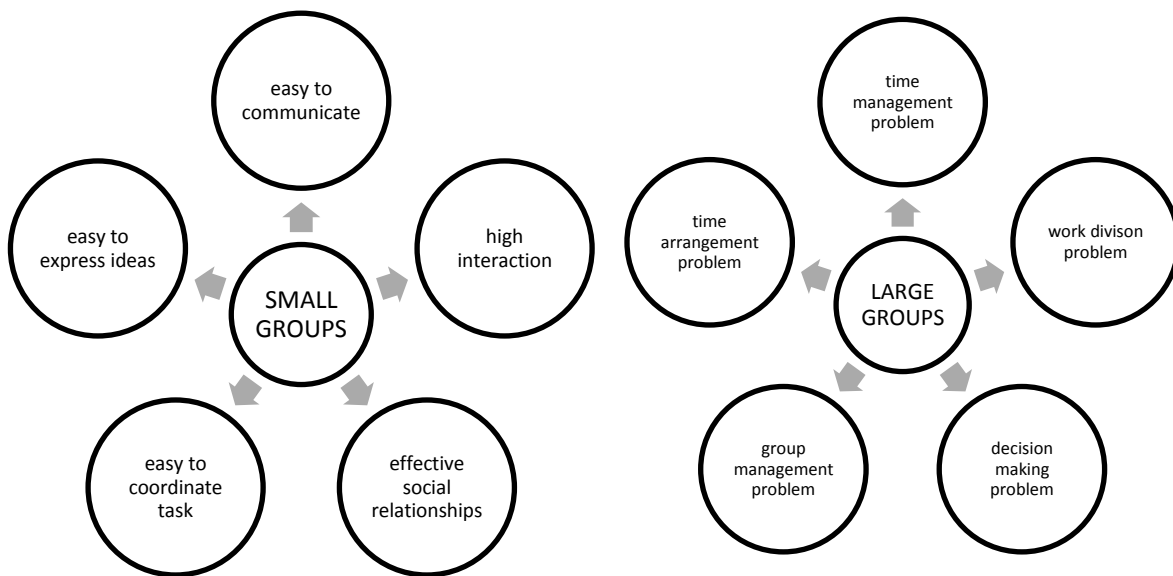


Figure 6. Small groups vs. large groups

Participant 26 who favored small groups over large groups stated that:

“I prefer working in small groups because I think everyone doesn't have equal chance to participate in working in large groups.”

Other participants agreed on the difficulty of self-expression in the activities due to the large group size and pointed out that:

“...because there are more opportunities to express myself clearly with less people.”

Participant 43, second grade

“I think it is better to work with 4 or less people because everybody will have the chance to contribute. In groups of 7 or more people, I think it is not possible because of the crowded environment.”

Participant 112, fourth grade

The nature of communication during the activity process was another issue reported by the students. They believed that it was easier to communicate with their peers when they worked in small groups since it led to a higher level of interaction. Below are some excerpts of the students related the issue.

“It is better to communicate and agree on a topic when there are a few students.”

Participant 106, fourth grade

“I prefer small groups because keeping up with more people is always hard. Contradiction between ideas is more possible.”

Participant 13, second grade

“I prefer working in small groups because the more group members mean the more trouble is there.”

Participant 34, second grade

“I prefer small groups because it is easier to communicate. For instance, this year, we had four members in our group. So, this was good for us.”

Participant 48, second grade

“I prefer working in small groups because in small groups we can communicate well and divergence will be less. Thus, there won't be a problem between members.”

Participant 66, second grade

“I prefer working in small groups because when the number increases then there may be some complications. Everyone talks at the same time; no one listens to another so it gets harder to come up with an idea.

Participant 139, fourth grade

Difficulty in task management in terms of work division, task completion, time and decision making process was another problem reported by the students due to the large group size in activities. They believed it led to unfair grading due to the unequal responsibility and contribution to the task completion process and it was problematic to arrange a suitable time for every member, which resulted in waste of time. In addition, the more the group members means the more people there were in need to express their opinions about the task. This causes a problem in the decision making process and made it difficult to reach a consensus easily in a shorter time span. Some of the participants emphasized the issue in these words below:

“I prefer working in small groups because it will be easier to arrange the time to work and it will be also easier to manage dividing the work and do the discussion.”

Participant 42, second grade

“Small groups, because it is really hard to come together for all the group members at the same time.”

Participant 128, fourth grade

“I prefer working in small groups. I think every person contribute something in a small group rather than a large one. Generally in a large group, two or three people just sit and watch their friends.”

Participant 104, fourth grade

“Small groups. The responsibility is evenly taken by 4 or 3 people. The communication and understanding each other is easier.”

Participant 22, second grade

4.3.2 Theme 2: Strengths of cooperative learning strategy

The findings of the study demonstrated that the participants believed the use of cooperative learning strategy in their courses had some advantages with respect to the improvement of language and communication skills, the opportunities to learn from and with their peers and the establishment of a positive classroom atmosphere. Following sections will discuss these four subsections regarding the strengths of cooperative learning.

4.3.2.1 Improvement of language skills

The results of the study revealed that the 52 percent of the EFL pre-service teachers in the particular institution believed being able to cooperate with their peers on a task contributed the development of their language skills. The computation of the Pearson correlation of the items 13 and 24 was found out to be significant at the 0.01 level. The value of the correlation was negative since the items were the negative forms of each other semantically.

Table 12. Correlations of the items 13 and 24

		Q5	Q10
Q13: I think other students CANNOT contribute to my English.(%63.5 Disagreement)	Pearson	1	-,406**
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	148	148
Q24: Studying with other students can improve my English more than studying alone. (%52 Agreement)	Pearson	-,406**	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	148	148

In addition, 59.5 percent of the participants reported that they believed cooperating with their group members in class activities provided them more opportunities to practice their English, which contributed to the development of their language skills. The students also underlined the effect of cooperative learning on the particular issue in their responses to open-ended questions. Some of the students mentioned that being able to cooperate with their classmates in classroom tasks contributed to the enhancement of their speaking skills since they needed to interact with their peer through communicating in English. In addition, others emphasized the point that

they had a variety of opportunities to learn with and from each other through cooperative tasks, which facilitate learning more about the foreign language.

4.3.2.2 Improvement of communicative skills

The participants acknowledged that they enhanced their communication skills through interaction with their peers when they worked in a group with 57.4 percent of agreement. Some of the participants summarize the issue in these words:

“Working with a group is a great practice of social and communicative skills. Although I personally do not enjoy it, I believe it’s necessary. Learning to communicate leads to understanding and empathy and therefore peace.”

Participant 94, fourth grade

“It is good for students to do assignments collaboratively because it creates a communicative environment which will increase students’ engagement in the course... I am happy for that. It really provides student communication which will enable them to learn from each other vicariously.”

Participant 49, second grade

“I think by doing collaborative work, I will learn how to be more socialized and how to cooperate with people.”

Participant 42, second grade

“Actually, we are lucky because we have such a department that gives us opportunity to improve our communication skills.”

Participant 8, second grade

The students reported that the enhancement of their communicative skills will provide them to be able to work with their peers and develop an understanding for each other’s opinions. It will also lead to an increase in student engagement to the class by creating an interactive environment for effective peer learning. The students also point out the significance of the development of their communicative skills in

such interactive environments for their prospective teaching careers, which will be mentioned in the following chapters in detail.

4.3.2.3 Peer learning

“...learning with and from each other is a necessary and important aspect of all courses. The role it plays varies widely and the forms it takes are very diverse but without it students gain an impoverished education.”

Boud, 2001

When the students actively engaged in the learning process by cooperating with their peers, they will have opportunities to learn together and from each other at the same time. This feature was one of the advantages of the implementation of cooperative learning activities in the classroom settings, which was reported by the pre-service EFL teachers of the particular institution. One of the participants emphasizes the issue in these words.

“I prefer to work in a group because I can see other opinions about the topic and I can ask my friends some points that I do not understand. I share my ideas in a relaxed way.”

Participant 78, second grade

The participants acknowledged that they believed they learn more information when they work with their peers with a high agreement level of 56.8 percent. The students also reported that the material was easier to understand, when they worked with other students with approximately 60 percent agreement. Some of the student mentioned the importance of the use of group activities on the development of knowledge through integration of a variety of perceptions by stating:

“I would [prefer my instructors to use more group activities] because thanks to group work I can [ask for] help in difficult parts and also I can benefit from my friends’ different ideas.”

Participant 129, fourth grade

“...I think students learn better when they work together and I also regard myself as a person whose understanding is based upon cooperative and group works.”

Participant 89, second grade

“I prefer working in groups. It helps me to understand the work better because each person has a different idea. Different ideas contribute to my mind.”

Participant 76, second grade

The existence of a variety of ideas due to combination of different points of views from different students led to the formation of an artifact which good in quality and creative in the end of the task process.

“...When I work with a group, we gather information that is from different perceptions, which will increase the quality of the work.”

Participant 49, second grade

“I may not be creative when I am alone. In a group, I’m more productive by sharing ideas.”

Participant 73, second grade

“I prefer to work in a group rather than on my own because sharing our ideas with each other contributes to our work.”

Participant 79, second grade

4.3.2.4 Positive classroom atmosphere

A safe classroom environment was one of the key features reported by the participants that lead to effective learning thanks to the cooperative learning activities. 45.3 percent of the students agreed that they felt more comfortable to participate in class activities when they work with their peers rather than being alone. Below are some excerpts from students’ responses regarding the issue.

“I prefer group work because I am motivated when I study with people who are willing to study.”

Participant 20, second grade

“I am more comfortable in group works because I can broadly share my ideas and hear the others. There is a more relaxed environment in group works.”

Participant 73, second grade

The majority of the students also mentioned that they were able express their ideas more freely in group activities. The Pearson correlation of the items 5 and 10 related to this feature was computed and it was found out to be significant at the 0.01 level (see table 6).

Table 13. Correlations of the items 5 and 10

		Q5	Q10
Q5: When I work in a group, I am able to share my ideas. (%53.4 Agreement)	Pearson	1	-,482**
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	148	148
Q10: I find it hard to express my thoughts, when I work in a group. (%48.0 Disagreement)	Pearson	-,482**	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	148	148

The students further pointed out the issue in their texts below.

“...working in a group gives me more courage to express my ideas and I also hear about other people’s ideas and that increases my success.”

Participant 89, second grade

“...I feel relax and express my opinions more freely as a member of a group.”

Participant 136, fourth grade

“I feel much more comfortable in group works because the risk of doing wrong decreases as you are under an umbrella of a group...working with the people you know helps to decrease the anxiety.”

Participant 32, second grade

Some of the participants reported that their feeling of stress to make mistakes in the course of assignment decreased when they worked in groups. The idea of sharing the responsibility and the trust to group members facilitated a safe environment for learning English.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Problems of cooperative learning strategy

The findings of the study demonstrated that the participants believed the use of cooperative learning strategy in their courses had some disadvantages with respect to time management, task management, communication issues, prevention of creative thinking and self-expression issues. Following sections will examine four subsections regarding the disadvantages of cooperative learning perceived by the participants.

4.3.3.1 Time management

One of the important problems caused by the use of cooperative learning strategy in EFL classroom setting was the time and pace management problem during the course of activity. Participant 1 states her opinion shortly by saying “...working individually is better in terms of using time economically”.

The agreement of the participants to the problem was also reported in responses to the likert-scale items 2 and 22, which are semantically reversed forms of each other. Table 14 represents the values regarding the Pearson correlation level of two items at 0.01 alpha level.

Table 14. Correlation of the items 2 and 22

		Q2	Q22
Q2: The work takes longer to complete when I work with other students. (%42.6 Agreement)	Pearson Correlation	1	-,340**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
	N	148	148
Q22: It takes less time to complete the assignment, when I work with other students. (%37.8 Disagreement)	Pearson Correlation	-,340**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
	N	148	148

Below is an excerpt from a response of Participant 31 related to the time management issue during group activities:

“I prefer working on my own because working in a group is more time consuming in contrast to what is believed.”

Another participant emphasized time management issue caused by the divergence from the topic itself due to group dynamics:

“I prefer working alone because it will be faster and I will be more focused. [While] working in a group, we sometimes talk about something else rather than the lesson topic and waste time.”

Participant 42, second grade

Some of the participants agreed on the problem by considering the issue from a different perspective. They reported that they experienced some problems in arranging a suitable time for each group member to meet and complete the task. The responses of the students pointed out that they feel like they were under threat of limitation by others in terms of time and space.

“I wouldn’t prefer more group activities because it takes much more time than needed. Also, it is hard to come together with group members.”

Participant 114, fourth grade

“I am more relaxed when I work on my own. I can study whenever and where ever I want and I don’t want to take the responsibility of others.”

Participant 133, fourth grade

“Group activities are good to complete in a short time with variable opinions but it’s hard to find a fixed time to meet. [Therefore], I don’t prefer more group activities.”

Participant 32, second grade

“I prefer to work on my own most cases. It is sometimes hard to gather group members [together] and start to work. The time issue limits the group work.”

Participant 146, fourth grade

“Of course, I prefer to work on my own. I can arrange my project however I want; I can read what I want and I can do it whenever I want. In group, you just do what your part is and meeting with group members is also another problem.”

Participant 52, second grade

One of the students mention that they experienced difficulties in the decision making process of the task due to working in a group and it leads to the waste of time.

“...when I study on my own, I do better and also it takes less time to finish the assignment. For example, in writing assignments, I do my homework more quickly than I do with them because we have different ideas. It is hard to come to a common idea, sometimes.

Participant 67, second grade

4.3.3.2 Task management

45.3 percent of the students expressed that the workload was less in group activities since they divided the work into parts and every group member was supposed to complete his/her part. Below are some excerpts from the participants related to situations where division of labor is managed appropriately:

“Yes, I would prefer [my instructors to use more group activities] because the workload is lower when we work in groups.”

Participant 79, second grade

“...I feel more relaxed and comfortable with groups. The workload is divided.”

Participant 139, fourth grade

Nonetheless, the majority of the students complained about the unequal responsibility and contribution to the task since some of the group members failed to perform their duties.

“I prefer to work on my own because it’s hard to find a group mate who will take responsibility and will work really hard to achieve. In

group work, I am the one who takes all the responsibility and other members don't make as much effort as I make."

Participant 66, second grade

"I prefer to work on my own because I think in group works the workload is not equal. Some of the group members are not motivated to work, so we have to do their workload."

Participant 34, second grade

As a result of the unequal contribution during the task completion process, the participants discussed their discomfort about getting the same grade with those who did not take their responsibility to complete the work. Therefore, the majority of the students indicated that a group grade is not fair with a 37.8 percent agreement.

"I prefer to work on my own when we present something because the others don't do their duties. They rely on me. I prefer to work on my own or with a partner. I don't like sharing the same grade with others."

Participant 95, fourth grade

"I prefer to work on my own because I think in group works, the workload is not equal. Also, some of the group members are not motivated to work so we have to do their work...It is not equal to get the same grade with someone whose contribution in the group work is less than yours."

Participant 34, second grade

One of the issues regarding task management is the decision making process. The participants reported that when there were members with different points of views in the group, it could be hard to reach a consensus. Some of the participants complained about the issue in these words:

"...Actually, I want [my instructors] to decrease group works because mostly it is difficult to come to a common point. Even if we do, we may not like that work so much."

Participant 87, second grade

“I prefer working on my own than working in a group for couple of reasons. Firstly, I get distracted easily. Secondly, it takes forever to provide a consensus; thus, the whole project takes longer.”

Participant 94, fourth grade

4.3.3.3 Problems in communication

The participants reported that the existence of people with different points of views in a group could lead to occurrence of some communication breakdowns. This problem may have some negative effects on the social relationships of the students as well as the task management process. Participant 64 summarizes the influence of this compliance on her motivation with these words:

“I prefer to work on my own because I feel more comfortable and I can do everything as I want. For example, when we were three people in a group work, the members were always arguing and it definitely effected my motivation and work quality.”

Other participants also underlined the problem by setting emphasis on communication break downs during group works in these words:

“...group works can sometimes create crisis among members. Yes, they are beneficial but I think they are more than enough in our courses. So, I think there is no need to incorporate more.”

Participant 130, fourth grade

“I wouldn't prefer [my instructors to use more group activities] because there are enough group activities in our classes. Sometimes, getting on with people is harder than doing the homework or activity.”

Participant 52, second grade

Some of the individuals approached the issue from a different perspective with respect to over emphasis on grade in group works and its effects on their friendships.

“I would not prefer [my instructors to use more group activities]. I really hate it and my relationships with my friends go worse as well because some of them are too worried about grade and they have no tolerance to mistake.”

Participant 52, second grade

“I hate group activities. It makes people dishonest. They just do them for grade. They become somebody else. It’s just the opposite of my mind.”

Participant 61, second grade

The results suggested that the students experienced some unfortunate situations in their courses as a result of failure to communicate with their peers due to the differences in perceptions.

4.3.3.4 Prevention of creative thinking

The findings of the study revealed that the participants believed working in groups proposed a limitation for them with respect to thinking creatively. Participant 25 emphasized the issue by comparing herself in situations in which she was alone or in a group.

“I prefer working on my own rather than in a group. I can be flexible in my working time and using my ideas. If I work in a group then I give more importance to other’s ideas. It limits me.”

Participant 25, second grade

Another participant pointed out the issue that individual activities were to be practiced as well to create one’s own teaching perspective regardless from others.

“Every homework is expected to be done as a group; even micro-teaching is done as a group and it prevents me from being an original teacher and creating my own style.”

Participant 52, second grade

One of the participants is good at summarizing the issue with a unique style when answering how cooperative works in the current institution will contribute her teaching skills in the future. She advocated that the obligation to work in groups all the time prevented one from trying new things that could possibly led to the creation of an innovative idea due to the fear of making mistakes since all the members depend on each other for the grade.

“It will help us to adopt the environment and obey the rules because in group activities you are given a task. [However], there is no tolerance to make a mistake. This prevents creative outcomes because I feel bad for others if I propose a new thing and it fails. This will make us ordinary teachers who adopt the environment and have fear of the system.”

Participant 52, second grade

4.3.3.5 Difficulty in self-expression

Although the majority of the participants acknowledged that there are opportunities to express their opinions (%64.2 percent agreement) in the likert-scale, they reported that the situation could change depending on the group dynamics in a negative way. There were more negative statements about the ability of self-expression than positive ones in their texts. Some of the students expressed their opinions about the difficulty in self-expression in group works in these words:

“I prefer to work on my own no matter how much I agree that cooperative learning contributes too much to any person because I can express my own thoughts better.

Participant 74, second grade

“I hate group activities...I find it hard to express my thoughts and I can notice that other people in the group suffer from the same thing.”

Participant 59, second grade

“...I don't like group activities. I don't feel relax because I am a shy person. In addition, if the group has a person who likes speaking or showing off, I stay in backwards more and I don't prefer to do anything more.”

Participant 133, fourth grade

The key reason why students felt like they could not express their opinions or perform well in group works was sometimes dependent on the group dynamics as the students reported. When there were people with more self-confidence than others in a group, the other members could not find sufficient opportunities to talk about the task and feel behind.

4.3.4 Theme 3: Suggestions

The findings of the study demonstrated that the participants proposed some suggestions regarding the use of cooperative learning strategy in their courses with respect to balanced use of the strategy, importance of the nature of the task and the course and fairness issues. Following sections will examine three subsections regarding the suggestions proposed by the participants.

4.3.4.1 Balanced use of cooperative learning strategy

Most of the pre-service teachers acknowledged the importance of the use of collaborative study in their course of study in the EFL department even if they complain about the drawbacks of the strategy. Nonetheless, they suggested the balanced use of the strategy accompanied by individual study.

“I think collaborative study is necessary but it should not be too much or too less.”

Participant 26, second grade

“It’s good to work collaboratively. However, it is also important to assign the students who prefer working on their own with individual work.”

Participant 47, second grade

“I don’t like group activities but I cannot deny that they are helpful to students. I think there should be group works but there shouldn’t be many”

Participant 60, second grade

The participants also pointed out the significance of individual study that contributed to the the feeling of self-sufficiency and they emphasized the situations in real life classroom.

“...when we become teachers, we will be alone and we’ll prepare every work alone.”

Participant 45, second grade

“I think we have many groups works which are unnecessary because we can feel like without our friends we cannot complete the task...I

think we should have collaborative study but in this department we have so many of them.”

Participant 45, second grade

“As long as there is only one teacher in a real-life classroom, there should be only one student-teacher in a teaching practice lesson.”

Participant 53, second grade

“I think [collaborative work] may not be so effective because when I become a teacher I will not work collaboratively in class and I will perform as an individual.”

Participant 66, second grade

Some of the participants advocated that it should be voluntary or optional to choose between collaborative work and individual study since every student had its own way of learning.

“Collaborative work can be beneficial but it does not work for each and every student. I think the instructors should give us the chance to study individually or collaboratively. I don’t say we should remove group studies but it should be optional to work in groups or individually.”

Participant 65, second grade

To summarize, the results suggest that students believed the significance of the use of cooperative learning strategy but they advised it to be used in a balanced amount accompanied by the consideration of the nature of the task and the student.

4.3.4.2 Importance of the nature of the task/course

The students suggested that the nature of the task and the course should be taken into consideration during the choice of method to be implemented in teaching since not every method could work all the time for all subjects including the cooperative learning techniques as well.

“We should not apply this method into all subjects.”

Participant 82, second grade

“It depends on the task. If it is a demanding task that we have to complete, then group work is more preferable because there will be collaborative working.”

Participant 84, second grade

“[Whether I prefer group work or not] really depends on which project I’m working. In ELT courses I prefer group working but in Literature I want to express my own voice so I prefer individual study.”

Participant 23, second grade

“...not every assignment is suitable for group work such as writing or term paper assignments”

Participant 28, second grade

“Collaborative study cannot be used in every course but if it is used in certain courses like speaking or ELT courses, it can be really effective.”

Participant 55, second grade

The participants suggested that greater learning could be achieved by collaborative learning in some courses while others may not be in need for such activities due to their nature. Therefore, they advised the teachers to take into account those parameters before making decisions about the teaching strategy to be implemented in the course.

4.3.4.3 Need for fairness

One of the suggestions of the students included the emphasis on fairness in collaborative activities in their course of study with respect to division of labor and grading, which is one of the most frequent features reported by the students as a drawback of the collaborative study. Below are some excerpts from the students’ text regarding the issue.

“Grading is not fair in group activities. I think this must be improved.”

Participant 71, second grade

“In fact, group working is very useful. However, teachers should observe the groups and take into consideration that the workload of each student should be equal. Every student should carry out their responsibilities.”

Participant 13, fourth grade

“I believe that if the group members are aware of their responsibilities and they don't leave the work to others, group activities are very effective in language teaching.”

Participant 134, fourth grade

The students advocated that the collaborative study could be more effective if the problem of unequal responsibility and contribution accompanied by unfair grading accordingly are to be solved immediately. The participants expressed their feelings and how uncomfortable they were about the issue. They suggested that the teachers should observe this process and make plans to overcome this barrier during the course of activity.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Benefits for future career

The findings of the study demonstrated that the participants believed the use of cooperative learning strategy in their courses had some benefits for their future teaching career. Those benefits included the improvement of skills with respect to teaching, communication and language skills and personal characteristics regarding the improvement of perspective of individual differences and self-confidence and self-expression. The students believed that being able to cooperate in class activities in their courses means they will do a better job with their prospective teaching career with approximately 58 percent in response to likert-scale item. Following sections will examine the related features in detail.

4.3.4.1 Improvement of Skills

a. Teaching skills

The results of the likert scale items revealed that the students believed working in a group provides a chance to explore great teaching ideas of others to enhance their teaching perceptions with approximately 60 percent of agreement. In addition,

the improvement of teaching skills was the most frequent feature response with respect to the benefits of cooperative strategy for their prospective career in students' texts as well. Moreover, the students also pointed out in their responses that they will be able to use the techniques of cooperative learning in their classroom settings. Furthermore, 57.4 percent of the participants proposed that they will use them in their future teaching career.

“I think it will surely contribute to my teaching skills in the future because as teachers, we should collaborate with students and other teachers. For example, I and some other English teachers would come together and share our ideas about teaching or prepare some lesson plans. This will help us to improve our teaching skills.”

Participant 67, second grade

“21st century wants us to raise collaborative learners. Therefore, gaining this skill contributes to my future career a lot. I am planning to integrate group activities and pair works into my teachings to increase motivation and cooperation.”

Participant 118, fourth grade

“In my classes, I can apply these activities so that the students will have a chance to learn to work with others.”

Participant 30, second grade

“...It will give me a chance to improve myself by getting new ideas about teaching. For example, I have learned several activities to teach speaking in the ELT Methodology course.”

Participant 70, second grade

“We will be aware of the advantages and the disadvantages of group activities. We will be experienced; thus, we'll be able to prevent some cons of group works and foster the pros of collaborative tasks. We will know where and when to use them.”

Participant 132, fourth grade

The students reported that the use of collaborative activities in their undergraduate courses in their department will provide them to collaborate with their colleagues effectively in their future career in terms of the design of their lessons or discussing different ideas related to teaching. They also pointed out that it contributed to the enhancement of their knowledge about teaching strategies that could be used in their courses. In addition, they emphasized the awareness of the advantages and the disadvantages of the collaborative strategy due to the experience in first hand thanks to their department and how they will foster the positive sides accordingly.

b. Communication skills

The participants of the study reported that the use of collaborative learning strategy in their department provides them the opportunity with the ability to communicate with their colleagues and students effectively in the future. They linked this contribution with their chance to go through a variety of experiences in the courses of their department and developing a sense of awareness accompanied by broadening their perceptions. The students expressed their opinions as follows:

“In the future, I will work with a team of teachers and it will be helpful in my communication with them.”

Participant 5, second grade

“I will be more comfortable to communicate with my students and my colleagues.”

Participant 19, second grade

“By improving my ability to collaborate effectively in groups, I will learn how to handle and interact with people. Moreover, the soft skill of working with people is really needed to acquire so that later I will be easy going person and can be good colleague.”

Participant 42, second grade

“If we as prospective teachers know well how to respect other people’s thoughts and feelings, we will be able to get better relationships with our own learners.”

Participant 138, fourth grade

“I will use cooperative learning strategy in my classroom. I know that group works can enhance their communication skills and they can learn many things from each other.”

Participant 8, second grade

They believed their experiences in group works foster the learning process of interaction and communication with people including their fellow teachers and students. Therefore, this ability facilitates the healthy and effective relationships between individuals.

c. Language skills

The students stated that the use of collaborative activities in classroom settings helped them to improve their language skills by providing them opportunities to practice English with their peers, which fostered communication through the foreign language channel. Although most of the students used short sentences to express their opinions about the issue to indicate its effect on their language skills especially speaking skills, they agreed that collaborative activities are beneficial to foster the development of their language.

“I think group activities help me to practice English. Thus, this will make a better teacher.”

Participant 37, second grade

“It will improve my speaking skills because in order to communicate with our group members, we should speak in English.”

Participant 83, second grade

4.3.4.2 Personal Characteristics

a. The improvement of the perspective of individual differences

The participants believed that they have the chance to explore a variety of perceptions, ideas, values and intelligences during collaborative activities since each member of the group contributes to the task with her/his own unique style.

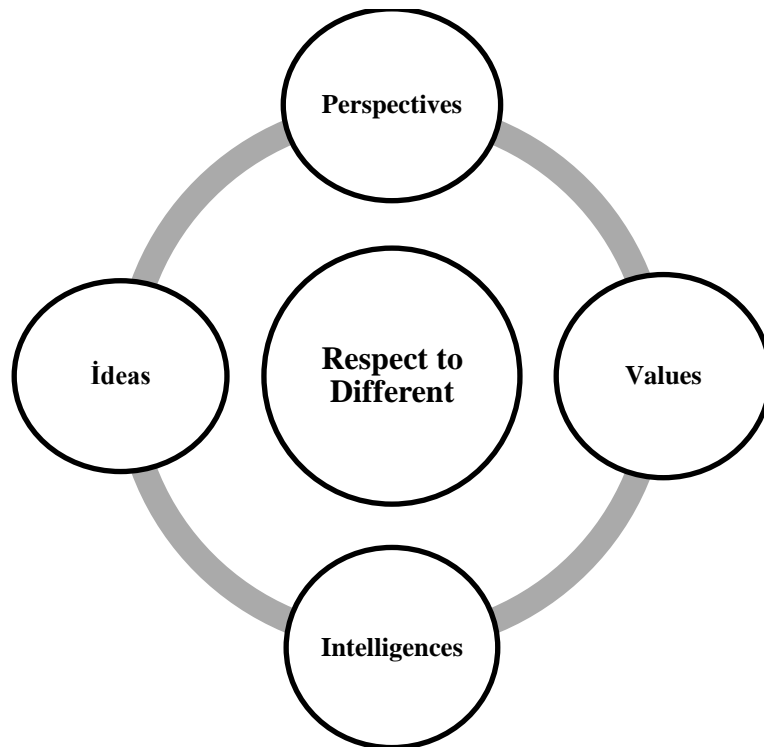


Figure 7. Individual differences

Some of the students pointed out the issue in these statements below:

“It helps me teach easier in classes because I try to work people who have different skills, intelligences and characteristics.”

Participant 7, second grade

“It will help me to learn how to work with people with different learning styles. For example, in a group you learn to deal with different ideas, values and beliefs.”

Participant 22, second grade

“In group works, I can improve my communication skills and by means of it, I will have the chance to respect others’ opinions.”

Participant 56, second grade

“In work life, there will be many colleagues with different characteristics and backgrounds. Therefore, we have to know how to work with people in groups. Thanks to EFL, I feel more comfortable.”

Participant 128, fourth grade

“...the skill to collaborate effectively in groups will be beneficial for me to work with many different people who have different views and ideas. Besides, it contributed me in terms of understanding different points of views and dealing with crisis in group works.”

Participant 130, fourth grade

The results indicated 63.5 percent of the participants agreed that they learnt to work with students who are different from them and 60.8 percent of the participants considered their experiences in group works as an assistance to understand different learning styles. Not only had they reported they developed awareness about the issue, but also suggested that they respect to those valuable differences.

b. Self-confidence and self-expression

In the previous sections, it is discussed that some of the students reported they feel more secure to share their ideas in group works. They also stated that this positive effect will be useful for their future teaching career as well since they have had already experienced it themselves in first hand.

“I can be a more self-confident person and I will not have any difficulty in sharing ideas or communicating with people.”

Participant 1, second grade

“Working in groups gives chances to take responsibility and share ideas to make others support you or learn from others.”

Participant 12, second grade

4.4 COOPERATIVE LEARNING IN THE FLE DEPARTMENT

This section provides information about the extent of the use of cooperative learning techniques and the types of cooperative learning techniques utilized in the institution, which is the second research question of the study. The results included the opinions of the students about whether there is a need to incorporate more group activities to their courses or not and the courses in which they believe greater learning could be facilitated via group activities.

4.4.1 The extent of the use of cooperative learning strategies

Figure 8 represents the opinions of the students about the percent of the use of cooperative learning techniques in the EFL classroom settings at the university.

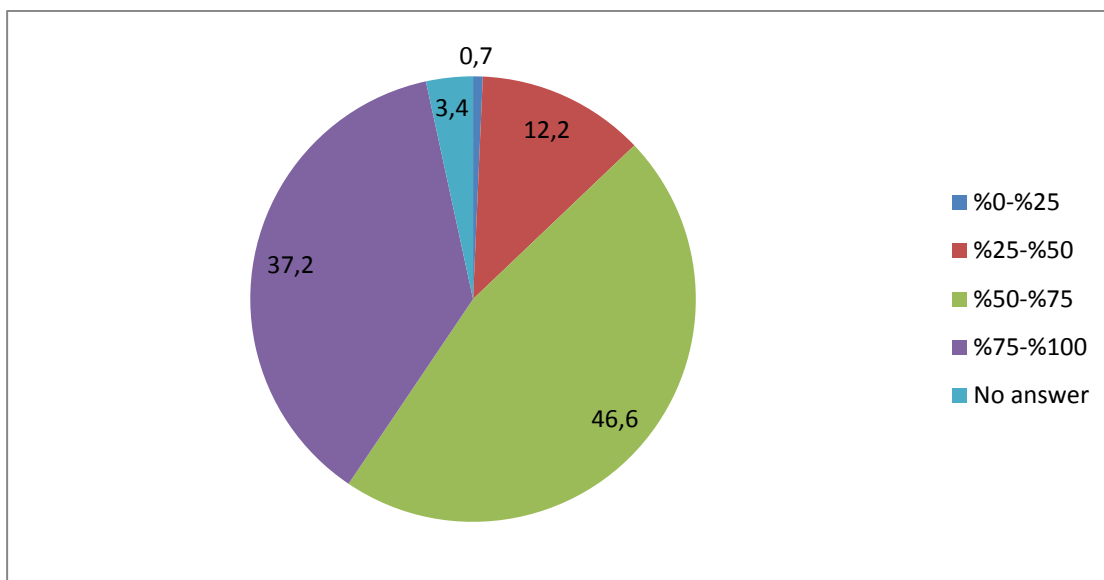


Figure 8. The percent of the use of cooperative learning techniques

The majority of the students believed that it is implemented over fifty percent in their course of studies while only a small number of students indicated the extent of its application is below twenty five percent.

The results also indicated the degree of willingness of the students if more group activities were incorporated in their course of study. The findings point out that 52 percent of the participants reported to feel uncomfortable if more group activities were incorporated into their lessons whereas only 25 percent of the students were favor of it. Table 15 outlines the responses of the students as follows.

Table 15. The perceptions of students about the incorporation of more group activities

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	37	25,0	25,0	25,0
No	77	52,0	52,0	77,0
Dependent on the situation	22	14,9	14,9	91,9
No answer	12	8,1	8,1	100,0
Total	148	100,0	100,0	
Yes	37	25,0	25,0	25,0

Approximately 15 percent of the participants indicated it is dependent on the situation and emphasizes some advantages as well as drawbacks of the incorporation of more group activities into their classes. Participant 1 explains her point of view on the issue in these words:

“Sometimes, I don’t feel comfortable because working in groups, communicating with each other, and coming up with a clear idea may be challenging for me. Other than these [factors], it is more comfortable because the workload is less.”

While participant 1 compares the challenges and the strengths of the use of cooperative learning strategy in the lessons, other students approach to the issue via different perceptions:

“It’s all about balance. If you implement both pair/group work and individual activities in fair grounds, that’s the way to go to comfort in our course of study.”

Participant 105, fourth grade

“Sometimes, I am more comfortable but sometimes I feel really nervous and anxious. It generally depends on the course, the workload and the group members.”

Participant 131, fourth grade

25 percent of the participants indicated a positive attitude towards the issue and explained their reasons as follows:

“Yes, it makes the work easier and contributes to the understanding of the course.”

Participant 22, second grade

“Yes, because I would have more chance to understand the topics that I don’t know.

Participant 37, second grade

“...The more I share my ideas, the more I feel comfortable. And, also the material is easier to understand.”

Participant 107, fourth grade

“...I would because I won’t feel alone and I am not fearful about making an error. Also, I am not bored with classes. For example, the literature lesson is more enjoyable and more teachable with group activities.”

Participant 129, fourth grade

The majority of the participants reported a negative attitude towards the issue. They generally stated their perceptions shortly that the amount of group activities in their courses is enough or they don’t like working in groups. Some of the participants explained the underlying reasons for their choice in detail in their texts below:

“I totally don’t like group activities and during the classes we don’t speak about the lesson topic when we are asked to do so in groups.”

Participant 31, second grade

“I wouldn’t be more comfortable if more groups activities were incorporated in our course of study. Even though I am a confident person and have no hesitations about explaining my opinions, still I want to control my study without being dependent on anyone.”

Participant 46, second grade

“...group works can sometimes create crisis among members. Yes, they are beneficial but I think they are more than enough in our courses. I think there is no need to incorporate more.”

Participant 130, fourth grade
 “No, because I don’t like group activities. I don’t feel relax because I am a shy person. In addition, if the group has a person who likes speaking or showing off, I stay in backwards more and I don’t prefer to do anything more.

Participant 133, fourth grade

4.4.2 The courses in need for incorporation of more group activities

The participants proposed courses in which they believe greater learning could be facilitated via group activities. Table 16 presents the frequency and the percentages of the courses suggested by 2nd grade students.

Table 16. Courses suggested by 2nd grade students

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
ELT Methodology	55	23.5
Instructional principles	36	15.4
Oral expression and Public speaking	35	15
Oral communication	30	12.8
Drama	19	8.1
Literature	16	6.8
Contrastive Turkish English	13	5.6
Others	30	12.8
TOTAL	234	100

The course which was most frequently proposed by the 2nd participants was the ELT Methodology course. Then, the courses of Instructional principles, Oral expression and Public speaking, Oral communication follow. The courses which

have the frequency under 10 were categorized in the others section such as Linguistics, Approaches to ELT, Speaking and advanced writing.

The results suggested some differences with respect to the types of courses proposed by the students and the frequencies of them when the 2nd and 4th grade students' responses were analyzed. Table 17 presents the frequency and the percentages of the courses suggested by 4th grade students.

Table 17. Courses suggested by 4th grade students

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
ELT Methodology	30	22.7
Literature	19	14.4
Materials	10	7.6
Oral communication	9	6.8
Teaching English to Young learners	8	6.1
Testing	8	6.1
Practice Teaching	7	5.3
Classroom management	6	4.5
Linguistics	5	3.8
Translation	4	3
Advanced research and writing	4	3
Others	22	16.6
TOTAL	132	100

The course which was most frequently proposed by the 4th participants was the ELT Methodology course. Then, the courses of Literature, Material development and evaluation and Oral communication follow. Since the number of participants are lower in 4th (f: 58) than that of 2nd (f: 90), the frequency of the items under 4 were categorized in the others section in order not to underestimate their importance due to the smaller size.

Figure 9 outlines the most frequent responses regarding all the participants of the study about the courses in which they believe greater learning could be facilitated via group activities in their institution.

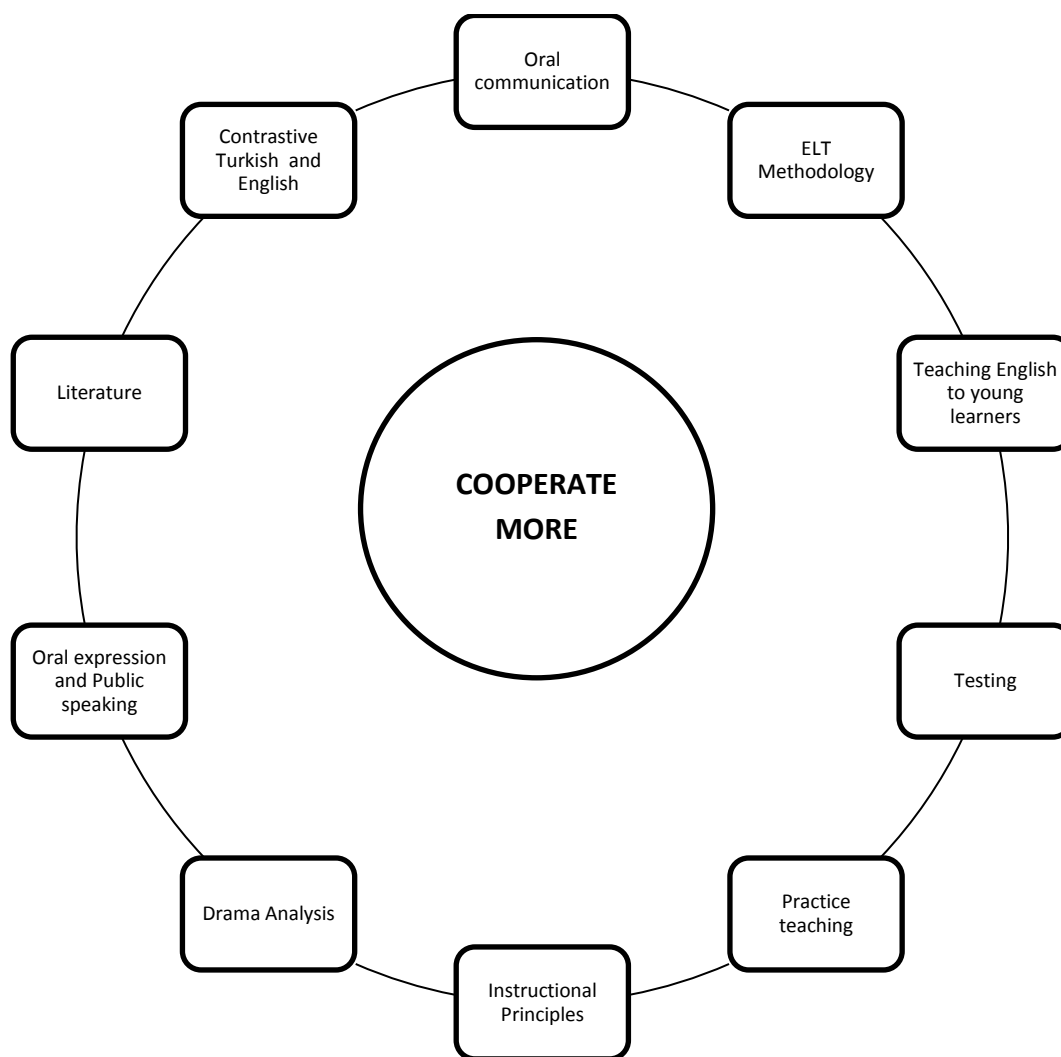


Figure 9. The types of courses suggested for more collaborative activities by students

The analysis of the data revealed that the course which had the highest frequency of all was ELT Methodology (f: 85) in both grades. Then, the courses of Instructional principles (f: 36), Oral expression and Public speaking (f: 38), Oral communication (f: 39), Literature (f: 35) and Drama (f: 19) follow.

4.4.3 The types of cooperative learning techniques

This section provides information about the students' responses to the cooperative learning techniques that were practiced in the courses in their EFL department. Table 18 outlines the types of cooperative techniques proposed by the students.

Table 18. The types of cooperative techniques

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Group work	68	22
Jigsaw	66	21
Discussion	61	19,7
Round table	25	8,6
Pair work	21	6,8
Role play	18	5,8
Information gap	14	4,5
Debates	12	3,9
Numbered heads	5	1,6
Others	20	6,5
TOTAL	310	100

Group work, Jigsaw and Discussion techniques have the highest frequencies of all to be proposed by the students. The students provided some examples related to the implementation of those techniques in their classes.

“We performed presentations in groups in Oral expression and Public speaking course, [which makes us] feel more secure and used jigsaw in Advanced Reading and Writing classes to use time effectively. We implemented group discussions technique in Instructional principles and methods to feel more secure [as well].”

Participant 5, second grade

“We use micro-teaching groups in ELT Methodology.”

Participant 24, second grade

“We implement Jigsaw in our reading and writing courses and I really like it. We also use discussions and group works.”

Participant 8, second grade

“We use group works in micro-teachings and preparing lesson plans for the course of Teaching English to Young learners.”

Participant 42, second grade

“For Instructional principles we, as a group, prepared a lesson plan. For ELT Methodology 1, as a group, we have made micro-teachings. For Contrastive Turkish and English we, as a group, conducted a research and presented in the classroom.”

Participant 46, second grade

“We use discussion in Literature classes and by having discussions we can see many different perceptions for a specific topic.”

Participant 56, second grade

“In our Instructional principles and methods course, teacher divides the class into five groups. Each group studies one topic and teaches it to the class.”

Participant 66, second grade

“We usually make pair work in Drama analysis lesson by discussing about the topic of the day. We make discussions in our Oral expression and public speaking courses. We use jigsaw method in our Instructional principles and methods course.”

Participant 82, second grade

Other important techniques proposed by the students include roundtable, role play, information gap activities, debates and number heads. Below are some examples of students regarding the use of those techniques in their classroom settings.

“We apply roundtable technique in Oral expression and Public speaking course.”

Participant 24, second grade

“I experienced jigsaw, roundtable and small group discussions in Instructional principles and methods course. The content of the lesson is so complex and hard to process all the information. That’s why we need to collaborate to finish and understand the content by sharing our knowledge in group activities.”

Participant 75, second grade

“We used information gap activities in our ELT Methodology course to find the missing information about ELT methodologies. We used ice-breaker activities at the beginning of the classes for new-coming students to get to know each other.”

Participant 105, fourth grade

Grade difference in the attitudes towards cooperative learning strategy

Table 19 represents the results of the 2nd grade and 4th grade students in their perceptions of the cooperative learning strategy. As the table outlines, the mean score of the 4th grade students is higher than that of 2nd grade students. Nonetheless, there is no statistical significant difference between the students in the answers to the questions.

Table 19. ANOVA

Grade	Mean	N	Std. Deviation		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
2nd grade	87,4667	90	11,03742	Between Groups	358,578	1	358,578	3,091	,081
4th grade	90,6552	58	10,34078	Within Groups	16937,503	146	116,010		
Total	88,7162	148	10,84714	Total	17296,081	147			

The differences between 2nd grade and 4th grade students in their perceptions of the cooperative learning strategy were further analyzed based on each question. There is a statistical significant difference between the mean scores of the students in only questions of 3, 12, 14 and 22. Table 20 represents the results for those four items. The ANOVA for results for the questionnaire items are included in App. H.

Table 20. ANOVA based on each question

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q3	Between Groups	3,619	1	3,619	6,914	,009
	Within Groups	76,408	146	,523		
	Total	80,027	147			
Q12	Between Groups	2,912	1	2,912	7,505	,007
	Within Groups	56,655	146	,388		
	Total	59,568	147			
Q14	Between Groups	2,208	1	2,208	4,094	,045
	Within Groups	78,731	146	,539		
	Total	80,939	147			
Q22	Between Groups	4,922	1	4,922	6,194	,014
	Within Groups	116,017	146	,795		
	Total	120,939	147			

4.5 Concluding remarks

This study investigated the perceptions and the experiences of the pre-service teachers in a Foreign Language Education department. The purpose of this chapter was to provide a detailed description of the results of the study. The findings were presented both quantitatively and qualitatively. The key findings that emerged from the questionnaire were categorized under sections which correspond to the two research questions of the study. The first research question of the study investigated the perceptions of the participants about cooperative learning. The results of the study included five main themes with respect to the size of interaction, strengths of cooperative learning strategy, problems of cooperative learning strategy, the suggestions of students about cooperative learning strategy and the benefits of the use of cooperative learning strategy for future career. The second research question of the study investigated the extent of the use of cooperative learning techniques and the types of cooperative learning techniques utilized in the institution. The majority of the participants believed the cooperative strategy was utilized over 75% in the department and the Group work, Jigsaw and Discussion techniques had the highest frequencies to be proposed by the students.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The first research question of the study investigated the perceptions of the EFL pre-service teachers of cooperative learning. The findings of the study provided four themes in relation to students' views on the use of cooperative learning involving the strengths of the cooperative learning strategy, problems of the strategy, the suggestions of students and the benefits of the use of cooperative learning strategy for their prospective teaching career. Figure 10 represents the strengths of cooperative learning strategy perceived by the students.

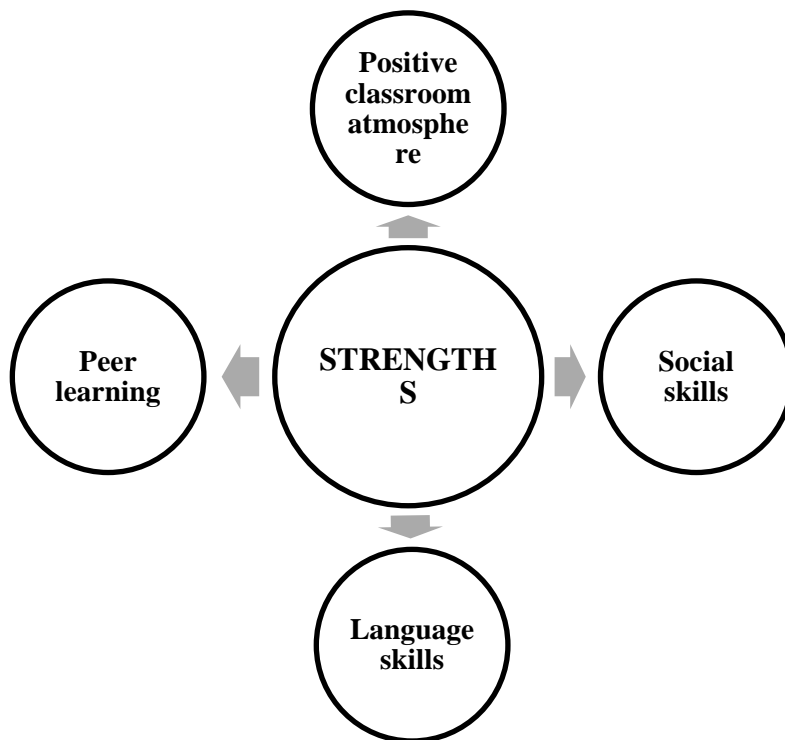


Figure 10. Strengths of cooperative learning according to the perceptions of students

The results of the study revealed that only 20% of the students indicated they prefer group activities in their course of study. The students reported some strengths of the cooperative learning strategy explaining why they prefer to work in groups when compared to individual work. They indicated that the cooperative learning is effective in the development of language and social skills accompanied by increased

level of learning about the subject. The students also indicated that it promotes the establishment of a safe supportive environment for learning by reducing the anxiety level of the students. Johnson and Johnson (1989) asserted that cooperation, as opposed to competitive and individualistic efforts, tends to promote greater long-term retention and greater transfer of learning as well as task-oriented and personal social support. It creates a relaxed and mutual supportive environment for learning (Dörnyei, 1997). Moreover, the cooperative learning fosters the development self-confidence and self-esteem of students, which is consistent with the assertions of Johnson and Johnson (2009) and Webb (1982). The pre-service teacher also mentioned that the use of cooperative learning is significant for their prospective teaching career in the sense that it enhances their language, communication and teaching skills by providing them opportunities to experience the strategy in the eyes of a learner in their departments. Figure 11 represents the benefits of cooperative learning for future career perceived by the students.

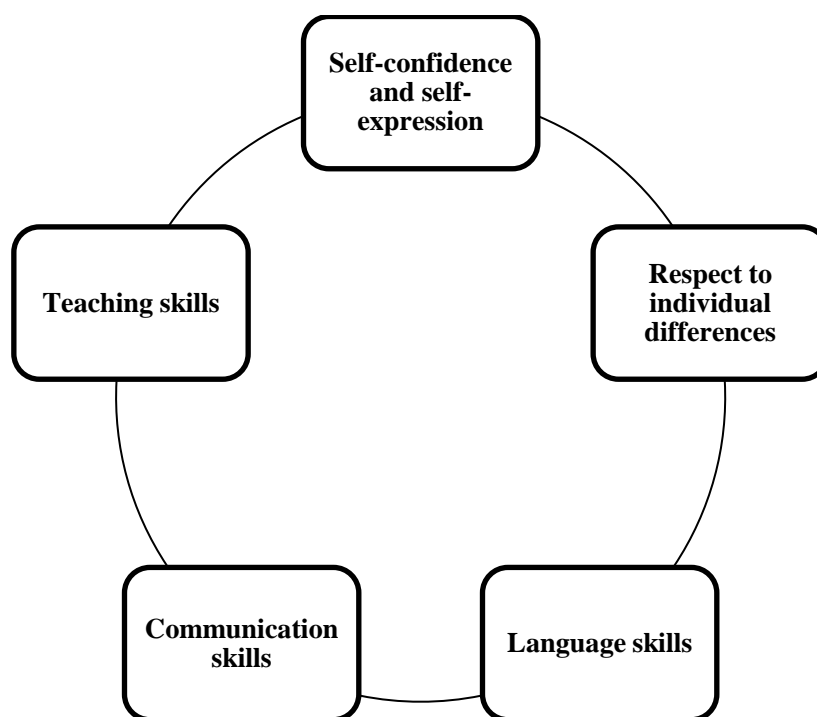


Figure 11. Benefits of cooperation for prospective teaching career of the students

The students reported that the use of collaborative activities in their undergraduate courses in their department will provide them to collaborate with their colleagues effectively in their future career when they design a lesson or discuss different ideas related to teaching. They also stated that their repertoire of teaching strategies will expand as well as their knowledge about the advantages and the disadvantages of each strategy due to their experiences in first hand. In addition, the students asserted that the use of collaborative learning strategy in their department provides them the opportunity with the ability to communicate with their colleagues and students effectively in their prospective teaching career. Moreover, the students emphasized that they have the chance to gain a greater awareness about individual differences with respect to perceptions, ideas, values and intelligences during collaborative activities. This in turn teaches them how to deal with such situations and show respect to differences. Accordingly, approximately 80% of the participants stated they will utilize the cooperative learning strategies in their future classrooms. These results are consistent with the suggestions of Lyman and Davidson (2004) in the way that the pre-service teachers need to experience the cooperative learning strategy as learners for the possible future implementations of the techniques. Therefore, it is important that the stakeholders in the education departments should feel special commitment to teaching of the nature of the cooperative learning and the essential elements of the strategy to the teacher-learners in teacher education (Johnson and Johnson, 2009).

The results displayed that more than 93 percent of the participants preferred working in small groups. The students reported some of their experiences when working in large groups involving problems in the management of group dynamics in terms of time, work division, decision making process, social relationships, self-expression and task coordination. They believed that the existence of more people in a group means there will be ones who get the same grade with the group without contributing to the task as much as they did. Therefore, this situation leads to unfair grading due to the unequal responsibility and contribution to the task completion process. The student also mentioned that they had some difficulties in arranging a

suitable time for every member due to the large size of the group in order to work on the task, which results in waste of time. Moreover, when the size of the group becomes larger, it is not possible for every group member to express their opinions about the task or even if it is, then it takes a lot of time to complete the process. This causes a problem in the decision making process and makes it difficult to reach a consensus easily in a shorter time span. There will be students suffering from being in the backwards and not having a chance to explain their ideas. The findings are consistent with Kerr's (2001) study who proposes that the students do not display a tendency to perceive their contributions to the task as being significant when the size of the group gets larger. This also affects the social interaction between group members by posing a decrease in the frequency (Indik, 1965). Therefore, the individual accountability and the social communication in a team seem to be higher in the small-sized groups.

The results of the study revealed that the majority of the students (51.4 %) indicated they prefer individual work instead of group work activities in their course of study. The students asserted the usage group activities posed them some challenges involving difficulty in time management and group dynamics, unequal responsibility and contribution to the task completion, unfair grading, difficulty in self-expression and the feeling of limitation by others in terms of creative thinking and freedom in time/space. Figure 12 outlines the problems of cooperative learning strategy perceived by the students. The students asserted that they had difficulties in time and pace management during their course of study when they work in groups. The 42.6 percent of the participants believed it takes more time to complete the task when they work with their peers instead of working alone. They reported some reasons behind their perspective including problems in arranging a suitable time for each group member to meet and complete the task and the feeling of a threat regarding limitation by others in terms of time and space

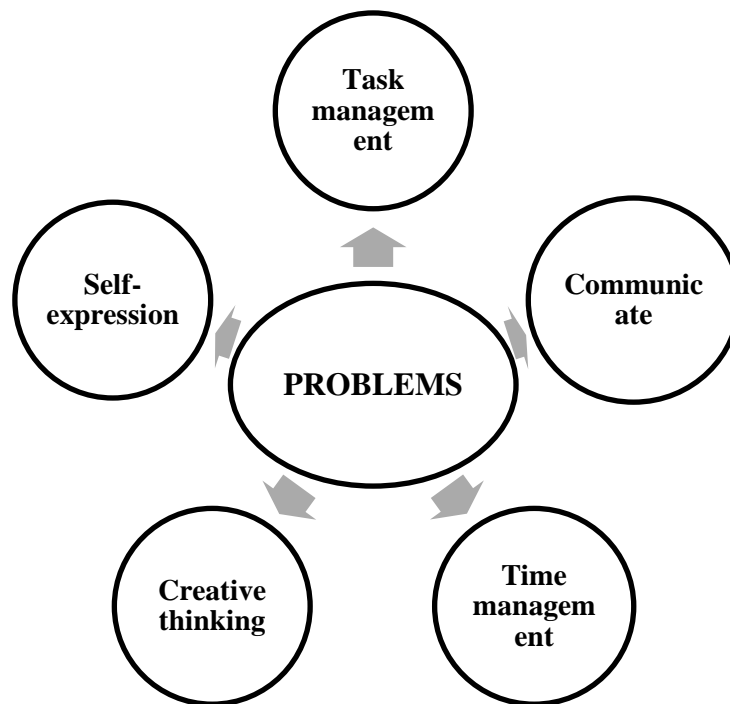


Figure 12. Problems of cooperative learning according to the perceptions of students

In addition, the students complained about the unequal responsibility problem in group work since some of the group members do not perform their part of the duty. This also leads to some opposing ideas regarding the issue of unfair grading. They criticize the fact that all the members get the same grade in the end even if their contribution is less than theirs or they do not contribute at all. Furthermore, the students argued that they experience some communication breakdowns when they work in groups due to the existence of people with different points of views and this issue compelled some complications regarding social relationships with their peers. For example, some of the students mentioned that their relationship with their peers is affected in a negative way since the group members have too much focus on grade and display no tolerance to any kind of mistake. They declared that the arguments in the group cause a decrease in the quality of the work and their motivation as well. Moreover, the students affirm that they feel difficulties in expressing their opinions in group works. They mentioned that there are some situations where a person likes showing off or talking too much and they do not have the chance to explain their

points of views. In addition, some of the students mentioned their discomfort about the feeling of limitation by others regarding creative thinking. They believed that the obligation to work in groups all the time prevents one from trying new things that could possibly led to the creation of an innovative idea. They explained that the reason behind this attitude is that some of the students fear getting a low grade since it is risky to try new things and they choose the secure one.

The results are consistent with the studies of Mulligan and Garofalo (2011) and McLeish (2009) and the suggestions of Joliffe (2007) about the challenges that might be faced if the essentials that govern the cooperative learning strategy; positive interdependence, group formation, individual accountability, social skills and structuring and structures; are not fulfilled appropriately. However, the results contradict with Gomleksiz's (2006) study which asserted that the cooperative learning experience have a significant positive effect on students' attitudes towards learning English but align with the findings that it contributes the establishment of better interactions among students. Felder and Brent (1996) proposed that the issue of "hitchhike" getting credit for a task without actively making a contribution is always a danger. The researcher proposes a solution, in which the students could distribute the total points for a task among themselves with regard to their proportion of effort to the assignment. When the teachers make sure that the students believe they will "sink or swim together" and united around a common goal, it is most likely that those issues are eliminated.

The findings of the study also pointed out that the majority of the students did not prefer the incorporation of more group activities in their course of study with approximately 60% agreement, which indicates a high level of negative attitude towards the issue. Some of the students mentioned that the current situation is sufficient while others complained about over-usage of the strategy in the department and present the problems caused by the usage of group activities above.

The pre-service teachers also put forward some suggestions taking into account the challenges they faced during the implementation of cooperative learning strategy in their course of study in terms of the balanced use of the strategy, the

importance of the nature of the task/course and the need for fairness. As Richards and Rogers (2001) indicated it is not possible for method to be fit in the needs and the design of each and every course. All methods have their pros and cons and it is the responsibility of the teachers to design a lesson by making a balanced use of a variety of strategies. The students propose that it is important for teachers to take into consideration the nature of the task and the course when designing a lesson since not every task is in line with the use of cooperative learning strategy. There could be some other methods that are more appropriate. They emphasized the importance of the individual study as well since they will be working alone in their classrooms and need to feel that they can accomplish task alone.

The second research question is related to the extent of the use of cooperative learning strategy and the kinds of techniques of the strategy practiced in the EFL department of the university. More than 70% of the students believed that the cooperative learning strategy is implemented over fifty percent in their course of studies while only a small number of students indicated the extent of its application is below twenty five percent. It seems that the cooperative learning strategy is utilized with high amount taking into consideration the benefits that could arise from the implementation of it. The areas of tertiary education, especially the teacher training departments are supposed to be the ones adopting a more-student approach and the EFL department of the university is seemingly performing well considering the students' responses. It seems that the educationalists are aware of the benefits of the use cooperative learning strategy as when compared to traditional ones and making use of some form of the strategy in their classrooms. Group work (22%), jigsaw (21%) and discussion (19.7%) techniques have the highest frequencies of all to be proposed by the students with respect to the techniques utilized in their course of studies. Nonetheless, the students suggested some courses in their department that they feel greater learning could be manifested via the use of group activities. The course which was most frequently proposed by all the participants was the ELT Methodology course with 22.7%. Then, the courses of Literature (14.4%), Material development and evaluation (7.6%) and Oral communication (6.8%) follow. Only 25

% percent of the participants reported they would feel comfortable if more group activities were included into their lessons due to reasons as described above.

5.1 Pedagogical Implications

The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions and the experiences of the pre-service teachers about the use of cooperative learning strategy in a Foreign Language Education department in a state university in Ankara, Turkey. Possible differences between the perceptions of 2nd and 4th grade students were also analyzed. The data about the points of views of the students about the cooperative learning strategy were gathered through 30-item likert scale and open-ended questions.

The findings of the research study may be used raise awareness for the students about their perceptions about the issue and possible reasons for the mismatches between their expectations and the current situation. The analysis of the findings may raise issues about the realization that some of the disadvantages of cooperative learning that they complained about may actually result from their lack of knowledge or guidance about its essential components. The findings may also suggest some implications for teachers to develop empathy for the side of learners about the reasons of the complications occurred in their courses when they incorporate cooperative activities into their course of study. They may rethink about some improvements in the course design with respect to the insight gotten through study and some of the teachers may choose to include more cooperative activities into their courses. The study may encourage the students, the instructors and even the stakeholders in the department to weigh their strengths and weaknesses and take some actions to improve the situation in their program. The training of both the teachers and the students about the essential components of the cooperative learning may be applied to overcome the difficulties arise from the lack of information about the issue.

As Lyman and Davidson (2004) assert some of the instructors refrain from using cooperative learning strategy due to its complexities and display a reluctance to incorporate those strategies into their course of studies.” However, it is very significant that learners experience cooperative learning strategies in their pre-service

education as learners for the sake of possible future implementations of them in their prospective teaching career. There has been a change in the perspective in pedagogy towards a more student-oriented approach from a traditional one (Richards and Rogers, 2001) and the prospective teachers need to use it to keep up with the modern educational implementations.

For the last word, I would like to end with a quote from Johnston (2009), for which I think thought-provoking for the ones who have not yet recognized the vital effect of collaborative learning (p. 246):

“Collaborative learning is not an add-on luxury for rare cases, but a vital component of any healthy forward looking educational setting.”

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The present study explored the perceptions and the experiences of the pre-service teachers in a Foreign Language Education department in a state university in Ankara, Turkey. It is evident from the findings that the students did not fully accept the cooperative learning strategy and did not feel comfortable of the greater incorporation of it into their course of study despite they indicated some awareness of its potential advantages. In addition, the FLE department of the university seems to give importance to the inclusion of the cooperative learning strategy instead of traditional methods and ensure some of the strategy is utilized in the classrooms.

This study will hopefully promote encouragement for the pre-service teachers to raise an awareness of their views on the cooperative learning strategy from the in-depth portrait of the case and reconsider their assumptions about their future implementations in their prospective teaching careers. The findings could also raise issue for the instructors and the stake holders in the institution to understand the side of the learners and hopefully plan some actions to overcome the challenges by implementing some innovations. The findings of the study partially display consistency with the previous ones in the literature. It is appreciated that further investigation of the issue is performed by the analysis of the present study to enhance the depth of information about the case and to contribute to the literature for future implications.

6.1 Suggestions for further research

Some suggestions for further research are established as a result of the findings of the current study. First of all, information about the case can be collected via applying a similar form of the questionnaire and conducting interviews with the instructors of the FLE department of the university. This may improve to have a more comprehensive picture of the case and provide an opportunity to see if the points of views of the teachers and the students complement to each other.

Secondly, the study may be conducted via expanding the number of the participants to increase the reliability of the results. In addition, the number of the

female students was considerably larger than that of male students. The discrepancy between both genders could be eliminated and numbers could be arranged closed by to each other. Moreover, a further study that investigates all the grade levels may be conducted to get information about the whole picture of the department.

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APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

INFORMED CONSENT FORM (ENGLISH)

The Perceptions of EFL Pre-service Teachers about Cooperative Learning Strategy

This questionnaire has been designed for my Master's thesis for the Foreign Language department Master's program. The aim of the study is to seek information about the perceptions of EFL pre-service teachers about cooperative learning strategy. Therefore, I will appreciate that the information you are about to share is to be correct for the sake of the reliability of the results of the study.

The choice to participate to the study is voluntary. You have the right to leave at any moment without completing the questionnaire. The data collected throughout the study will be kept confidential and your identity will not be included in any reports. Only the researchers will examine and reach the data derived from this study. The findings of the study can be utilized within scientific and professional publications; however, the identity of the participants will be kept anonymous. If you would like to have additional information about the present study, you can send an e-mail to Ebru Çakmak (e161814@metu.edu.tr).

The questionnaire takes about 10 minutes. I appreciate your contribution. If you accept the terms, please sign below.

“I participate to this study voluntarily. I am aware of that I can leave the study at any moment. I accept the fact that the information I share can be used in a scientific research. The information I gave is complete and correct.

Name/Surname

Date

Signature

---/---/----

ATTITUDES TOWARDS COOPERATION QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION I: Please fill in the following information.

Name:

Surname:

Class:

Department:

Sex: Male (.....) Female (.....)

Age:

GPA:

SECTION II: This questionnaire asks information about your attitudes towards cooperative learning in the undergraduate EFL teacher education program in this institution. Please circle the number which indicates your degree of agreement to the following items (Strongly disagree, Disagree, Not applicable, Agree, Strongly agree).

	1.Strongly disagree	2.Disagree	3.Agree	4.Strongly agree
1. When I work in a group, I do better quality work in activities.				
2. The work takes longer to complete when I work with other students.				
3. I enjoy the material more when I work with other students.				
4. My group members help explain things that I do not understand.				
5. When I work in a group, I am able to share my ideas.				
6. The material is easier to understand, when I work with other students.				
7. My work is better organized, when I am in a group.				
8. My group members like to help me learn the material.				
9. The workload is usually less when I work with others.				
10. I find it hard to express my thoughts, when I work in a group.				
11. I do not think a group grade is fair.				
12. I learn to work with students who are different from me.				
13. I think other students CANNOT contribute to my English.				
14. I have to work with students who are				

not as smart as I am.				
15. When I work in a group, there are opportunities to express your opinions.				
16. When I work with other students, the work is divided evenly.				
17. I help my group members with what I am good at.				
18. The material is more interesting when I work with other students				
19. Working with other students assists me in understanding different learning styles.				
20. When I work in a group, my teaching skills improve.				
21. I learn more information when I work with other students.				
22. It takes less time to complete the assignment, when I work with other students.				
23. I also learn when I teach the material to my group members.				
24. Studying with other students can improve my English more than studying alone.				
25. Cooperating with my group members in class activities provides me more opportunities to practice my English.				
26. Being able to cooperate in class				

activities in my courses means I will do a better job with my prospective teaching career.				
27. When I work in a group, I enhance my communication skills through interaction with my peers.				
28. Working in a group provides a chance to explore great teaching ideas of others to enhance our teaching perspective.				
29. I feel more relaxed if I work with other students in answering questions.				
30. I think I will use cooperative language learning method in my future teaching career.				

SECTION III: Please read the following items and answer accordingly.

1. Do you prefer working in large (7 or more persons) or small (4 or less persons) groups? Why? Please, provide examples to support your answer.

2. Do you prefer to work on your own rather than in a group? Why? Please, provide examples to support your answer.

3. How often are the cooperative learning strategies practiced in your courses in the EFL department?

- %0-%25 %25-%50 %50-%75 %75-%100

4. Would you prefer if your instructors used more group activities/assignments? Why? Please, provide examples to support your answer.

5. Name at least three cooperative learning strategies and techniques that are practiced in your courses in your EFL department. Please provide brief examples of the implementation of those strategies in your courses. (Roundtable, Jigsaw, etc.)

6. Name at least three courses in which you believe greater learning could be facilitated via group activities.

7. Would you be more comfortable if more group activities were incorporated in your course of study? Why? Please, provide examples to support your answer.

8. How will your ability to collaborate effectively in groups in the undergraduate EFL teacher education program contribute to your own teaching skills in the future?

Please, provide examples to support your answer.

9. Please, write down any other additional comments you have in relation to collaborative study in your EFL undergraduate program.

Thank you for your input😊

APPENDIX B

GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU (TÜRKÇE)



ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

İngilizce Öğretmenliği Öğrencilerinin Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bölümündeki İşbirlikçi Öğrenme Modeline Karşı Olan Tutum Ve Görüşleri

Bu anket, İngiliz Dili Öğretimi bölümü yüksek lisans programı kapsamında tez çalışmam için yürüttüğüm araştırma konusu için hazırlanmıştır. Araştırmanın amacı İngilizce Öğretmenliği öğrencilerinin İşbirlikçi Öğrenim Modeline karşı olan tutum ve görüşlerini öğrenmektir. Bu sebeple, vereceğiniz bilgilerin doğru olması, araştırmanın güvenilir sonuçlar ortaya koyması açısından önem taşımaktadır.

Ankete katılım gönüllülük esasına dayalıdır. Anketi herhangi bir nedenle, istediğiniz an doldurmadan bırakabilirsiniz. Araştırmaya katılanlardan toplanan veriler tamamen gizli tutulacak, veriler ve kimlik bilgileri herhangi bir şekilde eşleştirilmeyecektir. Katılımcıların isimleri bağımsız bir listede toplanacaktır. Ayrıca toplanan verilere sadece araştırmacılar ulaşabilecektir. Bu araştırmanın sonuçları bilimsel ve profesyonel yayınlarda veya eğitim amaçlı kullanılabilir, fakat katılımcıların kimliği gizli tutulacaktır. Araştırma hakkında bilgi almak isterseniz, ODTÜ İngilizce Öğretimi Bölümü öğrencilerinden Ebru Çakmak'a (e161814@metu.edu.tr) e-posta adresinden ulaşabilirsiniz.

Anket 10 dakika sürmektedir. Katılımınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederim. Aşağıdaki koşulları kabul ediyorsanız lütfen aşağıya imza atınız.

‘Bu araştırmaya gönüllü olarak katılıyorum. Anketi tamamlamadan istediğim zaman bırakabileceğimi biliyorum. Ankette verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel araştırmada kullanılabileceğini kabul ediyorum. Verdiğim bilgiler eksiksiz ve doğrudur.’

Ad Soyad

Tarih

İmza

----/----/-----

APPENDIX C

PILOT STUDY

ATTITUDES TOWARDS COOPERATION QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION I: Please fill in the following information.

Name:

Surname:

Class:

Department:

Sex: Male (.....) Female (.....)

Age:

GPA:

SECTION II: This questionnaire asks information about your attitudes towards cooperative learning in the undergraduate EFL teacher education program in this institution. Please circle the number which indicates your degree of agreement to the following items (Strongly disagree, Disagree, Not applicable, Agree, Strongly agree).

	4.Strongly agree	3.Agree	2.Disagree	1.Strongly disagree	The meaning of the question is clear to me.			
					Yes	Partially	No	Comments
1. When I work in a group, I do better quality work in activities.	4	3	2	1				
2. The work takes longer to complete when I work with other students.	4	3	2	1				
3. I enjoy the material more when I work with other students.	4	3	2	1				
4. My group members help explain things that I do not understand.	4	3	2	1				
5. When I work in a group, I am able to share my ideas.	4	3	2	1				
6. The material is easier to understand, when I work with other students.	4	3	2	1				
7. My work is better organized, when I am in a group.	4	3	2	1				
8. My group members like to help me learn the material.	4	3	2	1				
9. The workload is usually less when I work with others.	4	3	2	1				
10. I find it hard to express my thoughts, when I work in a group.	4	3	2	1				
11. I do not think a group grade is fair.	4	3	2	1				
12. I learn to work with students who are different from me.	4	3	2	1				
13. I think other students cannot contribute to my English.	4	3	2	1				
14. I have to work with students who are not as smart as I am.	4	3	2	1				
15. When I work in a group, there are opportunities to express your opinions.	4	3	2	1				
16. When I work with other students, the work is divided evenly.	4	3	2	1				

17. I help my group members with what I am good at.	4	3	2	1				
18. The material is more interesting when I work with other students	4	3	2	1				
19. Working with other students assists me in understanding different learning styles.	4	3	2	1				
20. When I work in a group, my teaching skills improve.	4	3	2	1				
21. I learn more information when I work with other students.	4	3	2	1				
22. It takes less time to complete the assignment, when I work with other students.	4	3	2	1				
23. I also learn when I teach the material to my group members.	4	3	2	1				
24. Studying with other students can improve my English more than studying alone.	4	3	2	1				
25. Cooperating with my group members in class activities provides me more opportunities to practice my English.	4	3	2	1				
26. Being able to cooperate in class activities in my courses means I will do a better job with my prospective teaching career.	4	3	2	1				
27. When I work in a group, I enhance my communication skills through interaction with my peers.	4	3	2	1				
28. Working in a group provides a chance to explore great teaching ideas of others to enhance our teaching perspective.	4	3	2	1				
29. I feel more relaxed if I work with other students in answering questions.	4	3	2	1				
30. I think I will use cooperative language learning method in my future teaching career.	4	3	2	1				

APPENDIX D

RESULTS OF THE PILOT STUDY: MEANINGFULNESS QUESTIONNAIRE

ITEM NO	YES (%)	PARTIALLY(%)	NO(%)
1	100	-	-
2	100	-	-
3	93.3	6.7	-
4	86.7	13.3	-
5	100	-	-
6	100	-	-
7	100	-	-
8	80	20	-
9	100	-	-
10	100	-	-
11	100	-	-
12	93.3	6.7	-
13	100	-	-
14	100	-	-
15	100	-	-
16	93.3	6.7	-
17	100	-	-
18	100	-	-
19	100	-	-
20	100	-	-
21	100	-	-
22	100	-	-
23	100	-	-
24	100	-	-
25	100	-	-
26	100	-	-
27	100	-	-
28	93.3	6.7	-
29	93.3	6.7	-
30	100	-	-

APPENDIX E

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF LIKERT-SCALE ITEMS

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1. When I work in a group, I do better quality work in activities.	2,5473	,81093	,06666
2. The work takes longer to complete when I work with other students.	2,9122	,83241	,06842
3. I enjoy the material more when I work with other students.	2,5811	,73784	,06065
4. My group members help explain things that I do not understand.	3,2365	,64271	,05283
5. When I work in a group, I am able to share my ideas.	3,3041	,64585	,05309
6. The material is easier to understand, when I work with other students.	2,9730	,69933	,05748
7. My work is better organized, when I am in a group.	2,5811	,79977	,06574
8. My group members like to help me learn the material.	3,0473	,69335	,05699
9. The workload is usually less when I work with others.	2,8784	,87213	,07169
10. I find it hard to express my thoughts, when I work in a group.	1,9865	,81638	,06711
11. I do not think a group grade is fair.	2,7095	,87484	,07191
12. I learn to work with students who are different from me.	3,0541	,63657	,05233
13. I think other students CANNOT contribute to my English.	1,9797	,71400	,05869
14. I have to work with students who are not as smart as I am.	2,0203	,74203	,06099
15. When I work in a group, there are opportunities to express your opinions.	3,1757	,59151	,04862
16. When I work with other students, the work is divided evenly.	2,6014	,81433	,06694
17. I help my group members with what I am good at.	3,3649	,54895	,04512
18. The material is more interesting when I work with other students	2,6014	,75358	,06194

19. Working with other students assists me in understanding different learning styles.	3,0676	,65634	,05395
20. When I work in a group, my teaching skills improve.	2,8243	,78866	,06483
21. I learn more information when I work with other students.	2,9122	,72777	,05982
22. It takes less time to complete the assignment, when I work with other students.	2,4797	,90704	,07456
23. I also learn when I teach the material to my group members.	3,2703	,52934	,04351
24. Studying with other students can improve my English more than studying alone.	2,7973	,76451	,06284
25. Cooperating with my group members in class activities provides me more opportunities to practice my English.	2,9527	,71271	,05858
26. Being able to cooperate in class activities in my courses means I will do a better job with my prospective teaching career.	2,9932	,69494	,05712
27. When I work in a group, I enhance my communication skills through interaction with my peers.	3,1419	,67016	,05509
28. Working in a group provides a chance to explore great teaching ideas of others to enhance our teaching perspective.	3,0743	,65039	,05346
29. I feel more relaxed if I work with other students in answering questions.	2,6284	,81048	,06662
30. I think I will use cooperative language learning method in my future teaching career.	3,0405	,72729	,05978

APPENDIX F

RESULTS LIKERT-SCALE ITEMS

	1.Strongly disagree	2.Disagree	3.Agree	4.Strongly agree
1. When I work in a group, I do better quality work in activities.	9,5	37,2	42,6*	10,8
2. The work takes longer to complete when I work with other students.	4,1	27,0	42,6*	26,4
3. I enjoy the material more when I work with other students.	4,7	42,6*	42,6*	10,1
4. My group members help explain things that I do not understand.	0,7	9,5	55,4*	34,5
5. When I work in a group, I am able to share my ideas.	1,4	6,1	53,4*	39,2
6. The material is easier to understand, when I work with other students.	2,7	17,6	59,5*	20,3
7. My work is better organized, when I am in a group.	8,1	37,2	43,2*	11,5
8. My group members like to help me learn the material.	2,0	15,5	58,1*	24,3
9. The workload is usually less when I work with others.	7,4	22,3	45,3*	25,0
10. I find it hard to express my thoughts, when I work in a group.	29,1	48,0*	18,2	4,7
11. I do not think a group grade is fair.	7,4	34,5	37,8*	20,3
12. I learn to work with students who are different from me.	1,4	13,5	63,5*	21,6
13. I think other students CANNOT contribute to my English.	21,6	63,5*	10,1	4,7
14. I have to work with students who are not as smart as I am.	23,6	53,4*	20,3	2,7
15. When I work in a group, there are opportunities to express your opinions.	0,7	8,1	64,2*	27,0
16. When I work with other students, the work is divided evenly.	9,5	32,4	46,6*	11,5
17. I help my group members with what I am good at.	0,7	1,4	58,8*	39,2
18. The material is more interesting when	4,7	41,9*	41,9*	11,5

I work with other students				
19. Working with other students assists me in understanding different learning styles.	1,4	14,2	60,8*	23,6
20. When I work in a group, my teaching skills improve.	4,7	27,0	49,3*	18,9
21. I learn more information when I work with other students.	3,4	20,9	56,8*	18,9
22. It takes less time to complete the assignment, when I work with other students.	14,2	37,8*	33,8	14,2
23. I also learn when I teach the material to my group members.	4,1	64,9*	0	31,1
24. Studying with other students can improve my English more than studying alone.	4,7	27,0	52,0*	16,2
25. Cooperating with my group members in class activities provides me more opportunities to practice my English.	3,4	17,6	59,5*	19,6
26. Being able to cooperate in class activities in my courses means I will do a better job with my prospective teaching career.	2,0	18,2	58,1*	21,6
27. When I work in a group, I enhance my communication skills through interaction with my peers.	1,4	12,2	57,4*	29,1
28. Working in a group provides a chance to explore great teaching ideas of others to enhance our teaching perspective.	0,7	15,5	59,5*	24,3
29. I feel more relaxed if I work with other students in answering questions.	8,1	33,8	45,3*	12,8
30. I think I will use cooperative language learning method in my future teaching career.	3,4	14,2	57,4*	25,0

APPENDIX G

RESULTS OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

OpenQ1

Grade			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2nd grade	Valid	Small group	84	93,3	93,3	93,3
		Large group	2	2,2	2,2	95,6
		None	4	4,4	4,4	100,0
		Total	90	100,0	100,0	
4th grade	Valid	Small group	54	93,1	93,1	93,1
		Large group	2	3,4	3,4	96,6
		None	2	3,4	3,4	100,0
		Total	58	100,0	100,0	

OpenQ2

Grade			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2nd grade	Valid	Group work	15	16,7	16,7	16,7
		Individual work	49	54,4	54,4	71,1
		Dependent on the situation	26	28,9	28,9	100,0
		Total	90	100,0	100,0	
4th grade	Valid	Group work	15	25,9	25,9	25,9
		Individual work	27	46,6	46,6	72,4
		Dependent on the situation	12	20,7	20,7	93,1
		No answer	4	6,9	6,9	100,0
		Total	58	100,0	100,0	

OpenQ3

Grade			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2nd grade	Valid	%25-%50	9	10,0	10,0	10,0
		%50-%75	37	41,1	41,1	51,1
		%75-%100	44	48,9	48,9	100,0
		Total	90	100,0	100,0	
4th grade	Valid	%0-%25	1	1,7	1,7	1,7
		%25-%50	9	15,5	15,5	17,2
		%50-%75	32	55,2	55,2	72,4
		%75-%100	11	19,0	19,0	91,4

OpenQ4

Grade			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2nd grade	Valid	Yes	18	20,0	20,0	20,0
		No	60	66,7	66,7	86,7
		Dependent on the situation	12	13,3	13,3	100,0
		Total	90	100,0	100,0	
4th grade	Valid	Yes	14	24,1	24,1	24,1
		No	27	46,6	46,6	70,7
		Dependent on the situation	9	15,5	15,5	86,2
		No answer	8	13,8	13,8	100,0
		Total	58	100,0	100,0	
No answer			5	8,6	8,6	100,0

OpenQ7

Grade			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
2nd grade	Valid	Yes	21	23,3	23,3	23,3
		No	50	55,6	55,6	78,9
		Dependent on the situation	15	16,7	16,7	95,6
		No answer	4	4,4	4,4	100,0
		Total	90	100,0	100,0	
4th grade	Valid	Yes	16	27,6	27,6	27,6
		No	27	46,6	46,6	74,1
		Dependent on the situation	7	12,1	12,1	86,2
		No answer	8	13,8	13,8	100,0
		Total	58	100,0	100,0	

APPENDIX H

ANOVA RESULTS FOR THE LIKERT-SCALE ITEMS

		ANOVA				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Q1	Between Groups	2,429	1	2,429	3,764	,054
	Within Groups	94,239	146	,645		
	Total	96,669	147			
Q2	Between Groups	,239	1	,239	,344	,559
	Within Groups	101,619	146	,696		
	Total	101,858	147			
Q3	Between Groups	3,619	1	3,619	6,914	,009
	Within Groups	76,408	146	,523		
	Total	80,027	147			
Q4	Between Groups	,015	1	,015	,035	,852
	Within Groups	60,708	146	,416		
	Total	60,723	147			
Q5	Between Groups	,375	1	,375	,898	,345
	Within Groups	60,943	146	,417		
	Total	61,318	147			
Q6	Between Groups	,070	1	,070	,142	,707
	Within Groups	71,822	146	,492		
	Total	71,892	147			
Q7	Between Groups	,003	1	,003	,004	,950
	Within Groups	94,025	146	,644		
	Total	94,027	147			
Q8	Between Groups	,397	1	,397	,825	,365
	Within Groups	70,272	146	,481		
	Total	70,669	147			
Q9	Between Groups	1,839	1	1,839	2,442	,120
	Within Groups	109,972	146	,753		
	Total	111,811	147			
Q10	Between Groups	,017	1	,017	,026	,872
	Within Groups	97,956	146	,671		
	Total	97,973	147			
Q11	Between Groups	,001	1	,001	,001	,977
	Within Groups	112,506	146	,771		
	Total	112,507	147			
Q12	Between Groups	2,912	1	2,912	7,505	,007
	Within Groups	56,655	146	,388		
	Total	59,568	147			
Q13	Between Groups	,134	1	,134	,262	,610
	Within Groups	74,805	146	,512		
	Total	74,939	147			

Q14	Between Groups	2,208	1	2,208	4,094	,045
	Within Groups	78,731	146	,539		
	Total	80,939	147			
Q15	Between Groups	,019	1	,019	,053	,818
	Within Groups	51,414	146	,352		
	Total	51,432	147			
Q16	Between Groups	,036	1	,036	,053	,818
	Within Groups	97,444	146	,667		
	Total	97,480	147			
Q17	Between Groups	,228	1	,228	,756	,386
	Within Groups	44,069	146	,302		
	Total	44,297	147			
Q18	Between Groups	1,062	1	1,062	1,882	,172
	Within Groups	82,417	146	,565		
	Total	83,480	147			
Q19	Between Groups	,033	1	,033	,076	,783
	Within Groups	63,291	146	,434		
	Total	63,324	147			
Q20	Between Groups	,957	1	,957	1,545	,216
	Within Groups	90,475	146	,620		
	Total	91,432	147			
Q21	Between Groups	,000	1	,000	,000	,983
	Within Groups	77,858	146	,533		
	Total	77,858	147			
Q22	Between Groups	4,922	1	4,922	6,194	,014
	Within Groups	116,017	146	,795		
	Total	120,939	147			
Q23	Between Groups	,050	1	,050	,176	,675
	Within Groups	41,139	146	,282		
	Total	41,189	147			
Q24	Between Groups	,642	1	,642	1,098	,296
	Within Groups	85,277	146	,584		
	Total	85,919	147			
Q25	Between Groups	,638	1	,638	1,258	,264
	Within Groups	74,031	146	,507		
	Total	74,669	147			
Q26	Between Groups	,073	1	,073	,151	,698
	Within Groups	70,920	146	,486		
	Total	70,993	147			
Q27	Between Groups	,017	1	,017	,037	,847
	Within Groups	66,003	146	,452		
	Total	66,020	147			
Q28	Between Groups	,311	1	,311	,733	,393
	Within Groups	61,872	146	,424		
	Total	62,182	147			

Q29	Between Groups	,009	1	,009	,013	,909
	Within Groups	96,552	146	,661		
	Total	96,561	147			
Q30	Between Groups	,157	1	,157	,295	,588
	Within Groups	77,600	146	,532		
	Total	77,757	147			

APPENDIX I

TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

İşbirliğine dayalı öğrenme “öğrencilerin küçük gruplar oluşturarak bir problemi çözmek ya da bir görevi yerine getirmek üzere ortak bir amaç uğruna birlikte çalışma yoluyla bir konuyu öğrenme” yaklaşımıdır (Richards and Rogers, 2001). Bu yaklaşımda, öğrenciler birbirleri ile etkileşim sonucu bir öğrenme gerçekleştirirler ve hem kendi öğrenmelerinden hem de sınıf arkadaşlarını öğrenmeye teşvik etme konusunda sorumluluk sahibi olurlar (Olsen and Kagan, 1992). İşbirliğine dayalı öğrenme biçiminde 5 temel koşul vardır: olumlu bağımlılık, yüz yüze etkileşim, bireysel sorumluluk ve değerlendirilebilirlik, grup işleyişinin değerlendirilmesi ve sosyal becerilerin uygun bir şekilde kullanılması (Johnson and Johnson, 1998). Olumlu bağımlılık, bireylerin ortak bir amaç etrafında toplanarak, grubun başarılı olabilmesi için gruptaki her bireyin katkıda bulunması ve grubun başarısını kendi başarısı, kendi başarısını grubun başarısı olarak görmesidir. Yüz yüze etkileşim, öğrencilerin birbirlerini güdülemeleri ve bunun grup başarısı için önemini bilmeleri ile ilgilidir. Bireysel sorumluluk ve değerlendirilebilirlik, her bireyin kendi yetenekleri kapsamında gruba katkıda bulunmasıdır. Grup işleyişinin değerlendirilmesi, grup üyelerinin performansları hakkında sürekli kendilerini kontrol ederek geri bildirim vermesi ve performanslarını geliştirmek için neler yapabileceği hakkında tartışmalarını gerektirir. Sosyal becerilerin uygun bir şekilde kullanılması, öğrencilerin grup içi iletişime önem vermeleri ve aralarındaki sorunları yapıcı bir şekilde çözebilme becerilerine sahip olabilmeleri anlamına gelir. İşbirlikçi öğrenmenin sınıf içerisinde başarılı olabilmesi için, öğrencilere grup içerisinde bazı görev ve sorumluluklar verilmesi gerekir. Bu görev ve sorumluluklar, düzenleyici, grup sözcüsü ve yazıcı gibi rolleri içerebilir. Oluşturulan grupların, öğrenci özellikleri bakımından heterojen olması önerilir.

Çalışma kapsamında, günümüzde yaygın bir şekilde kullanılan 4 işbirlikçi öğrenme türüne yer verilmiştir. Bu öğrenme türleri, Düşün-eşleş-paylaş (Lyman, 1981, 1987), Numbered heads (Kagan, 1994), Jigsaw (Aronson, 1978) ve Dönerli görüş paylaşımıdır (Kagan, 2003). Düşün-eşleş-paylaş (Lyman, 1981, 1987)

teknğinde, öğretmen tarafından öğrencilere aktivite ile ilgili bir soru yöneltilir ve öğrenciler soruyu cevaplama sürecini üç temel aşamada gerçekleştirirler. Birinci aşamada öğrenciler soru hakkında bireysel olarak düşünüp fikirlerini ortaya koyarlar. İkinci aşamada öğrenciler sınıf arkadaşlarından biriyle eşleştirilirler ve konu hakkındaki fikirlerini paylaşarak bir sonuca ulaşmaya çalışırlar. Son aşamada ise öğrenciler ulaştıkları sonucu tüm sınıf ile paylaşarak tartışırlar. Numbered heads (Kagan, 1994) tekniğinde grup içindeki bütün öğrenciler, materyali öğrenmeden sorumludurlar. Öğretmen konu hakkındaki soruyu öğrencilere yönelttikten sonra, grup üyelerini birden dörde kadar numaralandırır. Aynı numaraya sahip öğrenciler ger bir araya gelerek soruya bir çözüm bulmaya çalışırlar. Kendilerine ayrılan süre sona erdiğinde öğretmen rastgele bir numara söyler ve o numaraya sahip öğrencilerden birinden cevap bekler. Hangi numaranın söyleneceği belli olmadığı için bütün öğrenciler soruya cevap vermek için hazırlıklı olmak durumundadır. Jigsaw (Aronson, 1978) tekniğinde, konu ile ilgili bilgi parçalara bölünerek leçe grup içerisindeki öğrenciler arasında paylaştırılır. Böylece her grup üyesi bilgi bütünü farklı parçalarına sahip olur. Farklı gruplarda aynı bilgi parçasına sahip olan öğrenciler bir araya gelerek uzman takımı oluştururlar ve o konunun uzmanı olacak şekilde konuyu özümserler. Daha sonra kendi gruplarına geri dönerek edindikleri bilgileri grup arkadaşlarıyla paylaşarak bilgi bütüne ulaşırlar. Dönerli görüş paylaşımı tekniğinde (Kagan, 2003), öğrenciler kendilerine verilen göreve sırasıyla katkıda bulunarak tamamlanmasını sağlarlar. Öğrenciler sadece bir kalem ve bir kâğıda sahiptir. Aynı kalem kâğıt sırasıyla bütün öğrencilerden geçerek hepsinin kendince eklediği katkılar ile görevin tamamlanması sağlanır.

Bu çalışma Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bölümü hizmet öncesi öğrencilerinin kendi bölümlerindeki işbirlikçi öğrenme stratejisinin kullanımı hakkındaki görüşlerini ve tecrübelerini araştırmayı amaçlamıştır. Çalışma temel 2 araştırma sorusu üzerine odaklanmıştır: Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bölümü hizmet öncesi öğrencilerinin işbirlikçi öğrenme stratejisi hakkındaki görüşleri ve kendi bölümlerinde bu stratejinin ne derece ve hangi teknikler kullanılarak uygulandığı. Çalışmada temel alınan kuramsal yapıyı “sosyal yapılandırıcılık” oluşturmaktadır.

Bu kuram, bireylerin yaşadıkları çevre ve çalıştıkları ortam ile ilgili deneyimleri ile alakalı olarak kendi öznel anlamlarını oluşturduğunu varsaymaktadır (Creswell, 2013). Bu görüşler birden fazla değerdedir ve bireylerin çevreleri ile olan etkileşimleri, geçmiş yaşantıları ve kültürleri sonucunda oluşmaktadır. Bu kuramın çalışmayla olan ilgisi, kuramın bireylerin öğrenme sürecine aktif olarak katılımının önemini ve bunun öğrenme ve bilginin kalıcılığını artırmaya yönelik etkisini vurgulamasıdır. Çalışmada araştırma yaklaşımı olarak, betimleyici örnek olay yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Araştırmadaki veriler Türkiye'deki bir devlet üniversitesinin Yabancı Diller Eğitimi bölümü 2. ve 4. sınıf öğrencilerinden olmak üzere toplam 148 katılımcıdan toplanmıştır. Temel veri toplama aracını 30 soruluk derecelendirme ölçeği ve 9 açık uçlu sorudan oluşmaktadır. Araştırmanın pilot çalışması, yine aynı bölümdeki farklı sınıflardaki 15 öğrenciden toplanmıştır. Pilot çalışmanın güvenilirlik katsayısı hesaplanmış ve 0.77 olarak bulunmuştur. Ayrıca pilot çalışmadaki derecelendirme ölçeğine ek bir kısım eklenerek öğrencilere soruyu ne derece anladıkları sorulmuş ve buna göre gereken değişiklikler yapıp çalışma katılımcılara uygulanmıştır. 148 öğrenciden alınan veriler sonucunda derecelendirme ölçeğinin güvenilirlik katsayısı hesaplanmış ve 0.889 olarak bulunmuştur. Çalışma öncesi, sırası ve sonrasında etik konusundaki hususlar dikkate alınmıştır. Katılımcılar çalışmaya gönüllü katıldıklarına dair gönüllü katılım formu imzalamıştır ve araştırmanın amacı hakkında tam ve doğru bilgilendirilmiştir. Çalışma sonuçları rapor edilirken katılımcıların kimlikleri gizli tutulmuş ve takma isimler kullanılmıştır.

Çalışma sonucu elde edilen veriler SPSS ve kodlama yöntemi kullanarak analiz edilmiştir. Anket sonucunda elde edilen sayısal veriler SPSS programı kullanılarak analiz edilmiş sonuçlar tablo, grafik ve şekillerle sunulmuştur. Açık uçlu sorulara verilen cevaplardan elde edilen veriler ise kodlama yapılarak analiz edilmiştir. Elde edilen sonuçlar kategoriler oluşturularak sistematik bir şekilde düzenlenmiştir ve temalar oluşturulmuştur. Kodlama iki değerlendirici tarafından yapılmış ve gerekli düzenlemeler yapılmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda elde edilen veriler iki araştırma sorusu başlığı altında toplanarak sunulmuştur. Birinci araştırma sorusu

olan Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Bölümü hizmet öncesi öğrencilerinin işbirlikçi öğrenme stratejisi hakkındaki görüşleri için 5 tema ve alt temaları oluşturulmuştur:

- Etkileşim boyutu (grup veya bireysel, küçük grup veya büyük grup)
- İşbirlikçi öğrenmenin güçlü yanları (dil becerilerinin gelişimi, sosyal becerilerin gelişimi, akran öğrenimi ve olumlu sınıf ortamı)
- İşbirlikçi öğrenmenin zayıf yönleri (zaman yönetimi, iletişim sorunları, yaratıcı düşünmenin engellenmesi, görev idaresindeki sorunlar ve kendini ifade etmede karşılaşılan sorunlar)
- Öğrencilerin tavsiyeleri (stratejinin diğer yöntemlerle beraber dengeli kullanımı, dersin ve aktivitenin doğası ve not konusundaki adalet)
- Öğrencilerin gelecekteki kariyerlerine olan faydaları (öğretme, iletişim ve dil becerilerinin gelişimi ve bireysel farklılıklara saygı, kendine güven ve kendini ifade etme becerilerinin gelişimi).

Araştırma sonuçlarına göre, katılımcılar %51,4 oranında bireysel çalışmayı grupla çalışmaya tercih etmişlerdir. Grupla çalışmayı tercih eden öğrencilerin oranı %20,3'tür. Öğrenciler bireysel çalışmayı daha çok tercih etmelerinin sebebi olarak grup çalışmalarındaki zaman yönetimi konusunda yaşadıkları sıkıntılar ve grup üyeleri arasındaki iletişim problemlerinden bahsetmişlerdir. Başkalarının etkisi altında kalmaları veya kendilerini yeterince ifade edebilme fırsatı bulamadıkları için yaratıcı düşünme becerilerinin engellendiği, görev paylaşımı ve bu görevler yerine getirilirken yaşanan sorunlar da seçimlerinin arkasındaki diğer nedenler olarak öne sürülmüştür. Öğrencilerin %58,8'i bölümlerindeki derslerine daha fazla işbirlikçi öğrenme yöntemi kullanılmasına sıcak bakmamıştır. Bunun için de grup çalışmalarında yaşadıkları sorunlara ek olarak farklı nedenler de öne sürmüşlerdir. Örneğin, bazı katılımcılar işbirlikçi öğrenme stratejisinin faydalı ve etkin bir strateji olmasına rağmen her dersin ve aktivitenin doğasının buna uygun olmadığını ve stratejinin diğer öğrenme yöntem ve teknikleriyle beraber dengeli bir biçimde kullanılması gerektiğini savunmuşlardır. Bazı katılımcılar ise bölümlerinde stratejinin gereğinden fazla kullanıldığını ve bu sebeple kullanım oranının artırılmasına gerek olmadığını söylemişlerdir. Katılımcılar, %93,2 gibi büyük bir çoğunluk ile küçük

gruaplarda çalışmayı büyük gruplarda çalışmaya tercih etmişlerdir. Bunun sebebi olarak da büyük gruplardaki çalışmaları sonucu zaman yönetimi ve ayarlanması konusunda yaşadıkları sorunlardan, görev paylaşımı ve bu görevler yerine getirilirken her grup üyesinin kendi sorumluluğunu yerine getirme konusunda yeterince sağduyu ve çaba göstermemesinden bahsetmişlerdir. Ayrıca, büyük gruplarda birey sayısı fazla olduğu için kendilerini ifade etme şansı bulamadıkları ve her grup üyesinin aynı derecede katkıda bulunmadığını öne sürmüşlerdir. Katılımcılar, işbirlikçi öğrenme stratejisinin kullanımı sayesinde dil becerilerini, özellikle konuşma becerilerini geliştirdiklerinden bahsetmişlerdir. Ayrıca, grup içi etkileşimler sonucu iletişim becerilerinin de geliştiği ve bunun sonucunda karşı tarafa empati ve anlayış geliştirebildiklerini söylemişlerdir. Grup içi etkileşimler sonucu grup arkadaşlarından ve onlarla birlikte yeni bilgileri öğrenebildiklerini öne sürmüşlerdir. Grup çalışmaları akranları ile beraber daha etkili bir şekilde öğrenmeleri için uygun bir ortam oluşmasını sağlamıştır. Grup çalışmaları sırasında akranlarıyla beraber oldukları için kendilerini daha güvende hissettiklerini ve kendilerini ifade etmede daha cesaretli davrandıklarından bahsetmişlerdir. Katılımcılar, işbirlikçi öğrenmenin bu faydalarının yanında bazı olumsuz yönleri olduğunu da söylemişlerdir. Bazı öğrenciler grup ile ödev veya proje yaptıkları zaman bireysel çalışmaya oranla daha fazla zaman harcadıklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Ayrıca çalışmalarını devam ettirebilmek için bir araya gelmeleri gerektiğinden ve her defasında grup üyeleri için ortak bir zaman ayarlamakta güçlük çektiklerini söylemişlerdir. Görev paylaşımında yaşanan sorunlar da öğrenciler tarafından öne sürülen bir diğer olumsuz özelliktir. Her öğrencinin kendi üzerine düşen görevi yerine getirmediğinden ve eşit katkıda bulunmadığından şikâyetçi olmuşlardır. Bu eşitsizlik sonucu her bireyin aynı notu alması da bahsedilen diğer bir sorundur. Bu problemler beraberinde grup içi iletişim ve arkadaşlık ilişkilerinde de bazı sorunlara yol açmıştır. Öğrenciler arasında çıkan tartışmalar, birbirleri ile olan arkadaşlıklarının bozulması ve sadece not için arkadaşlarına karşı kırıcı davranışlarda bulunma katılımcılar tarafından bahsedilen başlıca iletişim sorunlarıdır. Buna ek olarak, grup çalışmaları sırasında kendilerini yeterince ifade etme şansı bulamamaları veya düşük not alma korkusu sebebiyle yeni

fikirleri denemekten kaçınma yaratıcı düşünmeyi engelleyen temel sebepler arasında gösterilmiştir. Katılımcıların bu sorunların giderilmesi konusunda belirli tavsiyeleri de olmuştur. Bireyler, işbirlikçi öğrenmenin etkin bir yöntem olmasına rağmen her ders ve aktivite için uygun olmadığını ve diğer öğrenme yöntem ve teknikleri ile beraber dengeli olarak kullanmasını önermişlerdir. Ayrıca, her bireyin öğrenme şeklinin farklı olduğunu ve yöntem seçiminde buna da dikkat edilmesi gerektiğini savunmuşlardır. Öğretmenlerin, grup çalışması sırasında öğrencilerini yakın olarak izlemesini ve her üyenin görevini yerine getirip getirmediğinden emin olması gerektiğini belirtmişlerdir. Öğrenciler ayrıca, bu yöntemin hizmet öncesi eğitimlerinde sıkça kullanılmasının ilerideki öğretmenlik kariyerlerinde onlara birçok katkı sağlayacağından bahsetmişlerdir. Öğretmenlik becerilerinin gelişeceğinden ve bu etkin yöntemi gelecekteki kariyerlerinde daha kolay bir şekilde kullanabileceklerinden söz etmişlerdir. Bölümlerinde kazandıkları deneyimler sonucu ileride kendi öğrencileri ve meslektaşları ile daha iyi iletişime geçebilecekleri karşılıklı anlayış ve saygı duygularını geliştireceklerini söylemişlerdir. İşbirlikçi öğrenme sayesinde başta konuşma becerileri olmak üzere tüm dil becerilerinin geliştiğini söylemişlerdir. Farklı düşünce, yetenek ve bakış açısında sahip bireylerle çalışma olanaklarına sahip oldukları için bireysel farklılıklar konusunda farkındalık geliştirdiklerini ve bunlara saygı göstermeyi öğrendiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Bunlara ek olarak, kendilerini ifade edebilme becerilerinin geliştiğini ve kendilerine daha güvenli bireyler olmayı öğrendiklerini de belirtmişlerdir.

İkinci araştırma sorusu olan kendi bölümlerinde bu stratejinin ne derece ve hangi teknikler kullanılarak uygulandığı hakkındaki görüşleri sonucunda elde edilen veriler katılımcıların büyük çoğunluğunun stratejinin bölümde %75 oranında kullanıldığını düşündüğünü ortaya koymuştur. Bu bölümde işbirlikçi stratejinin yüksek bir oranda kullanıldığını göstermektedir. Öğrenci görüşlerine göre bölümde kullanılan başlıca teknikleri, grup çalışması, jigsaw ve dönerli görüş paylaşımı oluşturmuştur. Devamında, dönerli görüş paylaşımı, tartışma ve rol oynama gibi teknikler gelmektedir. Katılımcılar bölümdeki bazı derslerde işbirlikçi öğrenme stratejisinin yeterince kullanılmadığından yakınmışlardır. Öğrencilere göre, işbirlikçi

öğrenme stratejisinin daha fazla kullanılmasının gerektiği başlıca dersler yöntem ve teknik, öğretim ilkeleri, drama ve edebiyat dersleridir. Katılımcılar bu derslerde işbirlikçi öğrenme stratejisi kullanımının artması ile daha etkin ve kalıcı öğrenmeler gerçekleşebileceğini öne sürmüşlerdir.

Araştırmanın sonuçları, alandaki öğrenci, öğretmen ve kurum yöneticilerine aydınlatıcı bilgiler sunması dolaylı olarak amaçlanan muhtemel eğitsel etkilerdendir. Böylece eğitim alanındaki farklı seviyelerdeki bireyler birbirine karşı bir empati geliştirebilir ve yapılabilecek geliştirmeler konusunda çeşitli adımlar atılması konusunda güdülenebilirler. Ayrıca, araştırma süresinin ve imkânlarının kısıtlı olması sebebiyle, bölümdeki öğretmenlerden veri toplanamamıştır. Aynı şekilde bir anketin öğretmenlere de uygulanması ve devamında mülakatlar gerçekleştirilmesi, konu hakkında ileride araştırma yapmak isteyen araştırmacılara önerilebilir.

APPENDIX J

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

Enformatik Enstitüsü

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

YAZARIN

Soyadı :

Adı :

Bölümü :

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) :

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: